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SPACE MEDICINE BRANCH REPORT

Annual SMB Meeting Report

The annual business luncheon of the Space Medicine Branch (SMB) at the 44th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Aerospace Medical Association (AsMA) took place on Thursday, May 11, 1995, at the Disneyland Hotel, Anaheim, CA.

Present at the head table were Mary Anne Frey, Ph.D., SMB President; Col. Charles F. Bolden, Jr., USMC, guest speaker; K. Jeffrey Myers, M.D., Awards Committee Chair; Bradley G. Beck, M.D., Secretary/Treasurer; and David A. Tipton, M.D., SMB President-elect. The meeting was called to order around noon, and the gavel was presented to the president. All the past presidents as well as the guests at the head table were introduced.

The Secretary/Treasurer's report was given. There are 360 members of the SMB, 16 new members and 287 current (dues up to date within one year). The SMB logo has been made into a 4-inch color patch and will be flown on STS-71 this summer by branch member Ellen Baker, M.D. The flown patch will be mounted and brought to the meeting in 1996 in Atlanta for presentation. It will then be kept on display in AsMA headquarters. The branch has also made 100 patches to sell at the AsMA meeting in May. Results of the election were given: Larry Pepper, D.O., was elected the branch's new President-elect, and Dave McKenas, M.D., and Jeff Myers, M.D., were elected as two new members-at-large of the Executive Committee.

Congratulations and thanks were offered to Stan White, M.D., for serving the SMB as its historian. Wyck Hoffer, M.D., will be assuming this position next year.

The President's report was presented by outgoing President Mary Anne Frey who emphasized our multinational future in space. Dr. Frey cited several examples of recent and ongoing work with the Russians, Europeans, Japanese and Canadians. Some examples include work on IML-2 (International Microgravity Lab), flown on STS-65 in July 1994; on STS-66 flown in November 1994 where developmental biology experiments were done with Russian and French Investigators, and where NASA cooperated with the National Institutes of Health for the first time in joint investigations; with ESA's Dr. Ulf Merbold's recent flight on Mir; on upcoming LMS-1 (Life and Microgravity Sciences) to fly June 1996, carrying several life science experiments in muscle, bone, pulmonary, neuro, and sleep studies by investigators from the U.S., Japan, Italy, Switzerland, France, Sweden, Germany, and Canada; the upcoming NeuroLab with several multinational experiments; and the recent rendezvous and docking of the U.S. space shuttle and the Russian Mir space sta-

tion where the shuttle picked up and returned two cosmonauts and U.S. physician Norm Thagard, who now holds the American record for the longest duration in space. He will be returning with another physician, Ellen Baker, who will be carrying the branch's patch to orbit. Dr. Frey encouraged members to stay current regarding events occurring in human space flight such as Norm Thagard's return from Mir. She emphasized that the world of space medicine is at the threshold of a new era because of both the changes in the political climate and the approaching emphasis on exploration and long duration spaceflight. Dr. Frey urged the members of the SMB to take a leadership role in this transition. The President then summarized the activities of several of SMB's committees and offered congratulations to all of them for their work during the last year. In particular, the President cited the work on our branch patch, our SMB-sponsored scientific sessions at this year's AsMA meeting, and the work of the Award's Committee, the International Committee, the Nominating Committee, the Long Range Planning Committee, and the Education Committee.

The Awards Committee chair then presented the SMB's Young Investigator Award to LT Demetri Economos, MSC, USNR for his paper entitled, "The Electrophysiological Implications of Bone Resorption in Space Flight." Of the 170 abstracts submitted, 33 manuscripts and presentations were reviewed, with 5 finalists chosen and 1 winner selected. The Awards Committee chair then presented the Hubertus Strughold Award to Mary Anne Frey, Ph.D., for her outstanding and consistent contributions to the field of space medicine.

Col. Charles Bolden, a distinguished astronaut and veteran of four space shuttle flights, gave an inspiring talk as guest speaker entitled "What Is The Thing About Space Anyway?"

Following the guest speaker Dr. Tipton, as President-elect, was installed as the new President of the Space Medicine Branch. Dr. Tipton thanked all, presented Dr. Frey with the Past-President Plaque, and adjourned the Luncheon.

Notes from SMB Annual Executive Committee Meeting, May 11, 7:00 a.m.

- The Long Range Planning Committee is looking to put more emphasis on making others aware of the SMB, and are encouraging its people rich in the history of the branch to record that history and present it in some way, such as in a session or in a panel at AsMA's annual scientific meeting.
- Anyone interested in putting together a panel for the AsMA meeting on the benefits or "spin-offs" of the space program

should contact the SMB Program Committee (Guy Banta, Ph.D., chair) or Joan Vernikos, Ph.D.

- Due to decreasing funds, greater corporate sponsorship will be solicited this year. The branch had no corporate sponsorship this year.
- Jeff Davis, M.D., the Chair of the Policy Committee will draft a resolution for distribution to the SMB Executive Committee and eventually to the Resolutions Committee of AsMA this year in time to be voted on at AsMA's annual meeting in Atlanta, 1996. The resolution will indicate the reasons for supporting the manned spaceflight program.

UTMB Establishes Space Medicine Center

A new space medicine center has been established at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. This represents the beginning of the academic community's leadership role in aerospace and aviation medical research, according to a UTMB space medicine expert.

The Center for Aerospace Medicine and Physiology is a unique venture in the operational, research and educational aspects of aviation and space medicine and physiology, according to AsMA member Dr. Patricia Santy, acting director of the new center.

The development of the center will expand the basic research base and open aerospace medicine to experts in many biomedical disciplines. In addition, the center will be a catalyst for multi-disciplinary research in aviation and space medicine, Santy said.

UTMB has already gathered together what is probably one of the largest groups of experts in aviation and space medicine disciplines in the world. Further, the university is ideally situated, geographically, to NASA Johnson Space Center and the Armstrong Lab at Brooks AFB. Many researchers at both centers are currently on faculty at UTMB.

The center will be the focal point for the education and training of future aerospace biomedical researchers and practitioners. Also, the university's recent designation as a space-life-sciences affiliate of the International Space University is likely to attract graduate students from all over the world.

The academic community has never played a major role in aerospace medicine, according to Santy. Until recently, most practitioners of aerospace medicine were in the military or worked with NASA or the FAA, and these agencies focused on operations such as maintaining safety and providing medical care for aerospace personnel, and not on basic science or medical research.