

“It is a serious thing
Just to be alive
On this fresh morning
In this broken world” — Mary Oliver

As I sat down to write this column, it had been a bit of a month — the election, the American Academy of Optometry meeting, the football game against that team up north, the tragedy on The Ohio State campus the week before. Mary Oliver is an Ohio poet whose words often resonate with me. Her bittersweet words did so again as I reflected on November 2016.

Our acute memories of that dreadful Monday at Ohio State faded with each passing hour — what it felt like to see family’s and friends’ concerned text messages; how to connect with what happened on a different part of campus without being overwhelmed by it; how to stay on track for the work and exams and challenges that week and into December; how proud we were of our campus alert system and our first responders.

We certainly get to celebrate our achievements. ASCO institutions were prominent at the Academy meeting in Anaheim, which was the biggest one ever! Our ASCO SIGs were meeting around every corner, and their feedback on our strategic planning efforts is much appreciated.

Now for a personal point of privilege. The Ohio State-Michigan game was ... exciting. Five hours of ESPN Game Day on campus. Lee Corso put on the Brutus head in the south end of Ohio Stadium. I shudder to think what my blood pressure was during the first overtime, let alone the second.

We can find plenty of advice on how to cope with recent events: Get used to it. It’s the world we live in. Protest. Resist. Find the benefit of the doubt. Prepare for the worst. Rise up. Prepare for a bright future. Take a hard look at higher education in America. And everything in between. I’ve been trying to think of what to do myself. The college’s Executive Committee discussed what we did right and what we did wrong on that November 28 Monday morning at Ohio State, and I have had similar conversations across campus. I told the provost he needed a big hug and gave him one. I’ve donated money to organizations for the first time. I’m seeking community activities and political engagement. I’m reaching out to people across The Ohio State campus who were more affected than we were. I’m finding a kinder voice, a universally more welcoming demeanor, and a wider open door.

What I know is that we should focus on the work and values that matter to us. Our faculty train optometrists and generate and disseminate new research knowledge. Our students learn to provide the country’s eye care. We strive for excellence. We will all find our way on each fresh morning and



*Dr. Karla Zadnik
(Photo by Jo McCulty, The Ohio State University)*

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beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karla Zadnik". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Karla Zadnik, ASCO President