

Editorial

In the Blink of an Eye . . .

At first glance, five years seems like a long time. One can obtain an American M.D. in less time or complete a combined residency in Anatomical Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. Under many circumstances, one can obtain a Ph.D. in the biological sciences or finish a post-doctoral experience. On the other hand, it can seem like no time at all. The last five years reveal that America's pop-culture idols carry on, American foreign policy is little altered, and NIH funding remains depressingly flat. Yet for us, five years marks the end of our stewardship of *The American Journal of Pathology*.

As our terms at the *AJP* conclude, we are struck by how rewarding the past five years have been. The accomplishments in this time are notable, from creating a Scientific Editor position to increasing Reviews and other editorial content, arranging articles into subcategories, publishing the "Power of Ten"—the monthly report of the most-read *AJP* articles, and adopting a formal Scientific Integrity Policy to disseminating *AJP* content through press releases, PubMed Central, and publish-ahead-of-print. With these changes we believe that we have improved the value of the *Journal* as well as enhanced the author experience. But beyond these efforts, we continue to believe that the greatest strength of the *AJP* is its commitment to unbiased peer review of the pathophysiologic mechanisms of disease. And just like the Coca-Cola Company, we alter this time-tested formula at our own peril.

The success of the *Journal's* initiatives manifests itself, in part, via the Impact Factor. Although the *AJP* experienced a drop in 2005 Impact Factor, together with many other pathology journals, the *AJP* received a 2006 Impact Factor of 5.917, placing it again in the first position for general pathology journals.¹ We believe this rebound is sustainable, as the *AJP* continues to be the most-frequently cited journal in the field, receiving over 32,000 citations in 2006.¹ Of note, since the Impact Factor lags from date of publication to calculation, the prolonged effects of our changes in the last five years (good and bad) will extend into the next few years. However, the Impact Factor (largely unchanged since its inception half a century ago) faces strong competition from several emerging metrics that reflect modern journal usage, for example, revised PageRank Score (Red Jasper) and Eigenfactor (University of Washington; <http://www.eigenfactor.org/>). Interestingly, when using these new methodologies, *AJP* fares extremely well among Pathology journals.

While Impact Factor is important to the perceived success of the *Journal*, our real success lies in publishing the strongest and most relevant science for our readers and the investigative pathology community as a whole. As a consequence of these lofty goals, we apologize to our colleagues who, perhaps more often than we would have wished, received rejection letters from us. As authors ourselves, we are not immune to the emotions such rejection brings. With this as a guide, we rendered our decisions with utmost care and respect, without bias, and with only the scientific rigor of the *Journal* in mind.

It has only been with the assistance of our colleagues that we have maintained our high publication standards. We are grateful to all of the Associate Editors who have served with us during our tenure, Drs. Jeffrey Cossman, Patricia D'Amore, Lora Ellenson, Philip Furmanski, Mary Hendrix, Setsuo Hirohashi, David Hockenbery, Dentscho Kerjaschki, Andrew Lackner, Kevin Moore, Brian Nickoloff, Yasunori Okada, Charles Parkos, Sem Phan, Kevin Roth, and Jeffery Saffitz. We extend a special thanks to Dr. Peter Ward for taking the lead as Special Associate Editor with responsibility for originating and implementing our high-profile review series Biological Perspectives. Together with our Editors, the Editorial Board represents the breadth of expertise and experience in pathobiology, and we appreciate their hard work and dedication to the *Journal*. We also reflect, with happiness, on the positive attributes the three Managing Editors have brought to the consistent quality of *AJP* over these five years as well as the Editorial team in Bethesda, MD, and at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

We are aware that we may be the last of a certain kind of editor. The American Society for Investigative Pathology, our Publisher, has for decades selected its editors from the leadership of American academic departments of Pathology. In a bold stroke, the ASIP selection committee has chosen a new Editor-in-Chief who is outside that mold. Dr. Michael P. Lisanti, who begins his term with the next issue, is Professor of Cancer Biology at Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University and Jefferson's Kimmel Cancer Center in Philadelphia, PA, and is among the Top 25 Most-Cited Scientists in Biology and Biochemistry (Thomson's Essential Science Indicators). He brings a depth of investigative experience and a breadth of research interests and knowledge in a variety of subject areas. Given that greater than 75% of our

submissions are from corresponding authors who are not from Pathology departments, Dr. Lisanti represents the diversity of our readers and authors. We wish him the very best of success as he steers this publication forward.

As for our time at the helm, it has been a pleasure and an honor to serve *The American Journal of Pathology*. We thank our authors, reviewers, and readers for having allowed us to serve you over this last half decade, and we trust you will continue to support the *Journal* by submitting your best scholarship for consideration, by agreeing to thoughtfully review submissions, and by continuing to read the *AJP*. Finally, we remain grateful to the efforts of the Editors, Editorial Board, and Editorial Office, as well

as the support of ASIP leadership. The last five years have been, for us, quite a ride!

Reference

1. Journal Citation Reports 4.0 Science Edition 2006 Thomson ISI Philadelphia

Jay M. McDonald, M.D.
Editor-in-Chief

Gene P. Siegal, M.D., Ph.D.
Senior Associate Editor