

# From the President's Desk: At CAP '13, countless ways to connect

## Stanley J. Robboy

April 2013—Our 11th CAP annual meeting will open Oct. 13 in Orlando with a scientific plenary tied to this year's "dig deeper" track (13 courses) in endocrine pathology. Three renowned experts will present "Metabolic Syndrome: Can the Controversy Become Pathology's Opportunity?" and launch four days of outstanding education and networking.

The scientific plenary will open the education program of nearly 100 CME courses for board-certified and resident pathologists to be taught by a faculty of 148 distinguished experts at CAP '13. Nearly half of the courses will be new; 51 are popular repeats. More self-assessment modules than at past meetings will be offered (23), along with luncheon roundtables on selected topics. Seven supporting associations will cosponsor 16 courses, reflecting healthy multidisciplinary involvement.

The Spotlight reception speaker, Eric Topol, MD, is a practicing cardiologist whose book, *The Creative Destruction of Medicine: How the Digital Revolution Will Create Better Health Care*, was published last year. Dr. Topol, director of the Scripps Translational Science Institute and chief academic officer for Scripps Health, is editor-in-chief of Medscape Genomic Medicine.

In 2003, I served on the CAP's first National Meeting Planning Committee, chaired by then president-elect Mary Kass, MD. There was a handful of ground rules. The education had to be new, bright, and fresh. The content had to be immediately useful and relevant to the practicing board-certified pathologist. And the environment had to make it easy for our members to connect with one another.



The original keywords (learn, connect, lead) captured the initial vision: pathologist-driven education in an environment that fostered genuine engagement and a sense of community. With 11 years' experience, we have expanded on those keywords, adding: be visible, be ready, be competitive.

We purposefully chose a single-site setting for all activities. By "owning" the hotel, we could ensure easy and meaningful networking. A geographically compact venue would create opportunities for CAP members to easily mingle, meet, and talk about policy, advocacy issues, or what they were learning in the didactic sessions.

Terence J. Colgan, MD, who now chairs the CAP Curriculum Committee, believes that our national meeting stands out because we think inclusively about member interests and concerns. The curriculum, roundtables, receptions, town hall meeting, and informal encounters accommodate conversations about the many factors that affect our practices—not only medical and scientific but also regulatory, economic, practice, and medicolegal. This year, we will also introduce expanded tools and resources to illuminate practice pathways that research suggests hold the most promise for our specialty.

Special provisions to make newcomers feel welcome include a luncheon for first-time attendees. And a dedicated lounge for residents and new-in-practice pathologists encourages friendships, mentoring, and leadership development. One highlight, open to everyone but "owned" mostly by our residents, is the abstract competition.

Abstracts are judged by subject editors of the *Archives of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine*, who score submissions for final review by *Archives* editor Philip T. Cagle, MD. Dr. Cagle tells me that we received a record number of abstracts last year and published a record number (567). CAP junior members who serve as corresponding authors of accepted abstracts are eligible to receive cash prizes as part of the Top 5 Junior Member Abstract Program. The Top 5 Junior Member winners will also be acknowledged during the Spotlight event.

Another meeting highlight is the Future in Medicine awards program, a competition for high school students from the area where we meet. Local pathologists attend science fairs at schools close to our meeting site and select winners, who attend our meeting, exhibit their projects, and are presented at the Spotlight event.

Our staff is obsessive about continuous quality improvement; surveys cover everything from program quality to the schedule, plenaries, location, and exhibit area. And such CQI pays off. Our attendance has grown by about 10 percent every year, despite the economy. Last year, 1,371 practicing pathologists and residents attended CAP '12. The number of exhibitors has tripled since 2006.

I see the exhibit hall as an educational venue that keeps us up to date on new technologies and the exhibitors as our true partners. Bob McGonnagle, CAP TODAY publisher, has proved that to be true. For our first annual meeting, he identified "early adopters" who were willing to rent exhibit space with no evidence that we knew what we were doing. It was a huge success.□

Finally, I would like to share a short story about our CAP philosophy of "connect." When the CAP '03 planning committee first met, I shared recollections about how national and international meetings had enabled me to meet and remeet others who would become friends and even working partners.

That was how, some 30 years ago, I met Jan Baak, MD, PhD, then from Amsterdam and now from Stavanger, Norway. More encounters led us to work together on cervical dysplasia. Never did I imagine that these chance meetings would so profoundly affect my future scientific career.

Sometime around the year 2000, Jan suggested we consider a much larger project (endometrial precancer) in collaboration with a younger pathologist, George Mutter, MD, from Boston (who is presenting at CAP '13). Together, we joined our capacities with molecular pathology, computer-based morphometry, and experienced eyes. We teamed up to give our first postgraduate course on the subject at CAP '03. Our seminal paper was published in 2005, followed by a major review on the subject. And on Jan. 1, 2010, our new terminology, Endometrial Intraepithelial Neoplasia, officially entered the International Classification of Disease-9 (ICD-9) lexicon.

There are many choices for pathology or laboratory management education, but only one meeting focuses exclusively on the needs of board-certified pathologists and pathology residents. Ours is THE Pathologists' Meeting. It provides "take-home-and-use education" directly and immediately useful to those in practice, whether in the community setting or academia, and those training to enter practice. Most important, the CAP annual meeting brings us together in a setting most conducive to reconnecting with one another time and again.

By the time you read this, the program should be posted at [www.cap.org/cap13](http://www.cap.org/cap13). Register now. The best opportunities fill quickly. □

*Dr. Robboy welcomes communication from CAP members. Send your letters to him at [president@cap.org](mailto:president@cap.org).*