

International Fetal Medicine & Surgery Society

16th Annual Meeting, June 1-5, 1997

Alyeska Resort, Girdwood, Alaska

September 4, 1997

Dear Colleagues:

Please find enclosed the group picture from the Alaska meeting. We hope that you will enjoy it, and all of us look forward to meeting again next May in Australia. By all accounts, the Alaska meeting was highly successful, and financially, essentially broke even. The small anticipated profit that we had budgeted did not materialize, as it was drunk by the membership. All things considered, however, that seems to have been a good cause.

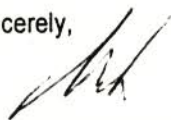
As was mentioned at the business meeting, the financial condition of the Society has been analogous to a Mom and Pop store. Each year, since the Society's inception, the President has had to make ever increasingly sophisticated and expensive decisions to secure the meetings' arrangements, and pay deposits, often a good year or more before receiving any monies from registration fees. By way of example, for the 1997 meeting, we had to lay out nearly \$10,000 to secure the hotel and tours more than six months in advance of the meeting.

Long term, as the Society has matured, and our tastes have become somewhat less rustic, the price of our meetings has certainly increased. Nevertheless, the life blood of a society such as ours is bringing young investigators into the field, and letting them present their best material at our meetings. As all institutions are feeling a financial pinch, the ability to get young investigators to increasingly exotic locations has become considerably more problematic. Thus, for these two very important reasons, our Society must be on a firmer financial footing than has sufficed over the past decade and a half. In Alaska, it was specifically decided not to have formal annual dues. However, there was general agreement supporting the establishment of a Society Start Up Fund with a one-time voluntary contribution by all members based on seniority and ability to help contribute. The purpose of this fund would be to help with the initial phases of organizing upcoming meetings by providing funds to secure a meeting site, etc. These funds would then be passed on, in their entirety, to the next President(s) before or shortly following the annual meeting. This, obviously, would require careful budgeting by the current President(s) as they will be responsible for assuring these funds get passed on and are not "consumed" and progressively depleted by that year's meeting.

In Alaska, the group also decided that the time had come to seek some commercial support for the Society, and for mechanisms to increase the participation of younger investigators. The best mechanism to achieve that goal is to establish a separate International Fetal Medicine and Surgery Society Foundation. To help facilitate this goal, we would be willing to process the necessary paperwork to establish the Foundation, and at least for now, manage it out of our center and report on its financial status on an annual basis at the IFMSS meeting. The purpose of this foundation will be to defray part of the expenses for junior investigators to attend the meeting. By establishing a foundation, and one that will have guaranteed charitable tax status, we can solicit donations from pharmaceutical and manufacturing firms, etc., such that they can deduct the contribution, and we can hopefully build up a fairly sizable endowment. The hope is to eventually provide up to five \$1000 scholarships per year for junior investigators to help defray the costs of the meeting. Competition for these scholarships will be on a basis of abstracts submitted to a program committee, made up of senior IFMSS members as they deem necessary to help in the task of an unbiased review. Such a mechanism should hopefully increase the number of investigators interested in attending our meetings, and helping to sustain growth and development of our Society over the long run.

The IFMSS has never asked its membership or attendees for additional financial support prior to this time. Establishment of a Society Foundation, however, is clearly in the long-term best interest of the Society, and of the field in general. Please use the attached form to indicate your support, and we look forward to seeing all of you next year in Australia.

Sincerely,



Mark I. Evans, MD
Co-President
IFMSS, 1997

Sincerely,



Mark P. Johnson, MD
Co-President
IFMSS, 1997

