

## COMMENTARY

### LINES FROM THE PRESIDENT: A VINTAGE YEAR

**J**ust about the time I had Henry's and Melissa's telephone numbers memorized and just about the time I thought all the mail and phone calls would go on forever, I became Past President.



*B. Leonard Holman, MD*

Howie Dworkin tells me that the Past President syndrome has an abrupt onset. The phone stops ringing and the mailbox, which had been overflowing for 12 months, begins to collect dust and circulars. Calls to hospital communication suggest that both services are working quite well, it's just that the information overload has moved

south to Charlottesville, Virginia, and Barbara Croft.

It has been a highly successful year. As any politician will tell you, success is in the eyes of the beholder. There are objective criteria, however. The fundamental criterion of success is the avoidance of a catastrophe during one's term in office. Another measure is fiscal. The Society is financially sound with increasing revenues and, for the first time in years, an upward turn in advertising revenue in the journal. The improvement in our finances is due to a number of factors—the close and careful attention by our Finance Committee under Marty Nusynowitz's guidance, the attention paid by Danny Vale and the staff in New York and, most importantly, to the resurgence of nuclear medicine. A return to growth makes any manager's job a little easier and nuclear medicine is growing once again. It is the rejuvenation of nuclear medicine as both a scientific and clinical discipline that has filled the rooms at our meetings and the pages in our journal. And it is the growth in revenue that allows the Society to maintain its services and to embark on new ventures which address the scientific and educational goals of the organization—in many cases, good ideas sitting on the shelf because money has not been available.

While we are seeing growth in the revenue side of the picture, we are seeing increasing stability in the Society structure. After more than a decade of mucking with the scientific program, we have found a format over the last number of years which satisfies most of our membership.

Paul Murphy, our Scientific Program Chairman, his committee, and Michele Voso and Maribeth Kraus and their staffs in the New York office have contributed substantially to that success.

Under Tom Haynie's direction, the Journal has tried to satisfy the diverse membership of the Society, balancing the needs of the basic scientists with those of our clinical scientists and practitioners. The incorporation of *Newsline* and review articles has helped. Tom has been highly successful in balancing the various needs of the membership against the limited number of pages in the Journal. Ultimately we may need to satisfy everyone's increasing needs by spinning off a second, clinically oriented, journal. The Publications Committee, under Dick Witcofski's direction, has evolved a pragmatic and reasonable approach to the publication of books and monographs. The most successful publications are those that meet the greatest demand—Naomi Alazraki's and Fred Mishkin's primer in nuclear medicine, Bob English's and Sue Brown's SPECT Primer, and, most recently, Peter Kirchner's and Barry Siegel's first volume of the Self-Study Program. The Society of Nuclear Medicine is not a publishing house but can fill special needs. With recertification and mandatory continuing education looming large over our lives, these efforts take on additional importance. I am indebted to the individuals who have taken up the challenge of developing these projects and seeing them through to fruition.

The Society's role in Government Relations, working with its sister organizations, particularly ACNP, has become highly effective and gives Society members the greatest benefit per unit of cost of any medical organization in the country. Experience and enthusiasm work wonders. The Government Relations Committee under Bill Briner's direction has been a potent political force on behalf of Nuclear Medicine and Melissa Brown and her Government Relations staff have provided us with the eyes and ears that allow us to respond to issues appropriately and effectively.

The Technology Section continues to play a critical and invaluable role within the Society. The integration of the Technologists into the fabric of the organization has placed the technologist on a par with other members, has

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## NEWS BRIEFS

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### SNM to Consider Structural Change

The Society of Nuclear Medicine is considering making an important structural change which will bring its official status for government purposes in line with its true mission and purpose. When the Society was incorporated, it applied for tax-exempt status as a "trade association or professional society" to promote the profession of nuclear medicine. As the Society has evolved, however, its focus has been on education, research and raising the level of medicine being practiced, for the betterment of the general public. It has become apparent that the majority of the association's activities are more in line with tax-exemption as a "charitable, educational and scientific" organization, which affords a more favorable tax status.

In line with this analysis, we would establish a new not-for-profit corporation to carry on the educational, research, and similar activities of the Society. It would assume the Society's name, and present members of the Society would become members of the new organization. The new organization would apply for tax-exemption

as a "charitable, educational and scientific" organization. The current professional society will remain in existence for some period of time as an affiliated organization which will carry on any activities more appropriate to its tax exemption.

The Society views the proposed restructuring as an opportunity to emphasize the many benefits that its activities confer not just on those practicing one medical specialty, but also on the entire scientific community and the general public. SNM members will have an opportunity to vote on this proposed restructuring at the Annual Meeting in June.

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### NAS ELECTS ALFRED P. WOLF

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) has elected Alfred P. Wolf, PhD, senior chemist in the Department of Chemistry, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, New York,

to its membership along with 60 others.

Dr. Wolf is director of Brookhaven's positron emission tomography (PET) program and is well-known for his innovative work in PET. He has won numerous awards, including the 1988 Gustavus John Esselen Award for Chemistry in the Public Interest (see *Newsline*, Apr. 1988, p. 440).

Dr. Wolf has served as an advisor for the International Atomic Energy Agency, the National Research Council of Italy, the Alasbimn Latin American Society for Nuclear Medicine and Biology, and the Atomic Research Center in Jülich, Germany, among others.

The NAS, often described as the most prestigious honorary society for scientists in the United States, now has 1,540 members. They are selected by secret ballot by existing members of the NAS, and are chosen to recognize significant achievements in original research.

The NAS is a private organization chartered by Congress to provide scientific advice to the government. This advice is provided by committees of experts who are not necessarily NAS members themselves but who are selected by NAS members. ■

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increased the strength of the technologists' voice in the regulatory arena, and has made our Society unique. I am indebted to Marcia Boyd and Virginia Pappas and their staffs for the continued growth and vigor of the Tech Section.

All of these various efforts require effective and imaginative management. Henry Ernstthal has demonstrated to me over the year the importance of the right touch on the tiller, neither too little nor too much. I am indebted to Henry for his continuing leadership role in the Society and, particularly, for his invaluable assistance to me this year.

While the Society has a small number of critical functions, it is nevertheless a complex organism which can run effectively only with the help of a large number of self-motivated individuals who take on and complete important tasks with no greater motivation than the fact that there are jobs that need to be done. I thank every one of you and am delighted to turn over the reins of office to Barbara Croft, whose knowledge and enthusiasm will make her into one of the Society's most effective presidents.

*B. Leonard Holman  
President, The Society of Nuclear Medicine*