

RAS-ACS News



A Quarterly Update from the Resident and Associate Society of the American College of Surgeons



Winter 2006

Editor: C. Suzanne Cutter, MD, Chair, Communications Committee, RAS-ACS

- [RAS Pays Tribute to Claude H. Organ, MD, FACS \(1926-2005\)](#)
- [Surgical Outcomes Club Created at the ACS Clinical Congress](#)
- [Join Us for the RAS-Sponsored Sessions at the Spring Meeting](#)
- [Feedback Needed on Proposed Volunteer Surgery Electives](#)
- [We're Looking for a Few Good Residents](#)
- [Submission Sought for 2006 Clinical Congress](#)
- [RAS Develops Surgical Fellowship Information Database](#)
- [Fellowship Application Process – Quick Links](#)
- [Committee on Young Surgeons](#)
- [Surgeons as Innovators – Is It Our Role?](#)
- [Resources on ACS-RAS Web site for Resident Members](#)
- [Announcing the RAS-ACS Symposium at the Clinical Congress](#)

RAS Pays Tribute to Claude H. Organ, MD, FACS (1926-2005)

Claude H. Organ, MD, FACS, the **84th President** of the American College of Surgeons, died of heart failure last June in Oakland, CA. A former Professor and Chair of the Department of Surgery at both **Creighton University** and the **University of California San Francisco-East Bay**, Dr. Organ also served as **Editor-in-Chief** of the *Archives of Surgery*, National Director of **Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society**, and **Chair of the American Board of Surgery**.

Those of us who were privileged to know Dr. Organ know that no man drank deeper from the *Pierian Spring* than he did. He inspired us as young surgeons to grow taller professionally, to think bigger, and to be better individuals. To his way of thinking, excellence was not an option--it was the rule.

Dr. Organ will forever remain a giant in American Surgery. The most apropos description of Dr. Organ I can offer was written by the physician turned author, Josiah Gilbert Holland, who offered his personal prayer as poetry.

“God give us men! A time like this demands
strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and ready hands;
Men whom the lust of office does not kill;

Men whom the spoils of office can not buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor; men who will not lie;
Men who can stand before a demagogue
and damn his treacherous flatteries without winking!
Tall men sun-crowned who live above the fog
in public duty, and in private thinking.”

We knew and stood in awe of such a man in Dr. Claude H. Organ. He touched our lives, and, as a result, we will never be the same. The Resident and Associate Society pay tribute to Dr. Organ for his mentorship and for proclaiming the year of his presidency of the American College of Surgeons as “**The Year of the Resident.**”

In tribute to Dr. Organ, we vow to be dedicated to and work hard for the College, and that our work will be nothing less than excellent.

Please review the November issue of Archives of Surgery, which was dedicated to Dr. Organ.

Mallory Williams, MD
RAS-ACS Communications Committee
Southfield, MI

[Surgical Outcomes Club Created at the ACS Clinical Congress](#)

The **Surgical Outcomes Club** held its first annual meeting during the College's 2005 Clinical Congress in San Francisco. This organization was created with the intent of providing a formal forum for collaboration among surgeons interested in the areas of surgical outcomes and health services research. The first meeting consisted of a scientific symposium with several surgeons presenting some of their research in surgical outcomes, which was followed by a business meeting and a keynote dinner with Atul Gawande, MD, FACS, one of the leaders in surgical outcomes research and author of the book *Complications*.

The newly elected executive committee includes John D. Birkmeyer, MD, FACS; Caprice K. Christian, MD, MPH, FACS; Samuel R. G. Finlayson, MD, MPH, FACS; David R. Flum, MD, MPH, FACS; Clifford Y. Ko, MD, MSHS, FACS; Selwyn O. Rogers, Jr, MD, MPH, FACS; and David R. Urbach, MD, MSc, FACS. For information about how to become a member and upcoming meetings, please contact Kit Giffen (kgiffen@eventquest.net).

Carlos M. Mery, MD, MPH
RAS-ACS Communications Committee
Palo Alto, CA

[Join Us for the RAS-Sponsored Sessions at the Spring Meeting](#)

When: Sunday April 23, 2006

Where: Dallas, TX

Due to their tremendous success, three resident-oriented programs will again be sponsored by the Resident and Associate Society (RAS) during the College's 34th Annual Spring Meeting in Dallas, Texas. All RAS programs are scheduled to be held on **Sunday, April 23, 2006**.

- The first session, “**Clinical Abstract Presentations by Residents,**” will provide a forum in which residents can present their research findings and discuss results of their research with experts and peers.
- The second session, “**Spectacular Cases from Residents,**” will offer residents the opportunity to present extraordinary cases to a group of expert panelists and to discuss various aspects of these cases.
- Finally, “**Surgical Jeopardy**” will be an exciting competition between resident teams during which they will be able to test their surgical knowledge against the knowledge of their peers from across the country.

For additional information, visit

<http://www.facs.org/springmeeting2006/index.html>. The registration fee for the Spring Meeting will be waived for all registrants who present at the aforementioned sessions.

Juan Paramo, MD

ACS Web Portal Community Editor

Miami Beach, FL

Feedback Needed on Proposed Volunteer Surgery Electives

Would you be interested in volunteering your time during residency to provide surgical care to people in need in areas such as the Caribbean, Central America, the Philippines, or the United States? Would you be more interested if the experience would count as part of your residency training? The Governor's Committee on Socioeconomic Issues has suggested that **Operation Giving Back** (<http://www.operationgivingback.facs.org>), the College's program that is intended to facilitate volunteerism among ACS members, might be able to help with that concept.

It has been proposed that an **elective volunteer surgery “rotation”** could be part of residency training. While aware of the complexity of implementing such an elective, Operation Giving Back is interested in learning what we think about the idea. Specifically, it would be helpful to know: the level of interest in participating in volunteer opportunities during residency, how many of you have already taken part in such activities and how you went about it, what level of supervision was provided, how you financed the experience, whether

you received any credit for the cases performed, how it was handled from a scheduling perspective at your residency program, and how you rated the educational and cultural components of the experience.

The potential benefits of volunteering your time and talent are many. Foremost is the opportunity to serve people in need of surgical care who wouldn't otherwise be able to receive it. Additional benefits include the chance to see how surgical care is practiced in countries that have few resources, to learn how practicing surgeons incorporate volunteerism into their careers, and to see disease processes rare in the United States or treatment options infrequently used in the current era of minimally invasive surgery. If you would be interested in a volunteer surgery elective, please seek out and talk with other residents in general surgery or surgical subspecialties at your program who might share your interest. Then talk to your program director(s) about what might be required to make a volunteer surgery elective work. Finally, contact Neal Barshes (nbarshes@bcm.tmc.edu) with any feedback, insights, ideas, or comments that result from these discussions and/or details on any previous surgical volunteerism experiences you may have had.

Neal Barshes, MD
Houston, TX

Kathleen M. Casey, MD, FACS
Newport, RI

We're Looking for a Few Good Residents

In addition to offering benefits like free registration for ACS meetings, the ability to participate in or simply attend the Surgical Jeopardy session at the College's Spring Meeting, and having access to the online educational resource *ACS Surgery: Principles & Practice*, RAS has a lot to offer to surgical residents--including residents in ob-gyn, neurosurgery, urology, orthopedics, ENT, and other surgical subspecialties. In an attempt to keep all residents better informed about programs and policies directly affecting **you**, we are looking for a resident representative from each program to serve as a **membership liaison** between RAS and the residents in each program. Interested residents should be willing to accept e-mails about RAS activities and to distribute them to other residents in their program, let us know if there are particular issues affecting residents that the College might be able to address, and encourage membership among residents in the program,. If you are interested in becoming a RAS membership liaison, please e-mail Andrea Silver (hiho70@yahoo.com).

Andrea Silver, MD
Chair, RAS-ACS Membership Committee
Royal Oak, MI

Submission Sought for 2006 Clinical Congress

The ACS Division of Education welcomes submissions for the following programs to be considered for presentation during the 92nd Annual Clinical Congress, to be held October 8-12, 2006 in Chicago, IL. The **deadline** for all programs is 5:00pm CST on March 1, 2006. Late submissions are not permitted.

- **Papers Session:** Abstracts are to be submitted **online ONLY**, via <http://www.facs.org/education/congress/paperssession.html>. Presentation type: Oral. Program Coordinator: Molly Clear (mclear@facs.org).
- **Posters Session:** Abstracts are to be submitted **online ONLY**, via <http://www.facs.org/clincon2006/sciexhibit.html>. Presentation type: Poster display. Program Coordinator: Mary Kate Colbert (mcolbert@facs.org).
- **Surgical Forum:** For surgical residents and scientific investigators in-training. Abstracts are to be submitted **online ONLY**, via <http://www.facs.org/sfabstracts/index.html>. Presentation type: Oral. Program coordinator: Kathryn Koenig-Matousek (kkoenig@facs.org).

RAS Develops Surgical Fellowship Information Database

The Education Committee of the RAS-ACS is developing a new resource to help provide practical information regarding **surgical fellowships** and the **application process** for those advanced training programs. This resource is envisioned as being incorporated into the new ACS **Web Portal**. In addition to useful information and links about the various fellowship application processes, contacts for individuals recently completing the fellowship application process will be made available to the RAS membership through the portal.

Much of the information will be contributed by members of the RAS advisory council, based on their specialty areas. We would like this resource to be as informative as possible. Some fellowship programs use the NRMP system; however, others operate outside of the NRMP.

Keith D. Amos, MD
RAS-ACS Education Committee
Houston, TX

Fellowship Application Process – Quick Links

As a cardiothoracic surgery fellow, I continue to work closely with my general surgery colleagues who are in the process of applying for fellowships in different specialties. There is a lot of discussion among third- and fourth-year surgical residents regarding the process of choosing a specialty. Based on my own experience, I am providing a list of several Web sites and Web-based search tools that may help

you make the process of choosing and applying for a fellowship less laborious.

- [**ERAS \(Electronic Residency Application Service\)**](#) is the application service that is becoming increasingly popular with surgical subspecialties. Most pediatric, cardiothoracic, and vascular surgery fellowships are involved with this service.
- [**NRMP \(National Residency Matching Program\)**](#) is the matching program for most fellowships in the United States. The site includes information about the NRMP policies and procedures, schedule of dates, and fellowship programs participating in the match.
- [**FREIDA \(Fellowship and Residency Electronic Database Access\)**](#) is a database provided by the American Medical Association regarding residency programs. It includes the number of positions offered by the program, hospital affiliations, program length, and the name, address and phone number of the program directors.
- [**CareerMD.com**](#) is a comprehensive source of information on physician training and employment opportunities and is frequently updated by program directors and employers.
- [**Careers in Medicine**](#) is a career planning program designed to help you choose a medical specialty, and select and apply to a program that meets your career objectives.
- [**APDS.org**](#) is the Program Directors' site with links to the available fellowships and residency positions including newly-opened spots or positions that become unexpectedly available.

Teimour Nasirov, MD

Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery

Department of Surgery

Loma Linda (CA) University Medical Center

From the Editor:

*The next deadline for eNewsletter submissions is **March 10, 2006**. Article subject matter pertains to training, practice, and career topics relevant to **surgical residents and associate surgeons**. Articles are to be **1-3 paragraphs** in length. Forward your submissions to ras-news@facs.org.*

Committee on Young Surgeons

The **Committee on Young Surgeons** (CYS) represents the interests and concerns of young surgeons of the College by promoting their active participation and input to support College activities. The committee is charged with establishing closer relationships between the College and surgical residents, Associate Fellows, and young Fellows of the College; promoting active participation of young surgeons in College affairs; and making College activities meaningful

to young surgeons in all specialties. Since its inception, the CYS has presented an education program for Initiates during the annual Clinical Congress, and CYS members have served as College representatives during visits to Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. In addition, members of the CYS serve as liaisons to the Board of Regents, to eight standing committees of the Board of Governors, to seven standing College committees including the Program Committee and the Resident and Associate Society, and to the AMA Young Physicians' Section.

The **goals** of the CYS are:

- **Education:** Provide opportunities for young surgeons to learn those aspects of surgical practice specific to us, and to promote educational opportunities for our peers and future surgeons.
- **Research and Optimal Patient Care:** Provide opportunities to explore the dynamic practice of surgery focused on the needs of young surgeons and patients.
- **Advocacy and Health Policy:** Represent the interests of the young surgeons and their patients. Educate the College and public about the concerns specific to all surgeons.
- **Member Services:** Develop methods of providing services needed by the young surgeon and endeavor to include all young surgeons under the umbrella of the College.

Our next upcoming event is the **Leadership Conference and Capitol Hill Visit**, to be held in Washington, DC, from June 11-13, 2006. This meeting is open to members from each of the chapters, including officers, administrators, and most importantly, the Young Surgeon Representatives. For information and to review agendas from previous Leadership Conferences, click on <http://www.facs.org/memberservices/cys/index.html>. Please notify your Chapter Officers if you are interested in attending and watch for updates about the 2006 agenda. Please contact me, or any of our committee members, if you have ideas about potential collaborations through which we can further the missions of both the CYS and the RAS-ACS.

Terry L. Buchmiller, MD, FACS

Chair, CYS

Boston, MA

terry.buchmiller@childrens.harvard.edu

Surgeons as Innovators – Is It Our Role?

For centuries, the advancement of surgery has occurred thanks to the work of a few surgeon innovators who have dared to think “outside the box.” On the past 100 years, surgeons have been actively involved in the development of some of the techniques and technologies that have radically changed the face of medicine: organ transplantation, the cardiopulmonary bypass machine, total parenteral nutrition, ventricular assist devices, laparoscopy, surgical robotics, and

endovascular prostheses, just to name a few. However, the resistance of most surgeons to change has led to the slow progress and deficient innovation that has stigmatized our specialty, especially when we compare its rate of discovery and progress with that in other fields. It just takes a critical look at the operating room to realize that most of the instruments, sutures, and procedures that we use have been around for more than 100 years. The growing complexity of technology, the increasing demands of clinical practice, the fierce competition within surgery and with nonsurgical specialties, the declining reimbursement, and the progressive subspecialization of surgery may be further stifling innovation by surgeons in our field.

It is imperative for surgeons to lead innovation, especially in those areas that have been characteristically our domain. As procedures become less and less invasive, some surgeons feel that our specialty is being displaced. However, surgery is not about performing operations through large incisions: it is about treating patients with surgical diseases with the best available methods. If we are to stay at the leading edge of medicine, it is not only necessary to accept change, but to embrace it-- to lead that change for the sake of our patients. The best way to lead the change is through innovation. Some academic institutions such as Stanford, Harvard, and University of Cincinnati have identified the need for innovation in surgery and have created programs to support it. Stanford has also created an educational fellowship to teach the process of innovation to surgical residents and young surgeons by teaming them with engineers, thus facilitating the translation of new techniques and technologies into improvements in patient care (<http://surgery.stanford.edu/innovation>).

Innovation in surgery should not be considered the mission of some. It should not be seen as a separate discipline, field, or specialty. It is the responsibility of all of us to look for alternative treatment paradigms, develop new surgical techniques, and create the necessary tools to provide the best treatment possible to our patients. **Dare to think outside the box.** Pause for a moment on your busy clinical day. Observe. Think. Is there a better way to treat this patient? Are there any problems with this treatment that we can improve? Can we do something better? The answer is always yes. There are thousands of clinical problems in our everyday lives that are just waiting for someone to solve them. It is our responsibility as young surgeons to tackle these problems and to keep our specialty at the forefront of medicine. It is our duty to innovate. If we don't do it, someone else will. Or even worse, nobody will.

Carlos M. Mery, MD, MPH
RAS-ACS Communications Committee
Palo Alto, CA

[Resources on ACS-RAS Web site for Resident Members](#)

We invite all general surgery and specialty residents to navigate the

[ACS-RAS Web site](#). The Web site contains information on different areas such as membership, surgical career opportunities, and upcoming meetings. It also offers a variety of resources for residents and young surgeons such as information on surgical specialty societies, board certification, residency programs, **[Surgical Research Clearinghouse](#)**, education on debt management services, access to the quarterly editions of our RAS eNewsletter, and free online access to *ACS Surgery Principles and Practice*.

How to obtain *free* online access to ACS Surgery Principles and Practice:

Click: <http://www.facs.org/ras-acs/resources/acsresidentsbrochure.pdf>

Or follow these three easy steps:

1. Go to:
<http://www.facs.org/memberservices/resident.html> and sign up for ACS membership.
2. Go to:
<http://web2.facs.org/partners/loginacssurgery.cfm> and enter your ACS membership number to receive your pre-assigned ACS online account number.
3. Create your personal user ID and password... you are now ready to access all the information from ACS Principles and Practice, the official text of the American College of Surgeons!

Other benefits:

Remember that as a resident member of RAS you receive a special discount for *Sesap12*, and free subscriptions to both the *Journal of the American College of Surgeons* and the *Bulletin*.

Mecker Möller, MD

Co-Chair, RAS-ACS Communications Committee
Grand Rapids, MI

[Announcing the RAS-ACS Symposium at the Clinical Congress](#)

The RAS-ACS will hold its Eighth Annual Symposium from 1-4 pm on Sunday October 8, 2006, during the 92nd Clinical Congress in Chicago. Each year the RAS sponsors a symposium on a topic of interest targeted at surgical residents, Associate Fellows, Fellows, and medical students. The topics typically focus on controversial issues concerning surgical training that will ultimately help shape the future of surgical residency programs and continuing medical education.

A panel of experts will be invited to present their points of view prior

to the open-microphone session. This format encourages a lively discussion and entertains multiple views on the subject under discussion. The symposium is open to all RAS members and other attendees at the Clinical Congress. We will announce the topic in the near future and it will also be posted on the ACS Web site when details about the Clinical Congress become available. We encourage all of you to attend and hope to see you there.

Richard C. Baynosa, MD

Co-Chair, RAS-ACS Issues Committee
Las Vegas, NV

About RAS-ACS

The Resident and Associate Society of the American College of Surgeons (RAS-ACS) is an organization within the American College of Surgeons that was formed to benefit young and future surgeons through involvement in the College's activities. Membership in the RAS-ACS is automatic when you become a member of the Candidate Group or an Associate Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. Candidate Group membership is open to all surgical residents enrolled in an accredited graduate educational program, surgical research, or fellowship program. Associate Fellow membership is open to young surgeons who are currently engaged in a second surgical residency, a research or a fellowship program, a surgical specialty practice, and are within five years of graduation from formal surgical residency training. Currently, over 2,700 Associate Fellows and 4,400 Candidate Group members are part of the RAS-ACS.

Benefits of becoming a RAS-ACS member:

- free *Journal of the American College of Surgeons* subscription
- free *Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons* subscription
- free online *ACS Surgery Textbook*
- free Clinical Congress and Spring Meeting registration and access to CME credit
- reduced pricing for selected postgraduate courses at the Clinical Congress
- information on clinical and research fellowship opportunities
- free access to the College's job and resume databank
- electronic newsletter, Web site, and Web portal
- educational materials to meet requirements for board certification
- opportunities to serve on various College committees
- opportunities for local chapter affiliation
- access to ACS-sponsored insurance programs (life, health, disability)
- a voice in advocacy and policy-making issues concerning residents and young surgeons

Join today!

Be Sure to Visit These Important Areas of the ACS Web site:

RAS-ACS Homepage: <http://www.facs.org/ras-acs/index.html>

How to Join RAS-ACS: <http://www.facs.org/ras->

acs/membership/membership.html

Job Bank:

http://www.healthcareers.com/site_templates/ACS/index.asp?aff=ACS&SPLD=ACS

ACS Homepage: <http://www.facs.org>

ACS Spring Meeting:

<http://www.facs.org/2004springmeeting/index.html>

Your Feedback Is Important to Us

We are interested in making sure that the content of *RAS-ACS News* meets the interests and responds to the needs of surgical residents and newly practicing surgeons across the country. Your feedback and ideas are important to us. Please send your comments about this newsletter and your ideas for articles to the Editor at ras-news@facs.org.

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