

## EDITORIAL

# Who's on first?

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**M**y cytopathology training experience was perhaps different from most of yours in that no 'double heading' existed, ie, the usual situation whereby the mentor and the apprentice both peer through the oculars of a common microscope to view in unison the cells of interest. Rather, in my world, each player had his/her own scope. The attending pathologist would examine the slide, render an opinion and pass it to me, the baffled apprentice. Often, I extemporaneously expounded on what I saw rather than presenting a diagnosis. I was rebuffed continuously and finally surrendered to the realization that I never would be able to grasp the pebbles from the master's hand when he turned to me and said, 'I see what you see, but you do not see what I see!' That ego-crushing pronouncement was certainly true then, and probably is still true today. It is, in part, the explanation for why I am not an especially good cytopathologist, even though I continue to contribute to the peer-review literature in that field, although under the direct guidance of true experts.<sup>1–2</sup>

I share this story because you, dear readers, are the victims of perhaps a similar slight-of-hand. This issue of the *Laboratory Investigation* (January 2009) is modestly different from the last month's issue. Most obvious is the revised masthead announcing the new editorial team with many old and some new names sprinkled among the editorial board members, but more about that later. For the more attentive, you will note the changes in the front plate cover. Working with the Nature Publishing Group, I along with the Senior Associate and Managing Editors have modified the cover, so that the monthly featured illustration now fills the entire page. We also emphasize our relationship with the publisher at the top of the page and with our 'owner,' United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology (USCAP), clearly and boldly splayed across the base. Like many other leading scientific journals, such as *PNAS*,

*JNCI*, *JBC*, we proudly highlight the 'LI' as the newest moniker for *Laboratory Investigation*.

Additional changes include a new conflict of interest disclaimer for reviewers and notifications for all authors as to the fate of their manuscripts. Still other changes are in various stages of implementation. None of these changes, however, are what I alluded to in the opening paragraphs. Rather, it is to the previous Editor-in-Chief, Dr James Crawford, and his executive team whom, by remaining furiously loyal to the success of the journal, we owe this change hidden in plain sight. Last year, after being offered the LI Editor-in-Chief position by the USCAP selection committee, he and I began a dialogue on the best way to transit the operation from Gainesville to Birmingham. Our chief desire was to retain Dr Catherine Ketcham as the Managing Editor. Her willingness to remain in the position lifted a huge burden off both from Jim's and my shoulders. Next, with the support of USCAP, I hired Martha Simmons, who was instrumental in the smooth running of the local editorial office for the *American Journal of Pathology* to take on similar responsibilities for LI. Working intimately with Dr Anthony Yachnis and Dr Jerrold Turner, we were able to transit and merge the operation. The Birmingham team has taken on all of the new manuscripts since July 2008, whereas the Gainesville group gently, but thoroughly, cleaned out the backlog.

I am especially grateful to Jim for his willingness to stay on as one of the 'new' Associate Editors, overseeing the 'Pathology in Focus' series, and to the Florida Senior Associate Editors for their willingness to accept positions on the editorial board. Dr Brian Rubin has been promoted from the Section Editor to the Senior Associate Editor, focusing on the very popular 'Inside Lab Invest' and 'Nature.com/pathology' sections. All these have proven to be exceedingly well-received features that I am delighted to be able to continue. Also key to this transparent transition has been the

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appointment of my colleague from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Dr Robert Hardy, who serves as my right and left hands in the day-to-day operations. Over the first 6 months, the new Associate Editors have performed a wonderful job of selecting the best papers in experimental pathology and shepherding them rapidly to the finish line with no one the wiser to the fact that a new team was running the show. It is certainly the time for them to be credited on the masthead for all of the hard work that they have already accomplished.

It is typical for the incoming editors in the inaugural editorial to talk about their perceived vision for the Journal, and I want to conclude with some brief comments about this topic. William F Bynum, Professor Emeritus of the History of Medicine, University College, London, wrote a short piece on the 'History of the Journal Nature'.<sup>3</sup> In it, he refers to the landmark work of Raymond Dart on *Australopithecus africanus* (published in the *Nature* (1925)) and states '...journals present science in the making, not science completely made'. We can strongly relate to this truism when reviewers kill good science with endless requests for supporting documentation and experiments to rule out any and all possible alternative explanations for the supporting data. This is balanced against our wanting authors to be right and wanting them to rapidly report novel discoveries that will advance our understanding of the pathophysiology of disease. Physicians, perhaps, carry a special burden because studies performed by them, be they basic, translational or clinical, are typically tied back to humans with real diseases, and the dictum '*primum non nocere* (first, do no harm)' always comes into play. This is not to say that we are not interested in maintaining

our 'top ten' status. In fact, in this country, LI is usually ranked as the second in general experimental pathology journals, and in the entire English language world, it is ranked as third. However LI is, and should be, more than that. We want the membership of USCAP along with our national and international readers and authors to consider LI as one of the first journals to send their best works. In doing so, it will allow us to continue to build a quality reputation as a prolific launching pad for both techniques and models, which have proven their worth experimentally and, for the best in advances in the pathophysiology of disease.

The masthead of LI has now been modestly revised to state the following: the prime mission of '*Laboratory Investigation*', a journal of USCAP, is to publish original manuscripts and review articles in the broad area of translational and basic research, as they are related to experimental pathology. Manuscripts dealing with research relevant to human clinical disease are given high priority along with those that explore the mechanism and etiology of disease processes.

We look forward to participating with you in this adventure over the next decade.

1. Jhala N, Siegal GP, Jhala D. Large clear cytoplasmic vacuolation: An under-recognized cytologic clue to distinguish solid pseudopapillary neoplasms of the pancreas from pancreatic endocrine neoplasms on fine-needle aspiration. *Cancer Cytopathol* 2008;114:249–254.
2. Eltoun IA, Eloubeidi MA, Chheng DC, *et al*. Cytologic grade independently predicts survival of patients with pancreatic adenocarcinoma. *Am J Clin Pathol* 2005;124:697–707.
3. Bynum WF. Mankind's place in Nature: the Gale-Brimble years. *History of the Journal Nature*, doi:10.1038/nature06259.