

A Thankful End of the Year



It is time for my (almost) annual end-of-the-year epistle, when I acknowledge the people, places, and things that have enhanced my life over the past 12 months. At the top of the list, of course, are my wife and daughter, who put up with my working and traveling. Also at the top are my 2 delightful granddaughters; on Saturday night I get to attend the first piano recital of a 5-year-old. Of course there is Annie Rose, my splendid canine, who is the epitome of unconditional love and always makes me smile. After these many years, I am grateful that I have become increasingly close with my 2 sisters, one on each coast. And then, there are my friends who, although I see them far too infrequently, remain so important to me.

I need to express appreciation to my publishers and to my editor Devon, who have kept this periodical going through challenging times, and to our readers, who are the reason we continue. I really have to thank the many pharmaceutical companies, such as Pharmacyclics/Janssen, AbbVie, Gilead, Roche/Genentech, Acerta, and others, who are helping to save the lives of so many patients. I never stop thinking about all my patients from years ago who might still be alive if we had then the revolutionary medications that are currently available. Now, if the pharmaceutical companies would only lower the prices on their drugs...

I have to thank Niels from Astellas who, despite direct orders from central headquarters, arranged for us to spend a memorable day in Jerusalem during my recent visit to Israel. I felt quite safe with my 6'7" bodyguard at my back. As for inanimate objects, I am devoted to my trusty iPhone 6. Not only does my phone keep me on time and in communication all over the globe, it tells me through its Health app if I am taking an adequate number of steps and climbing a requisite number of stairs each day. So, if I seem to be walking far out of my way or shuffling a bit, it is merely to exceed the essential 10,000 steps per day. And gracias to the Peter Michael Winery for producing one of my new favorites, Petite Petit, as well as a number of other fun wines.

How could I not thank the current bevy of presidential candidates who keep us so thoroughly entertained, from "The Donald" to "feel-the-burn" Bernie? The timing of Jon Stewart's departure from the air was unfortunate, but I'm much obliged to HBO for giving us a second season of *Last Week Tonight* with John Oliver. Not to be missed is his YouTube video on marketing to doctors, including the role of pharmaceutical sales reps. I can't remember when I laughed so hard at something this spot on. To be fair, I also take exception to the statement by Patrice A. Harris, chair-elect of the American Medical Association's Board of Trustees, that direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription drugs and medical devices should be banned because it "inflates demand for new and more expensive drugs." By that logic, we should ban advertising by Mercedes-Benz because it encourages the purchase of unnecessarily expensive automobiles.

The 9th Annual Lymphoma Research Ride that took place in September was a huge success, with the most bike riders and teams ever registered. Outstanding fund-raising efforts put us over the \$4 million cumulative mark; I am pleased to see so many dollars available to support Lymphoma Research Foundation programs, advocacy activities, and research. Most of the credit for the ride's success goes to Mark Watson of the Lymphoma Research Foundation and to our organizing committee, namely Lisa, Gary, and my wife, all of whom have been instrumental to the success of the event. I especially need to express our gratitude to all of the lymphoma patients who come out to ride and continue to inspire us.

As the years collect on and within me, I would like to thank all of those who still believe that I serve a useful function and remind me why I do what I do, and, thus, I will continue to do so as long as I am able to make a difference.

A wonderful holiday season to all...

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

Bruce D. Cheson, MD