COMMUNICATIONS

Letters to the Editors

“Those Were the Days”

A number of years ago I read an article about memory of things past. The gist of it was that we are seldom accurate unless we have written evidence collected at the time of the event. I am trying to recall the steps that led to the exciting discovery that my clan was blessed with an unusual blood type. I was a very new “blood banker” in the fall of 1959 when I tested a bit of my blood with some old anti-Lu^b serum and had negative results. We had no anti-Lu^a serum. Shortly thereafter I went to Dr. Greenwalt’s laboratory in Milwaukee. When I walked in I said, “How would you like to have some homozygous Lu^a cells?” I presented my arm for the important test. Tom Sasaki soon returned with the news that he could not find me positive for either Lu^b or Lu^a!

From then on there was a lot of activity. It seemed important to round up the clan. I bled my parents and siblings for Drs. Rob Race, Ruth Sanger, and Patricia Tippett at the Medical Research Council Blood Group Unit, University College, London. The blood samples were carefully shipped in ice in sturdy boxes. However, we were soon notified that a luggage wagon had run over our box. When it was returned to us, we found that the important inner box was still alright—so off it went again to London and reached the lab in good condition, although dripping wet from melted ice.

It seemed worthwhile to tap uncles, aunts, and cousins, but at a clan party I waited until they all had drinks in hand before I appeared with my bleeding tools. I suspect I was rather unpopular.

In four generations of the clan there have been 10 Lu(a–b–) members. We are also odd in the “Kidd” line but that would be another story!

Sincerely,
Mary N. Crawford, MD
125 Ashwood Road
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“Those Were the Days”

In the beginning, the organizational meeting of AABB was rocky. One of the big controversies was whether to offer membership to anyone below the level of MD or PhD, or perhaps even attorneys; wiser heads prevailed. At that original meeting of the Blood Institute in Dallas, med techs were “go fers,” drivers, and registration helpers, scarcely permitted to listen to papers.

My memories include the wonderful friendships that were forged and the quick, easy informal consultations, as near as the telephone.

Then there was the Kennedy assassination. I had letters of support from many AABB colleagues, including all the past presidents. There were wires, telephone calls, and offers of help and prayers. One past president expressed it this way: “All blood banking is riding on your shoulders today. Our prayers are with you.”

On the lighter side, events of the AABB traveling component workshops that appeared tragic at the time are remembered with laughter.

1. The lost refrigerated centrifuge at the very beginning of the component workshops. A refrigerated centrifuge failed to arrive at its destination. Years later it was located in the jungles of the shipper’s warehouse in New Orleans.
2. The lost shipment of disposables in San Francisco. The loaded truck appeared after the meeting on the supplier’s loading dock. All the area blood banks emptied their shelves to tide us over.
3. The strike in New York. No porters were available. The faculty had to do all the muscle work of loading, unloading, and putting heavy equipment in place.
4. The doubled order of Anti-B, when a shipping clerk could not find Anti-A. Florida blood banks rallied and came to the rescue.

Other events cannot be told to protect the living, but you and I remember.

Sincerely,
Ruth L. Guy, PhD
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Dallas, TX 75231

Attention SBB and BB Students: You are eligible for a free one-year subscription to Immuno- hematology. Ask your education supervisor to submit the name and complete address for each student, and the inclusive dates of the training period to Immuno- hematology, Musser Blood Center, 700 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123-3594.