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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

In the last year, public visibility of the American Society of Law, Medicine & Ethics grew in leaps and bounds. The society and its publications and activities were mentioned in major newspapers, for instance, including stories in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and on the front page of *USA Today*. Television newsmagazines used ASLME and its publications as a resource for work on DNA forensics and other topics covered in the pages of this journal. More frivolously, the FOX network medical drama *House* requested copies of ASLME publications as set dressing for the office of a character on the show, a hospital attorney. A similar request was made by a major Hollywood production company for a big-budget science fiction film that will be released next year; in that case the producers wanted copies of *JLME* to lend authenticity to the office of one of the major characters, a bioethicist.

Aside from the startling fact that screenwriters now create science fiction epics that feature bioethicists, this news is little more than a pleasant curiosity. In one sense, however, this trend in popular culture is instructive. The people who make films and television shows feel that the best way to make their lawyer, physician, or bioethicist character real, to make them believable, is to show them with an ASLME publication. It is in this most narrow sense that we at ASLME find ourselves in complete agreement with Hollywood: whether you are a lawyer, physician, or an ethicist, (and regardless of whether you are fictional or completely real) you cannot be without the *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*.

It is also curious that as the world of science fiction intrudes upon us, *JLME* finds itself nibbling at the edges of science fiction. As many of the authors in this issue's symposium suggest, rational concerns and curiosity about nanotechnology are too often subverted by either the fears or utopian hopes inherent in machinery so small that it is invisible to the naked eye. This symposium, guest edited by Robert Best, George Khushf, and Robin Wilson, goes a long way towards righting us on the path towards a more measured discussion about the prospects of nanotech in our lives. Without either fanning the flames of fear that always accompany the unknown, or resisting the necessary critical questions that must be asked of new technology, the editors and their authors bring us a step closer to understanding the critical role nanotech will play in the future of medicine and law, and steer us towards the questions we must ask as we continue to speed towards a science-fiction-like future.

*Ted Hutchinson*  
Editor

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