

President's Page

## The SCMR Annual Scientific Sessions 2000

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It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 3rd Annual Scientific Sessions as President of the Society for Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance. The Sessions run from Friday, January 21, to Sunday, January 23, at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia, in Buckhead. This year promises to be another growth year following the continuing rise in interest in Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance (CMR) in the clinical and cardiological arenas. We saw our attendance grow to 302 in 1999, which was a substantial rise on the exciting start to our Annual Sessions in 1998 when just over 200 delegates attended. We would, of course, be delighted if the rate of growth of the meeting were to continue at this rate! The uncertainty of running annual meetings reminds me of a teenager having his first party. Although plenty of friends say they are going to come, you are never quite sure. It is only at the last minute that everyone starts turning up. Planning for such capricious and expensive events is not at all straightforward.

We are therefore very lucky to be in the safe hands of our Program Director, Sam Wickline (Washington University, St Louis, Missouri) and our management staff, in particular, Donna Blackmore and Dale Zeigler, for all the hard work they put in to keeping all the cogs well greased. Many thanks to them and the Program Committee, who have put together this year's outstanding series of plenary talks, educational and update sessions, and who, of course, reviewed the abstracts for presentation.

Sam Wickline has served as Program Director for two years, following Gerry Pohost's (University of Alabama at Birmingham) directorship of the first Sessions, and will stand down from this responsibility at the end of this meeting. I would like to thank him, on behalf of the entire Board of Trustees and the membership, for the excellent job he has done in giving the meeting a fresh look and feel as well as for moving the timeline for the meeting organisation forward by three months, giving everyone

more time to book their travel for the meeting and make arrangements for absence.

Sam will be followed, but not replaced, by Norbert Wilke (University of Minneapolis, Minnesota). Norbert has great experience in running scientific meetings, and indeed ran the very successful myocardial perfusion symposium for SCMR at the American Heart Association in 1998. With Norbert's enthusiasm and creativity, I am sure we will have a vibrant 2001 meeting. I hope that the new Program Committee, which we are in the process of selecting, will be able to keep up! We will ask the new Program Committee to meet at the Annual Sessions in Atlanta to ensure that our success can be built on for 2001. If you have suggestions, please feel free to approach Norbert.

What of the future of the Annual Sessions? For 2001, we shall return to Atlanta. This may please some and disappoint others, but the driving reasons for using Atlanta for our first four meetings are straightforward. First, there has been an overriding need for stability in the planning and funding of the meeting from its inception, and your Board did not want to take the risk of moving the meeting until it was established both academically and financially. Staying at one hotel has allowed us to plan for considerable expansion in delegates and improve the meeting year by year, which would have been compromised if we had taken on a new venue every year. Additionally, we have to book well in advance for meetings of this size, which makes forward planning essential. At this time of the Society's rapid development—with the journal, web site and other issues getting started, your Board wanted to keep the decision process regarding the site of the annual meeting time-effective. Finally, Atlanta rarely becomes snowbound in January; rather, the climate is usually pleasant at this time of year. Atlanta is also easy to reach from the east and west coasts of the USA and from Europe, with good value airfares (my return fare from London on Delta this year was just over \$400).

This means that fellows have a higher likelihood of being able to attend.

We plan, however, to move the Annual Sessions for 2002. There are a number of possibilities that fit the general criteria listed above, and your Board has discussed these recently. I hope that we will be able to make an announcement of our preferred venue soon, possibly at

the Atlanta meeting. Again, if you have any input, please do not hesitate to contact Norbert, me, or the SCMR headquarters.

I look forward to seeing you in Atlanta!

*Dudley Pennell, MD, FRCP, FACC, FESC*