

Like moving an old tree...

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As it can be derived from the consecutive numbering at a rate of one volume per year, the *Acta Anaesthesiologica Belgica* has to be founded around the time I was born. A majority of this long period, the anesthetic department of our colleagues in the Ghent University have functioned as the home-port for our journal. Although the efforts of different eminent colleagues during the first decades should not be forgotten, it can not be ignored that especially professor G. Rolly was one of the most important inspirors of our *Acta*. Thanks to his efforts our journal is cited meanwhile in several data-bases such as Medline and Embase. When he retired around the turn of the century, prof. L. Herregods took over the difficult task in an even more difficult time period. Difficult indeed, because there was not an overwhelming number of manuscripts presented for publication in a relatively less reputable journal. With only four issues per year, it was far from easy to maintain this trimestrial frequency, which was considered to be an absolute minimum to meet international standards. Difficulties were even experienced to collect a sufficient number of interesting articles from authors invited to present a lecture at the annual congress.

When prof. L Herregods took over the editorship from his former department head, it was an undeniable advantage that the journal could stay under the same roof as the last decades before. Between his clinical tasks, he managed to organise all correspondence, the composing of the subsequent issue, sponsoring issues... In fact he did all of this on his own. In addition it should not be forgotten that meanwhile during that period he also was president of the Belgian Society.

To make the journal more attractive several innovations were considered. As in our surrounding countries the problems with national journals were similar, it was suggested to create a new journal with our dutch or french colleagues. The purpose was to get higher on the international ranking. An alternative idea was also raised to proceed under the wings of the *European Journal of Anaesthesiology*. Because it was aimed at preserving our identity but also for logistic and linguistic reasons (as opposed to our neighbors, publications in *Acta* are in english only) discussions with other journals were not further continued.

Meanwhile progressively more manuscripts were submitted which enabled to increase the quality of the journal by valuable contributions. Authors were invited to submit review articles with respect to their field of interest and experience. Authors with award-winning studies were encouraged to publish these in our journal or write a review or state-of-the art article around their subject of interest.

Even during his last year of being the editor, prof. L. Herregods was still thinking about new ideas to improve the look, style and quality of the journal. Deadlines for reviewers have been significantly shortened while submissions by e-mail are highly recommended at the present time. Translations of the summaries in the different national languages has no longer been considered obligatory as it is hardly imaginable that readers will only read the summary in their favourite language.

By this way, the complete new editorial board wants to express its gratitude for the work done by our colleagues in Ghent making our journal to what it actually represents. This would not have been possible without the additional help of the other members of the Editorial committee and Advisory board, the sponsoring companies and last but not least all contributing authors.

Although an old tree should not be moved, it was found that it might be an improvement when both the secretariat of the Society and that of the journal would share the same location. It is not important whether this is in hospital, French or Dutch speaking, University, community or private, a rented house or whatever. The daily management has been taken over by one editor assisted by two colleagues found willing to spend some free time to improve the quality of the journal. In addition two enthusiastic secretaries will be of great additional help.

Despite an abundant quality of scientific information available by different ways today, the actual team is convinced that there is still a place and need for a journal such as the *Acta Anaesthesiologica Belgica*. On behalf of the editorial board, we promise to take good care of our journal during the next years to come and hope that our *Acta* will remain the national journal for north, middle and south.