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SHEA News

THE SOCIETY FOR HEALTHCARE EPIDEMIOLOGY OF AMERICA

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ICHE Editor Michael Decker Passes the Torch to Barry Farr

Since this is the last page of the last issue of ICHE that will be edited by Dr. Michael Decker, it seems appropriate to look back to 9 years ago when ICHE's founder and first editor, Dick Wenzel, handed over the challenging and backbreaking task of editing ICHE.

In Michael's first year as editor, he stated that his long-term objective for the Journal was to increase the prestige and expand the influence of the Journal, and he outlined three strategies to achieve that goal: (1) increase the number and quality of original manuscripts, (2) build associations with other professional organizations and scientific meetings, and (3) increase the relevance and utility of the Journal to hospital epidemiologists.

During the 9 years that Michael has been editor of ICHE, the Journal has grown tremendously under his leadership, particularly the non-US submissions. According to the 1992 annual report, there was a total of 81 submissions for 1991/92, 16% of which were from countries outside the United States. In contrast, since 1999, approximately 50% of manuscripts submitted to ICHE have originated from countries outside the United States. In 2001, a total of 285 manuscripts were submitted to ICHE.

ICHE continues to maintain

its lead over its competitors, the *American Journal of Infection Control* and the *Journal of Hospital Infection*, in total citations, the impact factor, and the immediacy index in the *Journal Citation Reports*.

Susan Cantrell, managing editor of ICHE, says: "Michael is a really, really good hands-on editor, and it's largely because he has had two passions where ICHE is concerned: the quality of the material published in the Journal, which translated into serious time invested in each paper, and developing ICHE into an internationally respected publication. The combination of those two passions has resulted in ICHE's being elevated to the status of the world's leading journal in its field."

According to others, Michael's passion for the Journal was contagious: "Michael has been a dedicated leader of the journal, and the journal has increased in prestige under his leadership. He had a talent for finding willing colleagues who shared his vision for the Journal and commitment to its quality."—*Gina Pugliese, RN, MS, Editor of ICHE's Medical News*

"Michael Decker has been a tireless advocate for ICHE and SHEA, and has been personally involved in the improvement and sharpening of every manuscript published. His criti-

cal eye has been directly responsible for the marked improvement in submissions and the impact of ICHE. I owe him my personal thanks for his assistance with my submissions, as well as the thanks of the Society for countless hours of dedicated service. He has my personal best wishes in his new position at Aventis-Pasteur. SHEA and ICHE will miss him dearly."—*Dale Gerding, MD, Past President of SHEA*

Michael did all of this work not only, and not even primarily, in his office at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, but in cars, trains, airplanes, lounges, and hotels around the world. Being connected day and night, he truly made use of the World Wide Web and e-mail on his ever-present laptop computer.

The great guy he is, Michael seemed to carry the giant load like a feather, but we all know that he invested vast amounts of his work and private time into running the Journal. Michael said it has been an enormous privilege and honor for him to serve the Society as editor, but actually it is the Society who has enjoyed the enormous privilege and honor to have him serve us as such an excellent editor.

Still, much of this would not have been possible without the exceptional quality of the Journal staff, Susan Cantrell, managing editor, and Sara Wood, editorial assistant. The Society recognizes their excellent work and their efforts put forth toward a smooth transition.