



## A Time to Reflect and Plan

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Margaret E. Parsons, MD

SOME PEOPLE REFLECT on their goals for the year at New Year's. I have always thought more about the year as Spring breaks out with budding green leaves and new life; when you receive this issue Spring will be in full glory.

Your SSVMS Board has also taken time to reflect and plan, with a board retreat in early March. Part of what makes our board effective is that every couple of years we take time to get to know a bit more about each other, our practices, our families, and "what makes us tick." We can then work together to build on the strengths of our organization and plan for where we believe the Society needs to be moving. Historically, retreats have brought forth programs such as Adopt-A-School and been a time for organizational work, such as the combining of the separate county societies into our tri-county society.

All of us concluded one of our greatest strengths SSVMS possesses is in our Executive Director, Bill Sandberg, and his outstanding staff. Bill has built a team that works effectively for us all every day. He is a man with a wealth of knowledge on health care in our region and the players and insurance organizations. He has skills and contacts to help guide members through insurance, practice, legal, and medical board questions - including the sort that none of us ever want to have to deal with. We are fortunate to have his strengths and resources at our helm.

Accolades also go to Chris Stincelli, who I have come to know as someone who watches the details, helps keep the ship on course, and makes sure we don't forget someone or something. Janice Emerson ably staffs committees and is part of the team for all of our work in public health and children's advocacy. Le Pham keeps the details of membership organized - no small task. Melissa Darling runs the website - and if you haven't checked it out recently, you are missing some excellent information. Marti Hill keeps our finances and books in order and leads us to clean audits every year. And our SPIRIT and Adopt-A-School programs staffed by Kris Wallach are exemplary and her personal touch is evident - as those of you who have volunteered know.

Membership and its value to all of you and to potential members was the topic of much of the board's work at the retreat. Ensuring we provide the services our members need, and continuing to reach potential members as the face of medicine continues to evolve and change, was in our thoughts as we worked through the weekend. We discussed ideas to strengthen our magazine, the simplest of which was recognizing the three counties on the cover, as was done on the previous issue. More substantive discussion about topics of articles and what you as members have told us that you want in past surveys was reviewed, and we know that Dr. John Loofbourow and his editorial board will continue to strive to make the magazine a strong asset.

Letting members know of other member benefits, such as travel insurance, is always a goal. The work we do with CMA on legislative and regulatory issues will continue to be of importance. We in the Sacramento region are often leaned upon to testify at the capital on various health issues. SSVMS has also been working with the three counties on health

issues; we have a responsibility to be a strong voice for patients and the physicians who care for them, and that will continue as one of our society's priorities.

How SSVMS and physicians are recognized and perceived by the community in various venues is important. We spent time both at our December Board meeting and the retreat reviewing the Sacramento Magazine "Top Docs" issue. Bill Sandberg and I met with the co-publishers Mike O'Brien and Joe Chiodo.

We reviewed our concerns about the survey methodology and that there should be more information about how to select a physician than simply a list. Our discussion was productive and amicable, and we believe that their receptiveness to our concerns will help patients get more information they need.

The Board's weekend work provided a long list of ideas that we are now prioritizing and working through with staff. We hope to always build and strengthen the organization, and we welcome your input as members. Let us know if you have some ideas and if a survey comes your way, please take the time to give us the feedback we need.

As a physician volunteer, I strive to not only build our organization, but to learn from the experience as well. Physicians are always learning and growing their skill set. Because the retreat was at the beginning of Spring, it was my time to reflect and ponder on the coming year. So I came away with some things to include on my year's list and things to remember.

**Remember to Laugh.** Bill Sandberg has a collection of video clips that refreshed us all at the retreat with their hilarity. Laughter is indeed healing.

**Keep to your word.** I promised to lead the sessions of the retreat on time if the Board made sure to all be there and start on time. Wow! What a group - not once were we missing anyone when a session started. And so we finished on time or early every session - something we all appreciate, having been at CME sessions that get way off kilter.

**Get to know people you work with.** Having time to get know each other has helped us all build bridges to have hearty discussions and work as a team. We all know this as a "take-home" value to our office lives. I do not need to know every detail of my staff's lives, but enough to know how to maximize their strengths. Taking time for staff training or fun times is important and will help us care for patients more effectively.

**Exercise.** I was pleased to see that just about all of our physician board took time to walk/jog either in the morning or at our end of day break. Just as we ask our patients to exercise, we need to care for our own bodies.

**Play and do something you enjoy.** Barbara Arnold took in the view at the retreat and did some watercolors at break. (You have seen some of her work gracing magazine covers last year.) Taking time to play with our families is also never to be forgotten in our busy lives.

**Rest.** Some of the board was truly in need of rest, recovering from the influenza outbreak. Time to sleep with no pagers or cell phones is the most wonderful thing when you are physically tired.

**Reflect, Review, and Plan.** Well, that is what a retreat is about. SSVMS will be doing the ongoing work. And my Spring renewal time has me ready with my own list.

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