

# WHERE ARE YOU?

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A few years ago, Micscape regular Richard L. Howey wrote a plea for people to get involved in writing for Micscape. As he said back then, you can write about anything, from personal experience in microscopy to some weird wonders you may have encountered while looking through your favorite instrument. This appeal convinced me to start writing, and I've been doing so ever since. In last month's issue, the new articles were by Richard and yours truly... Our devoted editor had to dig through past issues to give us something else to read...

So it's my turn to throw a message in a bottle in the hope that the currents will be in our favor. I know, not all of you are retired with plenty of free time on your hand. But what we ask for is not a new version of War and Peace (we have enough war as it is...). Just a page or two, some thought, or even some questions in need of an answer.

There are some professionals out there, many of which send articles to Micscape on occasion; I am convinced that there are many more occasional readers of Micscape that have never contributed in any way. Whether you research plants, insects, ponds and lakes ecology, or the microorganisms one can find in the fridge, put some of your results together and send them to David Walker. Come on, are you all so good and so isolated that you never read about new techniques or new organisms? Are you all so blasé and self-centered that you don't care about sharing your thoughts and discoveries with others that share the same interests? I know for a fact that vulgarization is not the easiest form of writing for advanced scientists, but you should give it a try, if only to make the general public interested in what you're doing.

When I think of all that I have learned in the past from the pages of Micscape and compare it to the dwindling number of new articles that have been seen these past few months, I am worried about the future. Is amateur microscopy a thing of the past? There have been many great contributors to Micscape in the past, and many of them have sadly left us. One that comes to mind is Walter Dioni (he was mentioned in my other monthly article, the one about flies). A quick search in Micscape archives showed 117 of his articles (I am up to 25...). I have learned a great deal from Walter over the years, and he has inspired many of my trials and tribulations in the microscopic world. Now, along with our friend Richard L. Howey, I write every month. Why? First, because I have the time to do so; if you read me, you should know that I have recently retired and moved to the country. But there is also another reason: finding something to write about every month keeps one's mind busy and stimulated. And when life is busy and stimulated it is more enjoyable. And finally, I feel it's important to teach whatever I have learned to others who may need some help.

A few months ago, I sold one of my microscopes to a photography teacher who works with a botanist in South America. The botanist needed pictures for some publications, but was not equipped with the proper photographic equipment. The photographer had the cameras, but did not have a good microscope. On top of it, his knowledge of microscopy was limited. So along with the microscope I gave him a copy of a book I'm working on about photomicrography for the beginners; I also gave him Micscape address. The last I heard from him, the work was progressing nicely.

Micscape has a long history, one that will hopefully continue for many more years to come. But if that is to be, we need more involvement from everyone. If you read this, it means you're interested in microscopy. If you're interested, you must have something to share. I want to hear from you. You may think that what you have to say will not be interesting to others, but how do you know? You would be surprised at the number of great ideas that germinated from simple beginnings.

So get excited and give us your thoughts. Show me what you found out there, where ever you live. I am curious by nature, I want to know. I am a photographer, and as such a visual person. I want to see what you have to show me. It doesn't matter if your prose is not that of a great writer. Write as if we were sitting face to face sharing a good coffee... or a good pint of Guinness...

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Published in the April 2022 issue of Micscape magazine.  
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