

## EDITORIAL



## The Journal of Perinatology: the way it was

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*Journal of Perinatology* (2021) 41:2697; <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41372-021-01257-6>

It was not until 1975 that neonatal/perinatal medicine as a subspecialty was recognized. However, we know that the care of the newborn infant was described much earlier by Soranus (A.D. 98–138) of Ephesus who wrote the first definitive treatise of the care of the newborn infant. In 1975, 355 physicians were certified as the first neonatologists in the USA.

In 1978, the neonatologists in California formed the California Perinatal Association. Recruitment of other healthcare providers with an inter-disciplinary approach was initiated to improve perinatal healthcare in California. We believed that as we progressed both in academic and non-academic neonatology that it was necessary to produce a Journal dedicated to perinatal/neonatal medicine. Thus, the Journal of the California Perinatal Association was born in the spring of 1982. Jeffrey J. Pomerance and I were co-editors and realized that in order to appreciate the present we needed to embrace the lessons of the past. Our early editorials dealt with the “Fragmentation of Integrated Neonatal Intensive Care”, “Children’s Rights”, “Medical Malpractice” and “Perinatal Computerization: Benefits and Risks”.

In those early days with few submitted manuscripts, we solicited original articles, case reports, and book reviews in order to fill the pages of the journal. Our principles included the need for peer review and objective decisions regarding acceptance, acceptance with revision, or rejection. I must admit that our acceptance rate was quite high. The Board of Directors of the California Perinatal Association served as our Editorial Board. In soliciting manuscripts we often called authors who produced abstracts at the academic meetings. We had hoped that this “kinder, gentler, approach” (ala George W.H. Bush) would result in a larger number of submitted manuscripts.

I remember sitting in my den with Jeff Pomerance word smithing the manuscripts. This was a laborious task and oftentimes it took 6–9 months (or even more) from submission to publication. However, we only published two issues a year for several years and then progressed to the current monthly journal. A long the way there were several Festschriften and Supplements which complimented the scope of the Journal. There was no internet in those days and “snail mail” was truly “escargotolian”.

In 1980, the Journal of the California Perinatal Association added an “icon” in neonatology, Dr. Louis Gluck as another co-editor. At the same time, the Journal changed its name to the Journal of Perinatology to widen its national and soon to include an international scope. A long the way we became the official journal of the National Perinatal Association and the Perinatal Section of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The production of the Journal was accomplished with one editorial assistant (Sandy Skelley) who is still an active “ingredient” in the mix. The number of manuscripts increased exponentially and the Board of Directors believed that a more academic editorial office was necessary for our continued growth. Fortunately, Ned Lawson, one of our associate editors, volunteered John Hopkins as our new editorial home and Ned became the Editor-in-Chief in 2000.

From the first issue of the Journal in 1982 until the present, the content of the Journal has always “felt the pulse” of all issues in perinatal/neonatal medicine. The success of any publication depends upon the quality and the peer review of the material submitted. We now deal with the “impact factor” in rating the overall quality of our publication.

Over the past 40 years, I have progressed from Co-Editor to Editor-in-Chief and now Editor-in-Chief Emeritus. What does the term “Emeritus” mean? The etymology of the word is from the Latin, “emereri” which means to earn one’s discharge by service. In today’s world, this word is added to an individual’s formal title before retirement. A former member of the editorial board of the journal (John Hartline) reminded me years ago that in his view “emeritus” meant “ready to go”.

To quote my 8-year-old grandson Jacob, when asked if he was “ready to go”, he replied “not yet”.

Barbra Streisand in her wonderful song, “The Way We Were” sums things up lyrically. Take a moment and listen to her interpretation. It truly reflects the principles concerning us when we established the Journal.

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**COMPETING INTERESTS**

The author declares no competing interests.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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