

Commentary From Family Medicine's New Editor

A New Era

John Saultz, MD

Family Medicine was first published by STFM as a newsletter under the editorship of Lynn Carmichael, MD, in 1979, the same year that I began my family medicine residency. When our journal was accepted for listing in Index Medicus under the leadership of its second editor, John Frey, MD, in 1987, I was in my first year as a new residency director at Oregon Health and Science University. Like many of you, I have spent my entire career reading each issue of this journal. It has been a constant companion and an old friend.

Examined over the long term, a scholarly journal can be viewed as the written diary of an intellectual community, organized by a particular set of cultural rules. Reading over *Family Medicine's* past issues, one can track our progress, cringe at our mistakes, and fondly remember our triumphs. Taken collectively, the past issues reflect what we were thinking about at a point in time. You can feel the excitement of each new idea. You can mourn over opportunities lost. Lately, I've been reading some of the papers we were publishing during the debates about the Clinton health plan in the early 1990s. Perhaps past is prologue, but many of the ideas are oddly familiar. In those days, we were trying to

reform graduate medical education. We were looking to "managed care plans" as a way to better reimburse family physicians. In 1992, Barry Weiss, MD, became *Family Medicine's* third editor. Eighteen years is a long time, long enough for health reform to die and be reborn, long enough for us to forget some important lessons, and, perhaps, to remember others too well.

So it is not without historic irony that I now take over as *Family Medicine's* fourth editor as we again are debating health reform. I am honored to be entrusted with this responsibility. My charge in accepting the position is to preserve in the journal those attributes that matter most to our community while inventing new ways to capture the best ideas of our discipline. I am delighted that Chip Mainous, PhD, has agreed to serve as deputy editor. We will be planning the journal's future together. We will work to ensure that the journal publishes papers of the highest quality, and we will seek to expand its readership and broaden its impact. But we must also continue to support and develop young authors, encourage mentorship, and promote intellectual discourse among those who teach and study family medicine. If we do our jobs well, I think our readers will look forward to each new edition, just as many of us have done for 30 years. We promise to encourage and inspire and along the way, we will not hesitate to frustrate and provoke if doing so can make the journal and the discipline it serves better.

Over the next few months, we will be sharing more of our plans

for the journal. First will be a complete revision of the Instructions for Authors, reflecting our desire to increase the number of peer-reviewed works of scholarship published in each edition. These new Instructions for Authors will be used for all submissions arriving at the journal after May 1, 2010. *Family Medicine* will begin a process of electronic manuscript submission in April 2010, and we will need to populate this new editorial management system with an updated database of reviewers. So, we will have a call for new reviewers as soon as the new system is up and running. Finally, you will begin to see significant changes in the journal's layout. By the beginning of 2011, *Family Medicine* will look very different.

Our discipline owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to Barry Weiss, MD, his editorial assistant Tracey Corbett, and his associate editors Mindy Smith, MD, MS, and Chip Mainous, PhD, and former longtime associate editor Mike Magill, MD. Together, they have established *Family Medicine* as the premier American journal for family medicine educators. In successful organizations, each new generation builds on the foundation of the preceding one. Barry has built an outstanding journal on the foundation laid by Lynn and John. It now falls to all of us to take things to the next level. Let's get to work!

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From the Department of Family Medicine, Oregon Health and Science University.

Correspondence: Address correspondence to Dr Saultz, Oregon Health and Science University, Department of Family Medicine, 3181 SW Sam Jackson Park Road, Mail Code FM, Portland, OR 97239-3098. 503-494-2356. Fax: 503-494-4496. saultz@ohsu.edu.