

ASA Director's Report

ASA Continues to Prepare for the Future of the Society and Our Specialty

By Mark Singleton, M.D.,
ASA District Director



The ASA Board of Directors (BOD) met on March 4, 2012, at the Intercontinental O'Hare Hotel on a typical gray and cold late-winter Chicago weekend. Who knew that only a few weeks later Chicagoans would be cavorting in crazy 80-degree flip-flop weather? In addition to myself and Alternate Director Mike Champeau, Drs. Ken Pauker, Johnathan Pregler, James Moore, Peter Sybert, Paul Yost, Zeev Kain, Stan Stead, and Linda Mason represented the Californians. The March ASA BOD meeting is an "interim" meeting; the August BOD is designated as the "annual" meeting. Thus the number of committee and component society reports is relatively small in March. Much of the meeting concerned the ongoing evaluation of the internal governance and restructuring of the ASA and the projections and ambitions for the future success and growth of the organization. In many ways these considerations and decisions parallel what we currently are doing at the CSA.

Search for the Top Staff Executive

As I reported in the previous *Bulletin*, the ASA BOD approved a national search for an ASA Executive Staff Officer (in effect, a CEO). The first steps in this process, forming a search committee and selecting a professional search firm, have been accomplished. The ad hoc search committee is chaired by ASA Past President Gene Sinclair and includes our own Linda Mason among its four-officer/four-director membership. The BOD also approved a \$250,000 "initial outlay" for this search process. In addition to having identified a search firm, the selection process will include the input of a consulting firm specializing in "industrial psychology" that has demonstrated an impressive ability to ensure greater than 90 percent long-term success of the selected executive. The ultimate cost of the search will reflect a percentage of the individual's negotiated compensation package. A great deal of discussion has been ongoing over the relative role of the BOD in this process, with some arguing that the BOD should be involved in selecting the candidate among several finalists, while the President and the Administrative Council (AC = officers) believe that this would be unworkable due to required confidentiality guarantees to the candidates. The administrative procedures

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language currently empowers the AC to select, and the BOD to approve or disapprove, the selection of the CEO. This process is expected to be complete by the time of the August BOD meeting.

Many Other ASA Initiatives

The ASA Committee on Future Models of Anesthesia Practice has been given a \$30,000 budget to “further access, and possibly submit, a CMS Center for Innovation grant related to the Surgical Home model.” The ASA still is seeking a Director of Health Policy and Research, a search begun last year that is ongoing, the price tag for this position guesstimated to be \$94,000.

The journal *Anesthesiology* has been allocated \$72,000 to support the evaluation and potential contract renegotiations for production of two issues of the journal per month. In response to questions from many who voiced difficulty keeping up with reading just one issue per month, the Editor-in-Chief, Dr. James Eisenach, presented the rationale for these considerations as allowing the journal to publish more content of practical relevance to the practicing anesthesiologist, while at the same time becoming more profitable to the Society.

The BOD also approved efforts by ASA's official delegation to the World Congress of Anesthesiologists (WCA) in Buenos Aires the last week of March 2012 to attempt to win approval for the WCA to be held in San Francisco in 2020 (there was strong competition for this from other world capitals). Dr. Gelb, one of those lobbying for San Francisco, reports that we unfortunately lost out to Prague. Dr. Pauker had been influential in efforts to have this honor directed toward our state, and CSA presumably would have had an important role.

Further information was provided to the BOD on the “land use” considerations that I mentioned in my last report. A 6.6-acre vacant parcel had been identified as the potential future new location for the ASA headquarters, in Schaumburg, Ill., and negotiations had been in progress for its purchase. The final contract was signed March 21, 2012. Schaumburg is about 8 miles northwest of O'Hare Airport, near the intersection of two major freeways, and Motorola and IBM are leading employers in the community. Other national medical professional organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Society of Neurological Surgeons, are located close by. The disposition of the existing property where ASA is currently headquartered will await the next several years.

Relationships with Allied Organizations

It is noteworthy that there has been ongoing dissatisfaction expressed for the past several years by some of the subspecialty organizations that are

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administratively managed by ASA. This has involved many issues, including the increase in ASA management fees and complaints from the subspecialty organizations regarding timeliness and competency of the management services provided. The American Society for Regional Anesthesia (ASRA) and the Society for Neuroscience in Anesthesiology and Critical Care (SNACC) have decided to contract with other management service providers, leaving the ASA. This actually will have the effect of improving the ASA's balance sheet, as expenses were greater than revenue for these activities. The ASA has expressed a desire to fill a role as "incubator" for small subspecialty or special-interest organizations related to anesthesiology, but recognizes that at some point they may be better off on their own. ASA leadership and staff are, however, addressing and correcting the problems identified in these management duties.

A contentious discussion took place regarding a proposal from the ASA Committee on Regional Anesthesia to endorse a joint project from the committee and ASRA. The proposed "Ultrasound-Guided Regional Anesthesia (UGRA) Education and Clinical Training Portfolio" was initiated as a resource for granting medical staff privileges in UGRA. The specific objections to details in the document are beyond the scope of this report, but there was general agreement that such a resource would be valuable. It should be noted that this certainly will come up again at the August BOD and at the HOD in October.

I would also like to announce that Dr. Michael Champeau was elected by the BOD to fill a vacant position as one of ASA's two representatives on the important joint ASA-ABA-AMA committee, which makes significant advisory decisions regarding the American Board of Anesthesiology.

Future ASA Leadership

Finally, there will be a contested election for ASA First Vice President between Dr. Arthur Boudreaux (current Secretary) and Dr. John Abenstein (current Speaker of the House) in October. Other candidates have been rumored to be considering seeking ASA office, which may result in a robust election process.

MARK TWAIN'S WIT AND WISDOM

*It is better to keep your mouth shut and appear stupid
than to open it and remove all doubt.*

Always do right. This will gratify some people, and astonish the rest.

The best way to cheer yourself is to try to cheer somebody else up.