

President's Message

Thank you for the opportunity to serve

In my final president's message I would like to first thank all those who have helped and encouraged me in my years with the SCA. The list of individuals is long, and I am only going to mention a few by name. The list has to start with my mentor Earl Wynands, who helped spark my interest in Cardiac anesthesiology almost 30 years ago, and who has remained a wonderful friend and colleague over the years. It would not have been possible for me to devote the time I have to the SCA without the encouragement and support of all my Emory colleagues. John Waller helped promote my participation in the SCA when I first came to Emory, and Jim Zaidan continues to provide me the freedom to devote time and energy to the society. Every SCA president with whom I have had the pleasure to serve has provided inspiration and support, and I must extend particular thanks to Roger Moore and Glenn Gravlee who helped mentor me as a member of the executive committee. All the members of the Board for the last two years have been a true pleasure to work with, and have provided the real leadership of the society. Heather Spiess, as well as becoming a personal friend through our dealings related to the SCA, is a resource to the society that is, as the Mastercard ad says, "priceless." The SCA has been a hugely rewarding society for me in all respects – the people, the opportunities for my own growth and learning, and the opportunity to contribute to the development of our relatively young subspecialty.

The last two years have been exciting and eventful. My role has really been more to help bring existing projects to fruition, and help guide the society with new projects – all of which are ideas coming from past and present leaders. Cardiac Anesthesiology has become a recognized subspecialty of Anesthesiology, as a result of many years of effort by successive SCA presidents and led by Alan Schwartz. The American Board of Anesthesiology (ABA) has begun accrediting one year fellowships, with the first fellows in these programs to begin in July this year. We have either strengthened our alliance with, or forged new relationships with the American Heart Association (AHA), the American Society of Echocardiography (ASE), and the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS). We have provided leadership for the new "Cardiac Track" at the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Annual Meeting, and have co-sponsored another very successful International Meeting, this time in Prague, Czech Republic. In collaboration with the ASA and under the leadership of Dan Thys we have initiated a major update of the guidelines for perioperative transesophageal echocardiography. Our journal, the Cardiovascular section within *Anesthesia & Analgesia*, is being transformed into a true "journal within a journal" under the very capable leadership of Chuck Hogue, Marty London, and now Jerry Levy in the new subsection on Hemostasis and Transfusion. The "Echo Rounds" section with case reports and online video clips is growing exponentially, and the SCA is in the process of developing its own library of these, accessible at our website.

One of the most exciting developments in our Society's history will be introduced to the membership at our annual meeting in

Montreal, and this is our FOCUS project (Flawless Operative Cardiovascular Unified Systems). We have embarked on a major development campaign, targeting first our own past and present leaders as well as all of you, with the goal of raising two million dollars to initiate a project to study and improve operating room communication and safety, and reduce human error. Part of this project is the creation of the SCA Foundation, to manage the finances. This project has been led by Nancy Nussmeier, Glenn Gravlee, and

Paul Barash, with a major contribution from Bruce Spiess. I believe this is a truly visionary endeavor which has the potential to change the practice of our specialty and perhaps all of anesthesiology.

What are some of the challenges? We must continue to work with the ABA to ensure the process for accreditation of fellowship programs is based on the guidelines carefully developed by our society, and that these guidelines evolve with changes in our specialty. Our efforts in collaboration with other societies must not only give us "a place at the table" but in addition provide leadership opportunities for our members. As we continue our work with the ASA in developing the "Track" system at their meeting, and in renewing the guidelines for our practice of echocardiography, we must be sure that the expertise of our leadership is appropriately recognized. The ASA has recently begun a process to develop "basic" certification in echocardiography which will not require the training and expertise we have established in our work with the ASE and NBE. We must help guide this process, in order to preserve the recognition and endorsement by our cardiology and surgical peers, of the rigorous standards required for guiding surgical decision making in the cardiothoracic operating room. Our goal for the FOCUS project is ambitious and costly, and will require personal commitment and contributions from all of us.

The society is vibrant and strong. We have a relatively secure financial base to fund the day to day business and support the three very successful meetings we hold annually. It is not the kind of financial base which can support a major project such as FOCUS, but we have a clear and workable plan to provide that base through a development program and creation of a Foundation. Our membership is stable and we continue to attract many new members from residency and fellowship programs. I am confident that the leadership of the society is talented, diverse and committed, the SCA will meet the challenges of the present and future, and will continue to lead the world of cardiovascular and thoracic anesthesiology. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve.



*James G. Ramsay, MD
President, 2005-2007*