

## Our Lifeblood... You!

Joseph Dervay, M.D., M.P.H., MMS, FACEP, FAsMA, FUHM

We are all very fortunate to belong to the Aerospace Medical Association (AsMA), the preeminent international professional organization for Aerospace Medicine and human performance. Our membership, which sustained an understandable decrease during the pandemic, has slowly improved. The need and importance to grow remains a key goal. *A robust membership is indeed "our lifeblood"*.

The request historically made in many organizations working to increase membership is the mantra, "if each one of us gets *one new member*, our organization could double". When such an appeal is made, some embrace the challenge and seek out colleagues to join, others seem to go "yada, yada, yada ... membership is a committee's goal or someone else's responsibility". But for an organization our size, *membership growth is indeed vital for all of us*. Many of us belong to numerous organizations: collegiate, medical school, grad school, nursing school, professional, community, civic, etc. Each organization will stress how important membership is for their continuance. But substantial gains are seldom made.

AsMA is one of the most inexpensive medical professional organizations to join, as many of you will attest by virtue of the markedly higher dues you pay elsewhere. The combination of our excellent and highly referenced journal, international breadth, special collegial nature, and range of operational and scientific interests is collectively unique.

AsMA strives to keep dues as low as reasonably possible, provide a helpful website, promote educational opportunities, respond to numerous policy issues and questions received, remain financially solvent with resources to weather difficult times (such as during the Pandemic), and to develop an excellent Annual Scientific program.

Challenge yourself! Take action and get a new member. "*Pay it forward*" and consider sponsoring a student or resident for their *first* membership to AMSRO and AsMA. What a great way to help them as they often have limited financial resources at a crossroads in their training. Show your commitment to getting them engaged with AsMA. How wonderful it is to hear a student or young professional say "thank you" to one of us for getting them exposed to our professional organization and career fields in an arena they never knew about or had only rudimentary knowledge. You can indeed make a difference in someone's life trajectory and professional fulfillment via your support and mentorship.



When interfacing with other non-Aerospace professionals who are not members of AsMA, encourage them to spend time at an AsMA Scientific Annual meeting, even if they cannot be present for an entire week. I had an ENT physician friend come to AsMA because of my encouragement and his personal curiosity. He loved what he learned, relished the professional and personal exchange, and is now a member of our ranks. "I never felt so welcome to a scientific meeting by a new group of folks," he shared.

Please spend a moment after reading this message to reflect... think what tangible things you can do... and act to help make a difference! Check out the AsMA website section on Membership and the overview: "Why become a Member?" Your suggestions and thoughts to help us grow and provide value to our members is important. Never hesitate to reach out with suggestions to our AsMA leadership, the Home Office, or our Membership Committee Chair and Co-Chair, Drs. Sparky Matthews and Theron Toole. Although each Constituent group of AsMA is asked to provide a representative to the core Membership Committee, anyone who is inclined to contribute is invited to participate.

In closing, I recall a wonderful conversation at a prior Annual Scientific Meeting with one of our Past Presidents, Dr. Kris Belland, as we spoke about our respect and tremendous fondness for AsMA and its members. Kris shared that "AsMA is an organization he wants to grow old with" due to the personal connections we make and the professional challenges for which we dedicate our energies. I wholeheartedly shared such a sentiment, and I know many of us do also. It is my earnest hope that more of you will embrace such a heartfelt feeling.

So *take action*... and spread our message to others and invite them to become future colleagues and potential lifelong friends!

All the best.

*Keep 'em flying...and Full Steam Ahead!*

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CONTACT DETAILS:

**Email:** [President@asma.org](mailto:President@asma.org) • **Web site:** [www.asma.org](http://www.asma.org) • **Facebook:** Aerospace Medical Association • **Twitter:** @Aero\_Med