



## Voices of Medicine

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By Del Meyer, MD

### **A look back at the first issue of this magazine.**

*Although our society is a century and 36 years old, we do not have good records prior to our journal predecessor, *The Bulletin*, which started in September 1950. During 1997, we wrote a column titled, "Yesteryear," in which we included vignettes from *The Bulletin*. Since in 1997 we were unable to reach even 50 years into our past for an historical perspective, we chose items from 45 and 25 years ago. For this historical issue, we'll take a look at the first publication of our journal predecessor, *The Bulletin*, to see what was important to our society members, some of whom are still members.*

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:**

#### **We Dare To Do**

by Andrew M. Henderson, Jr., MD  
(Vol 1 - No 1, September, 1950)

**AGITATION** for various types of medical legislation inimical to the health of the nation prompted the American Medical Association to embark on a large scale educational campaign. The campaign has gone far to thwart the propaganda issued by various pressure groups and individuals whose objective is to inaugurate a system of compulsory health insurance. But it is not enough. County medical societies must do their part to prove to the people of the United States that American medicine free of political interference, has done, is doing and will continue to do the best medical job in the world.

The proximity of the state legislature makes it particularly important for our society to have a strong public relations program. This year such a program is being instituted. Through the cooperation of our members we intend assuring everyone in this county of expert medical care, twenty-four hours a day, regardless of ability to pay. Actually this is nothing new. It's not a dream of the future. It's here now. The medical profession has always cared for the sick, rich and poor. The indigent have been cared for through part-pay clinics and the county hospitals and doctors have always attempted to scale their fees to fit the budgets of their full-paying patients. What is new is the fact we are offering the guarantee to the public as society, instead of as individual physicians.

### **EDITORIAL MESSAGE: Our Voice**

by Charles E. Grayson, MD  
(September, 1950 - No 1)

The Sacramento Society for Medical Improvement takes considerable pride in initiating its own publication, *THE BULLETIN*. The Bulletin is the first regular or periodical publication of our society. Our society has, in the past, sponsored various scientific articles published by individual members. The Bulletin, however, is intended for diverse and general interest. A brief survey of this issue well demonstrates the scope of coverage. There is notice of regular society meetings, staff meetings, clinical conferences, meetings of interest to special groups and special meetings or sessions of interest to everyone. Contemporary activities of our society and of members of our society will also receive

attention. Space is allocated for expression of individual opinions and for the presentation of professional problems. Written contributions are requested.

The Bulletin is not intended for a publication for its own sake. It is neither intended nor desired as a medium by which the society or its members degrade or prostitute the medical profession. It is not intended as a publication of newsy chit-chat to be discarded.

The Bulletin is our voice, individually and collectively. It is for our interest is a medium for the dissemination of knowledge and for the expression of our opinions. Its value depends on the efforts of each individual member of the Sacramento Society For Medical Improvement -not on the efforts of a few. Let's take it and keep it the worthwhile project which the quality of the medical profession in the Sacramento area deserves.

This is a part of our program for better medicine, better service and better relations. Suggestions and constructive criticisms are welcome.

MANAGING EDITOR:

**Our Public Relations Program — Blueprint for Building**

*by Jane Algeo Watson*

Many MEMBERS of the medical profession seem to know better what they do not want than what they want. Perhaps this is the professions greatest weakness in public relations.

Medical men have definitely and irrevocably stated they want no part of regimented medicine — now or ever. The public isn't so sure. Warning has been repeatedly sounded from all quarters that if the profession is to successfully combat socialized medicine it must come forward with an alternative and unanimously and vigorously support such an alternate. The profession can not just say "no" and oppose; it must settle its views on what it does want and convert those views from vociferous assorted negatives to tangible positives.

Your society has taken a big step forward on the positive side. It has awakened to the imperative necessity of earning good relations with the public and has embarked on an extensive public relations program with that objective in mind.

Members of the medical profession can be and are justly proud of the fine traditions, the accomplishments and the aims of the American system of the private practice of medicine. That is system based on free enterprise, individual initiative and service to the public. It is worth preserving. But if it is to be preserved the public must be made fully aware of the merits of the system and its superiority over all others-extant or proposed. And the public-right here in Sacramento, as elsewhere-must be enlightened to the inherent dangers not only to the medical profession but to itself, in the various proposed schemes directed toward the regimentation or compulsion of medicine.

**A Way of Life**

This then, is a report on the general objectives, the philosophy and the basic policy of our public relations program. This is the blueprint and some of the bricks for the foundation to be used in building our program. This is the positive alternate we will offer to combat the selfish, the socialistic and others who would change the private practice of medicine for political gain. This is your program; it is intended and can be achieved only by an alert, active, honest and united society.

Public relations isn't magic, it's no panacea; it's applied action and hard work. It's not a special committee; it's our whole society working together. It's not our duty alone of an employed publicist; it's the day to day conduct activities of each and every member of this society - a gauge by which the entire conduct of affairs will be measured. Public relations is not just something to achieve; it's something to follow. It's not a project, or even a series of projects; it's a way of life - a way that has to be lived every day, by everybody. But it's the only way to earn and keep good relations your public. Someone has called it: "enlightened selfishness."

**BOOK NOTICE:****Memories, Men & Medicine***by J. Roy Jones, MD*

For our history from 1868, Your Public Narration, refers to the above book from which we can wield from the instructive potentialities discernable in and between the lines of "Memories, Men and Medicine." We are on record for 100 years of tangible accomplishment. Our substantial 500 page volume amply covers a wide sphere of facts.

It is an estimable history providing us potent testimony through recitations of the acts, words and personalities of countless members of the Sacramento Society For Medical Improvement, current to 1940. Our predecessors indelibly wove a fabric of high reputation for us to sustain. The book describes early California's medical tribulations, proceeds to our society formation in 1868, and traces our growth from struggling infancy. Now, with our reasonable maturity as an organization it behooves us to indulge in pride and gratification. Our saga is a published reality, factually and gently written by our untiring, studious colleague, J. Roy Jones. It is an instrument with which to whet strong bonds in effectual public relations.

**BOOK REVIEW:****The Ethical Basis of Medical Practice***reviewed by Edmund E. Simpson, MD, Secretary-Treasurer*

Sperry, Willard L.: The Ethical Basis of Medical Practice, New York, Paul B. Hoeber, 1950. pp. 185. \$2.50. This fine little book, by the Dean of the Harvard Divinity School, had as its beginning a lecture at the Massachusetts General Hospital following a request by Dr. James H. Means to address the staff, and subsequently another lecture to the faculty and students of the Medical School of the University of Michigan. These lectures were expanded into the present book.

There are no lists of "thou shalt" and thou shalt not," as in the Code of Ethics published by the A.M.A. The book points out that when presented with a concrete situation there is usually no simple choice between black and white but the more difficult problem of choosing between various shades of gray. Many of our problems arise because of a conflict of loyalties and not a clash between good and evil.

There is a short but significant chapter on Democratic vs. Totalitarian Medicine. Another discusses Telling the Truth to the Patient. Sperry does not agree with Richard Cabot, who felt the patient must always be told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The author states there is no single categorical rule about truth-telling, and that whether a factor is to tell the truth to the patient depends primarily upon his knowledge of the patient and his observation of the patient's own frame of mind.

There are chapters on The Prolongation of Life, and on Euthanasia Pro and Con, all well done. Several other chapters are equally well written.

This book does not tell us what to do. It makes us think what we are doing. The foreword is by Dr. Means. The reviewer heartily recommends this book.

**BORBORYGMI**

This space is reserved for you — a place where you can blow off steam — talk back, to the editor. Both bouquets and brickbats are welcome. We'll print ALMOST anything to which you'll sign your name. We're starting off the column with a thought-provoking letter from a dentist in Oxford, England.

Gentlemen:

Seeing in the papers today that the American Medical Association is making fight against socialized medicine, and as I spoke to a meeting of doctors in Sacramento last year, I felt that I must write to you and your colleagues.

I wish that it were possible for me to come to America again to speak, not to doctors, but to the ordinary man and woman, to warn them of the dangers of accepting socialized medicine.

Do the people realize that nothing is free in this world, and that they will find that when government control of medicine or dentistry is in force the cost government administration goes up to enormous proportions.

Ask them if they would like to pay a tax of about half a dollar, on every 20 cigarettes they buy, or a third of every car they bought, a purchase tax on their clothes, and in fact nearly all the necessities of life. That is the price the British working man is paying for his free medicine. The doctors are now terribly overworked, caused by a huge number of patients who attend with petty complaints and take up the time of the doctor who should be seeing patients who are really ill.

We have two of the largest hospitals in the old city. Since government control there are more clerks and administrative staff than all the doctors and nurses combined. The doctor or surgeon has lost his freedom, his contacts with his patients and is just a little cog in the big wheel.

We are rapidly losing our best men, who are leaving for Australia, etc., because they will not suffer the indignities imposed on them. As regards dentistry, my own profession, we are no longer a body of men who took pride in their work, but a group of civil servants, working to a state schedule and dominated by inspectors of the state.

So do I appeal to you and your colleagues, fight hard against the evils of socialized-medicine, get to the people and tell them the truth.

Yours Sincerely,

George W. Clarke, D.D.S.

#### **Antidote for Socialism:**

Medicine is not alone in its efforts to resist socialization. Attempts at government control threaten other professions and industries. As these efforts at government regimentation become apparent, more and more groups are becoming outspoken in their condemnation of anything leading to socialization. Not only are they resisting control of their own professions or industries but are joining medicine in its fight against socialization. Over 10,000 organizations are now on record as opposed to compulsory health insurance. Unquestionably some of this resistance has been activated by the realization socialized medicine would be only the opening wedge of the "welfare state" and that no compromise can be made with this philosophy.

Robert Gordon Menzies, the present Prime Minister of Australia, has said: You can't beat socialism by trying to be better and wiser socialists. You've got to fight socialism-not try to out-promise it."

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*This review of the first issue of the first journal of our medical society gives us a view of what was dear to our predecessors. Many in our society feel that we have lost our moral compass. This brief review of yesteryear could facilitate a return to it.*

*In 1954, Richard Johnson, MD, was appointed Editor, a post he continued for 40 years. We were then appointed to a four-year term beginning with volume 45 through volume 48. In 1970, with volume 21, the name was changed from The Bulletin to Sacramento Medicine, a name that gained worldwide recognition.*

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