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/THE FIRST WORD

Envoi, or A Night at the Oscars

At some point, *Bio/Technology* will have to editorialize on the Clinton Administration's much-ballyhooed and much-dreaded healthcare reform plan, which was leaked (with a fire hose) two days before our deadline. As with so many things, it is difficult to tell what the 250-page blueprint actually means. Too much depends on the details of the implementation and, indeed, the personalities of the implementers.

Plans for bureaucratic mechanisms for determining "appropriate pricing," for example, could too easily degenerate into a *realpolitik* nightmare, especially when the Department of Health and Human Services can make approvals contingent on manufacturers supplying detailed cost information—something that no drug-maker I've ever heard of is extremely happy to do.

And how broad will the standards be? It is clear to us that more money spent on more drugs (a bad thing, supposedly) means much less money spent on surgery, hospital stays, home care, and lost productivity of family members who have to stay home to give care (a good and humane thing, we think). Which yardstick will be used to measure costs?

As I say, some day *Bio/Technology* will have to tackle these topics. But not today. Today our concerns are more parochial.

The time has come for me to hand over the editorship of *Bio/Technology* to someone else. With the next issue, Susan Hassler moves to the top of the masthead; with that issue, I shall settle in among the contributing editors. Susan has been managing editor here for going on two years. She came to us from the Rockefeller University's Neurosciences Institute where she was editor of their publications program. She is a veteran of the New York Academy of Science's *The Sciences*. She is, moreover, a soothing presence in this deadline-driven world, and an unflinching advocate of the highest editorial standards.

I had planned to do something melodramatic at this juncture. It has been a heady experience, to hold this pulpit for a decade during which my congregation has shaped a great new force into a potent tool. You, our readers, have unleashed a torrent of new understanding, a Great Flood that has reshaped landscapes of the mind, of society, of the economy. The occasion, I thought, demanded some statement as epic as your undertaking. I considered taking leave of my book the way Prospero took leave of *his*: "I'll break my staff, / Bury it certain fathoms in the earth, / And deeper than did ever plummet sound / I'll drown my book."

But I'm sure the staff wouldn't *like* being broken, and anyway this farewell is much less final. It is a milestone, though, and I would like to thank you, the readers, for the most rewarding years of my career. And, in tedious Oscars style, I would like to add my thanks to the people who taught me so much and helped me so much over the past ten years. To all the members of the Scientific Advisory Board—especially the current and outgoing chairmen, Leroy Hood and George Poste—who kept us honest. To everyone, past and present, who shared this masthead—the advertising, production, and circulation staffs, and of course the editors—Susan, Harvey Bialy, John Hodgson, B.J. Spalding, Stephen Edgington, Jennifer Van Brunt, Pamela Knight, Mark Ratner, Arthur Klausner, and Tazewell Wilson. To our contributors, Bernard Dixon, Jeff Fox, Russ Hoyle, and Joe Alper. To the art directors who have labored to prod our prose into some coherent shape on the page—Lou Pippo, Edna Thomas, Dennis Ahlgrim, and Dorothy Schloerb. To the roster of amazingly talented assistants we have had over the years—Mark Goodstein, Kirsty Barlow, Claire Corcoran, Megan Lukas, Christine Punzo, Beth Harris, Christin Ciresi, Carrie Schneider. To Marion Delaney, Jim Skowrenski, and Ed Valis, with whom I have worked side-by-side since the beginning. To Andy Sutherland, Ray Barker, and Gary Rekstad, for whom I worked. To the partners who have made our conferences so rewarding, especially to William J. Whelan and Sandra Black of the Miami Winter Symposium and Stelios Papadopoulos of PaineWebber. To those who will never forgive me for omitting their names from this list, because they clearly deserve to be here.

Thanks to you all.

—DOUGLAS K. MCCORMICK