

Grist for the Rumor Mill

Michael Devitt

I've always been interested in how rumors begin. One of the most famous rumors I know concerned the writer Mark Twain. In a classic illustration of the power of misinformation, Twain once described how a legitimate news item - a report that one of his cousins was dying - quickly metamorphosed into the "scoop" that Twain himself had died. Upon reading of his own untimely demise, Twain sent the following reply back to the editor of the newspaper that published the story: "The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated." In fact, Mr. Twain "died" at the hands of the popular press at least three times before he passed away for good in 1910.

A similar rumor has been making its way across the country regarding Acupuncture Today. This April, I helped staff AT's booth at the California State Oriental Medical Association's meeting in Los Angeles, and was approached by a handful of attendees - some from California, others from as far east as New York - all asking me if what they were hearing was true.

"Is what true?" was my response.

"About Marilyn Allen - that she's no longer the editor." Usually, I take comments like this with a grain of salt and don't give them much thought. When a dozen people asked me the same question in less than an hour, though, I became somewhat concerned. When I received a smattering of phone calls the Monday after the convention, I became even more concerned. I spoke with Marilyn that day, told her what was happening, and asked what she thought would be the best way to address the situation. We agreed that a response was in order, and that this column would be the best place to deliver such a response.

So, to put this issue to rest once and for all: Marilyn Allen is - and will continue to be - *Acupuncture Today's* editor. There are no plans to replace her; she has no plans on retiring. Marilyn has been with the publication from the start, and if I have anything to say about it, she always will be. I hope this sends a clear message to our readers that *Acupuncture Today* is alive and well, and that Marilyn and I aren't going anywhere. I also hope it sends a similar message to the person (or persons) who started this rumor in the first place.

On a lighter note, it's my privilege to introduce two new columnists to *Acupuncture Today*. Don Matesz, MA, CH, CNC, who shares the "Nutrition and Wellness" column with Andrew Rader, makes his debut with an article on how to achieve acid-base balance, while Darren Starwynn, OMD, introduces readers to vibrational medicine through his column of the same name.

Next month, we'll see the premiere of the "Outside the Box" column authored by Robert Newman, LAc, and David Bruce Leonard, LAc. We had originally planned on having their column appear in this issue, but space restrictions prohibited us from publishing it. (Sorry, David and Robert; I promise we'll find space for your article in August.)

Not counting Marilyn, we now have 35 practitioners or students who contribute to *AT* on a regular basis. That's an amazing number for a publication its size, and a testament to the profession's

willingness to work together and share information.

Speaking of working together, take a look at the front page of this issue. You'll notice an article from the Vision Search Task Force and their efforts to unite the profession. For those unfamiliar with the Task Force, it's a conglomeration of representatives of five organizations - the AAOM, the Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Alliance, the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, the Council of Colleges and the Certification Commission. I haven't been privy to all of the Task Force's discussions, and I don't know all of the politics involved, but I appreciate what they're trying to do.

On a final note: This fall, Marilyn, the rest of the editorial staff and I will sit down and chart out what we'd like to see in *Acupuncture Today* in 2004. I've decided to open things up this year and get feedback from the rest of the profession. After all, this is as much your publication as it is ours.

So, what would you like to see us write about? Are there any columns we should add? Are we focusing too much on some areas, and not enough on others? Let me know your thoughts by sending an e-mail to the address listed below my name. I'll pass your messages on to Marilyn and the rest of the staff, and we'll use your input to help guide the direction of the publication.

Thanks in advance - we look forward to hearing from you!

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