



Historical Happenings

Newsletter of the Physician Assistant History Society

Durham to Atlanta Transition Completed

Following its formal affiliation with the *National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants*, the *Physician Assistant History Society* (formerly known as the *Society for the Preservation of Physician Assistant History*) moved its business office from Durham to Atlanta. Late in 2011, the decision was made to transfer all of the History Society archives to Atlanta as well.

New quarters were established in Johns Creek, Georgia in the building that presently houses the NCCPA, as well as ARC-PA. Scores of boxes containing journals, newsletters, manuscripts, correspondence, audio- and videotapes, photographs and other memorabilia were delivered from the former History Office in Durham, and from an ancillary storage facility near Duke University.



Historian, Ruth Ballweg, Historian Emeritus, Reg Carter and President, Tom Piemme cut the ribbon at the entrance to the new History office suite.

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Reginald D. Carter, PhD, former Executive Director of the Society, and, presently, the Historian Emeritus, was persuaded to emerge from retirement, and was engaged part-time to serve as an “uber-archivist.” Together with Lori Konopka-Sauer and several students, Reg was able to open all of the boxes and construct an inventory of the entire collection. Journals, newsletters and books are now shelved within the office suite. Manuscripts, and critical elements of historic correspondence, have been indexed and filed. Personal collections have been stored for reference.

A grant from a private foundation has enabled the Society to contract with a local electronics firm to digitize the entire audiovisual collection, including thousands of photographs and scores of audio- and videotapes that had been recorded over the years. Elements of the collection will be indexed and will reside on hard drives on the NCCPA main servers. At its meeting in June 2012, the Board of the History Society held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to introduce the Trustees to the new quarters and the Society’s rich collection of artifacts.

Program Associates Receive New Benefits

The *Physician Assistant History Society* has not been a membership organization for the past five years. The Society is largely dependent on contributions from individuals, PA programs, AAPA constituent organizations and from our partners in professional enhancement: AAPA, PAEA and the NCCPA. The Society recognizes that contributions will be forthcoming to the degree that it offers **benefits** to those who contribute.

To that end, the Society, last November, established the category of program “*Associate*” for those educational programs that contribute an annual “Educational Fee” of \$500 to the Society. In our first letter to program directors, the Society outlined some of the benefits that program *Associates* would receive. They included a listing on the **PAHx** Web site, along with a link to each program’s own Web site. Additionally, contributing programs will be featured on the home page of the Society’s Web site, on a rotating basis (every few weeks), highlighting the program’s history and whatever unique features set it apart from other educational institutions. This past June, the Society formally adopted several new benefits that will be available, at no cost, only to *Associates*. These will include:

- A *student mentoring* program: Most programs now require, from each student, a thesis, or substantive research project, in fulfillment of the Master’s degree. Under the direction of Ruth Ballweg, assisted by Reginald Carter, the History Society will provide individual mentoring to students who engage in a project that focuses on PA history (nationally, regionally or locally). The students will be given advice about seeking relevant information and directed to resources that might be available within the archives of the Society, in libraries or

on-line. An application form for participation in the program will be E-mailed to program directors with this newsletter.

- A *student prize* program: Independent from the mentoring program, the Board of Trustees has authorized two prizes, of \$2,000 and of \$1,000, to students of *Associate* programs who have authored published, or publishable, papers on the history of the PA profession. The competition will be judged by a committee, chaired by Fred Sadler. Information about the program will be issued within the next two months.



Programs who donate \$500 to the mission of the History Society will be highlighted on the home page of our Web site.

- Access to a *speakers bureau*: Many programs will be celebrating their 40th anniversary within the next two or three years. The Society is offering to assist in identifying, and to serve as an intermediary in securing, expert speakers for these and other major events in the life of our *Associate* programs. Inquiries can be made through Lori Konopka-Sauer (lorik@nccpa.net) at the History Society office.

- *Access to learning modules:* The Society is committed to the development of learning modules on topics related to the history of the profession. These are envisioned as audiovisual recordings, drawn from our archives, supplemented with workbooks expanding on the topics selected. The modules will be announced in the pages of this Newsletter as they are developed.

The History Society has received the Educational Fee from more than one-third of educational programs. As the Academic year gets underway, we urge program directors and financial officers to make their contribution so that the program, and its students, can avail themselves of these benefits.

A Message from the President

Thomas E. Piemme, MD

When the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants and the Physician Assistant History Society agreed to an affiliation in June of 2011, it began a period of rejuvenation for the Society. Navigated by Bill Marquardt, President of the Society at the time, and Janet Lathrop, then CEO of the NCCPA, the History Society officially became a “509 support organization” to the Commission. The staff of the NCCPA quickly began the process of consolidating activities in Atlanta and providing services that were badly needed by the Trustees.

Shortly following the formal adoption of the relationship, Fred Sadler (Historian, at the time) and I (as the President Elect) visited several foundations. We were able to obtain modest, but significant, grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation. The funds were intended to support travel and archival assistance, as well as to enable access to, and acquisition of, source documents dating to the founding of the major physician assistant governing organizations.

During the past year, Fred and I have visited the offices of AAPA, PAEA, ARC-PA and the AMA, as well as the NCCPA, and now have, either in hand or available to us, most of the critical documents that led to the establishment of a professional association, an association of teaching programs, a well-functioning accreditation system and an acclaimed certifying examination.



Visit by Tom Piemme and Fred Sadler to the offices of the AAPA. (l to r) Robert Wooten, President, AAPA; Piemme; Jenna Dorn, EVP/CEO, AAPA; Sadler; and Marilyn Fitzgerald, Senior VP, AAPA
Photo courtesy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants

In November of last year, the NCCPA provided substantial funds to permit a thorough reorganization of our archives, and enhancement of our ongoing programs. Among other early activities, the History Society Web site was upgraded. Its appearance and functionality have been greatly improved. With the help of several trustees, numerous biographies have been added. Most notably, the “Timeline” of PA history has been revised and greatly expanded. Spearheaded by Reg Carter with sequential input from Fred Sadler, Ruth Ballweg and myself, several iterations were generated. Each item was checked for authenticity. Links to documents, photographs, graphics and other artifacts are provided to make navigation a rich experience. Keri Habegger has spent countless hours entering the text, and providing the links. The earliest decades are now functional. Completion of

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the project is expected by November 1. It is to be considered a work in progress. Comments, additions and corrections are welcome.

By the time of our semi-annual meeting in June, the Society was ready to consider new programs and projects. (See article on “New Benefits” to programs.) There was free and open discussion. Subgroups of the Board considered enhanced outreach to our partner organizations, and prospects for future funding.

In July, Pam Dean was installed as Executive Director and *ex-officio* member of the Society Board, and Sheila Mauldin, a long-time member of the staff and a Vice President of the NCCPA, was appointed to be the Society’s new Managing Director. They lost no time becoming acquainted with our programs, and progress continues.

I have received assurance of commitment by officers of the NCCPA to the mission of the Society. Moreover, we have reasonable expectation of some new external funding over the next few years. Our goal, however, is the development of projects and programs that will allow sustainable fiscal solvency. Let me close with thanks to our devoted staff, and especially to Lori Konopka-Sauer and Keri Habegger for their hard work this year. Nor would we be where we are without the inspiration and contributions of our stalwart Historians, Ruth Ballweg and Reg Carter. The profession is indebted to their dedication.

History Society to Assist with PAEA 40th Anniversary

Founded in October 1972, at the Fourth Annual Duke Conference, the *Physician Assistant Educational Association* will observe its 40th Anniversary at its annual meeting in Seattle in November. From fourteen member schools, calling themselves the *Association of Physician Assistant Programs*, the organization has grown to 165 accredited educational programs – with as many as

60 more in some stage of development (according to John McCarty, Executive Director of ARC-PA). Having filled its hotel room block nearly three months in advance, the meeting will almost certainly exceed last year's record attendance in New Orleans of more than 400 PA education leaders. As founding President, Alfred M. Sadler, Jr., MD might say, "We've come a long way, baby."

The meeting will open with a plenary session on the morning of November 7. Although the Physician Assistant History Society will have a presence throughout the meeting with a booth in the Exhibit Hall, the featured event to honor the anniversary will be held at the Exhibit Reception, late in the afternoon of November 8. As a gift from the Society, Past Presidents of PAEA will wear ruby-colored academic stoles. (Ruby is the traditional color at a 40th anniversary celebration.) As many as thirty of the Past Presidents may be present, including a number of the early officers. Current President, Tony Brenneman will moderate a session marking milestones and recognizing major contributions to the organization.

An initiative by Ruth Ballweg will be a highlight at the Society booth. Photographs of the first graduating class of member programs have been requested, and are being received in the office. Seventy-six have been sent thus far. They will be placed in a power-point presentation, and displayed on a monitor throughout exhibit hours. Banner displays of the PAHx Timeline will be mounted on poster boards that will flank the entrance to the Exhibit Hall.

The PA History Society will be pleased to assist PA programs, state societies, and other constituent organizations with guidance on documenting their 40th anniversaries, many of which will be occurring within the next few years. Contact Lori Konopka-Sauer at the PA History Office (lorik@nccpa.net) for more information.

About this Newsletter

Soon after the History Society was incorporated in 2002 (as the *Society for the Preservation of Physician Assistant History*), the first issue of a newsletter was created by Reginald Carter, the first Executive Director of the Society. It appeared somewhat irregularly for three years, and was then produced quarterly by Pam Moyers Scott, Chair of a Publication Committee. Upon Dr. Carter's retirement, the Newsletter ceased to exist – until now.

After a five-year hiatus, it is the intent of the Society to resume issuing a Newsletter as a quarterly publication. Moreover, Reg Carter and Pam Scott had entitled the publication, *Historical Happenings*. Thus, the "masthead" on the front reflects history. Why not?

Next issue in December!

The *Physician Assistant History Society* is a charitable organization that exists for educational purposes, and is exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. It has no "membership;" its Trustees are volunteers. Accordingly, the Society is dependent upon charitable contributions from its constituency, the professional and educational communities of the PA profession. Donations may be made by visiting the PAHx Web site at www.pahx.org. Contributions can be received by credit card via PayPal, or by check.