

A New Editor Takes the Helm

This past week, we read an article forecasting the demise of scientific journals as we know them today, and predicting that ten, or at most fifteen, years from now computerized information systems will have completely displaced print and paper for the recording and dissemination of technical reports and research findings.

That article was not the first one we read along that line. In fact, it was just the latest of many such articles that have made similar predictions over the past twenty years or more. And, of course, had the initial forecasts of results and timing been accurate, neither this journal nor its many companion research periodicals would be appearing in printed format (so-called "hard copy") today.

So we must view such sweeping prognostications with an appropriate air of skepticism.

On the other hand, we also recall similar forecasts being made less than twenty years ago with regard to conventional office typewriters, both manual and electric. And, lo and behold, this very editorial is being composed today on a computerized word processor complete with video screen, disc storage, and a whole array of modern electronic hardware. Hence, this second experience simply confirms the adage that, with regard to the future, precious little can be said with any certainty.

Nevertheless, regardless of how our information systems may be automated, and regardless of whatever novel devices may be developed for the storage and transmittal of that information, human judgment, human decisions, and human selection will remain just as important and necessary in determining what qualifies as good research deserving of publication twenty years from now as today. Consequently, the talents and expertise of a knowledgeable, trained scientist-editor will be just as important as ever before in the research journal publication process.

All of which brings us to the purpose of this editorial.

The *Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences* has had the particular good fortune to have the sharp blue pencil, the perceptive watchful eye, and, yes, even the devoted loving care, of a highly dedicated and competent editor ever since this writer relinquished the position in December 1973. Mary Hudson Ferguson, Ph.D., had previously served with distinction as assistant editor, and subsequently as associate editor, from the time she joined the American

Pharmaceutical Association staff in January, 1967. Having amply demonstrated that she could handle the editorship, it was with complete confidence that the full editorship was then entrusted to her almost nine years ago.

And over the years, numerous authors and an equally numerous group of reviewers developed well-deserved respect and appreciation for the obvious interest and efforts she devoted to the *Journal* as a whole as well as to each and every manuscript submitted to it for publication consideration. Through her efforts and professional contribution, we believe that a very good journal was made even much better, and that it achieved a new high level of national and international recognition as a first-rate research-oriented publication.

For personal and family reasons, Dr. Ferguson decided about a year ago to take early retirement. It was with great reluctance that the Association and its Board of Trustees acceded to her wishes and accepted her resignation. Her associates on staff, as well as the many professional friends she made over the years in her work on the *Journal*, were saddened to learn of her impending departure. All, however, wish her the best in her decision and hope for her personal happiness.

And now a new chapter has begun in the life of the *Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences*. Effective November 1, Sharon G. Boots, Ph.D., took over the reins from Dr. Ferguson. In succeeding to the editorship, Dr. Boots continues in the scientific mold that the APhA established for the *Journal's* editors when it was initially founded over seventy years ago. Drawing on her background, it is her intention to maintain and extend the tradition of high scientific quality that has been the *Journal's* hallmark over the years. Moreover, she has the training and experience to enable her to achieve that goal.

We are pleased, therefore, to welcome Dr. Boots as the new editor, and to introduce her to the *Journal's* readership.

And to her we offer the old naval officer's greeting of "Welcome aboard!"

—EDWARD G. FELDMANN
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