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OKLAHOMA COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

MAY/JUNE 2017





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THE BULLETIN

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ABOUT THE COVER

Wheeler is a newly-imagined neighborhood in downtown Oklahoma City. Led by The Humphreys Company, Wheeler is first to expand the modern development footprint south of the Oklahoma River. Its layout encourages walking or riding to school, work, church, dining, the park, the river, the Ferris wheel and beyond. Last summer, we opened the Wheeler Riverfront Plaza featuring the former Santa Monica Ferris wheel. Wheeler strives to curate a quality place-based experience for everyone -whether locals or tourists, neighbors or visitors, young or old. In addition to the Ferris wheel, the Riverfront Plaza features public art: Amanda Bradway & Erin Cooper's "WindWall" and OKC's most "selfied" spot Hugh Meade's "O-K-C" sculpture. The Wheeler Ferris Wheel sold over 40,000 tickets during the 2016 season with an estimated 100,000 visitors to the Wheeler Riverfront Plaza.

One of the newest amenities to the Wheeler Riverfront Plaza for this season is the addition of a hammock grove. The

twelve hammocks will line the south bank of the Oklahoma River and be a perfect spot to read a book on a sunny afternoon or catch the Wheeler Ferris Wheel light show in the evening. The Wheeler Ferris Wheel hosted its season opening on Saturday, April 1st. The weekend event drew hundreds of guests to the Riverfront Plaza to enjoy the newest features and celebrate the start of the Ferris Wheel season.

Spring is also the start of the Wheeler Criterium racing season. The Wheeler Crit is Oklahoma City's premiere cycling festival. The event is hosted every Tuesday, March through September, in the Wheeler District. Each week, the Wheeler Crit provides an exciting weeknight outing for families across the community as people line the runway to cheer on some of Oklahoma's top cyclists.

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

DAVID L. HOLDEN, MD



Why Not?

In 1949 George Bernard Shaw wrote in the play “Back to Methuselah”, these words as spoken by the serpent to Eve “You see things; and you say why?, but I dream things that never were; and I say why not?” While this quote was repeated by John F. Kennedy later in a speech given in June 1963 it was his brother, Bobby, who paraphrased it and truly made it famous in a campaign speech in 1968. “Some men see things as they are and ask why? I dream things that never were and ask why not?” After listening to Dr. Stan Pelofsky’s eloquent presentation the other night at our Oklahoma County Medical Society Membership meeting concerning traumatic “concussion” injuries to the brain, I was reminded of that famous quote as it relates to the rapid advancement in medical science and technology that is allowing us to perceive and understand in more detail than ever before the full nature of disease and illness that has eluded us for centuries. The advancements are moving forward faster than clinical medicine can absorb in many cases. With the cracking of the genetic code and the advent of technology to manipulate and alter individual genes there should soon be no impediment to our ability to attack and cure almost any cancer, cell by cell. Disease is based

on abnormal genetic sequences and should in theory also be amenable as well to targeted genetic therapies. More than ever before in history the practice and research-based physician will truly be able to do more than just “dream of things that never were”. Being an avid reader of online news sources with the continual demise of the printed word, my eye was drawn to an article in the Drudge Report entitled “Upgrading Humans, The Next Billion Dollar Industry”. The article references the book by historian, Yuval Harari, entitled *Homodeus*. The gist of the article is that we will one day be able to upgrade humans with changes and genetic software that have been heretofore untouchable. The potential will exist for the creation of genetic inequality.

Physicians will be at the forefront of applying these technologies for our patients, especially as they relate to diseases like cancer. I wonder how much input we will have on the moral and ethical aspects of such medical applications. The possibilities for the cure of multiple diseases are unlimited. However, let us be reminded that in his original play George Bernard Shaw writes that it is the serpent speaking through Eve who says “Why not?”



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DEAN'S PAGE

RUSSELL G. POSTIER, MD, FACS
INTERIM EXECUTIVE DEAN AND DAVID ROSS BOYD PROFESSOR
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA COLLEGE OF MEDICINE



In the last issue of the OCMS bulletin, Dean Dewayne Andrews authored his 108th and final Dean's Page. In contrast, this is my first Dean's Page, serving as interim dean of the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine. Somewhat like Dean Andrews I have spent nearly my entire career at the College of Medicine, the exception being six years spent as a surgical resident at Johns Hopkins.

As Dean Andrews mentioned in his final letter, dramatic changes have occurred and continue to occur on our campus. I write this letter while sitting in the beautiful, new M. Dewayne Andrews, College of Medicine building. The Andrews Academic Tower is the latest addition to the campus and is a testament to the substantial growth that has occurred over the last 15 years under Dr. Andrews' guidance. We have developed a modern, state-of-the-art skills and simulation center for our students and residents. We have modernized our basic science education building for the benefit of

our medical, physician associate, and dental students. We have instituted a problem-based 1st and 2nd year medical school curriculum that has resulted in substantial increases in our students performance on USMLE Step 1 exams to a level now well above the national average. The results are a better prepared medical student entering their medical clerkships. These advances are all due to the leadership of Dean Andrews and the educators he has recruited and directed. We are grateful to Dean Andrews for what he has done for us. Those of you who are alums of our Center have reason to be proud.

Although Dean Andrews has left the position that does not mean that we will not continue to press forward and continue to strive to be better.

I hope to enhance further the existing good relationships between the Oklahoma County Medical Society and the College of Medicine and I look forward to reporting to you in these Dean's Pages about events and progress in the medical school on a variety of subjects.



MEMBERSHIP MEETING

& 50-YEAR PHYSICIAN *Celebration*



The OCMS Membership Meeting and Physician Celebration was held on Monday, March 27, 2017. Honored at the meeting include (from left to right): Ralph G. Ganick, MD; Stanley J. Dombek, Jr., MD; Mayo D. Gilson, MD; Khader K. Hussein, MD; Johnny H. Jones, MD; William H. Oehlert, MD; Sharon A. Rose, MD.



Above: Stan Pelofsky, MD, presented An Update on Concussions in Athletes. He is shown here with Oklahoma County Clinical Society Officers Apple Rice, MD, and Randal Juengel, MD. Also pictured is Dr. Juengel's wife, Luann Juengel.

Left: OCMS also honored the 2017 Medical Student Scholarship Recipient, Krystal Mitchell. Krystal is a third-year medical student at the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine. In her application, Krystal stated that her ultimate goal "is to become a dermatologist that works at the bedside, the research bench and in the community. Her life principle is to "strive, hope and empower."

KRISHNA

CONFIRMED FOR NEW TERM ON OKLAHOMA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH



Dr. R. Murali Krishna

The Oklahoma State Senate has confirmed the reappointment of Dr. R. Murali Krishna to a new nine-year term on the Oklahoma State Board of Health. Governor Mary Fallin made the appointment for Dr. Krishna to serve on the nine-member panel that is responsible for protecting and promoting the health of the citizens of Oklahoma by preventing disease and injury and assuring conditions by which Oklahomans can be healthy. His new term will expire on June 30, 2026.

Dr. Krishna is senior consultant of INTEGRIS Mind-Brain Health; co-founder and president of INTEGRIS James L. Hall Jr. Center for Mind, Body

and Spirit; past president of INTEGRIS Mental Health; founder, past president and current board member of the Health Alliance for the Uninsured; a clinical professor of Psychiatry at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science; past president of the Oklahoma County Medical Society; past president of the Oklahoma Psychiatric Association, and a distinguished life fellow of the American Psychiatric Association.

A resident of Edmond, Dr. Krishna represents Logan, Oklahoma, Cleveland, McClain, Garvin, Murray and Payne counties.



IN MEMORIAM

JOHN TIMOTHY (TIM) BALDWIN, MD
1943-2017

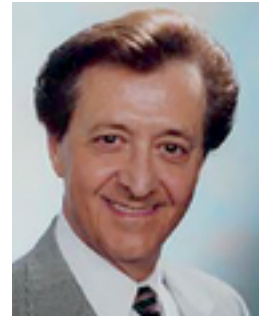
EDWIN NALAGAN, MD
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UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT


PART 2: HEALTHCARE ABUSE AND FRAUD

S. SANDY SANBAR, MD, PHD,
JD, FCLM, DABLM, DABFM



This article is the second of a three-part series on unprofessional conduct. Part 1 addressed Perjury and part 3 depicts Rogue Doctors. Healthcare abuse and fraud by providers are on the rise in the U.S. In Oklahoma, several healthcare professionals were accused of illegal billing and deceptive practices in 2016.

Abuse is improper, inappropriate, outside acceptable standards of professional conduct or medically unnecessary actions by a provider. For example: improper billing practices; a pattern of claims for services not medically necessary; a pattern of waiving cost-shares or deductibles; failure to maintain adequate medical or financial records; refusal to furnish or allow access to medical records; services for which the healthcare providers are not actually licensed or certified to provide; paying kickbacks with state money that providers illegally received; charging Medicaid not for the doctor's patient but for emergency treatment services for himself. When searching for abuse of the Medicare and Medicaid system, investigators often look for unusually high billing amounts.



Fraud is intentional deception or misrepresentation of fact which may result in unauthorized benefit or payment. For examples, submitting claims for services not rendered or used; billing for services at a higher level than provided or necessary; billing for weekends; and billing for patients when the provider was out of the country; falsifying claims or medical records; misrepresenting dates, frequency, duration or description of services rendered; falsifying eligibility; and failing to disclose coverage under other health insurance.

Convictions could result in prison time and paying substantial restitution to the state. The following are few recent examples.

On March 1, 2017, the U.S. Attorney's Office, Department of Justice, Southern District of New York, announced that a cardiologist, neurologist, and others were charged in \$50 million health care fraud scheme, and civil suit filed against clinic and participants in fraud. The defendants provided false patient medical information and used the identities of doctors who did not work at the clinic to submit more than \$50 million in fraudulent health care claims.

On March 3, 2017 Dr. Byung Kang, 77, and his wife Soo Kang, office receptionist, were indicted over allegations they conspired in a scheme to prescribe opioid painkiller to addicts and drug dealers. Dr. Kang sold 90-pill bottles of

oxycodone to patients with no medical need for \$150 to \$200 each. His records allegedly revealed that he knew many of those patients were addicted to oxycodone or were reselling the pills.

Dr. Kang was accused of issuing oxycodone prescriptions to a 26-year-old Clifton man, Michael Justice, who was found dead in December 2014 in a bedroom containing empty prescription bottles from Kang's office. One had been filled just five days earlier.

The doctor was indicted by a state grand jury under the state's "strict liability law", which holds "drug dealers" accountable for overdose deaths, as well as drug distribution charges. Dr. Kang was considered a "drug dealer". He and his wife also face charges of conspiracy, money laundering and tax fraud.

An undercover federal DEA agent obtained seven prescriptions from Dr. Kang, each for \$200, between October 2015 and April 2016 simply by telling him that her "shoulder felt tight." State and federal authorities then obtained a search warrant and seized the doctor's medical records, which allegedly showed that some patients had no plan of care and no medical justification for prescribing narcotics, a few patients were addicted to the painkillers and several were reselling their prescriptions. The state seized more than \$1.4

Continues on page 12...



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LAW & MEDICINE *Continued from page 11...*

million from Dr. and Mrs. Kang and accused them of failing to pay income tax in 2014 and 2015.

By allegedly causing the death of a vulnerable young man, Dr. Kang put himself on a par with every street-corner “drug dealer”. Under New Jersey’s “strict liability statute”, Dr. Kang faces up to 20 years in state prison. In recent years, a number of other states, including California, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Tennessee, Virginia and Washington, have enacted or revised laws aimed at punishing “drug dealers” for the overdose deaths of their clients, in this case a patient. Such laws are known under monikers such as “drug dealer liability” or “drug delivery resulting in death.”

New Jersey Attorney General Christopher Porrino stated, “Doctors are supposed to preserve health and life, but Dr. Kang allegedly turned his back on all medical and ethical standards, not to mention all standards of human decency.” Carl Kotowski, special agent in charge of the DEA’s New Jersey division said, “Unfortunately, this is another example of a doctor who was allegedly more concerned with his financial health than the health of his patients.”

Senior citizens are encouraged to be watchdogs and whistle-blowers. They are being urged to recognize healthcare fraud and abuse and contact the Medicare Fraud Hot Line, without fear of recrimination, for suspected cases of Medicare fraud and abuse.

Remember, healthcare abuse and fraud are preventable by constant vigilance and simple avoidance.

A LETTER FROM



As we welcome Spring, our thoughts turn to gardening and landscaping, so it's fitting that during our April 19th OCMSA general meeting, we will be learning about container gardening from Trochta's Gina Vallion. She is just one of the speakers we have lined up for our general meetings this year. Other topics and programs will include "Physician Health and Wellness" in May and "Medicinal Attributes and Health Benefits of Herbs" next Fall. A full calendar of our meetings, volunteer projects and other activities is available on our website: ocmsalliance.org.

Our Community Service Team has been active this Spring. Volunteer projects for March included hosting a birthday party at Positive Tomorrows and sorting and repackaging produce at The Regional Food Bank. In April, the CST volunteers will be helping at Oklahoma Mothers' Milk Bank and in May, in conjunction with mental health month, our volunteers will be serving lunch to clients of the Lottie House drop-in center.

The Kitchen Tour Committee has chosen the grant recipients for our tour scheduled for Sunday, October 22nd. Teen Recovery Solutions (a high school for teens in addiction recovery) and ITN Central Oklahoma (a transportation solution for seniors) will share in this year's proceeds.

We are continuing with our membership drive. Dues are \$80 with \$35 of that going to membership in the state Alliance (OSMAA) and the remaining \$45 going towards offsetting our OCMSA operating expenses. If your spouse is not already a member, we would love for him/her to join us! Information on how to join can be found on our web site.

Regards,
Cara Falcon
OCMSA President

LEADERSHIP OKLAHOMA HONORS OKLAHOMAN'S HELPING OKLAHOMA

Leadership Oklahoma sponsored its sixth annual Helping Oklahoma Recognition Program, which recognizes exceptional Oklahoma volunteers from across the state for their service to Oklahoma 501c3 non-profit organizations. The volunteer selected receives \$2,500 for the non-profit organization to further the work of the volunteer.

This year's winner is Dr. Mark Mellow. Dr. Mellow saw a need in the community and was the driving force behind this new non-profit, Independent Transportation Network of Central OK (INTCO). INTCO offers a

creative transportation option utilizing volunteers as drivers serving older Oklahomans and visually impaired adults in Oklahoma County.

The national founder of ITN America, Katherine Freund, learned firsthand that the transportation problems faced by older adults can have a direct impact on people of any age, including her toddler son, who was run over and seriously injured by an 84-year-old driver who didn't even realize he had nearly killed a child. Dr. Mellow heard Katherine's story over 6 years ago, and has since dedicated himself to establishing an ITN affiliate in OKC, building a working board, raising funds and securing community partnerships to open the doors just over a year ago. Since September 2015, a devoted corps of volunteer drivers, including Dr. Mellow, has provided 1,653 rides to individuals who would otherwise be isolated and homebound!

As the first ITN affiliate in Oklahoma, the mission is to provide a community-based, economically viable and personalized quality transportation service for individuals who can no longer safely provide their own transportation. Mark's dedication and vision to the needs of older Oklahomans reflects his fervent belief that ITNCO combines features that Oklahomans value most: volunteerism, practicality, independence and sustainability. Mark's own volunteer spirit is a true reflection of "The Oklahoma Standard"...consistent acts of honor, service and compassion. For more information or become a volunteer, visit www.itncentraloklahoma.org.



Above: Laurie Tilley (right), Chairman of the Executive Committee, Leadership Oklahoma, and Mark Mellow, MD.



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ANSWER THE CALL

WILLIAM TRUELS, MD

I was sitting in the doctor's lounge last week, waiting for my hernia case to start, when Herb Streeter walked in. His cleft palate reconstruction was delayed, so we had a few minutes to chat.

"I heard that Curt Winter, the orthopedic surgeon, was going to quit medicine and become a preacher," Herb began.

"That's surprising," I answered. "Why, I just scrubbed with him a couple of nights ago on a trauma case. He was putting some hardware on a hip fracture, while I was closing on a ruptured spleen."

"He never mentioned anything about the ministry, although he did say it was by the grace of God that our patient survived the accident—his car was rear ended by an eighteen wheeler!"

"I guess the truck driver forgot his energy drink and fell asleep!" Herb quipped.

"But why would you forgo all that medical education and start in the ministry?" I wondered.



“Why Curt and his brother, Jerry, are two of the best orthopedic surgeons in Oklahoma City!” I added.

“They did the best Putti-Platt shoulder operation during my residency of anybody in town!”

“Nobody does the Putti-Platt anymore, Dr. Truewater,” Herb quipped.

“Well, I guess a lot’s changed since I did a rotating internship in orthopedics, as part of my general surgery residency.”

“Nobody does a rotating internship anymore either, Dr. Truewater,” Herb replied.

“But why is Curt entering the cemetery, I mean the seminary?” I corrected myself.

“That seems like a waste of all his medical training.”

“It seems that Curt made a covenant with God,” Herb began.

“You see, his brother, Jerry, was sick with some kind of bone marrow problem, hypoplasia or something, and wasn’t making any white blood cells. Things looked bleak for a while, and Jerry was in isolation.”

“So Curt talks to God and makes a covenant,” Herb continued.

“I didn’t think orthopedic surgeons could talk to God,” I interjected.

“I know they’re high and mighty and everything. But I thought only preachers could talk to God—that’s the reason you went to seminary school.”

“No, anybody can talk to God, Dr. Truewater. God speaks to everyone—you just have to know how to listen.”

“Does he speak to general surgeons?” I asked.

“Sometimes,” Herb replied. “It could be like an inner voice or even sound like a real person—He’s always directing us.”

“Anyway, Curt makes a covenant with God, and says that if his brother Jerry survives, then Curt will go into the seminary.”

“So, long story short, Jerry survives—I guess he had some sort of viral infection—and Curt signs up for the ministry.”

“I guess this was God’s way of getting Curt into the seminary,” Herb added. “You see, God always has a Greater Plan for us.”

“But why would God give Jerry a viral infection in order to get Curt to go into the ministry?” I asked.

“I mean, why couldn’t God just talk to Curt—you said he talks to orthopedic surgeons—and just straight out tell Curt to join the ministry?”

“God moves in mysterious ways,” Herb added. “Far be it from us to know the Greater Plan!”

“That reminds me of Sister Mary Rock up at Mercy,” I said. “She was in a tornado in Edmond—there was this terrible noise like a freight train and, when it was over, her house was intact, but the house next to them was leveled down to the slab—thank God nobody was home!”

“Anyway, Sister Mary takes that as a sign from God. She had always thought about building a large retirement village. She felt like the tornado was God’s way of telling her to get going—and that’s how Epworth Villa got started—no joke!” I added.

“Well, sometimes God does things that don’t make sense to us at the beginning, but look, we’ve got a great retirement village now!” Herb replied.

“Are you saying that God controls the tornadoes?” I asked Herb.

“God controls everything,” Herb replied.

“Why, God even controls your hand while you’re operating in surgery!” Herb added.

Continues on page 18 ...

“He does?” I asked. “I hope God knows his anatomy—medical students today don’t learn anatomy like we did. I mean we spent a whole year on the cadaver—students today spend only a few weeks in the cadaver lab. I’m thinking about not even bothering to donate my body to science!”

“God doesn’t need to take anatomy, Dr. Truewater! God created the anatomy—why, just from Adam’s rib he created an entire woman!”

“Well, if God is guiding my hand in surgery, and He’s that good, maybe I should step over to the left side of the table and let God do the surgery—kind of like an Attending Physician when the resident gets in trouble.”

“Does that mean the Attending is God?”

I asked.

“No, Dr. Truewater, you’re getting confused,” Herb replied.

“God works through us, like he worked through Curt and Sister Mary for a Greater Good.”

“Humans still have to do their part,” Herb added.

Just then a voice came booming over the intercom in the doctor’s lounge.

“Dr. Truewater, your case is starting in room nine!”

“I’ve got to get going, Herb,” I replied. “God is calling!”



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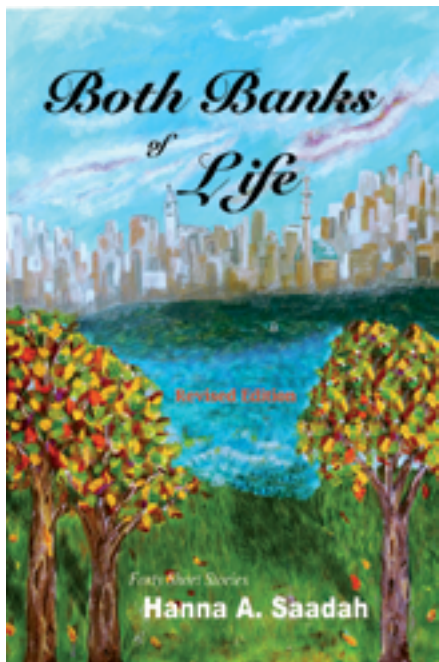
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OCMS MEMBER & AUTHOR HANNA SAADAH, MD



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A SCHIZOID INTERVIEW

HANNA SAADAH, MD

I am accustomed to sleep and in my dreams to imagine the same things that lunatics imagine when awake.

~ Rene Descartes (1596-1650)

In 1970, as fourth-year medical students at the American University of Beirut, we spent time in Al-Asfouriyeh, the only psychiatric hospital in Lebanon, which catered to schizophrenics. Professor Vesanus's introductory lecture to us described the psychiatric interview as a fateful, frightful flight through murky, mental clouds:

"Do not challenge an irrational mind with reason," he instructed. "To understand how an insane mind thinks, you must be compassionate, vicarious, attentive, and humble. Like us, the insane reason correctly, but arrive at incorrect conclusions because they reason from the wrong precepts."



After that seminal lecture, Professor Vesanus began assigning us patients. “Why don’t you start by interviewing Professor Matooh,” he said, pointing his finger at me.

“Professor Matooh?” I gasped. “Professor Matooh, our physics professor?”

“Yes,” replied Dr. Vesanus with calm indifference.

I was stung by his insouciance. Asking me, the student, to interview my esteemed physics professor struck me as a violation of establishment mores. I almost protested, but not wishing to affront yet another esteemed professor, I lowered my gaze and whispered: “I heard that he was on sick leave. I had no idea that he was...”

“A paranoid schizophrenic,” interjected Professor Vesanus, finishing my sentence.

Perspiring with apprehension, I sat behind my assigned desk in my solitary room and waited for the smartest man I knew to be brought before me. Steps shuffled along the long-dark corridor. An orderly knocked and entered, holding Professor Matooh by the arm. I stood at attention. The orderly eased the professor into the chair facing my desk. Then, pointing to the little bell at my side, said, “Ring when you’re ready for me to take him back.”

Professor Matooh slumped into his chair and ignored my extended hand.

“Good morning, Professor Matooh,” I intoned, pulling back my unrequited hand.

Silence.

“You taught me physics a few years ago, Sir.”

Silence.

“You taught me well, Sir, and I am but one of your many grateful students.”

His eyes gleamed and he straightened up his slumped posture.

“As a formal student who had visited your office on many occasions, Sir, I feel odd sitting in your place.”

He smiled, rose from his chair, and commanded, “Let’s change places, then.”

I stood up and offered him my seat. After sitting in it, he took immediate charge of the situation as if he were in his own office, and motioned for me to sit in the interviewee’s seat. Then, with a vibrant voice, he asked his usual, introductory question: “What’s on your mind, bright-young-man?”

Professor Vesanus’s words: “Do not challenge an irrational mind with reason,” saved the moment. With pen in hand, ready to take notes, I formulated my first question.

“How are you feeling, Sir?”

“The universe has no feelings,” he answered with mathematical certainty.

“Why not, Sir?”

“Because the universe is unconcerned.”

“Is the universe God?”

“No. It’s an extension of God.”

“So where is God, then.”

“You’re looking at Him.”

I gulped. He smiled with smug satisfaction and waited.

Continues on page 24 ...



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“May I ask you, Sir, the question that has forever eluded humanity?”

“You may.”

“How did the universe come into being?”

“About thirteen and a half billion years ago, I birthed it.”

“Birthed it? What caused you to do that, Sir?”

“I felt a strong urge to write down my thoughts.”

“Is the universe your written thoughts?”

“Indeed, and the more I write, the more it has to expand to accommodate my excogitations. The universe is my thirteen-and-a-half-billion-year diary.”

I was enthralled by Professor Matooh’s simple sincerity, explaining the unexplainable with nonchalant ease. More questions stirred, vying to be heard:

“And after birthing this magnificent universe, what else did you do, Sir?”

“After birth, I laid down my laws of physics and set the universe in motion.”

“Do your laws of spatial physics apply to us, Homo sapiens?”

“Not only they apply to you, they also apply to all the living creatures on Planet Earth, and on the many other planets that support life.”

“You mean there is life elsewhere in the universe?” I gasped.

“Only paranoid Homo sapiens—and all Homo sapiens are paranoid—make an issue out of life. Life is everywhere. Every atom is alive with motion. Every light wave is alive with photons. Every star is alive with fire. Every planet is alive with rotation. All of space is alive with my brain waves.”

Here, Professor Matooh took in a deep sigh and peered at me with penetrating vision, as if he were inspecting my unvoiced thoughts. With his eyes

piercing me, I couldn’t think of my next question, but I knew that I needed to find a good one for the interview to continue. Then, remembering that the universe was his living diary, I formulated my grand question.

“And how about our own writings, Sir? I mean us, paranoid Homo sapiens. Are our writings extensions of your thoughts and of your diary?”

Professor Matooh sighed with exasperation before he replied:

“Before Homo sapiens wrote, nature penned its chronicles with fossils, the silent, venerable hieroglyphics of life. But earth’s history came into awareness only after Homo sapiens began writing it, just about 5500 years ago. As an ephemeral millisecond, tossed into a thirteen-and-a-half-billion-year-old universe, how insignificant, how lost, how miniscule, how divisive are your writings compared to mine?”

“Divisive?” I protested.

“Divisive indeed. Writing divides people into languages, religions, nations, parties, factions, clubs, and armies. Writing is the epitome of awareness, and awareness is the root of all evils.”

Here, Professor Matooh shifted in his seat, and as if I had suddenly opened his floodgates, continued:

“Planet Earth was formed only four and a half billion years ago. Single life cells appeared three and a half billion years ago. Organisms appeared five hundred and seventy million years ago. And last to appear, a meager quarter-of-a-million years ago, were Homo sapiens.”

“So, why did your thoughts formulate the Homo sapiens to evolve so late?”

“I wanted aware life to appreciate my work, because unaware life cannot.”

Continues on page 26 ...



Dr. Atkinson



Dr. Chong



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“Are we the only aware life in the universe?”

“No. There were others, but because they are so much older, they have lost their awareness.”

“Are you pleased with our awareness, Sir?”

“No. Your awareness of life has traded peace for animosity. Unaware life, which is the unwritten life, is at peace. Aware life, which is the written life, is at war.”

“And what can we do about that, Sir?”

“Nothing. Only when you get close to extinction will you realize that your awareness is your curse. Only then, when your curse is spent, will you blossom back into humble equanimity.”

“Has that happened to other aware worlds, Sir?”

“That has happened to all the older, aware worlds. Without exception, they all got close to extinction before they rose again. When they rose from their own ashes, they forged newer, better, humbler, less aware, and less chronicled worlds. Your world is the newest and, therefore, is the most aware. It has not had time to blossom into the humble equanimity of unawareness. It will, though, but only after it reaches near extinction.”

One more question nagged at my mind. A question I was afraid to ask because I knew how he would answer it.

“Sir. Since we must evolve from awareness to unawareness before we can blossom into humble equanimity, should I conclude that the unaware life forms are, indeed, the more developed forms?”

“Indeed, they are. Which is better for Planet Earth, Homo sapiens or trees? Which does more good for this young planet, its unaware life forms or its paranoid Homo sapiens? Which is the only life form that harms Planet Earth?”

“Are you saying that, because of their awareness, Homo sapiens are the most primitive and the most damaging life forms on this planet?”

“Think in reverse-evolution and the answer will become clear. Awareness is counter-natural and, therefore, is both self-destructive and planet-destructive. Unawareness is pro-natural, which is why unaware life forms are far more successful than Homo sapiens, and why Homo sapiens need to evolve toward humble unawareness in order to survive?”

“So, are you saying that what to us seems primitive is actually advanced, and what seems advanced is actually primitive?”

Professor Matooh smiled, nodded a smug indeed, rang the bell, and commanded, “Next please.”

I collected my notes, rose from my seat, bowed a thank-you, and walked out.

*

In the long-dark corridor, the orderly and I exchanged knowing glances as we passed each other.

*

When I reported to Professor Vesanus, he asked, “Did you learn anything?”

“I learned that the universe views us as misfits.”

“The universe is indifferent,” he countered. “What did you really learn from interviewing Professor Matooh?”

“I learned, I learned, I don’t really know what I learned.”

“I hope you have learned that to know and to understand ourselves—first, we must understand others, and second, we must not take ourselves too seriously.”





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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Chelsey D. Gilbertson, DO, is a board-certified emergency medicine physician with TEAMHealth Emergency Medicine/INTEGRIS. She earned her osteopathic degree from Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Tulsa.



Stephen Blake Kelly, MD, is a family medicine physician specializing in pain

management with the Oklahoma Pain Center. He completed medical school at the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine and a residency at St. Anthony.

Matthew A. McBride, MD, is

a board-certified gastroenterologist with Digestive

Disease Specialists. He completed medical school at the University of Toledo College of Medicine in Toledo, Ohio. He completed his medicine internship, medicine residency and fellowship in Gastroenterology at Northwestern University Medical School in Chicago, Illinois.



Mark G. Miles, MD, is a board-certified internal medicine physician hospitalist in Edmond. He completed medical school and residency at the Medical College of Georgia.



Sumit Nanda, MD, is a board-certified ophthalmologist with

Oklahoma Retinal Consultants. He completed medical school at Duke University School of Medicine, residency at Johns Hopkins, residency at the Medical College of Wisconsin, and an internship at OU. He served as faculty at OU, as well as Chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology at Baptist from 2006-2010.

Stephanie Pickett, MD, is a board-certified OB/GYN with Mercy. She completed

medical school at the University of Texas, residency at Case Western Reserve University, and a fellowship in female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery at OUHSC. She also has a master's degree in clinical and transitional research from OUHSC.



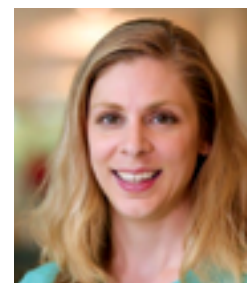
Peter B. Stanbro, MD, MPH, is a psychiatrist in Edmond with Stanbro Healthcare

Group. He completed medical school at the University of Buffalo School of Medicine, residency at Boston University Medical Center and fellowship at the University of Massachusetts.

Amanda R. Titus, MD,

is a board-certified rheumatologist with Mercy. She completed

medical school at the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine, a residency in internal medicine and fellowship in rheumatology, both with OUHSC.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



Alicia Vanhooser, MD, is a board-certified radiologist in Edmond. Dr.

Vanhooser recently transferred membership to Oklahoma County from Garfield County, where she practiced in Enid for 25 years. She completed medical school at the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine and residency at OUHSC.

J. Ross Vanhooser, MD, is a board-certified radiologist in Edmond. Dr.



Vanhooser recently transferred membership to Oklahoma County from Garfield County, where he practiced in Enid for 25 years. He completed medical school at the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine and residency at OUHSC.



Julie D. Watson, MD, is a board-certified neonatal pediatrician with

AllianceHealth Deaconess. She completed medical school at the University of Oklahoma, a fellowship with MaGaw Medical Center of Northwestern University, and a residency with Rush University Medical Center.



Timothy A. Vavricka, MD, is a board-certified general surgeon with INTEGRIS.

He completed medical school at the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine, and residency at OUHSC. Upon his acceptance to medical school Dr. Vavricka was also commissioned as an Ensign in the United States Navy. After completing his residency, he completed two combat deployments to the Middle East, served as Ship's Surgeon on the USS Enterprise, and served as Staff Surgeon at the Naval Medical Center.





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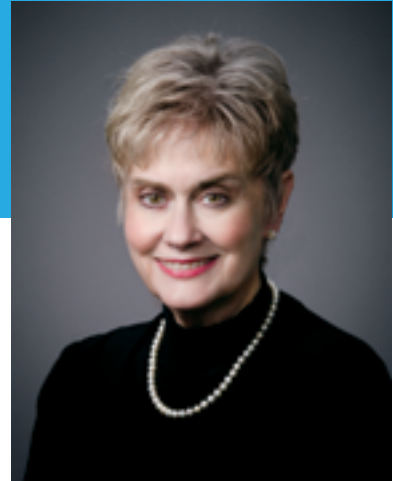
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DIRECTOR'S DIALOGUE

BY JANA TIMBERLAKE,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*“Real generosity toward the future lies in
giving all to the present.”*

~Albert Camus

This organization is so fortunate! Through the years, the physicians have “stepped up” to challenges and invested their time to benefit medicine and this community.

County medical societies throughout the U.S. continue to experience a decline in membership. In an effort to demonstrate the value of membership to young physicians, the OCMS Leadership Academy was created. Class VII completed its final session on April 1st and included thirteen (13) physicians and one OCMS Alliance member. While the class receives information on a multitude of subjects, the OCMS benefits by adding new members. The individual who is responsible for creating the Leadership Academy is Dr. Larry Bookman. He continues to give tirelessly during each year’s planning process and attends each session. Dr. Bookman’s generosity does not stop there – it also extends to the entire

community through his volunteer efforts. His life is an example of “investing in the future by giving in the present.”

The Metro Call Schedule continues to operate in Oklahoma City. It was created to offload some of the less seriously injured patients to metropolitan hospitals allowing the Level I Trauma Center to concentrate on those patients who have suffered the most severe trauma. With the threatened closure of the Level I Trauma Center in 2003, a group of dedicated individuals – hospital CEOs, specialty physicians, trauma specialists – began meeting to address this issue. Two people who remained constant during the planning, implementation and oversight were Drs. Jay Cannon and John Sacra. While many others made contributions to the call

Continues on page 32 ...

schedule's success, these two physicians were exceptional. Dr. Cannon continues to serve as the subcommittee's only chair, and his leadership skills have guided the subcommittee through some difficulties. Dr. Sacra's incredible knowledge of trauma systems and calm demeanor in intense situations helped keep everyone focused. And I would be remiss if I did not mention the contributions made by Dr. Stan Pelofsky, who worked with Oklahoma County neurosurgeons to decompress the OU Neurosurgery Department during a difficult period. I held my breath in May 2004 when the first call schedule went into effect. None of us dared to imagine that it would still be operating in 2017! While the Trauma Rotation Subcommittee has been faced with the need to "tweak" things here and there, the system is a tribute to the tenacity of the hospital CEOs, specialty physicians and trauma specialists who worked tirelessly to develop a community-wide call system for Oklahoma County. The three men mentioned above – Drs. Cannon, Sacra and Pelofsky – are yet another example of "investing in the future by giving in the present."

In 1993 when the Oklahoma County Medical Society partnered with Deaconess Hospital and the Free Methodist Church to open a free clinic in northwest Oklahoma City, Dr. Mukesh Parekh volunteered to be the first physician to

see patients there. After 24 years, he continues to volunteer at the clinic on Thursday nights. Several of the physicians who comprise the Thursday night roster have been doing so for 20+ years. I thank them for their generosity that has had a positive impact on the clinic. Once again, physicians "invested in the future by giving in the present."

According to a March 20, 2008 article in The Guardian, U.S. researchers found that the old adage "it's better to give than to receive" was correct. Their findings, published in the journal Science, showed that "regardless of income level, those who spent money on others reported greater happiness, while those who spent more on themselves did not." But generosity is not limited to giving money – I believe the greatest gift people can give is of themselves.

Examples of Oklahoma County physicians' generosity are limited because of the space available for this article. The stories are endless about those who gave of themselves "in the present" for the "future" of this organization and the community. Kahlil Gibram said, "Generosity is giving more than you can, and pride is taking less than you need." May we all let this be one of our guiding principles.

And remember...invest in something now that will benefit the future!



Oh, Happy Love

In the miracle of birth lies the hope of humanity. With every birth, life refreshes its old self and re-launches its new dreams. All new loves emanate from new births, which propagate love, rendering it immortal.

HANNA SADDAH, MD

Oh, happy love, the day you came to be
Two seeds held hands and kissed behind the dark
Aripening, that you may come to me
With smiles, which fragrant little children spark.
You are the wings that offered me the skies
The eyes that brimmed with tears that I had lost
The soul that buoyed me up to heaven's highs
Where minds are pure and God, the only host.
Love is a one-time offering vouchsafed
Only to those who dare assail its fire
Where naught is certain or secure or safe
When flames foment, and feed, and free desire.
Oh, happy love, the day when you were born
Has brought unto the night a glorious morn.

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