Remembrance for the Year 2016

With this brief note, the Remembrance series concludes. It began 18 months ago in order to provide a unique history of our journal and our society—and to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the journal. While thinking about the changes over 75 yr, it occurred to me that journal publishing will differ dramatically by the time the year 2016 (the 100th anniversary year of the journal) is with us. One can’t paint a picture of what the journal might look like then—I have seen the “futuristic” car designs prepared in the 1920s—these are interesting only to the degree that one is amused by the embarrassment of the designer. It would be surprising, however, if the journal media itself (that is, the paper and ink) remain unchanged. This is a significant issue to us now, since each page we run over budget costs about $100. A few more magnetic bits might be cheaper.

In late 1987 and early 1988, with the help of a loyal group of Board members and an effective office staff, the time from submission to publication in Endocrinology dropped from nearly 12 months to 5.5 months. Almost immediately, the submission rate increased by 30% and by more than 60% over the next 2 yr. We expanded the pool of reviewers both on and off the North American continent—feeling that FAX and BITNET allowed all Society members to participate in the review process without slowing it down. Indeed, with more reviewers the decreased work burden was welcomed by many in North America. As the submission rate increased, so did the quality of submissions. Now came the first problem: with more submissions and a higher quality of same, shouldn’t we be increasing the acceptance rate? Sure, but remember the $100/page overage cost? Clearly, we would have to use our pages more efficiently if we were to accommodate the reality arriving in the mail daily. We capped the number of references per article and down-sized the figures and type point sizes. These effected page savings of 2%, 6%, and 10%, respectively.

Midway into the effort, the Publications Committee allowed increased control by the Editors; we instituted editorials, and then, the Remembrance series. We added a color cover that changed monthly.

Now, as we prepare to enter 1993, the journal is robust with nearly 2000 submissions/yr and almost 7000 total published pages annually. Our board and reviewers in general (a group of 6000) are an international group reflecting the submissions (in 1991–1992, 47% of the submissions came from outside the U.S.) and the international makeup of our Society and discipline. The microscopic reflection of increased world-wide submissions was that we had to learn to accept bank card payments and bank transfers.

As those of you who read this in the year 2016 look back on our efforts, it is likely that they will appear modest compared to what you will be able to do—we did the best we could with just paper and ink! No matter how you are “publishing,” we expect you will still hold the view that communication (journals and meetings) is what makes us a Society and a profession.

There is a story about a self-impressed individual whose autobiography was delayed when the typesetter ran out of the letter, “I.” With this in mind, this editor has avoided inflicting himself upon you with any regularity. With this issue, however, the term of service of this office is completed and, for that reason, I want to take a moment to thank those who have been loyal reviewers, board members, office staff, members of the Publications Committee, those who have volunteered to be helpful, the redactory staff, and the editors. I offer my confidence that the new Editor-in-Chief and editors will expand the influence of the Journal.

P. Michael Conn