

# Executive Director's Page

## Getting Involved: A Roadmap

*By Barbara Baldwin, CSA Executive Director*

One of the greatest challenges faced by the CSA and all professional membership societies is having enough volunteers to participate in policy formation and governance of the Society. A mere twenty years ago, Society members vied to fill vacancies on committees, task forces, and delegations. Such involvement was a status symbol and provided opportunity to move into positions within the organization that would influence the internal and external agendas. Becoming a board member, officer, Executive Committee member and ultimately President required extensive long-term involvement and service to the organization.

While some of the status remains, for most members volunteerism competes with time needed for other pursuits, not the least of which are work and family. Spare time has dwindled and taking on activities outside of work and family requires a decision and commitment to make those activities a priority. Only a small percentage of the membership makes that choice.

The shrinking pool of members who have the time, interest and willingness to devote energy to the work of the Society has prompted changes in how, where, and the length of commitment to participate. With greater frequency, committees and task forces conduct business by e-mail, list serves and conference calls. Task forces and subcommittees provide opportunities for knowledgeable members to contribute to short-term projects. The advancement and availability of electronic technology has expanded the potential pool of volunteers who otherwise would find it a hardship to travel to meetings several times a year and to miss several hours of work, family or leisure time.

Sometimes involvement in a short-term project will stimulate the desire to do more and different types of service for the Society. Those who feel that the CSA can better serve the membership and conduct its business more efficiently and effectively bring needed energy and perspective to committees, the Board and the House of Delegates. New ideas and approaches are needed to keep the CSA in touch with the membership and to serve its needs in meaningful ways. Even the "squeaky wheels" are important to keep thinking fresh and to promote alternatives to business as usual.

**How then would a member explore and perhaps become involved in the CSA?** There are several avenues. The first stop is the CSA Web Site, which

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has extensive information on the issues of interest to the CSA membership as well as the structure and governance of the Society. By the time this issue of the *Bulletin* is received, the redesigned web site will be launched with a format that increases ease of access to a greater amount of information. The “About CSA” section provides extensive information about the CSA’s structure and governance.

The CSA has several committees and task forces that address *internal* matters such as bylaws, nominations to officer positions, finance and administration, as well as *professional and practice* issues such as office-based anesthesia, pain medicine, accreditation and hospital survey issues, and scope of practice. Two divisions (super-committees) oversee and develop CME activities (Educational Programs Division) and legislative, legal and practice issues (Legislative and Practice Affairs Division). The complete list can be found on the web site.

The Bylaws contain the charges to all standing committees, which are ongoing committees unless discontinued through a Bylaws change approved by the House of Delegates. Special committees and task forces are appointed by the President, usually to undertake a specific project to be completed before the end of the President’s term.

A once-a-year event in which any member can participate is the CSA-CMA Legislative Leadership Day in Sacramento. The CSA has tables reserved for members who are representing our Society (in contradistinction to their county medical association). This Legislative Day includes speakers from the legislature and CMA government relations staff who review legislative issues and proposals during the current term. The afternoon is open for members to visit their legislative representatives or attend hearings. The CSA will pay travel costs of actual mileage or the cost of a 14-day advance purchase coach airfare.

Other ways to get information about committees/task forces and other opportunities for involvement are through your District Director or by calling the CSA office at (800) 345-3691. Your District Director, Linda Herren or I can supply information that can help you decide the right place for you. Even if you have little time to volunteer, call and we will try to steer you to available opportunities that match your needs and interests.