editorial

Ring out some old, ring in some new

A number of the readers of this Journal are already aware that a major change in its editorial management will occur on November 1. On that date, a new editor will take the helm, representing the fifth in the chain since the Journal was begun 13 years ago: Donald Zilversmit; Daniel Steinberg; E. H. Ahrens, Jr.–Peter Woodford; Maurice Rapport–Lewis Gidez; and now, Richard Havel–Lewis Gidez. The Journal, its readers, and contributors are indeed fortunate in having Richard Havel undertake this task. In doing so, he will be completing an interesting and important experiment in journal operation that began, almost inadvertently, about three years ago. I will describe this experiment, but first I want to introduce our new editor. Dick Havel was selected as the unanimous choice of a search committee composed of representatives of the member societies of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology. The incumbent and executive editors, the President (Dr. Ahrens) of Lipid Research, Inc., the present owner of the Journal, and the Director of the Office of Editorial and Information Services for FASEB (Dr. Karl F. Heumann) also met with the search committee.

Havel is one of the increasingly rare and remarkable people that make search committees feel both wise and astute, since the appreciation of his service, experience, and talent expand in direct proportion to the effort one makes to examine them. He is at present Professor of Medicine at the University of California School of Medicine and Director of the Specialized Center of Research on Arteriosclerosis. His scientific contributions over the past 20 years have brought him a high degree of international recognition. Among these contributions, reported in over 85 scientific publications, are the development of quantitative techniques for the separation of plasma lipoproteins in man, elucidation of the role of lipoprotein lipase in metabolism of chylomicrons, studies of the interplay between the sympathetic nervous system and metabolism of free fatty acids, identification of the lipoprotein lipase deficiency in idiopathic hyperlipemia, development of quantitative methods revealing that inadequate triglyceride removal is the major defect in most hypertriglyceridemias, and discovery of the activation of lipoprotein lipase by a specific glycopeptide derived from serum lipoproteins. This list could well be continued, but I hesitate to enlarge it as I may already have offended Dick Havel's innate modesty. Among his colleagues, to whom one may look for the most definitive judgments, Havel's abilities receive even greater acclaim—his intellectual excitement, superb communication, recognition of the efforts of others, and uncompromising honesty are all deeply appreciated.

Dick Havel is already heavily involved in editorial duties for the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, the *American Journal of Physiology*, and the *Journal of Applied Physiology*, and he has in the past served on the editorial boards of both our Journal and *Metabolism*. As he rises to the challenge of this new position, I can only express the hope that his wife, Ginny, and their four children will be indulgent toward his willingness to share his limited time with them in order to perform this added service to the community of lipid researchers.

Let me return to the experiment referred to above. Most, if not all, students of the processes of growth and development, whether in organisms or institutions, recognize the essential role that turnover can play in providing the vitality for forward movement. The problem, of course, is how to effect this turnover without significant interruption in the flow of effort—in order to maintain our service to contributors and readers without diminution in quality or kinetics. I believe Dr. Ahrens, my predecessor, introduced the important changes in editorial functions that made our experiment possible. The first of these was the appointment of an executive editor; the second was the appointment of a group of associate editors. In retrospect, these are the "materials and methods" of our experiment. With the onset of my term as editor, an unusual situation developed. For the first time, the Editor and Executive Editor were geographically separated by a distance of about seven miles, measured from Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center to either Rockefeller University or the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Such physical separations have a disturbing effect on communication, and when the distance reaches a certain length, like the focusing of a camera, its effect becomes maximal. The experiment—and I will not claim such foresight as to say it was carefully planned—was to see whether this geographical

barrier would create any serious obstacles to coordinating the efforts of the Editor and the Executive Editor. If it did, then methods could be sought for reducing the distance, since seven miles was still within manageable limits; if it did not, then the distance might be extended without limit. I believe the results have been remarkable. Otherwise, I suppose I would not be writing this piece telling you about them.

The Journal and its contributors owe most of this success to the superb qualifications, capability, and interest of our Executive Editor, Dr. Lewis Gidez. He has, during the past three years, handled the Journal operations with consummate skill and with minimal assistance, leaving me to concentrate my attention on the activities of the Editorial Committee. I thus felt I was in a position to assure Dr. Havel that despite a scaling up of the distance by a factor of 400 there was an excellent basis for believing that the continuity of the Journal operation could be preserved without interruption.

The successful completion of this experiment, now the responsibility of Dr. Havel, provides an exciting prospect for the Journal's future, and, I believe, it also offers something novel in the annals of Journal operation. It will mean that the Editor and his Editorial Committee can be located in any center that has the requisite talent. It will mean that lipid researchers in different areas of the country will have the opportunity to identify with the Journal (as *our* Journal, not *their* Journal) in a way that geographical separation makes impossible. It will mean that fresh blood, fresh brain, and fresh heart will be available to sustain and enlarge the Journal's growth and service. I see two problems, neither of them particularly serious, that need to be solved in the new arrangement, and one major benefit. One problem is the increase in communication time that will arise from an increased dependence on the U.S. mail service. This increase will be small, and Dr. Havel already has some new procedures in mind to minimize this difficulty. I trust that you, our readers and contributors, will try to be patient during the initial period. The second problem is caused by the time difference between the East and West Coasts, which makes telephone communication awkward, since it severely narrows the working time slot. The major benefit of this arrangement is that we will not need to disturb our relatively new lines of communication, namely that between the home office in New York and the redactional service in Washington, D.C., a channel established only within the past two years (with the assumption of the role of publisher of our Journal by FASEB).

I am exceedingly optimistic about this turn of events, about the Journal's good fortune in having Dr. Havel as its Editor, about our ability to answer an old criticism about inadequate West Coast representation on the Editorial Board, and, perhaps immodestly, about this formulation and participation in a journalistic experiment that may serve to mark my term in office.

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EDITOR