

## MESSAGE FROM THE P R E S I D E N T

**Martha Pickett, CNMT**



This last column of the year by the president of the Technologist Section is usually devoted to a wrap-up of what was accomplished during the president's term of office and a thank you to everyone who made those accomplishments possible. I would like to focus this column on the last point because it fits well with one of the major concepts of our restructuring plan, that of leadership mentoring.

About 18 months ago, the Technologist Section's National Council adopted a restructuring plan with five areas in which we would devote the organization's energies: (1) improve communication, (2) work in a cost-effective manner, (3) respond faster to changes in our environment, (4) improve the accountability of leadership and (5) develop a formal leadership mentoring process. The rationale behind leadership mentoring is that any organization that hopes to thrive over the long term must have a constant influx of new people with new ideas in leadership positions. Some people are willing to step forward and assume leadership positions on their own, but a more formalized structure would ensure better depth and preparation of new leaders.

We already are implementing some important mentoring projects. We've revamped the National Council report form, reinstated a new-member National Council orientation and assigned every new member on the council to an experienced member mentor. Each new member received a phone call from their mentor before the last council meeting in February, and the mentors sat with the new members during the council meeting to help guide them through what can sometimes be a daunting experience the first time. All committees not only have chairs but also co-chairs, who are expected to step into the chairmanship the following year. An Emerging Leaders Conference will be held at the annual meeting in June this year, with special invitations going out to up-and-coming leaders identified by each chapter. The conference will not only have agenda items related to the Technologist Section but, more importantly, will feature a number of presentations on leadership in general. This will all be information that attendees can take back to their chapters and to their own workplaces. After the debut of the Emerging Leaders Conference in June, we plan to package the conference for use by chapters at their own annual meetings.

Why would an organization put so much effort into developing leadership? It is easier to fill important positions on committees or on a ballot when there is a good pool of people from which to draw. Such a program provides junior leadership with opportunities to try out different jobs

within the organization to find those that fit their own professional needs. Most people in leadership at the national level are also in senior leadership positions within their own chapters and can adopt useful concepts learned from the national organization to develop leadership at the chapter level. But, most importantly, by giving people the opportunity to serve and become leaders, we develop the professional skills that will transfer to all walks of life, including the workplace. When nuclear medicine technologists become competent to lead within their own facilities, they will be able to place their departments and the profession in a good strategic position. This has become in-

creasingly important as technologists from all over the country have indicated the need to be able to take the initiative with those who order and reimburse for nuclear medicine procedures. Developing good leaders benefits the profession as well as the society.

Developing leaders can be successfully accomplished by promoting a variety of programs, but the actual mentoring process is a one-on-one job. It is something we should all be doing, whether for the Technologist Section, the chapter, or our own state or local organization. It is something we should be doing at work as well. That means not only acting as a role model for those who will come after, but also providing opportunities to serve. It means asking people to chair or serve on committees or task forces. It means asking someone to help with a special assignment, go to an extra meeting or write an article for publication. It comes down to opening doors for people and giving them the chance to show what they can do, and then, most importantly, helping them do as good a job as possible.

There is a last aspect of leadership mentoring that shouldn't go unmentioned, something that was pointed out very well at our strategic planning meeting last fall. That is, we can do so much more when we build on the accomplishments of those who have gone before us. Bringing in new people does not lessen the merit of the accomplishments of those who served in the past. Those accomplishments have formed a strong base on which to work and grow. At our recent 25th anniversary, we celebrated the people and their work that enabled the profession of nuclear medicine technology to be a vital part of health care. The shoulders on which we stand will give us that extra boost to do so much more in the next 25 years.

In thanking all those who helped make this year a success, I should start with a thanks to those who mentored me. From the time I began attending the state organization through working at the chapter level and then the national

## **MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

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level, I owe a debt of gratitude to the many presidents of the Nuclear Medicine Technologists of Arkansas, the Southwestern Chapter and the Technologist Section who asked me to serve in some capacity. Being a member of the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board was a marvelous preparatory experience. The number of committee chairs who gave me the opportunity to work on projects is voluminous. But the most encouraging thing that happened to me was when I first began attending committees of the Technologist Section and I didn't know anyone. Lynn Fulk and Frances Neagley, both of whom were complete strangers to me, made special efforts to invite me to participate and told me, "You can do this. It's fun!" And it was.

To those who helped me this year, I cannot say enough good things. In many ways, the president has an easy task in that the real work is done by everyone else. Everyone certainly came through, from the chairs down to the committee members, from National Council members to a supportive office staff. There is no way I could have survived without the help and mentoring of Virginia Pappas. The immediate past president, Lynn Fulk, and the president-elect, Kathy Thomas, were always there when I needed them. But the best support came from the letters and notes from friends, from all over, with words of encouragement in difficult times. And that's the best kind of mentoring to be privileged to receive.