

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



'T is the coming of ASH and all through the hall, the sessions are picked, good abstracts in all. The hotel and restaurants all booked with care, the slides and the talks all ready (or nearly almost there).

I am writing this month's letter with anticipation the day before I leave for ASH. I always look forward to this meeting, at least as much as any other during the year. Yet, I suspect there will be something dreadfully missing, and this will be the ghost of ASH present. We shall see how it differs from the ghost of ASH past. A whole lot of new data will be presented on benign hematology and the hematologic malignancies, several of which are practice changing (and which I will be reviewing in an upcoming supplement). However, the economy and other factors will possibly keep attendance down. Social events have virtually become extinct, and I expect that the exhibits will suffer in attendance as a consequence of the lack of tchotchkes distributed at the booths, as was so apparent at ASCO. Will the companies still spend large dollar amounts for their exhibitions just to stare at each other for 3 days?

So, if you were unable to make it to N'Orleans, we shall bring it home to you. What we will not be able to bring home is the food and the ambience: the rush of the crowds, the greetings from all the people you don't recognize.

One source of information you actually have to pick up and read (and, yes you can find it online as well) is this month's issue of *Clinical Advances in Hematology & Oncology*. In our columns, Drs. Peyvandi and Palla describe the use of human fibrinogen concentrates for treatment of blood disorders, Dr. Jabbour discusses dose escalation of imatinib, and Dr. Kemeny outlines the role of local liver therapy

for hepatic metastases from colorectal cancer. In addition, Dr. Thompson describes new agents that target the anti-apoptotic signaling pathway, and Dr. Hutson reviews selected presentations from the 2009 Kidney Cancer Association meeting. This month's feature article examines venous thromboembolism in patients with monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance.

After getting your fill of the free bottles of water, candies, cookies, and frozen yogurt in the ASH exhibit hall, we hope you had a chance to visit the one booth that was a must-visit, Millennium Medical Publishing, the folks that give you *Clinical Advances in Hematology & Oncology*. We are always happy to hear your suggestions, criticisms, and, preferably, compliments about our journal, about to enter into its 8th year. Jacquelyn Matos, our new Senior Managing Editor, can be reached at jrm@clinicaladvances.com.

What happens with health care, new PhRMA guidelines and other regulations, and patent protection for biologics will certainly shape the ghost of ASH future. Will reimbursement be reduced to a level preventing physicians from taking time off from work to attend scientific meetings? Let's hope that Old Saint Nick and the Great Hannuk can bring peace and harmony amongst the various parties so that the meeting can continue to be all it can be for everyone.

Until next month...

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Bruce D. Cheson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bruce D. Cheson, MD