
Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

It is said that you can never understand what someone else is going through until you have walked around in his shoes for awhile. The past two months have bred in me an enormous respect for the work which Emily Taylor and Mark Kurusz have performed to produce this journal, and the great service they have done for AmSECT. Their tasks, seemingly invisible to most of the society's members, have combined to produce one of the most visible and representative aspects of AmSECT—an informative, professional reflection of the Society and its growth. I am gaining an understanding of the problems inherent in directing busy volunteers to produce bits and pieces of such a large undertaking, and looking for ways to solve those problems. My commitment as Editor must be directed toward two major goals: maintaining professionalism and increasing the volume of quality articles for publication. Several programs and ideas are being implemented to actualize these goals.

The professionalism of the Journal is reflected in both appearance and quality of content. The addition of an abstract for each article will provide a convenience for the reader and a solidification of thought for the author. It will also render the Journal more acceptable for inclusion in various indexes for medical journals. The printing of dates of article submission and acceptance will lend credibility and allow our contributing authors to receive recognition in the community for being on the forefront with new ideas or practices. Workshops for Associate and Manuscript Editors will help them become more knowledgeable about statistics, style, research methodology, and data presentation so that they can most effectively work with authors to create the best papers possible. Emphasis on scrutiny of galley proofs by authors, and communicating our needs to the publisher will prevent awkwardly printed articles and unnecessary technical

errors. All of these programs will provide a high standard of quality for what goes into the Journal.

The problem of lack of copy, which has plagued our editorial staff for years, is not so immediately delineated and solved. The responsibility for the professionalism lies with the editorial staff, but the responsibility for providing information to print, to share with one another, lies with the members of the Society. All we can really do is find new ways to encourage you, the members and subscribers, to participate in this process of exchanging ideas. Some of our plans include the addition of new sections to the Journal—a “How I Do It” section for descriptions of innovations in safety or technique; a Manufacturers’ Forum for purely unbiased, scientific reporting by manufacturers of their research; a survey section to include articles which contain valuable information on trends and practices obtained by survey. We hope to encourage new authors by offering more assistance in writing articles. We have expanded the staff to include three Manuscript Editors, relieving the excessive load on Mark Kurusz, and allowing more time for working with authors. If you have some good data or a case study but hesitate to try writing it up, let us know. We will help. We will push to get all proceedings articles published before next year’s convention, with the vital help of our hard-working Associate Editors. And, we would like to encourage more conversation in the Journal—more give and take through Letters to the Editor. Surely, something you have read here at some time has struck a responsive chord in you. Put it on paper and share it with us. This is what the Journal needs—it is what AmSECT needs—participation and communication, with a minimum of politics and rancor and a maximum of thoughtfulness and enthusiasm. I look forward to hearing from you.

Nancy Achorn
Editor