



# CANS

## newsletter

California Association of Neurological Surgeons

Volume 39 Number 12

December 2012

### **President's Message**

*Austin R.T. Colohan, MD*

Go to [www.cans1.org](http://www.cans1.org) for Annual Meeting registration and hotel information!

**DEADLINE EXTENDED until  
January 8<sup>th</sup>!**

**D**ear Colleagues,

I am excited to extend an invitation to you to come aboard the Queen Mary January 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> for the 2013 CANS meeting. The Queen Mary features some of the grandest, most intricate and beautiful interior designs ever aboard an ocean liner.

Launched in an era when speed and grandeur went hand in hand, the Queen Mary is the last survivor of the golden age of ocean liners. During World War II, the Queen Mary was known as the Gray Ghost as she zigzagged through U-boats and rode out massive waves carrying 15,000 troops to war.

The program planned will provide plenty of history about the Queen Mary, as well as Continuing Medical Education credits by presenting the following topics where you will:

- Discuss the aspects of the Affordable Care Act, including Health Care Exchanges and Accountable Care Organizations;
- Describe strategies for negotiating with hospital administrations for resources and contracts for service agreements;
- Discuss listening and interpersonal conflict resolution skills and how to integrate them in hospital based administrative roles, such as Chief of Surgery or Chief of Staff;
- Explain how the AANS, CSNS, Washington Committee and Washington PAC represent their neurological interests;
- Discuss the resources available to treat patients in CA with Neurological diseases and the research being conducted in California training programs.

Looking forward to boarding the Queen Mary with you!

# Casino Night

**Verandah Grill, Sun Deck Friday, January 18<sup>th</sup> 6:30-9pm**

You are invited to attend this reception (heavy hors d'oeuvres and hosted bar) where you will have an opportunity to meet with exhibitors and colleagues before the weekend meeting.

Keeping in the 1930s spirit of the Queen Mary, we are having a Casino Night with the Friday opening reception! Come try your hand at Blackjack, Roulette or Craps! This should prove to be a unique & fun way to spend the evening on this historic ship! Dress the part! Celebrate the 30s & 40s in your best Art Deco style! **There will be prizes!**

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## Look out for yourself—the wolves are gathering

*Randall W. Smith, MD, Editor*

**A**ccording to the Medical Board of California (MBC), there are 566 California docs who are boarded in neurosurgery and hold current licenses to practice in this state. One can safely assume that a modest number of the 566 are licensed and boarded but don't practice at all (but hate to give up the license they worked so hard to get) or just do some consulting without direct patient care (AME, QME, IME). I believe around 400 would be a reasonable estimate of truly working neurosurgeons for all 38+ million Californians.

It is estimated that 7 million Californians are uninsured while the rest have private insurance predominantly provided at least in part by employers with the rest being on some sort of governmental insurance (Medicare, Medicaid and military). One can assume that the uninsured get whatever neurosurgical care they really need via the ED as do the Medicaid group since very few neurosurgeons accept Medicaid patients because of the abysmal payment rates and billing hassles.

Obamacare will probably add 4+ million to the Medicaid rolls and maybe a million or two to the privately insured crowd. California is likely to reduce Medicaid payment rates even further with the primary care docs probably insulated from that by getting Medicare rates for the next 2-3 years as provided for in the Affordability Care Act. Those that add themselves to the private insurance rolls will likely choose from the Insurance Exchange that California is setting up and one might expect this crowd, spending mostly its personal dollars, will choose from among the least expensive plans in the Exchange. Insurance companies are already jockeying to be among the cheapest offered in the Exchange with some companies reported to be trying to create a stable of docs and institutions willing to treat this group at rates roughly ½ that of current private plans.

So what is the point of the three preceding paragraphs? The first point is there are very few of us, we are necessary for the provision of medical care and we should not sell ourselves short. When it comes to the Obamacare swollen ranks of the Medicaid crowd, continue to exercise (if it suits you) your right to not accept Medicaid patients unless you get paid something approaching your cost in caring for these folks. And when you have to see them as they visit the ED, make sure that your ED coverage stipend also includes some reasonable floor on the RVU's you will have to provide.

Second, don't be fooled by the promise of lots of new patients with new private insurance purchased on the cheap on the Exchange if you will only accept some ridiculously low compensation rate. These cheap plans will have to have neurosurgeons so get a rate at least somewhat above the current Medicare conversion factor. And if you are already working for an IPA or a hospital run group, monitor what your employer is doing. One suspects that a care delivery outfit which goes for the low, low rates will pass the low rates right on to you in much greater amount than any reduction in the outfit's administrative fees or salaries for the negotiators. ❖

## Transitions in Neurosurgery

*John Bonner, M.D., Associate Editor*

This edition marks the end of 2012, and one wonders what 2013 will bring. I am sure that many found 2012 to be quite enjoyable; others -- due to health, social, or financial concerns -- may not have appreciated the year as much as desired. But with the New Year come new challenges and opportunities. Certainly, the mid-January CANS Annual Meeting should be a high point for us. I hope that all will enjoy 2013 and that the upcoming year will be beneficial to all.

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Regarding transitions, I must note, with some sadness on my part, the retirement of Janine Tash. I first met Janine some years ago, and through the many years of working with Janine, I have found that she is one of the most capable persons I have ever had the pleasure to meet. Always cheerful and ever helpful, Janine is second to none as a person and professional. I wish her much happiness in her retirement. It is well deserved and certainly earned. ❖



### Pevehouse Distinguished Service Award

Dr. J. Gordon McComb is the 2013 recipient of the Pevehouse Award! The award will be presented at the Annual Meeting Banquet on the Queen Mary in Long Beach January 19<sup>th</sup>. Register today: [www.cans1.org](http://www.cans1.org)! Deadline January 8<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. McComb is the Chief Emeritus, Neurosurgery at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

Congratulations Dr. McComb! ❖

### Brain Waves

*Deborah Henry, MD, Associate Editor*

Deadlines! They loom all around us but seem especially prevalent this time of year with the holidays, insurance claims, emergency coverage and this year with my Brain Waves article. I have thought of writing this for months and here it is DEADLINE DAY and I am headed out to the Holiday Bowl to watch my alma mater Baylor play some of your alma mater UCLA.

There is one CANS person I know who always planned for the DEADLINES and that is our secretary Janine Tash who is officially retiring at our annual meeting as Emily Schile, her daughter, takes on the full reins of the organization. I thank Emily for helping me compile this article on her mom.

Janine started as CANS secretary in 1994 after “retiring” from her years at Pacific Bell where she was an engineer (I didn't know that!). She was born in the great town of Bath, England (very nice hot spas!) and at the age of 3 traveled by ship to the US with her mother to settle in Sacramento. Emily muses that her mom may have traveled on the Queen Mary. I will have to see if her 3 year-old memory retained any of the trip when we meet at our Annual meeting.

Emily is the oldest of Janine's three children, the other 2 are the twins, Ryan & Kendra. Janine is involved with her 4 grandchildren's art projects, soccer, baseball, biking and swimming.

Janine loved the flexibility of working for CANS and disliked the antiquated Bylaws and hopes that they will one day be updated. (We'll work on this). Janine's hobbies are art, spending time with family, art, reading, gardening, and ART. (I plagiarized this sentence from Emily because I could not say it better.) Maybe it would be nice to see some of her art in the Exhibition Hall at the meeting—hmmm.

I asked Emily if there were any stories Janine would tell and Emily recalls the time a neurosurgeon fell asleep during the QME meeting (not too hard to do) but was the first one out to claim his CME. Luckily the board meetings are always interactive and sleep never occurs to us. Join us at the board meeting on Friday, January 18<sup>th</sup> at 1:30PM and see if you agree.

The CANS Annual Meeting on January 18-20<sup>th</sup> at the Queen Mary is your opportunity to give Janine a thank you for 18 years of phenomenal service and bid her a great retirement. I think I can speak for the CANS board and say that it was a great honor to work with Janine Tash. ❖



## Tidbits from the Editors

### Narco cops are frightening

This writer's internist is a senior physician and sensible man. He has been caring for me and my wife for over 10 years as did his retired partner for the 24 years prior to that. I had worked with him professionally from 1980 to 2004. My wife gets two routine prescriptions from him for her hypertension and hypercholesterolemia and I get 30 Ambien a year for when my brain won't go off at night.

Two year's ago my wife had a prolonged non-productive cough as part of a URI and the internist prescribed codeine cough syrup which he refilled once back then and the last dregs of the refill have been languishing in the medicine cabinet for 2 years. As we approached flu and URI season this year, my wife noted our codeine syrup (10mg codeine + guaifenesin/ tsp) was about gone and requested a refill of the 180 cc bottle. She was

informed prophylactic refills were frowned upon and we should wait until symptomatic. Nothing wrong with that unless of course the nasty cough commences at Saturday midnight or while traveling to some other city or state.

I was impressed with how the narcotic police (media, attorneys and the MBC) have intimidated our internist to the point of our suffering needlessly to satisfy some vague codeine bogeyman. It makes one think twice about that first post-op refill of Vicodin prescribed upon discharge from hospital after spine surgery—and it shouldn't. Unscrupulous pill-mill docs and probably hurried and careless other docs are the problem but it shouldn't filter down to where a sensible lady gets the runaround about some rarely used cough medicine. ❖

## Editor's Note

It is that time of year when one takes a little stock of blessings and aggravations and in my case I resolve to continue the good fight about the aggravations but also to appreciate the blessings. The latter certainly include the fine people working with me on the CANS newsletter from Associate Editors Deborah Henry and Jack Bonner, CANS President Austin Colohan and our production staff of Emily Schile and Janine Tash. They, like me, work hard on newsletter copy for one week a month and their contributions are dearly appreciated.

By the way, Jack and I are getting a bit long in the tooth and Deborah will be assuming the CEO job in the Western Neurosurgical Society so anyone out there who has a journalistic interest in a not unpleasant job should contact me via my email address: [rws-avopro@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rws-avopro@sbcglobal.net). ❖

## Q&A—is CANS too expensive?

Recently, a stalwart CANS member and regular annual meeting attendee, emailed the following to this writer:

*Just a thought. For the first time I am wondering whether or not to go to the CANS meeting. What I like most about the CANS meeting is getting together with the local docs and discussing politics and other items of interest. The Saturday meetings are what I have enjoyed the most in the past and generally I do not stay for the Sunday meetings. However, the cost of then a one day meeting of \$400 seems excessive, not to mention the \$350/year membership fee, and a \$240 fee if I take my wife to the Saturday night dinner. It would seem that if CANS is trying to attract new members sticking with such a high fee will turn prospective members away.*

My response: CANS essentially breaks even on the meetings even with the \$400 registration and a bunch of exhibitors. One needs to realize that some of the Saturday speakers require a speaker's fee. The Friday night reception (you+wife), Saturday breakfast (you+wife) and

lunch (only you) and Sunday breakfast (you+wife) , which is included in your registration fee, comes to more than \$200 a person once you add tax and the mandatory 20+% gratuity.

In fact the whole annual CANS budget is a break even situation. The BOD has wrestled with the issues you bring up but have decided that to have a CANS annual gathering is important so the meeting is priced at a survival level. The BOD added CME credits this year trying to increase the value of the meeting (CME credits cost to CANS--\$2000+). I personally don't think \$350/year dues is excessive but it is what it takes to keep the Association going.

No question that the banquet is expensive as dictated by the venues over which we have no control. The menu is never on the high end but you can't get these places to serve a meal with wine for less than that. You can always vote with your feet and not go and choose to eat elsewhere probably saving \$100 for the two of you but you just get to talk with each other (which can be pleasant) and not your colleagues.

The annual dues for the AANS are \$895 which gets you some good journals, national advocacy and lots of committees and an annual 3.5 day meeting costing about \$600 as I recall which is \$30/CME credit.

The annual dues for CANS of \$350 gets you the newsletter, focused CA advocacy and lots of committees and an annual 1.5 day meeting costing \$400 which is \$40/CME credit.

I think we are in the ballpark of a reasonably run doc group. ❖

### **QUOTATION OF THE MONTH:**

There's nothing sadder in this world than to awake Christmas morning  
and not be a child -- *Erma Bombeck*

### **Thank you to CANS Exhibitor's**

*Emily Schile, Executive Secretary*

CANS would like to give a BIG thank you to the following Companies exhibiting at our Annual Meeting in January 2013:

Aesculap, Aloka-Hitachi, Anspach Synthes, Biomet Spine, BrainLAB, Codman, Covidien, The Doctor's Company, Exam Works, Integra, KLS-Martin, Koros, Lanx, LDR Spine, Leica-Microsystems, Medtronic Surgical Technologies, Mizuho America, Inc., NeuroLogica, Norcal, OsteoMed, Physiomed, PMT Corporation, Stryker Spine, Surgical West, TeDan Surgical Innovations, Ulrich Medical & Wenzel Spine!

**Exhibitors: There is still space! You won't get left off the boat! Call the CANS office today: 916 806-7463 or email [Emily@cans1.org](mailto:Emily@cans1.org)!** ❖

## Program for Annual Meeting

### **FRIDAY, Jan. 18<sup>th</sup> EVENTS**

1-5pm (open to all members) Board Room, Promenade Deck  
 6:30 – 9pm Casino Night Reception Verandah Grill, Sun Deck, stern

### **SATURDAY CME SOCIO-ECONOMIC MEETING**

7:00 - 8:00	<b>Continental Breakfast- Please visit EXHIBITS- Britannia Salon</b>	
7:45-8:00	CANS Business Meeting Austin R.T. Colohan, MD	President, CANS
8:00-8:30	Kimberly Page, MD	CANS 1st Vice President <i>'Electronic Medical Records'</i>
8:30-9:00	Susan Reynolds, MD, PhD	President & CEO, the Institute for Medical Leadership <i>'Success Factors for Physician Leaders'</i>
9:00-9:30	Ship's Captain	<i>History of the Queen Mary</i>
9:30-10:00	John Adler, MD	Stanford University School of Medicine <i>'Angels &amp; Demons-Start-up Companies for Neurosurgeons'</i>
10:00-10:30	<b>Break - Please visit exhibits- Britannia Salon</b>	
10:30-11:00	Mitch Berger, MD	President of AANS <i>'The AANS &amp; CANS'</i>
11:00-12:00	John Goodman	President & CEO, National Center for Policy Analysis <i>'Changing Face of Healthcare'</i>
12:00 – 1:00	<b>Lunch/Exhibits</b>	<b>Brittania Salon-M Deck</b>
1:00-1:30	Susan Reynolds, MD, PhD	President & CEO, the Institute for Medical Leadership <i>'Strategies for Leading Change'</i>
1:30-2:00	Helene Bielman-Werner	CEO, Zymeda Provider Solutions <i>'Developing an Effective Practice'</i>
2:00-2:30	Lisa Folberg	Vice President, Medical and Regulatory Policy, CMA <i>'The CMA &amp; CANS'</i>
2:30-3:00	C. Duane Dauner	President & CEO, The California Hospital Association <i>'Challenges Facing California Hospitals &amp; Physicians'</i>

3:00– 3:30 **Break – Please visit exhibits- Britannia Salon**

3:30-4:00 John Kusske, MD CANS Consultant  
*'Inside the Washington Beltway 2013'*

4:00-4:30 David Kizer, Esq. Medical-Legal Consultant *'Recent Changes to Workers' Compensation in California'*

## **SATURDAY BANQUET**

7:00pm Cocktail/Banquet **Queen's Salon, Promenade Deck**

## **SUNDAY CME SCIENTIFIC MEETING**

Residents from the 10 California Neurosurgery Programs

7:00 - 8:00am Continental Breakfast- Please visit EXHIBITS

8:00 - 8:20 Robert Lober, MD Stanford University School of Medicine  
*'DTI: Surgical Planning for Optic Pathway Gliomas'*

8:20 – 8:40 Debraj Mukherjee, MD, MPH Cedars-Sinai Medical Center  
*'Molecular/Radiographic Predictors of Long-Term Survival in Glioblastoma'*

8:40 – 9:00 Andrew Bieber, MD Arrowhead Regional Medical Center  
*'Endovascular Treatment for Ruptured Microaneurysms'*

9:00 – 9:20 Seunggu Han, MD University of California San Francisco  
*'Resident Led Quality Improvement Incentive Project to Reduce Lab Utilization at UCSF'*

9:20 – 9:40 Darrin J. Lee, MD University of California Davis Health System  
*'Hippocampal Theta Neuromodulation Improves Cognitive Deficits Following Traumatic Brain Injury'*

9:40 – 10:00 Justin Dye, MD University of California Los Angeles  
*'Mortality Related to Spontaneous Intracerebral Hemorrhage'*

**10:00 – 10:30**

**BREAK/Please visit EXHIBITS**

10:30 – 10:50 Brian Lee, MD University of Southern California  
*'Stereoscopic 3D Neurosurgery: Current State of Technology'*

10:50-11:10 David Weingarten, MD University of California San Diego  
*'Stem Cell Therapy for Spinal Cord Injury'*

11:10-11:30 Joseph Keen, DO Loma Linda University Medical Center  
*'Effect of Deep Brain Stimulation on Dystonic Cerebral Palsy in Children'*

11:30-11:50 Daniela Alexandru, MD University of California Irvine  
*'New Methods of Treatment of Gliomas'*

11:50 – Noon DISCUSSION

“The AANS designates this live activity for a maximum of 9.5 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.”



### **Meetings of Interest for the next 12 months:**

**CANS Board of Directors Meeting: January 18, 2013, Queen Mary Hotel, Long Beach, CA**

**CANS: Annual Meeting, January 18-20, 2013, Queen Mary Hotel, Long Beach, CA**

Southern Neurosurgical Society: Annual Meeting, February 20-23, 2013, Sarasota, FL

AANS/CNS Joint Spine Section: Annual Meeting, March 6-9, 2013, Phoenix, AZ

Neurosurgical Society of America: Annual Meeting, April 7-10, 2013, Sea Island, GA

CSNS Meeting, April 26-27, 2013, New Orleans, LA

AANS/CNS Joint Pain Section Bi-Annual Meeting, April 26, 2013, New Orleans, LA

AANS: Annual Meeting, April 27-May 1, 2013, New Orleans, LA

Rocky Mountain Neurosurgical Society: Annual Meeting, June, 2013, Sun Valley, ID

New England Neurosurgical Society: Annual Meeting, 2013, TBA

Western Neurosurgical Society: Annual Meeting, September 15-18, 2013, Half Moon Bay, CA

North American Spine Society: Annual Meeting, October 9-12, 2013, New Orleans, LA

Congress of Neurological Surgeons: Annual Meeting, October 19-23, 2013, San Francisco, CA

AANS/CNS Joint Pediatric NS Section: Ann. Meeting, December 3-6, 2013, Toronto, Canada

American Society for Stereotactic and Functional NS: Biennial Meeting, 2014, Washington, DC

North American Neuromodulation Society: Annual meeting, December 5-8, 2013, Las Vegas, NV

Cervical Spine Research Society: Annual Meeting, December 5-7, 2013, Los Angeles, CA

Any **CANS** member who is looking for a new associate/partner/PA/NP or who is looking for a position (all California neurosurgery residents are CANS members and get this newsletter) is free to submit a 150 word summary of a position available or of one's qualifications for a two month posting in this newsletter. Submit your text to the CANS office by E-mail ([emily@cans1.org](mailto:emily@cans1.org)) or fax (916-457-8202)—Ed. ❖

**T**he assistance of Emily Schile and Dr. Austin Colohan in the preparation of this newsletter is acknowledged and appreciated.

- To place a newsletter ad, contact the executive office for complete price list and details.
- Comments can be sent to the editor, Randall W. Smith, M.D., at [rhs-avopro@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rhs-avopro@sbcglobal.net) or to the CANS office [emily@cans1.org](mailto:emily@cans1.org).
- Past newsletter issues are available on the CANS website at [www.cans1.org](http://www.cans1.org).
- If you do not wish to receive this newsletter in the future, please E-mail, phone or fax Emily Schile ([emily@cans1.org](mailto:emily@cans1.org), 916-457-2267 t, 916-457-8202 f) with the word "unsubscribe" in the subject line.

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## Editorial Committee

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monthly from the Executive Office:**

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