

EDITORIAL

Lessons *not* Learned in the Classroom

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My responsibilities as editor of *Optometric Education* include the writing of three editorials per year. Because the journal is the only journal dedicated to optometric education, my editorials usually reflect upon the educational process. In this editorial, I am writing about lessons learned outside of a classroom, lab or clinical environment.

The Boston Marathon is the oldest annual marathon.¹ First run on April 19, 1897, it is always held on Patriots' Day.¹ The link to Patriots' Day is significant because it represents the start of the Revolutionary War and the struggle for liberty.¹ In 1924, the race was lengthened to 26 miles 385 yards, which extended the start of the race to Hopkinton and allowed for conformity to Olympic standards.¹ The first cash prize was awarded in 1986, and the first woman runner was officially allowed to enter in 1972.² Past marathons have included events that were scandalous or motivational. The Rosie Ruiz scandal in 1980 officially disqualified the winner after an investigation, which concluded that Ruiz had skipped most of the race.³ The father and son team of Dick and Rick Hoyt is inspirational: Dick Hoyt has pushed his son Rick, who is afflicted with cerebral palsy and wheelchair-bound, through 30 marathons.⁴

The 2013 Boston Marathon was the 117th running of this famous race.¹ The race started in Hopkinton at 9:17 a.m.¹ The weather was clear with temperatures ranging from the 40s to mid-50s. It was a perfect day to enjoy the excitement and festivities associated with the race. More than 23,000 runners were participating.¹ The winners of the race were Lelisa Desisa (men's division), Rita Jeptoo (women's division) and Hiroyuki Yamamoto (wheelchair division).⁵ The New

England College of Optometry (NECO) is less than 1 mile from the finish line and even closer to parts of the marathon route. In past years, several of our students, faculty and staff have run in the race. Most of our students live in close proximity to the route of the marathon. Classes are traditionally cancelled on Marathon Day due to the practicality of getting to the area; however, the college is open for fund-raising events.

On April 15, 2013 at 2:50 p.m. EDT, the Boston Marathon experienced unthinkable events that were shocking and colossal. At that time, two explosions occurred on Boylston Street near the finish line of the race. The images of chaos, fear and uncertainty were displayed by the media. The college was immediately evacuated and closed. Several members of the NECO community were at the finish line or in the area. Thankfully none was injured. As everyone knows, three spectators were killed and more than 200 were injured.⁶ The following day the college was still closed because it fell within the investigation zone.

The days following the marathon proved to be a sad reminder of the event. My normal route to work was altered because my exit was in the crime zone. A memorial of flowers, memorabilia, etc., outlined Boylston Street as well as the yellow crime tape along the perimeter of the crime scene. The end of the week brought a new level of fear and uncertainty. The alleged suspects were identified, and a surreal chase and shoot-out occurred in the attempt to apprehend them. Neighborhoods in which our students and faculty lived were in lockdown. The college was closed again, the term "shelter in place" echoed over the media. The television stations reported the same information over and over again, yet I could not stop watching it. By Friday evening one suspect was captured, another deceased.⁶

Reflecting on these events leads to emotions, realizations and lessons learned. There are feelings of sadness, horror

and vulnerability associated with the understanding that some events are beyond our control and being in the wrong place at the wrong time could happen to anyone. There is the kindness and heroism of bystanders and first responders helping innocent victims. The generosity and outpouring of concern from Bostonians and in particular the NECO college community is memorable. Our students, faculty and staff who were in such close proximity to these events will have acquired life lessons that will impact them in a unique and personal manner. As faculty we often spend much time preparing our lessons, but on April 15, 2013, lessons were taught that were not learned from the curriculum.

Reference

1. Boston Athletic Association. Boston, MA. [cited May 22, 2013]. Available from: <http://216.235.243.43/races/boston-marathon/boston-marathon-history.aspx>.
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3. Boston Athletic Association. Boston, MA. [cited May 22, 2013]. Available from: <http://216.235.243.43/races/boston-marathon/boston-marathon-history/race-summaries/1976-1980.aspx>.
4. CBS News. Boston, MA. [cited May 22, 2013] Available from: <http://boston.cbslocal.com/2012/04/16/dick-and-rick-hoyt-complete-30th-boston-marathon/>.
5. Boston Athletic Association. Boston, MA. [cited May 22, 2013]. Available from: <http://216.235.243.43/races/boston-marathon/results-commentary.aspx>.
6. Daily News. New York, N.Y. [cited May 23, 2013]. Available from: <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/boston-marathon-explosion-gallery-1.1317371>.

★ SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT ★

AUTHORS OF TOBACCO DEPENDENCE EDUCATION PAPER WIN 2013 DR. LESTER JANOFF AWARD FOR WRITING EXCELLENCE

The winners of the 2013 Dr. Lester Janoff Award for Writing Excellence are Marlee M. Spafford, OD, PhD, Matthew D. Iley, BSc, OD, Annette S.H. Schultz, RN, PhD, and Ryan D. Kennedy, MAES, PhD. The authors received the award for their paper "Tobacco Dependence Education in Optometry: A Canadian Pilot Study Assessing Practices and Opportunities," which was published in the Fall 2010 (Vol. 36, No. 1) issue of *Optometric Education*, the journal of the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry.

The Dr. Lester Janoff Award for Writing Excellence recognizes the outstanding writing of a research article published in the journal. It is named in honor of the late Lester E. Janoff, OD, MSED, FAAO. Dr. Janoff was editor of the journal from 2002 to 2005 and a longtime member of its editorial review board. Along with being known as an exceptional optometric educator, administrator and contact lens clinician and researcher, he was a beloved mentor of young writers.

A committee of the journal's editorial review board selects the winner of the award. The judges rate all the research articles that appeared in the journal in the previous two years. Writing excellence is judged on significance of the topic chosen, quality of the article and potential impact. Authors of the winning paper receive a cash award.