

Editorial

Change and Constancy, 2002

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This issue marks not only the beginning of the Journal's 23rd year of publication, but also—for only the second time in those 23 years—a change to new editorial leadership. I am extremely pleased to report that Dr. Barry Farr, Professor of Medicine and Hospital Epidemiologist at the University of Virginia, has accepted appointment as Editor and will have the pleasure and responsibility of guiding the Journal from this point forward.

Dr. Farr not only is a renowned hospital epidemiologist, he is a frequent contributor to these pages who is known to delight in the play of words and the works of literature, all traits that will stand him in good stead and help to ensure that for him, as for me, the burdens of his duties are more than offset by their pleasures. Those pleasures, indeed, have been exceptional, not least among them the good fortune to work with outstanding managing editors (especially including Susan Cantrell in the Nashville office and Shirley Strunk at SLACK Incorporated) and a dedicated corps of editors and reviewers. I could go on at length with my thanks, and would, but regular readers might find it unseemly, recalling my having already done so in my December 2000 editorial.¹

That prior editorial¹ touched three main themes: my appreciation for the dedication and support of all those who have worked to make *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology* the premier journal in its field; the history and present status of the Journal; and the need for continued active support of the Journal. The importance of the latter issue was reflected in that earlier editorial's title, "Help Wanted." Please do not think that the arrival of Dr. Farr satisfies that plea; to the contrary, it intensifies it. Dr. Farr must now begin a task that is substantially more challenging than the one I had to take on 9 years ago. In the intervening period, the Journal has doubled its content and now attracts four times as many submissions requiring editorial and outside review. Nearly all submissions now are Original Articles, and more than 50% come from outside the United States. This dramatic increase in editorial workload can only be managed with a commensurate

increase in active support from you, the dedicated readership, from whom we draw our editorial board and cadre of reviewers.

Susan tells me that when she began as managing editor, she typically would have to contact perhaps a half-dozen reviewers to find two who would review a given paper. During 2001, she had to contact as many as 30 persons per manuscript to accomplish the same task. I understand how complicated all our lives have become, and that changes in academia and medicine constrain our ability to volunteer, but your Journal will decline if this trend is not reversed. Please try not only to serve as reviewers yourselves, but also to recommend to the editorial office as reviewers your promising young faculty and senior trainees.

Dr. Farr will be particularly needful of your contributions this year, as his skills have been recognized in yet another way: he is the 2002 President of our sponsoring organization, the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America. The burdens imposed by this dual responsibility have played no small part in the decision to move the editorial office functions for the interim to the home of our publisher, SLACK Incorporated, rather than directly to Dr. Farr's institution. As always, please check the masthead for the correct contact information for the Journal.

Nine years ago, my predecessor and our Founding Editor, Dr. Richard Wenzel, spoke of "Our Journal - A New Era"² and I wrote of "Change and Constancy,"³ as I do again now. The sentiments expressed then are fully applicable now: the editorial team has changed and the editorial office moved, but the Journal far transcends editors and offices. As long as it continues to receive your scholarly and editorial support, it will provide the stimulation, leadership, and strength that have marked it since its founding.

REFERENCES

1. Decker MD. Help wanted. *Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol* 2000;21:757-759.
2. Wenzel RP. Our journal - a new era. *Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol* 1993;14:12-13.
3. Decker MD. Change and constancy. *Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol* 1993;14:14.

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