

# President's Column

Amy B. Hahn, PhD, D(ABHI)

Dear ASHI Friends and Colleagues,

It is an honor and a privilege to write this, my first President's Column, for the *ASHI Quarterly*. It wasn't too many years ago that I was the Editor of this fine publication. It's hard to believe that, at the time, it was our main way of communicating directly with the membership. Now we have blast e-mails and have recently started our e-newsletter, "In the Groove," to get information to you in between issues of the *Quarterly*. But I still get excited when the *Quarterly* arrives in my mailbox, and I hope you do too. It's always full of great articles, meeting highlights and important updates you need to know to keep your lab accredited.

I'm writing this only a few days after returning home from the annual meeting in New Orleans. It was an amazing success and I hope you were all there to hear the great speakers and see all the posters and exhibitors. The meeting space was great, and Marcelo Fernandez-Viña and his Program Planning Committee put together a superb schedule of plenary lectures, symposia and workshop sessions. Save the dates of October 8-12 for next year's ASHI Annual Meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico. I know Geof Land already has some great ideas for what will surely be a fantastic meeting in a unique location.

Because a large portion of our membership was not at the annual business meeting (which is really a shame because it is a great way to hear what the committees are up to and have your voice heard regarding ASHI's business and finances), I thought I would share the transcript of my speech with you:

*I would like to thank each and every one of you for having the confidence in me to elect me as your president. It is a tremendous responsibility and I do not take it lightly.*

*I would also like to thank Geof Land for his incredible work this past year. He's been a truly wonderful leader for our Society and I've learned so much from him. Thank you for your guidance!*

*A special thanks also to our amazing and tireless VPO John Hart and to the other Board members who are rotating off this year.*

*Thanks to the AH staff for all of their help this past year, and in advance for the coming year. They keep everything running smoothly and are willing to try new things, like the app for this year's meeting.*

*Many years ago, the first time I was on the Board (or maybe it was still council then), we had a strategic planning session and one of our*

*I still get excited when the Quarterly arrives in my mailbox, and I hope you do, too. It's always full of great articles, meeting highlights and important updates you need to know to keep your lab accredited.*

*"big audacious goals" was to be recognized as the scientific leader in histocompatibility and immunogenetics and to have a "seat at the table." People scoffed. They said we would never be one of the big players in transplantation...and yet, here we are! In the last edition of the ASHI e-newsletter, I wrote an article about all of the tables we have sat at since the last annual meeting. There were 28, and most were by invitation. Twenty eight! Our National Clinical Affairs, Scientific Affairs, External Affairs and CPT Committees are to be commended for this great achievement.*

*Our Membership Committee is also to be commended for nearly reaching our goal of 1,400 members by the end of this year. Kudos to our PT Committee for enhancing our great PT program and designing a user-friendly software system, and to the ARB for getting CMS-deemed status for another five years. And just wait until you see the new software that the ARB will be launching soon! It will make laboratory accreditation so much easier for the laboratories, inspectors and commissioners.*

*The DTRC has made a number of process improvements for our directors-in-training this year, QAS got all of the standards and guidance in order and added a few more, and Bylaws cleaned out the dusty attic of old, forgotten policies and got them into procedures. Education and Publications have been working together to create a really innovative laboratory manual that will tie in to instructional modules in ASHI-U. And thanks to all of our other committees who have worked so hard this year.*

*When I stop to think about how much we've accomplished and how much we have in the pipeline right now, I am just so proud of our*

Society. We've gained a huge amount of momentum and we need to keep it going. In June we will be having a strategic planning session to set goals for the next three years. If you have ideas about what new "big audacious goals" we should strive for, talk to me or any of the other Board members. If you have ideas about services that would be useful to our members, tell us! But don't be surprised if we ask you to help us put your idea into action.

We could not have accomplished as much as we have without the support of our many members who have volunteered their time and energy. Those of you who chose to attend this business meeting instead of walking around the French Quarter are, for the most part, the people already doing the bulk of the volunteering. So instead of asking you to do even more, I will encourage you to enlist the other people in your laboratories. If they're not ASHI members, tell them about what a great organization it is. If they already are, convince them to be an ARB inspector, to get involved with a committee, or to write a module for ASHI-U or an article for the Quarterly. Let's get more people involved in this great organization!

So that is the message I will leave you with. Please get involved...let's work together to make our Society even better!



Amy B. Hahn, PhD, D(ABHI)

*When I stop to think about how much we've accomplished and how much we have in the pipeline right now, I am just so proud of our Society. We've gained a huge amount of momentum and we need to keep it going.*

### In Memoriam: Ralph Steinman

*January 14, 1943 – September 30, 2011*

The American Society of Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics and all immunologists mourn the passing of Ralph M. Steinman on Sept. 30, 2011, at the age of 68.

Just three days after his death, Dr. Steinman, a Professor of Immunology at New York's Rockefeller University, was named a co-winner of the 2011 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. Dr. Steinman shared the Nobel Prize with Bruce A. Beutler, a Professor of Immunology and Genetics, at the Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, Calif., and Jules A. Hoffmann, a researcher at The University of Strasburg, who discovered the dendritic cell receptors that are triggered by bacteria and viruses.

Dr. Steinman was credited with the discovery of the role of dendritic cells in the initiation of the immune response to pathogens and cancers avoiding horror autotoxicus, i.e., the destruction by the organism of its own cells. Dr. Steinman's strong belief in the potential therapeutic value of dendritic cells in immunotherapy of cancer was translated in his relatively long survival (four years) after receiving dendritic-cell-immunotherapy of his own design.

### In Memoriam: Baruj Benacerraf

*October 29, 1920 – August 2, 2011*

The American Society of Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics and all immunologists around the world mourn the passing of Baruj Benacerraf on Aug. 2, 2011, at the age of 90.

In 1980, Dr. Benacerraf received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, sharing it with Jean Dausset and George D. Snell. He was credited with the definition of immune response (Ir) genes as MHC-linked genes that control T cell immune responses. He postulated that the existence of the broadly polymorphic MHC system determines an individual's specific responsiveness or non-responsiveness (suppression) to various pathogenic agents, thus securing the survival of the species during epidemics.