From spermiation to appreciation—signs of opportunities yet to come

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As an impressionable university student in the late 1960s, a saying mounted on the office wall of my first academic mentor left an indelible imprint that is most appropriate to share with our readership:

“Appreciation is the sense of favors yet to come”

Only over the many years that have come to pass have I more fully extracted the meaning of such a simple phrase, being mindful of the fact that a crusty Xerox (yes Xerox) copy has held steadfast in my office since 1977. Attribution and authorship respectfully go to Dr. Arthur T. Hertig who, in his emeritus years, maintained an active NIH-funded research program at the New England Regional Primate Center of Harvard Medical School. Most of you will recognize his name of “Hertig and Rock” or “Noyes, Hertig and Rock” fame. For me, he was a mentor and inspiration. I was fortunate enough to have spent the better part of 4 years working in Hertig’s laboratory, as a research technician doing histochemistry on primate ovaries—which I find myself more or less doing today and for more years than I would care to admit. So what does this have to do with a supposed connection between spermiation and appreciation?

Spermiation signifies that remarkable event in the life-span of our male gametes when freedom from the confines of the seminiferous epithelium is realized (see cover this month). After days, if not months, of nurturing by neighboring Sertoli cells, haploid spermatids get to cast off their

somatic cloaks in pursuit of a rebirth in the world of diploids, should they be fortunate enough to find their way to their appointment with an unsuspecting oocyte. Spermiation also marks the moment when the diploma of bioenergetics is acquired enabling sperm passage through the male’s excurrent duct system and the “ticket-to-ride” for those few making it into the depths of the uterus and Fallopian tubes. Call it liberating to say the least and our lead articles this month focus on the various trials and tribulations endured by sperm during reproduction under in vivo and in vitro conditions. Now, on to appreciation!

Our issue this month closes 2012 on an upward note of gratification for the many authors, reviewers, editors, and compatriots at both Springer and the ASRM, who have conspired and collaborated to make this a landmark year for JARG. That saying about “favors yet to come” has arrived as the long-term efforts of many individuals contributed to an added dimension of growth and recognition for the journal, in response to my persistent requests for assistance at many levels. Thus, to show my appreciation for the many of you who have guided JARG along this pathway over the past 3 years, I would like to recognize the following for their dutiful service to the journal:

Associate Editors:

Gianpiero Palermo
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Gary Smith

Members of the Editorial Board:

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Ursula Eichenlaub-Ritter
Alan H. Handyside

Capsule While spermiation signifies that long-awaited separation of a male gamete from its intratesticular niche, showing appreciation for those who have supported you through the long and eventful process of achieving a goal becomes a matter of purpose for those who care.

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In closing, we would all do well to keep Hertig's saying in mind, especially in the fast-paced media driven social networks of today that rarely ever leave time for showing appreciation or even anticipating what may lie ahead. It has been a pleasure to work with you on behalf of Springer and the ASRM, as we venture into the new year and the advances we will witness in the spirit of helping patients around the world as they deal with their fertility. Happy New Year to All!