

From the Editor

Arthur N. Popper



I want to thank the 758 Acoustical Society of America (ASA) members who responded to the recent *Acoustics Today* (AT) survey. As promised in the survey, we awarded \$50 gift cards (using an online random number generator) to five ASA members. They are David Bonnett, Raymond H. Dye, Gordon Ebbitt, Zhe-chen Guo, and Guillermo Rus. The results from the survey are discussed on page 84 of this issue.

This issue contains a very important statement about the ASA and future meetings by President Diane Kewley-Port. Although I realize (from the survey) that only about 60% of members read the From the President column (and perhaps 70% read this column), I would like to encourage every member to see Diane's column.

This issue of AT has seven articles. The first, by Kenneth Good Jr. and Neil Shaw, arose from my having dinner with Ken at a recent ASA meeting. Ken shared some of his work on speech privacy and particularly on issues of privacy in places like doctor's offices and such. Ken's description was really fascinating, and by the time the entrée was served, Ken had agreed to do this article.

AT has had a number of articles about function of the inner ear and hearing, an area (as you might expect) of particular interest to me. To round out discussions of the ear, Sunil Puria writes about the structure and function of the middle ear. The three-bone middle ear is a defining characteristic of mammals, and it is important for detection of higher frequencies, as Sunil explains.

This is followed by an article by Timothy Leighton, Ben Lineton, Craig Dolder, and Mark Fletcher. Tim and his colleagues start with a fascinating case study from a school in Seattle, WA, and use that as the basis for discussing human detection of ultrasonic sound. Human detection of ultrasound is not well-known, but this article shows that it may, in fact, be more pervasive than we think, especially for younger ASA members.

The fourth article is by J. Lauren Ruoss, Catalina Bazacliu, Daphna Yasova Barbeau, and Philip Levy. They discuss the value of using ultrasound in clinical diagnosis, with a focus on dealing with high-risk newborns in neonatal intensive care units (NICUs). Although the use of ultrasound is widespread in medicine, its use in the NICU has special importance because of the fragility of the babies and their special needs.

Lately, I have been seeking out editors of some of the Special Issues that have been published or will be published in *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*. The goal of these articles is to provide summaries of the broad topic of the Special Issue to introduce the whole ASA membership to the topic. Thus, these articles focus less on the papers in the issue than on the overall topic.

One of the recent Special Issues was on the speech patterns in the United States South. The editors of the Special Issue, Irina Shport and Wendy Herd, provide wonderful insight into Southern speech and include excellent multimedia demonstrations of these speech patterns.

The sixth article in this issue is quite personal to me. Along with Bill Yost and Tony Hawkins, we write about the immense contributions of my very close friend and collaborator of almost 50 years (and 80 books), Richard (Dick) Fay, to auditory neuroscience. Dick was unable to write an overview of his extraordinary work on vertebrate hearing, and so we decided to provide this for him. (But Dick has read the article and approved of what we say about his work.) We had great fun revisiting older papers and our interactions with Dick (I took **Figure 1** in the article when I introduced Dick to great herring and aquavit in my favorite restaurant in Copenhagen).

The last article in this issue is by T. Christina Zhao and Patricia Kuhl. Christina and Pat discuss the value of early music training on the development of the human brain. I personally found this article totally fascinating. Indeed, I suspect that many other members will start to think of how they might want to introduce musical training to

their young children (or, in my case, encourage my kids to introduce training to my grandkids).

Our “Sound Perspectives” section starts with our series on “Ask an Acoustician” (quite a popular series according to our survey). In this issue, long-time ASA member D. Keith Wilson talks about his research on atmospheric acoustics as well as his many contributions to the ASA.

This is followed by a wonderful article with too many authors to list here, the ASA Publications Staff. I realized that although most ASA members interact with these people at meetings or during the submission process to one of the ASA publications, few get to know anything about our colleagues or their invaluable contributions to the ASA. So, besides reading the essay and getting to know a bit about these wonderful folks, I encourage you to meet them “in person” at a future ASA meeting.

As many of you are aware (hopefully through donations), the ASA has a Foundation Fund that supports many ASA activities such as travel awards and scholarships. In the past, the Foundation has had short pieces in every issue of *AT*. However, after discussions with the Foundation leadership, we agreed that ASA members might like to know more about the Foundation and what it contributes to the ASA as well as a brief accounting of the funds. Thus, we decided to shift to a schedule of one essay each year by Foundation Chair Jim Miller. I encourage everyone to read and learn about this very important part of our Society (and, of course, consider a donation).

The next essay is on a topic of great importance for every member of the ASA and for the ASA itself, sharing our work with the lay public and journalists. Effectively communicating the complex work that many of us do to family members, reporters, deans, and others is not easy, and it greatly benefits from training. Thus, this essay by Andy Piacsek introduces us to the topic of communication with folks other than our peers. Although a short essay here (and others in the past by ASA Education and Outreach Coordinator L. Keeta Jones) cannot give a real course in science communication, the essay gives substantial food for thought and some direction for those who want to be better communicators.

In the last essay, ASA Editorial Assistant and my close colleague for *AT* Kat Setzer discusses the results of the survey (look for the section about Kat in the ASA Publications essay on page 76).



Finally, we are pleased to announce that the newly designed *Acoustics Today* has been recognized for excellence in publication design for print magazines with a Gold Award in the Hermes Creative Award competition for 2020 (see bit.ly/3gIcXe0). This international competition recognizes outstanding work of design professionals for a variety of media. We are very proud of this recognition and thank our colleagues at OPUS for their outstanding and creative work for *Acoustics Today* and the Acoustical Society of America. The award is to OPUS and the Acoustical Society of America.

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