



Get Boarded

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Paul Phinney, MD

I HAD THE HONOR recently to publicly acclaim a lifetime of accomplishments by a gentleman who by that time had become a personal mentor. I have carefully chosen a few such mentors over five decades. Ed Rudin never knew he was on my list, nor have any of the others.

I liked Ed's equanimity, understanding of human behavior, active concern and thoughtful approach to issues. They all rolled up into a delightfully unassuming personality that could show depth from across committee meeting rooms with nothing more than sparkling eyes and a smile. We would all do well to be so composed at 80.

Most of all I learned from Ed's activeness. Once after reading a draft of a message for this magazine, Ed kindly but bluntly reminded me of my tendency towards the passive voice. He said: "If we want to make things happen, we need activeness." He was right, and my work benefited.

Ed lived as actively as his edits would suggest, but other pages in this magazine recount his life and accomplishments. My purpose here is not so much eulogy as to honor a promise.

I made that promise to Ed in his living room about a year ago. It was to tackle the SSVMS Board of Directors as a topic in this magazine. Ed told me he thought the SSVMS membership has little or no idea what the Board does on its behalf. From what I have seen during more than three years on the Board, he was right.

First, some basics. The SSVMS Board of Directors establishes policy for the Medical Society. It provides guidance and direction to Society staff on matters as they arise, and facilitates the Society's mission. Roughly paraphrased, that mission is to uphold the authority and autonomy of physicians in the delivery of professional and ethical medical care, promote the art and science of medicine, and defend the public health.

The Board is made up of 12 directors, plus the President, President-Elect and Immediate Past President. Directors come from six districts. Three are in Sacramento County (north, central and south), with Arden Way and Fruitridge Road the latitudinal dividers. Yolo and El Dorado Counties each comprise self-contained districts, and one district is made up of all members of Permanente practicing anywhere in the three counties.

Each SSVMS district is entitled to at least one director, with the other six seats apportioned by total membership. The more members in a district, the more seats. District representation is adjusted every odd year.

There are important questions buried in this pretty dry stuff. For example, how many SSVMS members know who their Director is? Do *you* know which Directors represent you, and what they say about what is going on in your district? When was the last time you called one of them to find out? When was the last time *one of them called you*?

District reports are a regular agenda item at the Board, with each Director giving a brief overview of "the good, bad and ugly" from his or her district. It has always seemed odd to me that, judging from the district reports at some meetings, nothing is happening in those districts. Directors have even said as much.

Board representation is potentially a hot-button issue. After readjustments are made for 2003, four of the six districts will have only one director each; the other eight seats will be divided equally between District 2 and Permanente (District 5). Given the distribution and number of active dues-paying members who practice with Permanente (452 out of a total 1214), the idea of this medical group comprising its own district makes some sense. But perhaps other sizeable groups should be similarly represented.

Along different lines, surgical and subspecialty physicians on the Board outnumber those in primary care by more than two to one. Would the Society be more productive if organized along mode of practice lines rather than geographic lines - or perhaps both, as is done in the CMA House of Delegates? If the Board should be organized differently, what kind of structure would best position us to develop a professional agenda and actively promote the health of our communities? Should district lines be re-drawn? Should our mission statement, now almost eight years old, be revised to reflect current realities? Questions like these require thoughtful and informed answers if the Society is to be successful. The Board should, and does, consider them periodically.

There is also a fair amount of more humdrum work, including oversight for Society finances, staff benefits, major expenditures, membership issues, and committee work.

Not all the work is tedious. Recent issues of consequence and controversy include: closure of the Society library, merger with the Yolo County Medical Society, coordination of a community response to bioterrorism, support of a level four bio-laboratory, local government and tobacco tax issues, potential conversion of *SSV Medicine* to an all-electronic medium, dollar support of an effort to insure all children in our region by 2006, and the equity of SSVMS dues discounts.

Such are the meat and potato issues of SSVMS Board agendas. Issues and controversies at state and national levels, reported on regularly by our CMA trustees and AMA delegates, provide a broader perspective and give us an opportunity for input. Sometimes it is an earful.

The SSVMS Board represents *your* interests on such issues. As an SSVMS member, you have a right, perhaps an obligation, to communicate your input on current issues before the Board, and on issues you think *should be* before the Board. I am sure Ed would have agreed.

In that spirit, and with a hope that by honoring my promise I can facilitate that involvement, I provide below the direct-dial office telephone numbers and, if available, e-mail addresses for each SSVMS Director and Officer. I encourage you to call one or more of them to find out how they are representing your particular interests. I challenge you to challenge them.

Better yet, I invite you to attend a Board meeting to see for yourself.

2003 SSVMS Directors

District 1, North Area

Donald Blythe, MD, (916) 966-6287, emergency medicine, donblythe@sbcglobal.net
Kuldip Sandhu, MD, (916) 965-9650, gastroenterology

District 2, Mid-town

Satya Chatterjee, MD, (916) 447-6466, general surgery
Richard Jones, MD, (916) 452-8105, ophthalmology, rajones@sbcglobal.net

Margaret Parsons, MD, (916) 739-1505, dermatology, mepmd@ix.netcom.com
P. Gail Pirie, MD, (916) 733-6990, anesthesiology, gail.pogoriler@comcast.net

District 3, South Area

Dean Rinard, MD, (916) 681-6000, internal medicine, drinard528@aol.com

District 4, El Dorado County

Richard Detwiler, MD, (530) 622-1397, general surgery

District 5, Permanente

George Chiu, MD, (916) 784-5197, urology, george.w.chiu@kp.org
James Sehr, MD, (916) 688-2030, orthopedic surgery, james.sehr@kp.org
Howard Slyter, MD, (916) 973-5175, neurology, howard.slyter@kp.org

District 6, Yolo County

Janet O'Brien, MD, (530)662-3961, internal medicine, jeobrien@cwnet.com

2003 SSVMS Officers

President, Paul Phinney, MD, (916) 614-4800, pediatrics, paul.phinney@kp.org
President-Elect, Richard Pan, MD, (916) 734-1518, pediatrics, r.pan@ucdmc.ucdavis.edu
Immediate Past President, Bryant Sheehy, MD, (916) 455-0224, neurology,
bryantsheehy@yahoo.com

paul.phinney@kp.org

Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society
5380 Elvas Avenue #100 • Sacramento, CA 95819
916.452.2671 PH • 916.452.2690 FX • Email: info@ssvms.org

Copyright © 2000-2008 Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society - All Right's Reserved