There is an infectious excitement in the biomedical community in general and in the cancer community in particular. Powerful new tools and a rapid pace of discovery are allowing us to glimpse the basic mechanisms of cancer with an invigorated hope for prevention and control. There is an opportunity to harness this excitement in this new journal, Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention. It provides a unique forum that will bring together seemingly divergent disciplines for constructive goals: a comprehensive approach to cancer based on interdisciplinary collaboration and a rigorous emphasis on prevention. These are disparately held goals in the cancer community, in part because the opportunities to see examples of interdisciplinary or prevention research, to analyze them, and to learn from them are limited. This new journal provides such opportunities.

Advances in biomedical research also are not without their problems. The growing emphasis on the molecular aspects of cancer provides a chance to change the way individuals are viewed and treated in the future. The potential for discrimination, invasion of privacy, and other undesirable effects cannot be ignored as we look hopefully at the current advances. Focus only on the molecular level and you may miss the overall view. In the past, such reductionist approaches have been antithetical to public health because they failed to understand the social, cultural, and political milieus in which prevention and control programs occur. This new journal provides the opportunity for a comprehensive view of cancer research from the “micro” to the “macro” levels. An interdisciplinary capability is necessary to achieve this view.

The time is right for a journal that will highlight interdisciplinary research. The development of biological markers of exposure, effect, and susceptibility requires such collaboration if they are to be effectively used in cancer research. Laboratory and population scientists seemingly have been at two poles of cancer research, often unable to speak each other’s language, read each other’s journals, or utilize each other’s skills or talents. That no longer needs to be. Epidemiologists cannot ignore the fact that disease is now being characterized at the gene and molecular levels. Exquisite new tools are available to reduce misclassifications and confounding in epidemiological studies and to provide assessments of mechanisms and opportunities for intervention. On the other hand, laboratory scientists cannot ignore the leads from observations in populations or the ultimate require-
indicators of risk for effective program targeting. A journal such as *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention* can contribute to that process by disseminating information on the difficult issues involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of prevention programs.

The juxtaposition of the three component journal topics (epidemiology, biomarkers, and prevention) may appear irregular, discordant, and chaotic. However, the history of science is replete with fruitful results of discordant juxtapositions. This is not a call for three mini-journals under the same masthead; rather, it is the belief that the journal can make a contribution to each of its three topic areas, by providing high-quality scientific manuscripts written for those within a particular topic discipline and those in adjacent disciplines, and by stressing the implications of any research. This is a challenge to both authors and editors. I am suggesting that we seek the highest common denominator in an attempt to understand and prevent cancer and keep that foremost. This may mean experimenting with different editorial forms and formats to foster cross-disciplinary understanding and appreciation.

In summary, the combination of research on epidemiology, biomarkers, and prevention in the same journal provides the opportunity to see the gaps in our understanding of cancer and to stimulate further useful research. Within each component topic area, there is also the opportunity to present developments and research themes that can stimulate future work in that area. Despite many excellent journals, *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention* is a needed new opportunity to harness the current excitement in the cancer research community.
New opportunities for interdisciplinary cancer communication.

P A Schulte