

Foreword

The *Tenth International Symposium on Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Analysis* (PBA '99), was held from May 9–12 in the Renaissance Washington DC Hotel in Washington, DC. After the conferences organized in Orlando (1997) and Brussels (1998) this was another example of a well-organized and successful meeting, during which the special event was a delicious dinner and a few hours of 'no risk' gambling at *An Evening at Monte Carlo*. During this evening it was possible to choose roulette, craps, blackjack or other games of chance to gamble 'safely' with the 50 000 PBA dollars that were provided.

Seven years after independence was declared in Philadelphia, the northern and southern states finally agreed on a site for the nation's permanent capital — right between the two regions, on land ceded by Maryland and Virginia. A visit to Washington and a swing through the surrounding state gave the participants the possibility to compare the business-like North with the more leisurely South and to find out if Philadelphia is as earnest as its reputation or Virginia as stately as its old plantation-days image? What about Washington itself? In a moment of irritation, President John F. Kennedy once exclaimed that the capital had all the charm of a northern city and the efficiency of a southern town!

It is, however, impossible to mistake this city for anything but the capital of a great republic. Everything about it smacks of government. Monuments and ministries abound, but the architecture leans more to the temples of ancient Greece and Rome than the palaces and cathedrals of the European monarchies, and the government buildings are set in a green and pleasant landscape.

The Symposium was organized by the International Association for Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Analysis under the chairmanship of

Professor Irving Wainer (Georgetown University, Washington, DC). In addition to the social programme there was a nicely balanced scientific programme consisting of oral presentations, poster presentations, 1-day and half-day short courses, and technology spotlight luncheons. Topics highlighted during this meeting were the electrically driven separations, sample preparation techniques, LC-MS/MS, method validation and transfer, physical characterization of pharmaceutical solids, molecular imprinting, systematic LC method development, LC-NMR, instrument validation and chiral separations, genomics on drug discovery and development, combinatorial chemistry, microseparations and in vivo and in vitro drug metabolism. The enthusiasm of the participants was clearly visible in the discussion sessions on 'Miniaturization in Analytical Chemistry: The Way of the Future or Simply a Passing Fad?' and 'Cassette Dosing: Fact or Fiction?'

It is my privilege, as one of the Editors of the *Journal of Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Analysis*, to publish the papers presented at the Washington meeting and we hope that the next meeting in this series, which will be in Basel (Switzerland), in the year 2000, will again lead to many stimulating discussions and offer an opportunity to welcome many of our international friends and colleagues.

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