

EDITOR'S PAGE

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Thoughts on SNM-TS Membership

There has been much discussion recently related to Society of Nuclear Medicine–Technologist Section membership. Members and nonmembers have been surveyed. Membership categories and member benefits have been evaluated. Proposals for change have been debated. The financial impacts of various models have been calculated.

Each individual must make a decision to become a member of the Technologist Section or not. I must admit that I have a difficult time trying to understand those who practice nuclear medicine technology and decide that membership is not for them. Like many others, I joined as a technologist student and have maintained my membership ever since. The benefits of membership seem obvious to me. For example, the *JNMT* was important to me long before I ever volunteered to help work on the journal.

Mother Teresa had a saying that goes something like this, "To keep the light burning, you have to put a little oil in once in a while." It seems to me that this applies to many things—to relationships, to cultural and belief systems, and to careers. The hard part may be finding a balance among all these things.

If a technologist was planning on retirement or changing professions, I could understand their not continuing to put oil (time and money) into their nuclear medicine lamp. Otherwise, investing such resources in one's career is clearly the only choice.

Two examples might help illustrate the point. Many years ago a nuclear medicine physician decided that he did not want to perform cardiology procedures in the nuclear medicine department. At the time these procedures were new and would have required everyone in the nuclear medicine department to learn new, additional techniques and interpretive skills. Those in cardiology were interested in these new procedures and established a section of nuclear car-

diology. Nuclear cardiology procedures are a large portion of most nuclear medicine departments' workloads today. The physician who made the decision not to learn nuclear cardiology no longer practices nuclear medicine.

The second example is a technologist who was the first in her class to secure employment. She had a solid job offer halfway through her training year. She was a good technologist and a hard worker. She was not, however, a member of the Technologist Section. Her opinion was that her employer was responsible for providing training in new procedures and informing her of new information. Unfortunately she no longer works as a nuclear medicine technologist. The skills she learned as a student carried her for almost ten years. This is unfortunate because she had excellent patient skills and much to offer her employer and coworkers. If she had a failing it was that she did not put many of her own resources into her career. I believe this contributed to her ultimate decision to leave the profession.

The benefits of membership in the Technologist Section go beyond helping maintain and upgrade members' nuclear medicine skills. These are essential benefits that all members can take advantage of through the journals and continuing education meetings. Individual members also can participate and make significant contributions to the profession in a wide variety of activities through committees, such as government relations, or other professional organizations, such as the NMTCB or the JRCNMT.

Building an information network or support network beyond an individual's local community is also important. Most members have been enriched by interactions with their peers. This peer network stretches around the world. Look for a report from the World Congress of Biology and Nuclear Medicine held in Berlin in the December issue. The Technologist Section was represented on the planning committee and a number of technologists from North America joined technologists from Europe, Asia, Australia and other areas to discuss new procedures and to learn from one another about current issues affecting nuclear medicine technologists across the globe.

Maintaining membership in the Society of Nuclear Medicine–Technologist Section is the first step toward putting oil into your nuclear medicine technologist career lamp. You will have a more rewarding career over the long run through active participation in Technologist Section activities.

Reader Survey

Please take a few minutes to complete and return the enclosed Reader Survey. It has been three years since our last survey. The editorial board and the Publications Committee rely on your responses for planning future continuing education articles and future issues of *JNMT*. The results of the 1998 Reader Survey will be published in the March 1999 issue.