Microscopy Microanalysis

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DearAbbe

CrossMark

Dear Abbe,

Help! Like many modern microscopists, I am seriously overworked. Between writing grants and contracts, reviewing other peoples' grants and contracts, staff meetings, progress reports, committee meetings, time-use reports, writing papers, reviewing papers, and other meetings, it seems the only time I have to do actual microscopy is during my commute. What can I do?

Harried in Harrisburg

Dear Harried,

Quit your whining! In my day we had microscopes even in our bathrooms so we could always be working. But a solution is coming soon. As you may be aware, auto manufacturers have been working on self-driving cars. Since many preparation instruments and most microscopes are becoming self-driving, Abbe Labs has been diligently working on a hybrid solution for microscopists. The microscopy instruments are contained in a self-driving car, and there you are! A whole new kind of micro-car! We call it the Microsetta.

Dear Abbe,

I'm using old steel re-sharpenable blades to section decalcified teeth. I realize most people use disposable blades these days. My concern is that people might think I'm a histology hipster. I get funny looks when people see me using the automatic knife sharpener. When people see me using an old AO 820 microtome, they think I'm some kind of historical histology re-enactor. Should I use the modern equipment we have available in our lab, or should I go full hipster historical histologist on them?

Hysterical in Rootstown

Dear Hysterical,

Ach, ja, I see the problem. You are nothing but a plausible poser. "Automatic knife sharpener" indeed! True hard-core histologists hand-sharpen their microtome knives and finish them on a leather strop. I call that a true Historical Histological Hipster. When I learned to section, we would travel to the forges of Volund (I recovered his wife's ring, and he owed me a favor) and forge our own microtomy knives. And woe be to the unfortunate student who couldn't slice a fresh liver biopsy into 1 µm serial sections with the new knife! Look closer at that "modern equipment"! You'll find it's just smoke and mirrors. Go to any histology lab, ignore the lab techs, and look for the real histologist behind the curtain. You'll find an 820, a proper selection of sharpening stones, a well-cared-for leather strop, and a harassed Histowizard snarling at the Landstreicher who dares disturb his slicing. Say "No" if they ask if you want a slice of meat pie.

Herr Abbe can't wait to hone his wisdom on the strop of sarcasm! Don't hesitate to send him a line at jpshield@uga.edu.

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