

## Letters to the Editor

### Association Presidents Review Their Terms in Office

May 17, 1978

Dear Mr. Editor:

#### The Year 1949-1950

In 1949, the Executive Council appointed a committee with instructions to prepare complete revisions of the Aero Medical Association's Constitution and By-Laws for consideration by the Association at its annual meeting in 1950. The Committee, composed of Capt. A. A. Corbet, RCAF; CAPT Wilbur E. Kellum, MC; USN; Dr. Thomas H. Sutherland; and COL Arnold D. Tuttle, USA (Ret), met at a hotel in Washington and after 2 days of concentrated effort produced first drafts of the documents. Group Capt. Corbet took these back to Canada and produced admirable final copies. I had been gravely concerned about a recent development which could have had serious weakening effects upon the Association. A group of Airline Medical Examiners, feeling that they were not adequately represented in the Aero Medical Association, decided to form an organization of their own and did so in 1948. Recognizing that other groups with special interests would likely develop in the future and fearing a weakening effect on the parent organization if they formed splinter organizations, I proposed a mechanism by which they could organize within the framework of the Aero Medical Association. The other members of the Committee shared my concern and saw some merit in the suggestion. So the new Constitution, adopted at the 1950 convention, provided for the formation of branches of the Aero Medical Association. Apparently it was an "idea whose time had come," for a new group with very special interests was then in the process of forming. As a result of the foresighted planning of Col. Paul A. Campbell and Dr. John P. Marbarger, this group met during the 21st annual meeting (1950) of the Association and took the first steps toward becoming the Space Medicine Branch of the Aero Medical Association. Today there are a number of branches

organized along geographic or functional lines.

Sincerely,  
Wilbur E. Kellum, M.D.  
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Carmel, CA 93921

January 9, 1979

Dear Mr. Editor:

#### The Year 1951-1952

The history of aerospace medicine being prepared in connection with the Association's Golden Anniversary celebration will have more lasting value than any other feature of that occasion. However, that account must, of necessity, confine itself to the sweep of past worldwide events over a period of some two centuries and omit interesting details of our organization's affairs during the 50 years of its existence.

The suggestion that this situation be rectified by publishing a series of vignettes in the Journal is heartily endorsed and forms the basis of this communication. It will review the activities of our society during 1951-1952 when I was its president. My initial effort upon assuming that office was to thoroughly review the Association's affairs during the previous 5-year period in order to become familiar with the recent progress made and to identify any existing problems needing special attention.

As to the former, it was noted that in 1947 the society's name was changed, from The Aero Medical Association of the United States to The Aero Medical Association, in order to reflect the international character of the organization. In 1948, a committee was appointed to seek approval for board certification in aviation medicine for those physicians who could qualify. In 1949, that effort was intensified by the establishment of an interim board with Gen. Otis O. Benson as Chairman.

August 25, 1978

Dear Mr. Editor:

**The Year 1956-1957**

I succeeded Dr. Kenneth Dowd as president of the Aero Medical Association. I can recall an episode before that when Dr. Dowd was president elect. The proposed annual meeting of the Association was to be in Canada during Dr. Dowd's presidency. Dr. Dowd felt that the Canada meeting could not be held for various reasons and it was decided to hold the meeting in Chicago. Dr. Dowd felt he should resign as President Elect because of this. We held a small group meeting to dissuade Dr. Dowd from this decision. I do not know who suggested that Dr. Louis Bauer be present but it was a marvelous suggestion. Louis talked to Ken for some time and persuaded him to stay on as President Elect. Those of us that had the privilege of knowing Louis realized what a wonderful speaker, diplomat, and all-around man he was and this episode rightly proved this.

The chief problem of my presidency was the up and coming civilian aviation medical group that was demanding more say in the management of the Association or they would split off from the Aero Medical Association. They had even gone so far as to form a smaller association and set up a meeting including separate commercial exhibits. The Association had two opinions on this. One, that they be ignored and allowed to set up a separate association, and two, that efforts be made to appease them by including a greater number in the governing committees of the Association, recognizing their problems and trying to deal with them, and broadening the subject matter of our Journal. This latter was my opinion and this finally won out. I felt that this group was a progressive, interested group that the Association could not afford to lose. I must say that certain aspects of my joining them rather than fighting them took some time to reach complete accomplishment.

Another problem, and I believe an oft-recurring one, was the Journal of the Association. There was a group who felt that the publishers of the Journal, the Bruce Publishing Co. of St. Paul, were making unreasonable profits from our Journal. They were constantly suggesting either some fly-by-night publisher who would do it for practically nothing, or well-known medical publishers. Investigation revealed that the Bruce Publishing Co. was not making large profits from us and, in fact, at times lost money publishing our Journal. We also discovered many of the proposed publishers had no concept regarding a medical publication and their low bids were not firm bids, but estimates. And finally, the recognized medical publishers would have nothing to do with us except at very high costs. A further problem was the subject matter of the Journal. The scientific group thought it too pedestrian and not oriented to research. The clinical group thought it too scientific and erudite, and not of interest to the practicing physician. I recall the only time when I felt like Abraham Lincoln presiding over a divided land was when I had two letters on my desk. One, was from a friend of mine wishing to take the Civil Avia-

tion Medical Group out of the Association so that they could have a journal that would fit their needs. The other from a well-known scientist suggested that the scientific and research group leave the Association and publish a truly scientific journal.

If there was an accomplishment of the Association during my year in office it was the joining together of the differing opinions and keeping together in one association the many people who are interested in aerospace medicine. A further helpful accomplishment was the recognition of the American Medical Association by the formation of the AMA Aviation Committee and an aviation medical member of the Council of Occupational Health. It also was at my meeting that we had the first sectional meeting of Space Medicine, which Dr. Hubertus Strughold chaired and organized.

Finally, it was an honor and a privilege to be elected a President of our Association and I shall cherish the memory of the office.

Sincerely,  
Jan H. Tillisch, M.D.  
1069 Plummer Lane  
Rochester, MN 55901

December 8, 1978

Dear Mr. Editor:

**The Year 1957-1958**

It was the Navy's turn, my number came up, and I was gently eased into and out of office as the 27th President of our Association. By nature an activist, I was quickly taught the meaning of "ex officio." Upon retiring as President, a well-meaning friend advised me to fall back into the ranks and eschew all attempts to act as a leader. What my friend did not realize is that the presidency in our Association is designed to confer an honor, not power.

In addition to the responsibilities of the President set forth in our Constitution and By-Laws, the main events that I recall (the Navy abhors old files like nature does a vacuum) include the following: 1) arranging with a former President, Dr. Tamisea, for the affiliation of CAMA; 2) chairing a meeting of the Executive Committee at Pensacola; 3) visiting our headquarters at Marion, Oh, where our Business Manager, Dr. Sutherland, had his office (total costs about \$4,000 yearly); 4) obtaining permission to offer student membership at approximately the cost of our Journal; and 5) initiating a hand-written letter of invitation to prospective new members. To accomplish the letter-writing, I volunteered my wife's services, and this effort resulted in an upturn in our previously declining membership. This was before the President's Page, T. G., was invented.

When I was President, a main responsibility was in connection with the annual meeting, which that year was held at the Washington Hilton. I was fortunate to have Hermann J. Schaefer in charge of the scientific program; his expenses (\$1.46 for post cards) drew a high dB applause. Dr. Norman Barr was in charge of all other arrangements. The USSR had just succeeded in launching

## PAST PRESIDENTS REVIEW THEIR TERMS

Sputnik II with a dog as passenger and, on behalf of our Association, an official invitation to participate in our meeting was extended to the Russian Ambassador in Washington for transmittal to Moscow. This proved to be too much to accomplish in the short time available.

Our Association not only has survived 50 years but, also, has grown much stronger: in nature, we attribute survival to the ability to adjust to changing conditions; but too great a specialization also poses a risk when conditions suddenly change. I believe we are coping with this dilemma by making "conservatism" the watchword of our Association but "liberalism," i.e. to change with the times, the hallmark of our Journal.

Conservatism is reflected in the election of our Presidents and the membership of the Executive Council. Approximately half of our Council comprises members who have been or will become President. All of our Presidents have been male Doctors of Medicine. The first 11 Presidents were civilians. The next 27 comprised 15 from the Navy and Air Force and 12 civilians. Among the civilians was Kenneth Dowd of Canada, the first from outside the United States ever elected to the Presidency. Bringing in Dr. Dowd may have been inspired by a lingering desire to have Canada rejoin our union, which would at once solve their problem in divisiveness and our need for oil.

The last nine ran true to form with two important exceptions. The Army, thwarted early on by having to give up their aircraft, turned that misfortune to good account by introducing missilery. They were thwarted a second time by having to give up missiles to NASA but again they proved that necessity is the mother of invention by coming up with helicopters which could outperform many aircraft. Anyhow, in 1972, they made the Club in the shape of Spurgeon H. Neel. NASA has also been represented in the person of Chuck Berry, who became President in 1969.

Now take a look at our Journal. What was the *Journal of Aviation Medicine* became the *Aerospace Medicine* and is now *Aviation, Space, and Environmental Medicine*. When the last word, "Medicine," is dropped for a term with broader meaning which more accurately reflects the contents of our Journal today, conservatism will have gone out the window.

I now draw your attention to the six words of Article XII of our Constitution, "The Association shall have perpetual existence," which provides an opportunity to mention again a matter with which I have been concerned for some time. If our members take Article XII literally (synonyms for perpetual are everlasting and eternal), then we must devote thought and energy toward ensuring survival on Earth as long as possible and when it becomes uninhabitable, to find another "home." The overwhelming urge to do "something" is the fact that we are the only creatures on Earth (or elsewhere in the cosmos insofar as we are aware) that have an appreciation of the wonders of our Earth and solar system. I will assume that neither warfare nor pollution will lead to the eventualities just mentioned for the reason that even if we are half-devil as well as half-god, our instinct is to survive. Indeed, children should be taught the wonders of the cosmos and the fragility of our planet at an

early age. After reading the introduction to "The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence" by the President of the University of Notre Dame, we can conclude that enlightened theologians no longer regard the Earth as the center of the Universe.

In the early part of this century, a popular idea that brought satisfaction to many was that life on Earth has its origin on Mars. Today's counterpart is the Big Bang theory that may account for our solar system as one among billions. Even assuming an infinite number of planets over infinite time, a habitable planet on which creatures such as ourselves might evolve has a finite life. Hence, added to what might be light years in terms of speed of communication, the likelihood of contacting "intelligent life" is vanishingly small.

The more we learn about the cosmos the greater the need for philosophers. This need coincides with a time when our universities are abolishing the appointment of philosophers even though endowed chairs of philosophy remain. If it is no longer *de rigueur* to speculate on the ultimate origin of matter, we still need philosophers to help explain human behavior, especially some of the actions of nations.

The preservation in perpetuity of our germinal code poses at once a problem and a purpose for mankind. For the near-term, it means that we must not compromise habitability on Earth before the elementary laws of physics dictate otherwise. The most likely natural course that could destroy mankind would be the impact caused by a meteor. Surely we could cope with such a prospect.

The core idea for the far-term is to send forth colonies, each self-sufficient for periods measured in generations. This would require unlimited energy and a global effort that beggars description. It would be regarded as impossible were it not for the alternative that is equally "impossible" for mankind to accept. Moreover, this goal offers a challenge of surpassing importance which could provide a unifying purpose for mankind.

Let me conclude with the fact that our Association, with its worldwide membership, is engaged in activities vital to man's well-being, and our Journal is unchallenged in making and broadcasting news of these activities.

Sincerely,  
Ashton Graybiel, M. D.  
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Warrington, FL 32507

November 27, 1978

Dear Mr. Editor:

### The Year 1958-1959

In response to your request on activities during my tenure as president of the Association, I submit the following:

*Name Change:* The Aero Medical Association became the Aerospace Medical Association, with appropriate unveiling of the banner depicting this at the annual meeting.

*Journal Name Change:* Similarly, at the institution