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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

Peter G. Forbath, M.D.

This the first occasion that I address our members on matters of our Association in the capacity of President; an honor bestowed on me at the last meeting of the Board. I appreciate the trust given and pledge to serve you to the best of my capacity.

As you may have read in the History of our Association published in a previous issue, the time between meetings is spent with a lot of hard work. The past six months were no exception. It is my turn now to thank the members and the Board for the ongoing, time consuming work. I will not single out any individual, since you all worked very hard. I know you will all continue your much appreciated contribution to the growth of the Association as only this way can we itur ad astra. I need to mention however our Past President, Peter Petrusz, who served during a particularly difficult time. He needed to mend some fences, but he managed to bring about an admirable integration of the Auxiliary into the Association and brought our By-Laws up to date. We would not be as far as we are today without his devotion and work.

There are three important activities of the Association that require a lot of daily attention and much work. These are the Student Exchange Program, the organization of the Annual Scientific Meeting and the work of the membership services. The successful fulfillment of the mission of our Association would not be possible without the untiring efforts of the

Chairmen of these Committees and their members. I am grateful to all, because no job is too small and no job is too sublime as quoted famously: quod minimis mihi fecisti.

Since the tragedy of Sept. 11, 2001 – which almost wiped out our meeting – the world probably will never be the same. Little has been at rest since that time and the future is unknown. That experience reminds us that evil is present probably since the beginning. We cannot wipe out inequities in this world – but as physicians and individuals we must work toward salus aegroti suprema lex. Individually we may have disagreements, personal grudges or even biases but as a group we have to work toward refinement of mankind. This general philosophy must be the guiding direction of the Association.

A few months after assuming the Presidency of the Association, I have only one message to you all. No matter how little or how infrequently you can help - but be with us. Our commitments remain the same as laid out by our dedicated founders 35 years ago: to promote and disseminate medical knowledge by participating in the Scientific Meetings, support the Scholarship and Student Exchange Programs. The young physicians and the medical students who are the beneficiaries of our programs hopefully will be the leaders of the future. I ask you to help by furthering the interactions of medical personnel between North America and abroad (especially our native land). This bi-directional communication is in keeping with the ideas of the founding generation.

Our Association is ageing. Retirements continue whether for God given reasons or because of personal circumstances but we can take pleasure in the fact that at the same time, the Association is growing. However, not only do we want more members but we also need individuals who are willing to serve and work. No executive and particularly those in advanced age can be happy unless new recruitment and rejuvenation occurs. This process may be at times confrontational and previous standards may stumble. If this happens for the common good and was well meant, it must be observed with patient acceptance. As your President I wish never be more than *primus inter pares*. I ask you all join our ranks, offer your help without being solicited. Attend our Meetings. Voice your opinions. You must be assured that in my capacity I am open to criticism and want to hear opinions. I also ask you to send abstracts for the Scientific Meeting to the Program Chairman.

While we are members of an Association, I do hope we shall continue to be personal friends also. The Auxiliary is anxious to serve those who will not attend the Scientific Program.

With these thoughts I wish to see a record number of you and your beloved family members in the Sarasota sunshine in October. I ask you all: work for the HMAA, enshrine our goals into your busy schedule of daily work



REPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN.

Szabolcs I. Fejer, M.D.

This is my third year managing membership related issues for the Hungarian Medical Association of America (HMAA). However, it is the first year that my responsibilities include maintaining records of membership dues. There have been bugs in the HMAA billing system, for which I apologize. In the near future, we will begin sending reminder statements 60 days after the first billing, as well as two additional statements, 30 days apart. Your prompt payment will decrease our expenses, thereby improving our financial state, which in turn helps our exchange programs.

This year the HMAA began soliciting donations for our educational fund and three endowment funds. I am pleased to report that our members responded

generously. As a board member, I thank all of you who contributed to these worthwhile funds.

In addition to working out the "bugs" in the billing system, we are working diligently to update and maintain timely and accurate membership records. Only with the assistance of our members can we better maintain these records. We need to know of address changes. Should you find yourself relocating, let us know of your address change at the earliest time possible. We also need to know changes in your professional status. Without your help, it is impossible for the HMAA to know who is in training, who has become a practitioner with the completion of training, who has retired and when. In addition, every physician in training needs to have their program director send the HMAA their program confirmation and expected date of graduation. Please provide the following information:

The above mentioned application form.

A recent/current, type-written, and signed Curriculum Vitae.

Copies of your diplomas.

List of your publications (if any).

Name and phone number of at least one HMAA member who knows you, or a letter of recommendation from a colleague who has known you for at least one year.

If you are a resident, a letter from your chief - confirming status and the length of residency.

A color photograph.

All of the information, except the items in C.V. that refer to publications, hobbies and special interests, is required in order to process your application. Any omission will result in additional correspondence and consequent delays. Our annual membership dues are the following. Practicing physicians: \$ 150.00, Retired Physicians: \$ 60.00, Physicians in training: \$ 25.00. Medical students may become candidate members without fees. Please send all inquiries and correspondence to the following address: Szabolcs I. Fejer, MD W 1982 Rader Road, Marinette, WI 54143.

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SECRETARY'S REPORT. Thomas Peredy, M.D.

When I began attending the HMAA scientific meeting in 1991, I felt like a complete outsider (barely could afford the room on my student budget). Despite a strong sense of my heritage and having lived many summers on the Balaton as a child, no formal primary education in Hungarian left my reading and writing skills far inferior to my fluency in conversational Hungarian. No one in my family had been a physician with my own parent's education cut short by the Hungarian uprising and turmoil of the mid-50's. Just over thirty years after my family emigrated for the prospects of a brighter future in the US, I had embarked on the risky journey of returning to Hungary to become a Pécs medical student. My future was entirely uncertain.

The road to return to the US for post-graduate medical training was laden with hurdles and filled with discouraging advice. Established just three years prior to my arrival, visionaries had recognized the Hungarian Medical Universities as great assets that had retained their prestige and high quality through the political hardships. The new English Program initially provided mostly Americans, and then students from around the world an opportunity to study at these historical institutions while opening them to a greater cultural diversity, improving the language skills of many of the instructors and providing some much-needed hard currency influx. The professors though needed to be tolerant to the variability in student rigor since many enrollees could not compete with the pre-selected top echelon of Hungarian students.

In addition, the market for foreign-trained medical students and young physicians was in a state of flux. Dropout rates at American Medical Schools that would allow for foreign transfers were notoriously low (<1%). Many of the teaching hospitals once open to foreign rotators were now closed to them because of malpractice worries. Governmental work visa restriction for foreign nationals grew tighter. Requirements such as good performance on the multi-part national medical board exam (now called USMLE) and participation in the national residency matching program (NRMP) made competition with American students for the same residency positions very difficult. Like all of medicine it was more a

matter of patience and luck then intelligence. Only a few of us managed to navigate through.

It was during this difficult transition when I felt like I neither truly belonged in Hungary nor in the US, that I became aware of the HMAA. There was no structural support in place yet such as the student exchange or fellowship programs. No one gave me money. No one was even interested in hiring me or admitting me into his or her training program! Yet I felt a distinct sense of reassurance from attending the meeting. Months later when my motivation for streaming over microbiology texts waned, I recalled my Sarasota experience with a society of reputable individuals gathered for the common purpose: to promote nothing more complex than the bridging of two cultures and nothing less noble than the expansion of human medical knowledge. My aspirations took on a tangible form.

There is no statistic that can record how the HMAA helped me. I cannot recall any of the individual speakers, some of whom are no longer alive. Yet by its very existence, the open door of the HMAA helped me to grow comfortable with the idea that I was and am a part of the bridge not completely belonging within the US or Hungary. My sense of being an outsider subsided.

We, the HMAA have, as a society, grown sophisticated in very concrete ways. We can help students get unique training opportunities or help young physicians add to their experience by additional training exposure. We offer novice researchers an opportunity to showcase their work mingling with more senior colleagues from other countries; all in the comfortable context of a family-style resort.

The HMAA is a professional group but with a distinct personal closeness. I now take on a new role in my professional family – the job of Secretary. And like a younger brother receiving a prestigious hand-me-down from an older brother I am both proud and also eager to forge my own identity. There are many individual society embers I must thank for their support down the years but none more than Laszlo Mechtler. Dr. Mechtler for the past decade has carried the torch as Secretary in exemplary fashion. There is no space in this report to fully cover all his unselfish accomplishments. What is conclusively clear is that he was omnipresent, fostering new

relationships, mending occasional rifts and keeping the lines of communications open at all times. His tenure spanned many presidents who each in turn left their marks. The society and I thank him.

For our readership it is important to understand what benefit we have gained from having a stable Secretary. Though we all must adapt to new ideas and new influences, the core responsibilities of the office of secretary are well understood. These include:

Providing minutes for the three board meetings and the annual membership meeting. Supporting the needs of the leadership.

Maintaining communication with the committee chairpersons and the membership.

In addition to the above, I plan to continue administration of the HMAA website: <http://www.hmaa.org>. Membership will find valuable information at the site including copies of the minutes, forms for electronic abstract submission and on-line meeting registration, lists of scheduled activities and other society news. For those interested in joining, we will have a membership form available shortly. The website represents our society in the electronic universe. It is important that each member be familiar with the site. I would call upon each member to visit the site sometime this summer and provide constructive feedback on how it and we can be more helpful.

I look forward to serving you and supporting you.



REPORT ON THE STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM. Ivan M. Krisztinicz, M.D.

Twenty five students applied to the program for the academic year of 2002/03. All students were well qualified according to the interviewing committee. As usual the majority of students came from Budapest, from the Semmelweis University faculty of Medicine. The next larger group came from Pecs, few came from Szeged and only one from Debrecen. These students clearly represent those, who not only excelled academically and on the most part participated in the scientific work of the various departments, but also were involved in community activities as well. Indeed a select group. They are fluent in English and are able to speak at least one or

two other languages and many took the opportunity to spend a semester abroad, in other European countries during their medical studies. During the academic year 6 of the students will spend 3 months each at the State University of New York Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse; the rest will be in Buffalo.

After I received the results of the interviews, I completed the administrative work, which consist of sending the acceptance letters and notifying the Medical Schools. While this was taking place during the winter holiday season, a major change became necessary in the student's housing in Buffalo. Their previous accommodation became untenable because of the physical deterioration and neglect of maintenance of the rented apartment the students occupied. This came about because the health of the owner suddenly deteriorated and she no longer was able to look after the apartment. This has become an emergency because the arrival of a new group was imminent. Fortunately I was able to find a much better accommodation for them, very close to the hospitals, practically in the same area where their previous apartment was located. The new apartment consists of 3 bedrooms, a large living room and kitchen, etc. The apartment was unfurnished but in one week we were able to accommodate the new group of students with a perfect housing arrangement. With the help of a friend from the Buffalo Hungarian community and Ilona Csaba, we arranged the moving from the previous apartment, rented the furniture from a rental company and arranged the utility services (electricity, gas, TV, telephone). Since the lessee is the Association, all utility bills are our responsibility, as well as the rent. I discussed these matters with the President and obtained his approval to this emergency arrangement that will have to come to the Board for discussion and final approval.

Because of the new situation will give us in some respect more work and higher expenses, I contacted the New York State Taxation Department and applied for tax exempt status in the state. Here I have to point out that although we have federal tax exempt status, it does not automatically exempts us from all state taxes. Our application was approved and now we pay no New York state taxes.

The Program continues to enjoy the highest level of praise from students and faculty alike. The students enjoy their work in an American Medical School hospital, the knowledge they gained and also the many advantages the geographic location of Buffalo gives them (the proximity to Niagara Falls, to Toronto, etc.). Our Program is well known in Hungary and recently I received a "thank you" letter from the Rector of the Semmelweis University recognizing the Association and myself for our work on behalf of the students.



REPORT OF THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR OF THE SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS.

Istvan Stadler, Ph.D.

The 33rd Annual Scientific Meeting of the Hungarian Medical Association of America was held in Sarasota, Florida on October 28 - November 2, 2001. The general title of the meeting was: 2001: NEW LOOK AT OLD PROBLEMS – and the sessions were organized focusing on the following topics: Advances in Endocrinology, Recent Trends in Public Health and Health Care Management - an International Perspective, New Developments in Gastroenterology, Latest Developments in Oncology and finally, Multidisciplinary Sessions: Studies from the Basic Biomedical and Clinical Sciences.

138 registered participants attended the Meeting from different countries. This number is slightly lower than in earlier years due to the travel difficulties resulting from the tragic events in September.

The meeting was conducted in an orderly fashion. The quality of the presentations was generally high and computer generated graphics and audio effects were highly effective in supporting the lectures (a majority of the lecturers used the computer assisted supporting features). There was no conflict of interest among the lecturers, presentations supplemented each other. The audience was able to gain information from 60 lectures delivered by well recognized experts on their field. General interest was remarkable and attendance in the sessions was very high also. Each session was closed with an extensive discussion, in which audience had the possibility for questions or consulting with the presenter.

Latest scientific developments and their clinical

application for treatment of malignant diseases were the main topics in the oncology session. Topics were focused on: research and application of virus derived vaccines in the treatment of cancer, virus induced apoptosis in cancer, (Dr. Sinkovics), new diagnosis and management of early stage of prostate cancer (Dr. Haas).

The session on "Recent Trends in Public Health and Health Care Management" involved comparison of the health systems in different countries (USA, England, Canada, Hungary). Participants were informed about latest vaccination possibilities and results by Dr. Judelsohn of the New York State Health Department. Round table discussion on the above mentioned topics was exceptional and attracted a large audience. Our Guest of Honor was István Mikola, M.D., Minister of Health in Hungary. His lecture detailed present and future Public Health Programs in Hungary. Dr. Barabas discussed the situation of the British National Health Service.

Lectures in the traditional multidisciplinary sessions were of good quality and covered a wide range of the clinical and basic biomedical topics. Participation in these sessions was very high also. The audience actively participated in the discussions that followed the sessions.

The friendly atmosphere of the Meeting, as always promoted the establishment of new relationships between interested parties and resulted in the continuation of the discussions after the official hours.

The feedback from audience was very favorable, requesting the continuation of this type of Meetings. Comments on the quality of lectures and the technical organization and location of the meeting also were positive and favorable.

Many thanks to all of you who contributed to the success of the meeting at a very difficult time. It is my obligation to point out that the success of scientific sessions would not be achieved without excellent work and effort of the moderators. Their work is greatly appreciated.

The Scientific Committee and myself want to express our special thanks and recognition to the Auxiliary for their tremendous work in organizing the social events and their untiring and excellent work in registration led by Dr. Bodnar, President of the Auxiliary.

Finally I would like to express our appreciation and thank to Dr. Peter Petrusz, who was President of the HMAA at the time of the Meeting and to Dr. Ivan Harangozo, the Treasurer of the Association for their effort and help in assuring the smooth progress of the meeting in a difficult time period. Also many thanks to Dr. Kamill Gal for his work in editing and preparing the Abstracts of the lectures for publication.

We believe that our decision not to cancel the Meeting after the tragic September 11 events was the right one: the 33^d Annual Scientific Meeting was another success in our history. Your contribution and effort will guarantee that we reach our goal in the future also.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 34th ANNUAL MEETING

We are pleased to announce that the 34th Annual Scientific Meeting of the HUNGARIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA will be held from October 27 to November 1, 2002 in Sarasota. The general title of the meeting: NEW CENTURY, NEW WAY. The Meeting is Continuing Medical Education credited and sponsored by the Department of Medicine and Department Continuing Medical Education, State University of New York at Buffalo, and also AMA approved. Session will be organized focusing on the following topics: Telemedicine, Preventive Medicine, Infectious Diseases, Cardiology, Anesthesiology, Pediatrics, Surgery, Studies from Basic Biomedical Sciences and Clinical Medicine.

If you have questions please contact us via telephone, mail or e-mail: Peter Forbath, M.D., President, 2 Wells Hill Ave., Toronto, ON, M5R3A6, Canada, (416) 537-7590 or Istvan Stadler, Ph.D., Scientific Program Director, e-mail: istvan.stadler@viahealth.org, phone: (716) 691-8296 (home), (585)-922-5368 (work). Mailing address: Hungarian Medical Association of America, 34th Annual Scientific Meeting, 356 Denrose Drive, Amherst, NY 14228, USA.



THE AUXILIARY PRESIDENT'S REPORT. Eszter Bodnar, M.D.

As the president of the Auxiliary I am pleased to report on our last year's achievements, current activities and future goals. The 33rd Annual Scientific Meeting took place in the shadow of 9/11. The decision to continue with our traditional annual meeting - despite the obvious influence of this tragic event, despite the lesser number of participants - made this meeting special - filled with a strong feeling of unity. The unusual circumstances gave some extra challenge to the Auxiliary as well. Last minute cancellations and rearrangements required above average flexibility and creativity almost in every area where the Auxiliary is involved.

This was the first year when we launched our new registration program that was especially designed for the HMAA registration. With a few small corrections along with the two recently purchased laptop computers, the program will meet the technical requirements of a speedy registration for a long time. To help us to maintain our speedy registration please pre-register (at the www.hmaa.org web-site on line or in paper) which will save time to the participants and to the Auxiliary as well. With the growing number of participants it will be very important in the future.

Regarding the social events: the very thoughtful, well planned children's program organized and carried out by Cornelia Harangozo was a great surprise and left kids and families with sweet memories. So was the Halloween Party lead by Candy Frater year after year which had a very high attendance. As our Wednesday Night program has been canceled right before the meeting the abrupt idea to make palacsinta and lángos was very rewarding so we are planning to continue it in the future during and after the water polo game. "Mens sana in corpore sano" is the motto for our sport events and it attracts more participants every year for competition and relaxation in water polo, tennis, table-tennis and running.

We are continuously making the effort to recruit new members as the tasks of the Auxiliary are outreaching. If you know anybody who would be interested in joining the auxiliary please contact me at your convenience at ebodnar@pol.net or at 509-766-6952.

The fundraising remains a challenge every year. The Wednesday Night Program (chair: Julia Borsos) the

silent auction (chair: Lilly Vamos) requesting unrestricted educational grants from pharmaceutical companies, selling lángos and palacsinta all contributes to our goal to help to grow financially our organization. Please find the area that fits your interest and abilities and be part of this mutual effort that is the key for success.

Thanks Dr. Peter Forbath for the expression of his appreciation of our work. I would like to forward to this to each and every member of the Auxiliary along with my thankful regards for the hard work.

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ANNOUNCEMENT.

The International Society of Medical Hydrology and Bioclimatology will have its World Congress in Budapest, Oct. 14-19, 2002. The Congress is organized by the Magyar Balneológia Egyesület and the MOTESZ. Contact person: Bende Tamás, M.D., Ph.D., e-mail: balneo@axelero.hu, fax and phone: 36-1-333-0266.

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