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 COMMENTARY
 

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## LINES FROM THE PRESIDENT

*"Let's face it: however old-fashioned and out of date and devaluated the word is, we like the way of living provided by democracy."*

*—Eve Curie, Address to American Booksellers Association, New York, April 9, 1940*

**A**t The Society of Nuclear Medicine's business meeting for the general membership last June in Houston, several members presented a claim that the position adopted by the Board of Trustees on the desirable length of training for physicians to be licensed to use radionuclides for cardiac nuclear medicine procedures did not reflect the sentiment of the majority of the membership nor the best interests of the Society (see *Newsline*, Mar. 1985, pp.



220–222; June, 1985, pp. 557–558). In response, I proposed that the solution to this complex issue did not lend itself to an abbreviated discussion late on a hot Texas afternoon, and that the issue be resubmitted to the membership for further discussion and subsequent review by the Board of Trustees.

This controversy represents a microcosm of issues confronting the Society today. How do we function as a Society representing members with diverse professional, scientific, and personal interests and opinions?

Indeed, as I circulated through the meeting rooms, exhibit hall, and receptions at the Annual Meeting, I received good wishes, advice, comments, and suggestions. A number of people told me that the trouble with the Society was that it did nothing for the practitioner, nothing to protect "our turf," and that the Society was too research-oriented. Interestingly, an equivalent number told me that the Society was too involved with socioeconomic issues, and that it had drifted from its original mandate to promote education and research. Some members felt that the Society had drifted too close to industry,

that "we're too commercial." Others stated that the Society was insensitive to the concerns of industry and unrealistic about economic issues.

It is insufficient simply to conclude that a Society which equally displeases its diverse membership might not be doing such a bad job. A number of sociologic studies have reported that the stability and survival of a group is determined to a greater degree by how the members handle their differences than by the number of issues upon which they agree.

I believe that we can best maintain the Society's stability and guarantee its survival by serving as a voice which speaks for the nuclear medicine community, with that voice reflecting a conscientious effort to reach professional yet practical compromises on our members' differences of opinion.

In developing policy, the leadership of the Society will continue to be responsive to the concerns of the membership. It is important that we know of these concerns. It is equally important, however, that the Society not drift while a consensus is developed. I encourage members to write to their local chapter presidents, the Board of Trustees, and the Society officers about issues, including the cardiology training issue, which are important to our members.

Early in October, the Executive Committee will meet to identify the forces which affect nuclear medicine and the Society, to examine the nature of the Society's response to these forces, and to consider what changes, if any, should be made in our organizational structure and direction.

During the past year as president-elect, I have come to appreciate at close range the strengths of the Society—the quality of our meetings and publications, the energy and imagination of our members, and the dedicated and sophisticated staff in the Central Office. A recent past president, Dr. Merle Loken, once compared the Society to a large ship. I am convinced that our ship and crew are sound and that we shall successfully navigate the choppy waters before us.

*Stanley J. Goldsmith, MD  
President  
The Society of Nuclear Medicine*