By the time you read this journal, we, shivering in the cold in the Northern Hemisphere, and you, enjoying the (envious) heat in the Southern Hemisphere, will be well into our respective holiday seasons, wherever we are.

It is my pleasure, on behalf of the Laser Therapy Editorial Team, to hope that for all our Laser Therapy readers, your festive season was suitably festive. Furthermore, the Team and I wish you and yours all the very best for 2018: may it be all you could wish for and more, and bring you every happiness and the best of health!

So once again, following along with the Oriental 12-animal zodiac, we leave the Year of the Cockerel and enter the Year of the Dog, at least we will officially do so for 2018 in the middle of February. If you were born in 1922, 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994 or 2006, (or on any 12-yearly cycle before 1922) then you are a Dog (although those born in 2006 are probably not reading Laser Therapy!). You share this year, amongst other notables, with Confucius, Sir Winston Churchill, Michael Jackson, Madonna and His Royal Highness, Prince William. The dog, the 11th of the 12 animals, is regarded as an auspicious animal. They have a transparent personality, and are very down to earth, following their earth elemental origins. In fact 2018 is an Earth Dog year. Dogs are warm, intelligent and generous ... sometimes too generous for their own good, and they have an inherent sense of duty. On the negative side, they can be over-sensitive, conservative, stubborn and emotional, and tend to be too protective of their family and friends. So if this is your year, enjoy it!

Travel Adventures: Caveat Peregrinator

As you will know, the 2017 Laser Florence took place in beautiful Florentine surroundings from November 9th to the 11th, and combined four major meetings in the one venue: the 29th edition of Laser Florence itself; the 22nd meeting, International Society for Laser Surgery and Medicine (ISLSM); the 4th meeting, World Federation of Societies for Laser Medicine and Surgery (WFSLMS); and the 7th meeting, International Phototherapy Association (IPTA). I will talk more about the results of the meeting later on in this Editorial. I had planned to attend, and duly turned up at Haneda Airport, clutching my trusty passport. Unfortunately unnoticed by myself but noticed by the check-in clerk, my passport had less than 3 months to run, and was therefore outside of the criteria for passports in the European Union member countries, such as Italy. I was therefore not allowed on the plane, despite my earnest entreaties. As I said above, caveat peregrinator ... let the traveller beware!! I was particularly disappointed as I had been given the singular honour of giving the Memorial Lecture to our dear friend, Professor Isaac Kaplan, during the Opening Ceremony. I was also planning on talking about the humanitarian work we had been doing with the Blood Saving Campaign (B-SaC), and on showcasing Laser Therapy as we rapidly expand. However, it was missing the chance to pay homage to Isaac that I regret most. I had planned to give a brief eulogy to his memory with a warm greeting to his wife Masha, followed by a reading of the very poem by Isaac for Laser Florence 10 years ago I quoted in my previous editorial. Sadly, it was not to be. So, I wrote to Professor Leonardo Longo, apologising profoundly for this sad event, and suggested that a small poem might be added from me, as follows:

"Dear friends, Leonardo and Patrizia:

“I'm sure you know it was such a blow
To me, not to fly to you.
To celebrate this meeting great
Together, with friendship true.

“Toshio Ohshiro MD PhD

EDITORIAL
But at least I had to try
To emulate our Isaac great,
Though to Florence I could not fly.

But for Isaac’s name, our eternal flame
Shall burn so clear and bright.
So let us all in this great hall
Remember him tonight!”

Needless to say, I have renewed my passport so this
will not happen again!

**Laser Florence: A Successful Conclusion!**

As I wrote above, we happily congratulate Professor
Leonardo Longo for successfully staging his 29th Laser
Florence last month. The business meetings for the
ISLSM, IPTA and WFSLMS were all held during Prof
Longo’s meeting, and participants were faced with a
dilemma. Under its Articles of Association and Bylaws,
the WFSLMS has to be held every 4 years, concurrently
with the ISLSM being run in that year. During the
meeting, no decision could be taken regarding the
2021 WFSLMS and ISLSM meeting, so the Federation
was rudderless. Fortunately, Professor Ming-Chien Kao
had already gone a long way to managing the prob-
lem, by offering to host the 2019 ISLSM and IPTA
meetings in Taiwan, aided and abetted by Professor
Chen Jen Chang who was attending Laser Florence
with Prof Kao’s mandate. It was therefore decided to
hold the next WFSLMS 2 years early in 2019. The prob-
lem was thus solved by Profs Kao and Chang, who will
work together to host the meetings in Taiwan in 2019.
Further details both of the Laser Florence meeting itself
and the business meetings, and of the proposed 2019
joint meetings, will be forthcoming, including a report
on the financial standing of the various societies. As I
have written before, the WFSLMS itself is fundless, but
is supported financially by the Japan-based Non Profit
Organisation (NPO)-WFSLMS.

**Laser Therapy: Electronic version Online or Hard
Copy? Request for Your Opinion**

Another point I have raised in previous Editorials is the
potential for moving *Laser Therapy* to an e-Journal
with a fully online electronic version. However, would
that necessarily mean the demise of the mailed-out
hard copy? In order to gauge what the feeling of you,
our faithful readers, might be, I would like to conduct
a brief questionnaire by email. We already support
ePublication Ahead of Print for outstanding papers
whose data should be disseminated as soon as possi-le, so the mechanism for shifting to an ejournal is
already partly in place. I would very much appreciate
hearing from you by email with your vote as to
whether we should move to a fully online version of
the journal, retain the current status quo with a hard
copy print edition, or run the two versions side by
side. When you make your decision, please bear in
mind that the cost of the paper on which the journal is
printed has rocketed over the past few years and con-
tinues to do so, and postal charges also show regular
increases for airmailing the journal out, even at printed
matter rates.

A second point to take into consideration is the
page count of the journal. With the increasing volume
of papers now coming in for consideration for inclu-
sion in *Laser Therapy*, the Editorial Team is faced with
da dilemma …. If we increase the page count to enable
timely publication of the papers we are receiving, or
alternatively look at 6 issues a year instead of 4, in
both cases a rise in the cost of producing the journal is
inevitable and this will mean that such an increase will
have to be passed on to you, the readers, in the form
of a higher subscription fee. One of the benefits in
favour of an ejournal is that the page count is not con-
cretely set because it is an ejournal in electronic format
which you as the reader can read online on your com-
puters or tablets, with the option to download and
print out your own hard copies of articles that you
want to read. I know that I prefer to be able to handle
hard copy on physical pages sometimes, to be able to
flip backwards and forwards through an interesting
article, check references and so on.

So please, dear readers, I am asking you kindly to take
a moment of your time and email me at laserther-
apy@jmll.co.jp and tell me what your opinion is:
ejurnal or hard copy, or both? If you would briefly
tell me why you have voted the way that you have, it
will help the Editorial Team to come to the correct
conclusion. Thank you in advance for your much
appreciated cooperation.

**Blood-Saving Campaign (B-SaC)**

I have written before about our humanitarian project,
the Blood-saving Campaign or B-SaC. At the 9th and
2002 meeting of the Asian-Pacific Association for Laser
Medicine and Surgery (APALMS) held in Thailand, we
debated and voted on the inception of the B-SaC
which has since then slowly gained international
recognition. However, we would dearly like to see
even more international interest and participation in
the B-SaC’s goals. Basically, we promote the use of the
laser wherever possible rather than incision and exci-
sion with the conventional scalpel to achieve as
haemostatic a field as possible, thereby cutting down intraoperative blood loss and the necessity for blood transfusion. This is especially the case in developing countries, where the concept of a blood bank is difficult to manage from both the financial and practical logistical considerations. We formed the Japanese arm of the B-SaC in 2007, and we have held annual meetings since then with the 11th meeting having been held this year. The meetings in the form of a colloquium consist of usually 2 presentations on how the campaign is doing, suggestions on enhancing the campaign and a hands-on session on LLLT. The last meeting was in October, and attracted 100 attendees. We would hope that more countries would follow our lead, so if any of our readers are interested, I would like to hear from you. The B-SaC is one of the humanitarian concerns under the wing of the NPO-WFSLMS, and has attracted attention from local and regional Lions Clubs. It’s a really worthwhile venture, so I encourage more international participation.

The REAL Importance of Laser Safety

Laser safety is again in focus with another very unfortunate incident which could have been completely avoided had basic laser safety rules been followed. A laser nurse was involved in training for laser toning, and was given the Operator’s Manual written by the laser manufacturer. On her own initiative, unsupervised and without proctorship by a trained clinician, she undertook the training session by herself. Very sadly she was not wearing any protective goggles. At one point during the training session she aimed and fired the laser at a plastic footprint sheet. The laser energy was reflected off the plastic surface back into her eye, causing severe damage through the retina into the vascular choroid and resulting in loss of sight in right eye. The matter was raised and debated at the 38th meeting of the Japan Society for Laser Surgery and Medicine (JSLSM) Symposium, and is currently proceeding through the court system. I should note that the JSLSM in cooperation with the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare have the oversight of medical laser safety in Japan.

It was unclear where the fault lay, whether it was the nurse who did not know that she should be wearing goggles from an oversight in the Operator’s Manual, or she had not read the manual properly, or whatever the problem was. In any event, it was decided that laser manufacturers should be advised to incorporate clear laser safety warnings at the beginning of their Operator’s Manuals, and at appropriate places throughout the manual particularly at any sections regarding training with a live laser. Furthermore, laser manufacturers should be encouraged to initiate strict and stringent laser safety training programmes for all users of their lasers, including the mandatory attendance of a trained clinician mentor at any such laser training sessions which must be signed off on by clinics in which lasers are used. I have always stated in previous editorials, and in clinical practice in the Ohshiro Clinic and the Japan Medical Laser Laboratory, that laser safety should come first, second and third, for the continued safety and wellbeing of both our patients, and our staff in attendance during any laser procedure, or any training sessions for our clinicians, nursing and ancillary staff on the correct handling of lasers. Laser safety really matters: pay attention to it.

End notes

And so we come to the end of another volume of the journal, and another year. Where did 2017 go? It seems like yesterday that I was writing the Editorial for Volume 26, issue one. The articles published in this volume have been compiled and sent out to our international panel of adjudicators to choose the award winners for both the Ohshiro-Laser Therapy Best Paper and Good Papers Awards, and the Ming-Chien Kao Awards for Young First Authors. The results will, as always, be announced in Volume 27, issue one. So, if you didn’t have a paper published this year then you’ve missed out on the prestige of the awards, and the substantial cash prizes which accompany them, Don’t miss out … see the notice elsewhere in this issue, and get writing for next year.

It only remains for me to wish you and yours, wherever you are, my personal wishes and all the very best for the New Year. May it grant you all you might wish for, and thank you for being part of our Laser Therapy family.

Tokyo, December 2017