

EDITORIAL

Lessons in Hope

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A couple of months ago, my 85-year old father passed away. He had a heart attack, developed pneumonia, and significant blockage of the cerebral aqueduct, probably brought on by invasive cancer that had spread throughout his body. Through all of this, and through the many trials in his life, he maintained a wonderfully positive attitude—always answering the “how are you doing” queries with a self-convincing “fantastic” answer—even when he could feel the cancer eating away inside. He and my mother were consummate optimists and spent their whole lives working hard for a better tomorrow for their children, grandchildren, and humanity in general. Despite their infirmities, they made it to the polls this past November and proudly cast their ballots for “change” and “hope” for the future. I miss my father dearly, but his lessons of hope will always remain close at heart.

I lean on these lessons more right now than ever before. Like too many Americans, I have seen the value of my retirement investments plummet to new lows. I sometimes feel like I am banging my head against the wall trying to garner funds so I can engage my students in hands-on, inquiry-based research. I worry about the job market for my son and daughter and for my students. It is hard to make sense (or cents) and to find a “silver lining” in an economy in which it literally costs about a dime to make a nickel and a nickel to make a dime! Nonetheless, I am hopeful, and though the job ahead will be monumental, I am grateful we have an intelligent, bold new leader who will help guide our country through the rough waters ahead.

I am also grateful to my FUN colleagues who impart hope for the next generation of neuroscientists. Your contributions to JUNE represent a plethora of new and innovative ideas to help in the education of our students. This issue is no exception—from laboratory simulations (SWIMMY and the digital microscope and a virtual EEG)--to the clever use of distorted images in a neuroscience lab--to new ways of involving students in a cost-saving, yet instructive exercise of building their own microdialysis probes—our contributors have, yet again, broadened our perspectives in pedagogy.

I am also thankful for the reviewers and editorial board members who contribute their time and talents to make each issue of JUNE a helpful tool for all of us. It is this strong network of support that keeps me hopeful that JUNE will not only survive, but actually thrive, in the hard times ahead. Although we have faced some setbacks, such as the rather extensive damage done by hackers this past year, I am confident that JUNE will continue to flourish—precisely because of the support engendered by such a

wonderful group of colleagues—who continue to hope and prepare for a better future for our students.

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