Dear Trink:

Thanks for your letter, with accompanying correspondence and Birthday greetings. We did make it, didn't we? And with our good looks and sense of humor intact!

You are always most punctilious in sending your correspondence by hand. Your writing is quite legible, unlike that of some members of my family. Unfortunately, I get too impatient with the progress of pen over paper, so that I tend to cut short what I might otherwise be moved to say. On the other hand, I have become so addicted to the computer keyboard that, using the word processor, I often go on at greater length in my correspondence than the occasion calls for. If the latter be the case here, forgive me.

This is coming to you first by e-mail, for I am eager to clarify what Jaffe has indicated as my endorsement of his candidacy for the Conklin award. But, in the event that you do not look at your e-mail on a daily basis, I am sending a follow-up hard copy.

My reaction to the self-nomination by Jaffe of the Conklin award is the same as yours. Lionel telephoned me requesting my support. I should have said "No!" immediately, but I do have to see the guy frequently at MBL, so I asked him to send me his résumé. When it came, I forwarded it to Ida Chow with the following covering letter. I have designated the letter's content in quotes.

"Some days ago, Dr. Lionel F. Jaffe approached me with the request that I nominate him for the Conklin Medal in Developmental Biology. I was somewhat taken aback that one would solicit a recommendation for his own nomination for this honor. Not wishing to offend a colleague whom I have known for many years I asked, nevertheless, that he send me his CV.

"Given Dr. Jaffe's well-known idiosyncrasies, I find it hard to picture him as giving the Conklin lecture and would not normally have called his name to the committee's attention. His idiosyncrasies aside, however, his record deserves consideration. I have found much of it fascinating and consider it to be of considerable importance, particularly as it deals with the measurement of bioelectric currents of and calcium flux in developing systems."
"It is without further comment that I forward herewith Dr. Jaffe's resume, which includes a rather substantial list of publications. The Resume was prepared in Word 98 (Mac) and is an attachment to this note. If a hard copy is needed please let me know John"

Although you said in your P.S. that "....this is the last that I will say explicitly to anyone about the Jaffe case....." I think it would not be amiss for you to send a copy of your Nov 24 letter to the committee. You could e-mail it to SDB. Also, tell me what you think of my letter to the committee. Does my suggestion that ".....his record deserves consideration.", strike you as an endorsement? If it seems so to you, perhaps others will take it to be such. In that case, I should probably write a follow-up indicating that my forwarding his résumé does not constitute an evaluation of his candidacy vis-à-vis that of another that might rightfully be considered.

Do please let me hear from you in this regard.

We had a fine combination Thanksgiving and birthday party at daughter Maggie's house. We celebrated the holiday along with birthdays of Grandson Christopher John, Maggie, and me. All the birthdays fall within a period of two weeks in November. For my birthday, Lil and all my children and grandchildren combined their resources to present me with a very fine digital camera. So, I'm having fun with it instead of annotating limb-bud papers (which appear in press faster than I can keep up with them)

This is too long.

My fondest greetings as always to you and Madeleine