

**May 2008**

**Editor:** Carlos M. Mery, MD, MPH

**Associate Editor:** Wesley P. Francis, MD

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**Message from the Chair: "Taking Action"**

*"You must get involved to have an impact"* - Napoleon Hill

We are all aware of the issues affecting us in medicine today, as well as the necessity for us to take leadership roles in health care. Several of our members are already involved in addressing issues such as the movement toward a 60-hour work week and the 20/220 financial crisis. These activities carry particular impact when they are viewed from the standpoint of improving patient care, which ultimately must form the basis and impetus of all our efforts, both clinically and politically. However, one frustration I often hear from residents and young surgeons is finding opportunities to get involved in a meaningful way, especially given the time constraints we all experience.

**The Resident and Associate Society of the American College of Surgeons (RAS-ACS) can help by providing opportunities for participation and leadership in an active group of individuals addressing current surgical issues.** We recently had the pleasure of awarding RAS Leadership Scholarships to several outstanding residents and young surgeons whom we anticipate will be making significant contributions to the field of surgery. The overall applicant pool was exceptional, and I look forward to more scholarships being offered again next year as well as other opportunities to let us draw from this rich resource of talented residents and young surgeons and engage them in the work of the College.

**Currently, there is need for a RAS representative to the Board of Governors Committee on Chapter Activities.** The Board of Governors is an integral administrative body of the College. The representative will serve the College and RAS in a leadership capacity and will have the chance to make a difference on both the local and national level. The representative should be an active member of RAS and of his or her local ACS chapter. Responsibilities will include attending the Board of Governors committee meeting as well as local chapter meeting. Two one-page reports to the RAS will be expected in January and August of the service year. Applicants should send a letter of interest to Peg Haar at [Phaar@facs.org](mailto:Phaar@facs.org) along with a letter of support from their Chair, Program Director, or local Chapter President.

In the upcoming months, RAS plans to make it even easier for you to get involved. **If you are interested in future positions and leadership opportunities**, send your name, contact

information, and a brief description of your areas of interest and experience to Peg Haar at [Phaar@facs.org](mailto:Phaar@facs.org). We will create an active list of available participants to call upon as openings occur. Keep an eye out for these opportunities to “take action.”

**Ted A. James, MD**

Chair, RAS-ACS  
Burlington, VT

**Describe Your Mentor—Win \$500 and Publish in the *Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons***

New this year, the RAS-ACS is sponsoring a **competition for surgery residents and fellows whose relationship with a mentor has had a positive impact on their training and career**. Surgeons-in-training are requested to submit a **500-word essay** describing what role their mentor has played in their personal and professional development. The top essays, as judged by the RAS-ACS Communications Committee, will be **published in the *Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons***. At the October 2009 Clinical Congress, an award and a **\$500 honorarium** will be presented to the writer of the essay that best expresses the meaningfulness of the mentor-mentee relationship in surgical training.

Submissions should be sent to [Phaar@facs.org](mailto:Phaar@facs.org) by **no later than July 31, 2008**. Surgeons at all levels of training are encouraged to apply. Notification of selections for publication as well as the overall winner of the competition will be made via e-mail.

**Heena P. Santry, MD**

Member, RAS-ACS Communications Committee  
Chicago, IL

**Calling All Surgery Specialty Residents...**

Under the leadership of Carrie Wieneke and your RAS liaisons to the Advisory Councils, the RAS-ACS Membership Committee is organizing a **national recruitment drive emphasizing the benefits of ACS membership to specialty residents**. As with general surgery residents, all specialty interns have their annual membership fee waived. This is a great way to sample the benefits of membership and access to the [efacs.org](http://efacs.org) Web portal. Membership also brings the opportunity for greater involvement at your home institution (RAS-ACS institutional liaison) or the College (RAS-ACS committees). Membership also allows specialty fellows and residents the opportunity to present at the Surgical Forum session during the Clinical Congress.

**If you are interested in greater involvement in the College or in helping with our recruitment of surgical specialty residents effort**, please email: Carrie Wieneke ([cwieneke@alumni.nd.edu](mailto:cwieneke@alumni.nd.edu)), Luke Brewster ([lukebrewst@aol.com](mailto:lukebrewst@aol.com)), or Peg Haar ([Phaar@facs.org](mailto:Phaar@facs.org)).

**Luke Brewster, MD**

Chair, RAS-ACS Membership Committee  
Oak Park, IL

**Challenges and the Future of Surgical Education**

These are **challenging and exciting times for surgical education**. The super-specialization of surgery, the changes in the scope of practice of general surgeons, the new mandates by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) in terms of work hours and residency training, the economic and global pressures in surgery, and the drive to standardize surgical training are just a few of the challenges that surgical education is currently facing.

This year, RAS-ACS will be exploring some of these issues in the **July issue of the *Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons*, which is dedicated to RAS**. We will explore topics such as:

- Training in essential non-clinical skills
- The economics of health care: Is it threatening surgical education?
- Mentoring surgeons
- The use of simulators and virtual reality in surgical education
- The demise of the general surgeon
- Teaching and assessing the ACGME competencies in surgical residency
- Teaching surgery to medical students

Different author teams are currently working on bringing new insights and perspectives into this special issue of the *Bulletin*. We look forward to a great compilation of articles in this issue!

**Carlos M. Mery, MD, MPH**

Vice-Chair, RAS-ACS Communications Committee  
Boston, MA

**RAS-ACS Membership Plans for the Clinical Congress in San Francisco**

As a RAS-ACS member, you have a variety of opportunities to become more involved with the College and represent your own institution. **If you are not currently a member of a RAS committee but would like to explore the possibilities, you should attend the RAS-ACS Business Meeting** on Sunday, October 12, from 9am-12 noon, during the ACS Clinical Congress in San Francisco. During this meeting, RAS-ACS committees are rearranged, agendas are created, and the leadership for the society is selected. The meeting will be followed by the RAS-ACS Symposium in the afternoon. If these sessions are of interest to you, please plan your arrival to San Francisco accordingly.

The Membership Committee is also helping to organize a **resident and medical student reception for the ACS Clinical Congress** in San Francisco to help build our collective voice both inside and outside of the College during these educationally turbulent times.

If you or anyone at your institution has questions about any of these opportunities, please contact Luke Brewster at [lukebrewst@aol.com](mailto:lukebrewst@aol.com) or Peg Haar at [Phaar@facs.org](mailto:Phaar@facs.org).

**Luke Brewster, MD**

Chair, RAS-ACS Membership Committee  
Oak Park, IL

**Surgeons Diversified Investment Fund Adds Commodity Allocation**

**A 3% commodities allocation has been added to the Surgeons Diversified Investment Fund (SDIF) in an effort to further align its asset allocation with that of the ACS endowment.** The commodities component allows SDIF shareholders to obtain exposure to various types of commodities, including industrial and precious metals, agriculture, livestock and energy. Commodities exposure adds an asset class to SDIF that provides further diversification, and one that historically has a negative correlation to stocks and bonds.

Normally, the minimum investment to participate in SDIF is \$25,000. However, the minimum investment has been modified for Medical Student Members (\$500), Resident Members (\$1,000), and Associate Fellows (\$2,500) of the College. For those who find it appropriate, an automatic investment plan\* is also available.

For more information about SDIF, please contact Tom Kiley at 312/202-5019, [tkiley@facs.org](mailto:tkiley@facs.org), or Savi Pai at 312/202-5056, [spai@facs.org](mailto:spai@facs.org).

*An investor should consider the charges, risks, expenses and investment objective carefully before investing. Read the prospectus carefully before you invest or send money. For more information or*

for a free copy of the prospectus, please download a copy at [www.surgeonsfund.com](http://www.surgeonsfund.com) or call 1-800-208-6070 and a copy will be mailed to you.

\* A program of regular investing does not ensure a profit or protect against depreciation in a declining market. Because a consistent investing program involves continuous investment in securities regardless of fluctuating prices, you should consider your financial ability to continue to purchase through periods of various price levels.

SDIF is distributed by Ultimus Fund Distributors, LLC, 225 Pictoria Dr., Suite 450, Cincinnati, OH 45246. The phone number is 513-587-3400.

#### **Debbie Bakazan**

ACS Surgeons Diversified Investment Fund  
Chicago, IL

#### **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 Resident Member or an Associate Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. Resident 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 2,600 Associate Fellows and 8,000 Residents 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 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](http://www.healthcareers.com/site_templates/ACS/index.asp?aff=ACS&SPLD=ACS)

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

#### **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](mailto:ras-news@facs.org).

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For additional information regarding the benefits and activities of the RAS-ACS, please contact Joan Wellington.

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