

# President's Report to the SEBM: Centennial Celebration and Exciting Times Ahead in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century



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I am deeply honored to start the second year of my two-year term as President of one of the oldest and most prestigious biomedical societies in America. The Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine (SEBM) recently celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary (2003) that highlighted a century of success in promoting biomedical research and its publica-

tion. This success has continued into our second centennial within the 21<sup>st</sup> century and been accompanied by significant evolution and change both within the SEBM and in the journal we publish. These changes reflect progress resulting from initiatives and actions taken by elected members of Council, Editors-in-Chief (EICs) of our journal, and the SEBM office. I want to underscore some aspects of our history, elaborate on recent changes made by the Society, and stress the directions in which the SEBM is headed.

Physician scientist Samuel James Meltzer, M.D. (1851–1920) founded the SEBM in New York City in 1903. The Society became a home for basic scientists and physicians in several disciplines who conducted biomedical research. It cultivated the careers of young and established scientists and promoted the dissemination of findings of biomedical investigation, primarily through the publication of the Society's multidisciplinary journal, *Proceedings of the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine* (PSEBM). From its beginning the SEBM promoted the integration of science and medicine.

The SEBM office moved several times within the city of New York during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, following the location of each new EIC of PSEBM. The journal originally published proceedings that were written at meetings prior to publishing original research articles that underwent peer review. The SEBM sponsored its first annual symposium at the 1978 FASEB meeting and started publishing these proceedings in PSEBM. In 1982, PSEBM started publishing minireviews, which immediately became very popular. The Society office moved to New Jersey in 2000. Much of the success of the SEBM and its journal for many years is due to the efforts of Felice O'Grady (Office Manager from 1971 until appointment as Executive Director in 1989) and Nancy E. Blake (Administrative and Editorial Assistant since 1982).

Significant positive change in the SEBM and its journal has occurred since the late 1990s under the leadership of Presidents Dale R. Romsos, Ph.D., (1997–1999); Robert H. Knopp, M.D. (1999–2001); Barbara Horwitz, Ph.D. (2001–2003); and Kenneth L. Barker, Ph.D. (2003–2005). Dr. Romsos motivated the changes to publishing online in 1999 and, with Publications Committee Chair, H. Rex Gaskins, Ph.D., self publishing in 2001 with the accompanying change in the journal's name to *Experimental Biology and Medicine* (EBM). These changes were made under the guidance of Andrzej Bartke, Ph.D., who was EIC at the time (1998–2002). The name change provided the journal better visibility and helped convey the fact that the journal published original research articles and not just proceedings of meetings.

We established the SEBM Endowment Fund in 2002. Under the leadership of Burton E. Sobel, M.D., President of the Board of Directors of the Endowment Fund and President-Elect of the SEBM, the fund currently has more than \$140,000, and we have set a goal to increase it to over \$1,000,000 in the next three years. It will assure us the financial means to continue support of ongoing programs such as the Young Investigator Awards, Best Paper Awards, and SEBM-sponsored symposia as well as the establishment of new programs outlined in a recent Task Force Report.

Dr. Barker presented his Task Force Report on *The Future of the SEBM: A Vision and Strategic Action Plan* at the Council/Business meeting in April of 2005. Council adopted many of the Objectives/Strategies in the Report and is addressing programs that include Membership Development and Retention, Mentoring Early Career Experimental and Biomedical Scientists for Success, Promotion of Cross-Disciplinary and Translational Research, Advocacy for the Importance of Hypothesis-Based Biomedical Research in the Advancement of Medicine, and the Financial Stability of the SEBM. These plans include some exciting changes that are taking place in EBM.

Dr. Romsos became EIC of EBM in 2002 and has set the stage for change in EBM that will be made by Steven R. Goodman, Ph.D., who starts his term as EIC in July of 2006. In addition to continuing to publish original research articles in a number of different scientific disciplines, EBM will be publishing multidisciplinary research that is both cross-disciplinary and translational. Through Dr. Goodman's vision and efforts, I have no doubt that EBM will become a premier journal in these fields. Dr. Goodman addresses his plans in the following article.