We are frequently asked what made us choose our career paths. I’ve always felt a bit sheepish about my answer because it seems so trite. But, though it smells of cliché, the truth is that I became a veterinarian because of an innate love of animals, and I specialized in reproduction and fertility because of a fascination with the miracle of life.

A miracle doesn’t have to be inexplicable; a miracle just needs to be wondrous. It is fascinating to study how a sperm and ovum come together, fuse, develop, and eventually form autonomous life. And then there are the myriad mechanisms for delivering sperm to ovum, and the intricate, supportive environment needed for embryonic and fetal development in utero. Understanding the physiology does not lessen the wonder of it all. On the contrary, understanding enhances the miracle. The more you understand about how intricate the processes are that create and support developing life, the more you have to step back and marvel that it all works. And it does work. And has worked. Over and over, year in and year out for millennia in millions of organisms.

Well, it mostly works.

Sometimes something goes awry in those intricate processes and life falters. Sometimes miracles need a little assistance. And at other times we humans want to redirect those otherwise natural processes to cause a desired outcome that fits our husbandry goals. That we can take delicate processes that took millions of years to evolve, mess around with them, and create a desired product is also pretty miraculous. Fixing defective reproductive processes and manipulating normal reproductive pathways are what theriogenologists do. This issue offers some excellent, recent reviews of both fixing and manipulating fertility in small animal veterinary medicine.

I want to thank the authors who contributed so much of their time to produce these articles for the benefit of our profession. It was a pleasure to work with them, and
I commend these articles to small animal practitioners striving to serve their dog- and
cat-breeding clientele.

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