

UVM Anesthesia News

A Newsletter From The University of Vermont Department of Anesthesiology

Volume 3 Issue 1

Winter 2008

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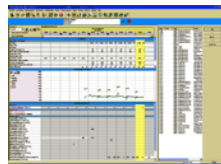
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Department of Anesthesiology

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The Stowe Meeting and Johns' Fund Lecture

As I write this, it's still the first month of the ski season here in Vermont, and Burlington has already received over forty inches of snow. Mount Mansfield has over ten feet, so it seems like a good time to put in a plug for our department's ski meeting, the 13th Annual Vermont Perspectives In Anesthesia Meeting, March 5th through 9th at the StoweFlake Resort and Conference Center. Over the years, Matt Fisher and Rob Williams have developed a good educational program that mixes some terrific outside speakers with the best of our homegrown UVM talent. I was lucky enough to attend both the 2006 ASA meeting in Chicago and our Stowe meeting six months later, and found that the quality of lectures at Stowe was top notch, better than Chicago IMHO. The skiing at Mount Mansfield still retains its unique Vermont character and quality, despite global warming and recent "improvements" to the mountain, and over fifty restaurants in Stowe offer plenty of variety. Finally, I'm told by David Adams that this year's Johns' Fund lecturer, Barron Lerner MD from Columbia University, is not only an excellent writer (he's the author of "The Breast Cancer Wars: Hope, Fear, and the Pursuit of a Cure in Twentieth-Century America," among other books) but also an entertaining speaker. His lecture "When the Famous Get Sick and the Sick Get Famous: How Celebrity Patients Influence Medicine" should be a good one. You can find information on this year's Stowe meeting and John's Fund Lecture on page four, or point your browser to <http://cme.uvm.edu>. I hope to see you at the meeting.



Joe Kreutz MD

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



As this winter edition of the UVM Anesthesia News goes to press, it is quite cold outside. The temperature hovers in the

teens with a slight breeze out of the north, so for those of you reading this in warmer climates, I'm slightly jealous. To date, we have had a great ski season though.

On a somber note, two deaths this fall had a very meaningful impact on the department. First, as many of you know, after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer, Michael Burfoot passed away on September 25th. I was fortunate to be able to both visit with Michael several weeks prior to his death and talk with him on the phone the day before he died. Michael was always looking forward. On the occasion of my last phone call, he was personally adjusting his medicines, of course, so he could be more lucid when an old friend was to visit from Western Canada. Throughout his illness, Michael was the picture of grace. There is more about Michael on page 4 of this newsletter.

On November 5th we learned of the tragic loss of Adam Muller. Pfc. Muller, the son of Kathy Muller who is a long-time assistant in our department, was killed in his Humvee by an IED in Tal Al-Dahab, Iraq. We have established the Adam Muller Memorial Fund and it is our hope that, through this fund, Kathy will have the means to have a permanent memorial built for her son. Many of you have been very kind and generous in your donations and we thank you. Anyone wishing to make a donation should contact me directly.

As you read this newsletter, you will see that many exciting things are happening. Initiatives that have been worked on for quite some time, from our electronic record keeper to our new web site, are coming to fruition.

Let me take this opportunity to wish you and your family a happy and healthy new year.

Howard Schapiro MD
howard.schapiro@vtmednet.org

Our new website:

<http://www.fahcanesthesiology.org>

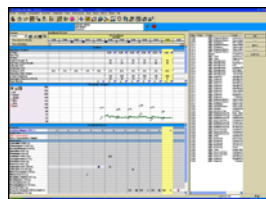


UVM Anesthesia has a new (and vastly improved) website. Created by Media Solutions International of Essex Junction, with input from a UVM Anesthesia team led by administrative assistant Kellie Dutra, it went online December 6th after six months of development. New

features include biographical information on all current faculty, staff, residents, and fellows, reviews of the resident training program and department research, a publication bibliography, a community and department event calendar, guidelines and applications for prospective residents and visiting medical students, and much more. The site's design showcases photographs by former UVM Anesthesia faculty member Jim Rathmell MD and others, and artwork by Richmond, VT's Daryl Storrs. We expect that our new website will soon rival Yahoo! and Google as one of the most popular on the internet.

PICIS Goes Live

On December 5th, FAHC "went live" with the long-awaited PICIS Caresuite Anesthesia Manager, an electronic automated anesthesia



record-keeper, in all its Mary Fletcher operating rooms. The new Anesthesia Manager software runs on PC's attached to anesthesia machines, with data from the physiologic

monitors (blood pressure, SpO2, etc.) and anesthesia machines themselves downloaded to a networked server in an SQL database. Additional documentation of all anesthesia-related events, such as medications, fluids, intubation, maintenance and emergence details, and billing and compliance notations, are entered manually from specially constructed event lists. We hope to be able to leverage our new anesthetic database to facilitate clinical research, teaching and patient care. Eventually, information will be stored and shared with the upcoming Electronic Health Record, an initiative that FAHC is committed to installing in the near future (*more on this in a future issue - Ed.*)
-Bill Paganelli MD

UVM Anesthesia 2007 =/ -

The only constant in the UVM Department of Anesthesiology in 2007 was change, including personnel - remarkably though, no one has retired from the department in over a decade. A rundown of physician comings and goings:

Arrivals

- Francisco "Paco" Grinberg MD**
Saint Mary's Medical Center
West Palm Beach, FL
- Monika Modlinski MD**
Denver Children's Hospital
- Vincent Miller MD**
UVM Anesthesia Residency class of 2007
- Clarence "Sonny" Ivie DO**
Southwestern Vermont Medical Center
Bennington, VT

Departures

- Jerry Tarver MD & Michael Borrello MD**
Vermont Interventional Spine Center
Colchester, VT
- Olga Torbin MD**
Aventura Hospital and Medical Center
Aventura, FL
- Matthew Walker MD**
Central Anesthesia Services Exchange
Sutter Hospitals, Sacramento, CA

Call Me "Dean Adams"

David Adams MD, an Associate Professor of Anesthesiology at UVM since 2000, has been named Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education at UVM College of Medicine and FAHC. David is a graduate of Michigan State College of Medicine and completed his anesthesia residency and neuroanesthesia fellowship at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center. Since 2004, he has served as UVM Anesthesia's Residency Director, a position he'll be turning over to Ralph Yarnell; David will continue as UVM Anesthesia's Vice Chair of Education & Research. We're all very proud of David and always knew that he'd amount to something someday.



Mark Hamlin MD snowkites on Lake Champlain.



Back to the Future: Epidural Anesthesia at UVM

Part of a series of reviews of ongoing UVM
Department of Anesthesiology research projects.

Mike Sutherland never met "Big John" Abajian, who passed away in 1996, nor does he know much about him. Their lives and careers are separated by over sixty years, almost the entire span of modern anesthesiology. And yet, unbeknownst to Mike, the two men had at least one thing in common - an interest in epidural anesthesia.

Mike, a UVM Anesthesia CA-3 resident, has just completed phase one of a two-part research project comparing the minimum electrical current required for nerve stimulation guidance of epidural vs. spinal catheter placement. Twenty patients receiving epidural anesthesia have been studied thus far; using a Braun Perifix FX spring wire coiled epidural catheter and a Johan's adapter, the average minimum current required to elicit a visible myotomal muscle twitch from an appropriately placed epidural catheter has been determined. Now, the same measurement, this time with twenty patients receiving continuous catheter spinal anesthesia, will be made. Mike's hope is that differences in minimum electrical current levels required to elicit a myotomal muscle twitch will allow early detection of inappropriately placed epidural and spinal catheters. "This is especially important in accidental dural puncture with inadvertent subarachnoid placement of an epidural catheter," says Mike. And this, strangely enough, leads us to John Abajian...

Now it's well-known that John Abajian spent almost his entire career intentionally pushing sharp needles through the dura mater, but a well-kept secret is that his first research interest was epidural anesthesia. In fact, he published three



articles on it between 1941 and 1943. In his 1941 publication, "Big John" wrote that he had performed over 1,000 epidurals in his first eighteen months at Mary Fletcher Hospital - a claim that's hard to believe given a surgical volume of about 1,500 cases per year. Epidural anesthesia was used for cases including thoracotomies, cholecystectomies and spinal fusions in patients ranging in age from thirteen months to eighty-four years. John often used a two needle technique, with a thoracic or lumbar injection and a separate caudal injection for "visceral anesthesia." He wrote that he "had no deaths in the operating rooms or post-operatively directly attributable to the anesthetic," and that one advantage of epidural anesthesia is that it "had reduced anesthetic costs from \$1.25 to 28 cents per patient."

Despite John Abajian's initial enthusiasm, by 1944 epidural anesthesia had been almost completely abandoned at UVM. What happened? Ed Stannard happened. In 1942 John Abajian enlisted in the Army, and in his absence most anesthesia at UVM was performed by nurse anesthetists (Betty Wells and Jackie Roberts), surgeons, and interns like Ed Stannard, a 1942 UVM College of Medicine graduate. Apparent-



ly, while attempting epidurals in late-1942, Ed caused enough inadvertent total spinals with accidental and unrecognized dural punctures - exactly what Mike Sutherland's current research is designed to detect - that the nurses nicknamed Mary Fletcher Hospital's Drinker respirator (the "iron lung" used to support Ed's unfortunate patients until their respiratory muscles recovered) "Uncle Ed's Cabin." John Abajian learned of the mishaps and wrote to Betty Wells in early-1943, saying "The promiscuous use of epidurals by not-too-well-trained intern anesthetists is not to be encouraged, as you know by now." Betty took his advice seriously - maybe a little too seriously - and epidural anesthesia was rarely seen again at UVM, until the late-1970's when it was "rediscovered" by Heidi Kristensen, Chris Abajian, and Michael Burfoot. Ed Stannard, by the way, entered general practice in Fair Haven, VT after his internship and had a successful career.

Mike Sutherland's research project isn't the first UVM epidural study since John Abajian's pioneering work, but it is one of the more interesting. It's an innovative look at an old problem - just the type of out-of-the-box thinking that "Big John" was famous for. Mike hopes to complete his research by July.

Cuatro Gringos De UVM Llegan A Guatemala



In early November, UVM Anesthesia's Chris Viscomi MD and Mark Hamlin MD traveled to the Hospital de la Familia in Nuevo Progreso, San Marcos, Guatemala to provide volunteer anesthesia for a variety of general, plastic, gynecologic, and ophthalmologic surgical procedures.



And, for the first time in UVM history, they were joined by residents - CA-3's Tim Waring MD and Chuck Eastwood MD - who participated as part of UVM Anesthesia's new International Medicine resident opportunity. It

was a unique and valuable experience for them, but not without its hazards. "I saw more pediatric laryngospasm in one week in Guatemala than I've seen in two years in Burlington," says Tim.



Other members of the UVM Anesthesia Department have also worked overseas recently. John Gaydos AA returned to the Sacre Coeur Hospital, Milot, Haiti with a team of UVM surgeons October 20th to 27th (his fourth time there). And CRNA Barry Meehan came to the rescue of Light of the World Charities when she volunteered as a last-minute replacement for a mission to San Benito Jose Hospital in Comayagua, Honduras November 11th to 17th. Barry faced a different hazard: "We were escorted by one or two "pistolas" with guns from the moment we got off the plane until we returned to the airport to come home - standard operating procedure."

Alumni News

*We and your fellow UVM Anesthesia alumni are eager to hear from you!
Please write to us or just stop by our offices next time you're in the area.*

Michael Burfoot MD died September 25th after a year-long struggle with pancreatic cancer. Michael was born July 6th, 1932 in Hove, Sussex, UK and was a graduate of Oxford University Medical School. In 1963, he joined the staff of Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal, and later conducted pioneering research on the mechanism of action of epidural anesthesia with Philip Bromage at McGill University. Lured to Burlington in 1978 by John Mazuzan, Michael worked in the UVM Anesthesia Department for eighteen years, much of that time as head of the Anesthesia Section at Fanny Allen Hospital. His anesthesia style was unique (anyone remember Enflurane-Demerol anesthetics?), his teaching style upbeat and personal, and his enthusiasm infectious. After his "retirement" in 1996, he worked part-time in St. Albans and Burlington, and participated in Orbis ophthalmologic medical missions to Libya and Uganda. Mi-



chael had a passion for renovating and designing homes and did so three times in Berkshire, VT, complete with several ponds each. He is survived by his wife of over 53 years, Ruth, and children Jacqueline, Annette, Frances, Christopher, and Jamie. Contributions in Michael's memory can be sent to the Franklin County Home Health Agency – Hospice Program, 3 Home Health Circle, St. Albans, VT 05478.

Fima Lenkovsky MD, UVM Anesthesia resident class of 2001, is an Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology at UT Southwestern Medical Center and O.R. Director at the Dallas VA Medical Center. His specialty is vascular anesthesia, especially for endovascular carotid and thoracic/abdominal aortic surgery.

Rob Spencer MD, UVM Anesthesia resident class of 1995 (and first chronic pain fellow 1995 to 1996), is in private practice with Concord Pain Consultation Services, LLC in Concord, NH, where he lives with his wife Louise and daughters Anna and Emily. He remembers his first day in the FAHC OR: "My second scheduled case was a cholecystectomy, but was bumped for an emergent trauma who died on the table. I went to John Mazuzan after a very long first day and said to him, "I'm probably the only anesthesiologist in the country with a 50% mortality rate." He reassured me and said I should come back the next day and my stats should improve. They did."

Upcoming Events

13th Annual Vermont Perspectives in Anesthesia March 5 - 9, 2008, Stoweflake Resort, Stowe VT

Updates and practical reviews of topics relevant to clinical anesthesia practice, including transfusion myth busters, perioperative multimodal analgesia, morbid obesity in OB, low back pain management, office-based anesthesia, acupuncture, and pediatric sedation. Includes specialized workshops for hands-on experience with ultrasound-guided peripheral nerve blocks, difficult airway management, and an introduction to acupuncture.



Johns' Fund Lectureship - "When the Famous Get Sick and the Sick Get Famous: How Celebrity Patients Influence Medicine"

Barron H. Lerner MD, Angelica Berrie-Gold Professor of Medicine and Public Health, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons
Sat. March 8, 2008, 4:30PM, Stoweflake Resort, Stowe VT

Once again, the UVM Department of Anesthesia's annual Johns' Fund Lectureship will be held in concurrence with the conference. The lectureship is held in honor of John Abajian, Jr. MD and John Mazuzan, Jr. MD, distinguished former chairmen of the department from 1939 to 1995. Registration for the conference is **not** required to attend the lecture and cocktail reception.

Tax-deductible contributions to The Johns' Fund (named in honor of former UVM Anesthesia Chairmen John Abajian, Jr. MD and John Mazuzan, Jr. MD) and the UVM Anesthesia Research & Development Fund are welcome and should be directed to Howard Schapiro MD, Chair - UVM Dept. of Anesthesiology, Fletcher Allen Health Care, 111 Colchester Avenue, Burlington, VT 05401.

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