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SPACE MEDICINE BRANCH REPORT

Message from the President

The annual meeting of the Aerospace Medical Association is next month, and I would like to take this opportunity to review some of the Space Medicine Branch's (SMB) activities during the past year, as well as to point out some of the plans for the upcoming luncheon scheduled for Thursday, May 9, 1996. I would like to encourage all SMB members, as well as anyone else who is interested, to attend the meeting.

First, I am looking forward to seeing you all in Atlanta, the home of the 1996 Summer Olympics. This arena of international camaraderie is a fitting site for our meeting. The featured speakers at the SMB luncheon will be Drs. Mike Barratt and Dave Ward, the Crew Surgeons for the American astronaut, Dr. Norm Thagard, who flew on the long duration Mir-18 mission, one of the highlights of the 1995 spaceflight program. They will be thrilling us with their fascinating story of preparing for launch and supporting an in-flight mission from Russia. This will also be the perfect lead-in to the Armstrong Lecture, which Dr. Thagard will be giving on Thursday afternoon. This U.S./Russian joint mission, the first of many, is a prelude to the International Space Station, the first step toward the permanent presence of humanity in space.

Our committees, as usual, have been extremely busy this past year. Currently, the Awards Committee is collecting nominations and abstracts for the Young Investigator Award.

Again, this year, the finalists will be guests at our luncheon where the winner will be announced. The Policy Committee has prepared a resolution on Human Space Flight (see February 1996 Space Medicine Branch Report for the complete resolution). This resolution, which was approved by the Council, will be voted on at the AsMA Annual Business Meeting on May 7, 1996. The Program Committee of the SMB, working with the AsMA Program Committee, has

put together three very informative panels: "The Shuttle-Mir Science Program: A Step Toward International Space Station," "Advances in Operational Space Medicine," and "Lower Body Negative Pressure: Countermeasure or Counterfeit for Space Flight". A complete listing can be found in the March 1996 Space Medicine Branch Report. These panels, all scheduled on Tuesday, May 7, will contain fascinating new information, as well as engaging summaries of existing information. I encourage all of our members to attend these panel sessions.

During this past year we have seen the first elements of the International Space Station being built and tested on schedule. There has been an increase in shared life sciences projects with our colleagues from Russia, Japan, Europe, and Canada. There has also been a continuous effort to refine the techniques and increase our experience in Extra Vehicular Activities. We have seen an expressed interest from NASA's administrator to begin formulating and studying the plans to return to the Moon to stay. Also in the upcoming year LMS-1 (Life and Microgravity Sciences-1), dedicated in part to life sciences research, is scheduled to fly on STS-78. The message seems clear that space medicine and life sciences are going to continue to be very active in the upcoming years.

As I close, I would like to thank the executive committee members and the volunteers on our various committees for all of the work they have done this past year. I would also like to thank all of those who have contributed to the SMB reports and encourage all our members to continue to support this with your articles and announcements. Finally, I personally wish to thank you all for giving me the opportunity to serve as your president. It's been a real pleasure, and I'm looking forward to seeing you all in Atlanta.

David A. Tipton, M.D.
1995-96 President

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