➤ *continued from page 20*

health, inflammation, and alternative laboratory tests. With the February/March 2003, Collin invited students, faculty, and clinical physicians at the US and Canadian naturopathic colleges to submit articles for an "impromptu contest." "The Best of Naturopathic Medicine" has been revisited about every other year since then.

Changes and Honors

During the first decade of the 21st century, the magazine shifted from adolescent to adult. "Letters to the Editor" and "Book Corners" now account for fewer pages than in the past. The passionate sharing of views and sometimes contentious debate found in its columns during the magazine's first and second decades has ebbed. Several columnists retired or moved on to other venues, but new columnists, just as knowledgeable and diverse, have taken their place. The magazine's title has shortened to *Townsend Letter*, available to doctors, patients, researchers, and all the others who make up its readership. Select articles from recent issues are posted online at www.townsendletter.com by Sandy Hershelman, who has managed the website since 2002.

Editor Irene Alleger retired in 2005, and Adrianne Harun, a college instructor and fiction writer, took her place. Under Harun's guidance, *Townsend Letter* moved from paper submissions to electronic/digital editing, allowing for detection of plagiarized work. After a few years, Harun decided to focus on her first loves – teaching and fiction – and handed the position of editor over to Lauren Brown, a former copyeditor for *Boston Globe* and MIT Press. "Having edited the *Townsend Letter* for several years, I enjoy a broad overview of the world of alternative medicine," says Brown. "When there is so much pop-nutritional information circulating in today's media, it is reassuring to be exposed to a wide variety of authoritative material, with dedicated experts sharing their conclusions and original research."

In 2010, Barbara Smith turned many of her office duties over to Julie Reuther and Jill Tomasi but continues to do the magazine's layout and design – although, more times than not, it's from the road as she and her husband, Larry, are enjoying his retirement traveling in their RV.

In October 2008, the American College for the Advancement in Medicine (ACAM) presented Jonathan Collin with its Legacy Media Award. The award honored *Townsend Letter*, then in its 25th year of publication, for its contribution to the field of alternative and integrative medicine. The award is well deserved. With an extraordinary open-mindedness, Jonathan Collin has created a unique forum for the sharing and discussion of nonconventional viewpoints. Over the years, *Townsend Letter* has published information that has later (often years later) been verified by mainstream research. Suicide ideation caused by SSRIs, dangers of Vioxx, the benefits of IV vitamin C in cancer, and the importance of beneficial bacteria and probiotics are just a few of the topics that appeared in *TL's* pages long before scientific verification and mainstream coverage.

Tori Hudson, ND, who has written for *Townsend Letter* since 1992, says, "*TLfD* was one of the very few publications at the time that I started, that offered a resource for clinicians in a wide range of topics. The articles were topical, controversial, informative and, yes, even the 'out there' articles were important to me. I always liked that the *TLfD* editor and staff included columns and articles that were left brain and right brain, mainstream evidence-based natural medicine as well as the progressive, theoretical, unproven, and even edgy."

> "I think the *TL* is still a very viable source of excellent info."
>
> Dr. Curt Maxwell

To the Future

Like other publications, *Townsend Letter* has been affected by the economic decline that began with the dot.com/technology bubble bust in 2000, and by competition from digital media. Its size returned to its 120-page days from a high of 180 in 2003. Once again, Jonathan Collin eased financial stresses with a move to a new printer, Dartmouth Printing Company (Hanover, New Hampshire), with the July 2011 issue. Dartmouth is a specialty press that prints and mails many US journals. *Townsend Letter* now has a worldwide readership of about 100,000 through subscriptions, store sales, conventions, and online access. The magazine is abstracted and indexed by EBSCO Publishing, GALE, and British Library.

The need for a forum that informally presents and debates medical alternatives is as great as ever. Many alternative therapies have been studied in laboratory and clinical studies, but many others have not. Despite all the talk about "natural" and "organic," most people, unconsciously affected by direct-to-consumer pharmaceutical advertising, continue to believe in a magic pill that will cure their ills. "Big Pharma is still winning big time," says Dr. Curt Maxwell, a long-time *TL* fan and contributor. "…the vast majority of the population is very much plugged into the status quo." Doctors, confident of medical training that lacks basic, well-established facts about nutrition and nutrients, still shut down or outright disparage the use of vitamin and supplements – which are probably the least controversial of the many alternatives discussed in *Townsend Letter*.

With the switch to more efficient and less costly printing and mailing, *Townsend Letter* is prepared to continue its unique mission as "The Examiner of Medical Alternatives."

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