

# Going Green and Banking Resources

Our most valuable asset is arguably our ability and privilege to practice medicine. While the recent near collapse of our financial markets has adversely affected most of us, our profession effectively immunizes us from the fear that we will lose the financial wherewithal to care for our families. Nevertheless, many of us must reassess our financial priorities.

Not surprisingly, the SCA leadership is similarly re-examining our priorities while working to protect our assets and maintaining our mission. This message outlines some of the changes that have resulted from this process, all the while maintaining the standards in membership service that have guided the Society for 32 years. For example, we have struggled with the goal of 'going green' while trying to determine the impact of such strategies on our educational offerings. 'Going green' allows us to reduce our consumption of paper, the fuel necessary for transport of materials, and our operating costs greatly, but the cost is that we must rethink the mass consumption of paper that has facilitated our past presentations. Our goal is not only to go green for all the economic and environmental reasons, but also to improve our educational offerings by taking advantage of the many opportunities offered by a digital product and electronic communications.

## The Newsletter

We will now publish our monthly SCA Newsletter as a digital publication that is available online only ([www.scahq.org](http://www.scahq.org)). In addition to the substantial cost savings in printing and mailing, this change will allow us to maintain a format that is visually similar for the most part while permitting us greater flexibility in layout and the capability of an even more robust content as the number of pages will not be restricted. The Newsletter Committee, chaired by Dr. Tim Park, has accepted the charge of exploring the publication opportunities inherent in a web-based instrument. Among other things, Dr. Marty London, the Cardiothoracic and Vascular Education Section Editor for Anesthesia & Analgesia, hopes to use the digital format to improve the accessibility of the echocardiography educational materials offered in our journal. We invite you to contact Tim ([tim.park@osumc.edu](mailto:tim.park@osumc.edu)) if you have suggestions for enhancing the Newsletter given the new format. For my part, I hope that Dr. Park and the Committee will consider including a 'Letters to the Editor' section as well as adding other features that aim to expand the possibilities of making the Newsletter an instrument of two-way communication.

## Our Meetings

Of the three meetings that we sponsor annually—Echo, CPB, and the Annual Meeting—only the week-long Echo Meeting will include paper-based curriculum materials. Although we recognize that this educational endeavor also might benefit from a digital-based curriculum, we know that many participants value using the course book as a medium to transcribe notes during the course lectures. But we invite your comments; please tell us whether this course should also be offered in a digital format only. Regardless, we anticipate providing the digital course books on the SCA website behind a password-protected section accessible only to those who have registered for a given course.

## Optimizing our Supply/Demand Curves

Over the last year, the Society's finances have required substantial attention by the Executive Committee and Board of Directors. This year we hope to break even, but we may venture slightly into the red. As many of our members may recall, throughout our history, almost every year has ended in the black, some years, very much so, others

only black enough. One might ask, what has happened? Knowing that, as anesthesiologists, we are familiar with 'supply/demand' curves, I will use this paradigm to discuss the financial health of our Society.

The SCA enjoys several sources of 'supply' or income value. As a non-profit organization whose greatest asset is arguably the volunteerism of its members, the SCA has the benefit of an Executive Committee, a Board of Directors, Committee Chairs and active members who do not receive any compensation, which allows the SCA to maintain low-cost membership dues and offer an excellent value in CME programs. The return on our educational programs, which had more participants last year than at any other point in our history, has historically been positive. In some instances, the program fees on our three meetings enabled the SCA to place a substantial profit in the Society's reserves. Under the Board's careful stewardship, these reserves historically accrued added value in conservative financial instruments. Another source of income has been the considerable support from the industry side of cardiovascular medicine. These income sources have provided substantial support for the 'supply' side of our ledger.

Over the last twelve months, however, the forces that determine our supply sources have shifted substantially. In short, our supply side has not been strong, while the demand side has not decreased proportionally, which has negatively affected the SCA's bottom line. In 2008, a variety of unrelated events, from the weak U.S. dollar in Canada, the U.S. ski resorts' deep snows in 2008, and the timing of the June Annual Meeting, combined to limit the participation in two of our meetings. As a result, only our Echo Meeting ended in the black. Although our conservative investment program is allowing the SCA to withstand this bear market, our return on investment has disappeared as the broad market has dropped. At the same time, we are going through a lull in new commercial products in need of an audience of cardiovascular anesthesiologists. Although this hiatus could end at any moment, the effect is that the industry financial support of our meetings is substantially less than in previous years.

The SCA is weathering this combination of financial concerns, and the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors are considering adjustments that will rebalance the supply and the demand sides while maintaining the high level of service that our membership has come to expect. This message seeks to update the membership on the SCA's financial well-being and to reassure you that we are 'taking care of business.' On a more positive note, I must add that the SCA Foundation has grown substantially over the last 12 months through the generosity of some of our founding members. (Please see my message in December's ASA Newsletter).

2008 has been a challenging year, but I am certain that the SCA is poised to grow in prominence and importance in the greater anesthesiology and greater cardiovascular medicine communities. Please continue to support your 'professional family'—the SCA; I look forward to seeing you at our three upcoming educational endeavors.



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