

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Recently, several events have reminded me of how lucky I am to have a second family. Of course at home, I have my wife, daughter, granddaughter, and two sisters, not to mention the lovely Miss Annie, my golden. However, I am also honored to be in the increasingly inclusive “lymphoma family.” I recently returned from Kauai, Hawaii, where I presented at the Pan Pacific Lymphoma Conference, organized by Julie Vose and Jim Armitage. Over a delightful yet educational 3 and a half days, the audience was exposed to a wonderful review of the state of the art in the lymphomas, including debates on topics such as “Is Follicular Lymphoma a Curable Lymphoma?”, where I trounced Gilles Salles of Lyon (of course I was defending the “NO!” position); “Should Subtypes of Advanced Stage DLBCL Be Treated Differently?”, between Rich Fisher and John Leonard; and the ever-popular topic of “Localized Hodgkin Lymphoma—Should Any Patient Receive Radiation Therapy?” between Achy Yahalom and Joe Connors (present in PowerPoint only, unfortunately). The setting was idyllic, at the beautiful Hyatt resort, and the meeting casual, with many participants bringing their spouses, partners, and children (a fee was required for compliance to the regulations). The atmosphere facilitated communication among the attendees, who were mostly from clinical practice, and the faculty, who were from coast to coast across the United States, as well as Italy, Germany, France, Switzerland, and elsewhere around the globe. Upon our return, there was a flurry of e-mails from the faculty, thanking our hosts not only for a splendid meeting, but, more notably—as initially conveyed by Volker Diehl—for a happy family reunion. It will be held again next year in Maui, and I encourage our readers to consider attending.

The second episode was a telephone call I received today from a colleague on the west coast. She was calling regarding the daughter of a friend who was attending college at my alma mater in Charlottesville (not too far from the epicenter of the recent earthquake). The 18-year-old was experiencing an exacerbation of her recurrent pulmonary issues and not benefitting from the care delivered by student health. Could I help? All it took was a call to Mike Williams at the University of Virginia to instantly hook her up with the appropriate physician who would see her within a couple of days. The student was hospitalized for a presumed fungal

pneumonia. My west coast colleague is eternally grateful. Hi-yo Silver, away.

The point is that, despite the fact that the universe is actually expanding on a continual basis, our world is an ever-shrinking place. I travel a lot and, by more than Brownian motion, repeatedly bump into the same people at symposia, advisory boards, international meetings, and the like. They have become more than colleagues or even friends, they are, indeed, my traveling family. When we meet, we are genuinely glad to see each other. Our conversations go beyond the science and the data, but include “how are” our families? We inquire about the children and grandchildren, the health of the spouse. We ask about what is going on with “our interests”? Thus, not only do we exchange slides and ideas, but also genuine concern for the welfare of the others. It isn’t the competition or insanity portrayed on the God-awful television doctor shows (whenever I see a trailer for *HOUSE*, I want to throw a large, heavy object through the screen). Unfortunately, there are some in our profession who are a bit too self-interested. But, for the rest of us, there is a sense that we are in this together, and we help each other personally as well as professionally. We want each other to succeed, and to figure out the best way to do things for our patients. But, whilst we are certainly friends when at home, when on the road, we serve as each others’ shield from the loneliness of the long-distance traveler. I never hesitate to grant a favor and have no qualms about asking for one.

So, wherever I go in my numerous journeys, I know that I will usually find a friendly face, someone I have known for years. I am quite grateful, most of all to Rich and George, but also to Pier Luigi, Kensei, Andrew, Randy, Kanti, Volker, Franco, and the so many others whose friendship makes being away from home less onerous because we are all in this together, we are all part of the “family.”

Until next month . . .

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce D. Cheson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bruce D. Cheson, MD