

N E R V A L ' s D I A R Y

Le voyageur enthousiaste observe...

*Grand Hyatt Hotel, Washington D.C.,
Sunday Sexuagesimae, 11 February, 1996*

The Second Winter Meeting of the Academy and the Demise of a Journal

The first week of December was selected originally for this convention in the 'Windy City' more than half a century ago in order to distract participants from other activities than dermatology, even from leaving the premises of the Palmer House. The Academy outgrew the biggest hotel east of the Mississippi, as it used to call itself. Convention centers had to be used and an alternation of sites, East/South/West was introduced sometime ago. Finally, after more than half a century since the foundation and after more than fifty meetings, it was decided by ballot to move the time of venue to February/March. By a hair's breadth, in time, we escaped one of the worst spells of cold and snow along the East Coast, and now can convene in mild weather in the Nation's capital. About 12,000 doctors, dependents and people from the pharmaceutical industry assemble from the four corners of the world making it a meeting busy and crowded as well as delightful as ever before in the preX-mas times. No other dermatological congress offers that many possibilities for personal contact during sessions, in the couloirs of the convention center and in the hotels around. Unfortunately, participation becomes more and more expensive and tax laws ever more stringent with regard to deductions, at least in Austria. Looking ahead to the 60-year anniversary of the Academy as well as to the turn of the century, one may hope that the board of directors will plan something special. Among this year's highlights were Luiz Diaz' and Vogelstein's award winning presentations on pemphigus foliaceus and colorectal cancer, respectively, and the incoming president's ethical message, '*The past is our future*'.

Fitzpatrick's Journal of Clinical Dermatology just made it for 2 years plus one issue in 1996. Too bad! What a pity! How much energy, thought, gusto and money has gone into this endeavor, not only by the Fitzes, father and son, but by so many more. To launch a new journal is risky, expensive, laborious and there are ever so many around competing for the shrinking pool of advertisers. A very difficult job indeed. Nevertheless, the Fitz Journal was elegant, innovative, humorous, not too thick – a delight for the reader. I just cannot believe it will stop. It is to be regretted and it is a loss for dermatology.

To name a journal after a living person is rare, at least in this century, and in dermatology. To the best of my knowledge this is the only one in this century being so named. It reflects vanity, sure, but are we not all subject to vanity? It needs the posture of T.B.F. to venture into something like that and this should be respected. After all, we have (had) *Virchow's Archives*, *Pflüger's Archives*, *Wittelshoefer's Weekly*, the oldest Viennese clinical weekly. So why not now, why not in dermatology?

A clear identification by name can never be a point of criticism: it requires tenacity not only vanity. T.B.F. should be applauded and I hope that some other form of the Fitz Journal will follow soon.