

Editor's Notes

Thank You and Farewell

By Stephen Jackson, M.D., Editor



This is my “farewell” editorial for your *Bulletin* and concludes my serving as editor for these past 15 years. As one looks back on the history of *Bulletin* editors, it is noteworthy that Dr. Gil Kinyon served with excellence for an extended time, as did Dr. Art McGowan, under whose leadership and mentorship I served as an assistant editor. When Dr. McGowan retired from his distinguished and innovative editorship in 1997, Dr. Kent Garman and I assumed his position on a shared basis. Soon thereafter, Kent asked me to assume full responsibility. Since then I have tried to remain faithful to the *Bulletin*’s mission to communicate, educate, illuminate and stimulate, all pointed toward enhancing and advancing the specialty of anesthesiology.

Over time, I have been given the opportunity to shape the content, eclectic character, focus, and even size and shape of the *Bulletin* in a manner that I believed would best serve to inform CSA members about issues that are pertinent to the viability of our specialty and practice. Indeed, as the *Bulletin* historically had been the CSA’s sole vehicle for communication with its membership, and continued to function as such for the initial decade of my editorship, I tried to enhance its mission by engaging, in some small way, each CSA member. Yes, we added “Laughing Gas” humorous prose and cartoons, “Tips From the Top,” the arts and humanities in medicine, medical ethics, environmental health, physician health and well-being, continuing medical education programs, front (and even back) cover art and photography, and just about any eclectic material that I hoped might capture the fancy of our readers. But we also continued with the traditional reports and commentary by a broad spectrum of CSA’s leadership, legislative and practice affairs by Bill Barnaby and Bill Jr. and Dave Willet, history of our specialty (especially in California), book reviews, letters to the editor, and capsules of informative state and national news.

Key to our success, I believe, was bolstering all that with a myriad of “one of a kind, offbeat” articles ranging from how to make a slide whistle from a syringe; to interviews with the anesthesiologists who captured “The Amazing Race,” won the U.S. Figure Skating Championship, served as a physician to the 2002 Winter Olympics, scaled the summits of the highest mountains on all seven continents, and published research as an etymologist on crickets; to

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commentaries by literary icons such as Ayn Rand, Atul Gawande, Mark Twain and Stephen Jay Gould; to reports on anesthesiologists who anesthetized Koko the gorilla and other exotic zoo animals; to chapters from books authored by prominent physicians such as Jerome Groopman and Naomi Remen; to other “scoops” and stories not to be found in any other publication. Of note, just as we have printed selected material from sources extraneous to the CSA, we also granted permission to other medical publications to reprint many articles from our *Bulletin*.

In the end, it always has been the *content* of the *Bulletin* that has been its distinguishing virtue and strength. The articles provided in-depth and well-developed analyses of important issues facing our specialty for those interested in delving beneath the surface. Each and every piece was deliberated, dissected, debated, scrutinized, reworked and reviewed by a diligent and responsible editorial board. All the while, a reasonable degree of editorial independence and prerogative were honored.

And, for those with an economic bent, amateur salesmen as we were, we nonetheless attracted a goodly amount of unobtrusive advertisements so as to make the *Bulletin*, in significant degree, self-sustaining.

In truth, this “job” has been a most delightful, stimulating and challenging opportunity for me, and one for which I am deeply grateful to the CSA. I believe that I have been able to hone and expand the scope and quality of my writing and editing skills from the realm of a research academician to that of the arts and humanities. I also more fully developed my nascent skills of mentoring, encouraging, suggesting, persevering, patiently coaxing, and even “nudging” to a level that I personally never had even considered. And, just as I have attempted to instill a gestalt of excellence, camaraderie and collegiality within CSA’s journalistic community, so have I benefitted and grown from my association with my co-editors. Indeed, I treasure my editorship as having been another blessing and gift—even another long-standing love—in my life.

During the past decade there has been, appropriately, considerable change and growth within the CSA as an organization, and especially in its potential to communicate with our members electronically as well as through the storied medium of print. Perhaps now, at this crossroads of organizational and even generational transition, it is the proper time to consider possible shifts in the role, nature and character of the *Bulletin*. As the philosopher Heraclitus once is alleged to have declared (no, he didn’t have Facebook, Twitter or CSA Online First), “You can never step into the same river twice.” Yes, gentle souls, change is inevitable, and the *Bulletin* is subject to that truism. And to that point, I wish my successor, Dr. Michael Champeau, the fullest of success and joy as he takes over the helm.

Assuredly, it is difficult even for me to comprehend that for this past decade and a half, every single day of mine has, at least somewhat, been consumed or involved with the *next Bulletin*. As such, it admittedly is with mixed emotions that I am, in fact, “retiring,” and with this I bid you all good health and “farewell.”



*Every now and then, we invite guest authors to pontificate or opine on a subject near and dear to them. In this Bulletin, we are pleased to have Samuel Clemens offer his commentary on serving as an editor, as he briefly (one week, as a substitute) did in the early part of the 1860s for the Virginia City Territorial Enterprise (for the most part, he was employed as a reporter). This “Guest Editorial” is excerpted from *Roughing It*, a book of semi-autobiographical travel literature written by Mark Twain—Samuel Clemens first used his famous pen name in February 1863 in Virginia City. *Roughing It* follows his travels and adventures in this gold and silver prospecting/mining region of the Wild West during 1861–1867. Should you wish to read about Mark Twain and his opinions on medicine as it was practiced in the later part of the nineteenth century, then I would suggest to you the scholarly and entertaining book *Mark Twain and Medicine* by K. Patrick Ober, M.D., professor of internal medicine and associate dean for education at Wake Forest University School of Medicine. —Stephen Jackson, M.D.*

On Being an Editor

By Mark Twain

Nobody, except he has tried it, knows what it is to be an editor. It is easy to scribble local rubbish, with the facts all before you; it is easy to clip selections from other papers; it is easy to string out a correspondence from any locality; but it is unspeakable hardship to write editorials. Subjects are the trouble—the dreary lack of them, I mean. Every day, it is a drag, drag—think, and worry and suffer—all the world is a dull blank, and yet the editorial columns must be filled. Only give the editor a subject, and his work is done—it is no trouble to write it up; but fancy how you would feel if you had to pump your brains dry every day in the week, fifty-two weeks in the year. It makes one low-spirited simply to think of it. The matter that each editor of a daily paper in America writes in the course of a year would fill from four to eight



bulky volumes like this book! Fancy what a library an editor's work would make, after twenty or thirty years' service. Yet people often marvel that Dickens, Scott, Bulwer, Dumas, etc., have been able to produce so many books. If these authors had wrought as voluminously as newspaper editors do, the result would be some thing to marvel at, indeed. How editors can continue this tremendous labor, this exhausting consumption of brain fiber (for their work is creative, and not a mere mechanical laying-up of facts, like reporting), day after day and year after year, is incomprehensible. Preachers take two months' holiday in midsummer, for they find that to produce two sermons a week is wearing, in the long run. In truth it must be so, and is so; and therefore, how an editor can take from ten to twenty texts and build upon them from ten to twenty painstaking editorials a week and keep it up all the year round, is farther beyond comprehension than ever. Ever since I survived my week as editor I have found at least one pleasure in any newspaper that comes to my hand; it is in admiring the long columns of editorial, and wondering to myself how in the mischief he did it!



Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

I want to share some of my reflections upon reading Dr. Sibert's opinions in the Spring/Summer 2011 issue of the *CSA Bulletin*. I do commend her on her courage and leadership in tackling contemporary issues that deserve discussion. As both she and I received our board certification in 1987, perhaps I may represent the admittedly smaller "control" group of physicians who have chosen to work part-time, which I have done for 25 years, sharing a full-time equivalent with another female anesthesiologist.

A major reason that many physicians work excessively long hours is economic, some of which may reflect the need to repay large debts accrued by the time of completion of their medical education. Perhaps society needs to make medical education less expensive, more affordable and less impoverishing. Perhaps we will see duty-hour restrictions in private practice as patient safety becomes increasingly scrutinized.

Part-time anesthesiologists allow greater flexibility in scheduling for others as well as themselves. When an anesthesiologist is ill or has other problems, who is likely to be available for backup? As for the younger generation of physicians not wanting to work to the point of sleep deprivation and physical/mental fatigue, perhaps this is the savvy and safe answer to much of the prevailing personal and professional dysfunction and even impairment of many physicians.

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Dr. Sibert writes about being present for her kids even though she worked long and hard hours, and she is to be commended on fulfilling that priority in her personal life. However, having just lost my mother to Alzheimer's and my sister to breast cancer, I had challenging off-duty responsibilities in addition to child-rearing. Because you are a physician does not automatically abdicate you from your other responsibilities, especially in the "sandwich" generation of having to care for parents as well as children.

I further want to say that the *Bulletin* is an absolutely fantastic publication, with outstanding writing in a broadly interesting and highly pertinent range of articles. Indeed, I believe that the *Bulletin* is the most valuable and enjoyable anesthesiology reading that I do.

Danielle Reicher, M.D.



To the Editor:

I congratulate you on your excellent and courageous article on "A Societal Pot Hole in Need of Repair" in the Winter 2012 issue. It was useful factual information, and nonpartisan: Neither the devil nor the saints were conjured up. Seldom does one find an article on this subject as well balanced, and therein you provided a true service. Over the years you have been a superb editor, and I admire that you can write as well as you do, time after time. As a retired Clinical Professor Emeritus at UCSF, I have a deep appreciation of our specialty, my colleagues and the CSA.

Clair Steven Weenig, M.D.



To the Editor:

Steve, this is a good opportunity to thank you for an absolutely wonderful job as Editor of our *Bulletin*. I know that it is a labor of love because you do it so well. I certainly enjoyed your last piece on pot as it was beautifully done and a reflection of my own thoughts about this troublesome problem. Thanks again for your years of service to our specialty.

John Hattox, M.D.