

# “So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish”: an Editor’s Farewell

Ann Blair Kennedy, LMT, BCTMB, DrPH, Executive Editor/Editor-in-Chief, *IJTMB*

*University of South Carolina School of Medicine Greenville, Greenville, SC, USA*

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This editorial is a reflection on the tenure of the outgoing Executive Editor/Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Ann Blair Kennedy. The editorial reviews the initial goals and accomplishments that were initiated in 2016 through 2022.

In the fourth book in Douglas Adam’s *Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* series entitled “So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish”,<sup>(1)</sup> the dolphins of earth save humankind by transporting everyone and everything onto a new earth in a parallel dimension. The dolphins have also all disappeared from the new earth and leave behind the message: “So long, and thanks for all the fish.”<sup>(1)</sup> This phrase has now been adopted by many in wishing farewell. The phrase is also a way that could express gratitude, even though it might not be as heartfelt as some may wish. Goodbyes and transitions require reflection and mine, in this editorial, begins with a bit of humor, expresses a large magnitude of gratitude, and offers a review of the *IJTMB* accomplishments during my tenure as the Executive Editor/Editor-in-Chief.

With the humor accomplished in the title, I want to now take some time to express gratitude. First, I want to thank Dr. Albert Moraska, who is also stepping down from his editorial position. Dr. Moraska has served as the Research Section Editor since 2012, and has reviewed, edited, and ushered 127 manuscripts through the *IJTMB* review and publication processes. He has supported the editorial team and done incredible work during his time with the Journal. Albert, thank you for your service. You and your attention to scientific rigor, scientific writing, and publishing work that matters have made the *IJTMB* better and you will be missed. Next, I want to thank Dr. Amanda Baskwill, the incoming Executive Editor/Editor-in-Chief and former Education and Practice Section Editor. Dr. Baskwill began her role in

2017 and has ushered 30+ papers through our processes. Amanda has worked with countless authors and reviewers to help improve manuscripts and bring them to a publishable state. She has also been prolific in submitting her own research to the Journal and was a natural choice to step into the role of Executive Editor/Editor-in-Chief. Gratitude also must go to the Massage Therapy Foundation staff, Board of Trustees, and the Registered Massage Therapists Association of British Columbia. Thank you for all your support and faith in me and in supporting the Journal by keeping it open access with no publication fees for authors. The open access and no publication fees reduce the barriers for practitioners and others to be able read and publish excellent massage therapy research. Your support of the Journal is vital. The Journal could also not continue without the service and expertise provided by our peer reviewers. Your service and critiques of manuscripts may be unnoticed or unknown by many; however, without you the *IJTMB* could not continue. We thank you. Finally, I must thank the authors and the readers of the *IJTMB* articles. To the authors, thank you for trusting us to go through the review and publication process. To our readers, thank you for reading the articles and for helping to spread the word about the *IJTMB*.

Now for reflection on my time at the Journal. In August of 2016, I began my tenure as the Executive Editor and soon also took on the dual role of Editor-in-Chief. When I began in this position, we set forth four goals for the editorial team and the Journal. First, we wanted to increase the visibility of the Journal which might help with increasing submissions, citations of our published articles, and the number of potential peer reviewers. To this end, we established social media profiles for the *IJTMB* on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.<sup>(2)</sup> The Massage Therapy Foundation now

manages the social media accounts that allow us to maintain our dissemination to a wider audience than only those subscribed to the Journal. Next, we wanted to begin a writing mentor program for those manuscripts that included interesting ideas and science but needed some extra help to improve the “publishability” of the manuscripts.<sup>(3,4)</sup> This program has seen success for those authors who have been paired with a mentor, and brought forward more manuscripts for us to publish. I additionally wanted to work with the editorial team to improve our peer review process.<sup>(2)</sup> For the last several years we have made continual improvements to our process, with the goal of increasing the speed of publication whenever possible. This goal is always one that we continue to review and assess, looking improvements wherever possible. Finally, we wanted to find more ways to recognize and incentivize our peer review process.<sup>(5)</sup> Being a peer reviewer takes a significant amount of time to provide good and relevant feedback to the manuscript authors, and that time should be compensated in some way. For this, we instituted a proposal that was accepted and put into place, whereby peer reviewers could receive CEs for completing a review within the time limits proposed. Since 2017 when the program began, we have given out more than 300 CEs to peer reviewers.

I am happy to reflect that all those goals have been realized and continue to push the Journal forward. I am so thankful for the time I held in this position. The people involved have helped me grow as a professional, as an academic, and as a scientist. I cannot thank the Massage Therapy Foundation and the Board of Trustees enough for all their support over the years. A special

thanks here at the end must go out to Dr. Jerrilyn Cambron who was president of the MTF at the time of my appointment, and also a member of my dissertation committee and my friend. Thank you, Jerrilyn, for thinking I could do this job; your confidence in me helped me grow. So now, as my theater training requires, I will bow at my curtain call and say, with a hint of a smile, of course: “So long, and thanks for all the fish.”

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**Corresponding author:** Ann Blair Kennedy, LMT, BCTMB, DrPH, University of South Carolina School of Medicine Greenville, 701 Grove Road, Greenville, SC 29605, USA

**E-mail:** ExecEditor@IJTMB.org