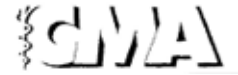




North Coast Physician



In This Issue:

In My Opinion, Scott Sattler, M.D.....	4
"Physician Mentors and the Role of Equanimity"	
Open Forum, Jennifer Heidmann, M.D.....	5
"Climate and Health"	
Health Department Update, Donald Baird, M.D.....	6
"Humboldt Co. Health Status Profiles"	
"Humboldt Co. Challenges Highlighted State Survey"	
Welcome New Members.....	8
Osteopathic Physician CME	8
HDN Tattler	9
Coming, Going & Moving Around.....	9
Hospital News, St. Joseph Hospital.....	10
2017 Physician Membership Resource Directory Updates	12
How To Get Involved - You CAN Make A Difference.....	14
Legislative HotList.....	16
\$14 Million Reasons To Be A CMA Member	17
CMS To Remove SSNs From All Medicare Cards.....	17
Medical Board Assistance - CMA Is Here To Help.....	19
CMA Webinars	21
Continuing Medical Education/Grand Rounds Calendar	22
Classified Ads.....	23

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"PELICAN OVER KLOPP LAKE 2016"

Stephen Kamelgarn, M.D.

The Editorial and Publications Committee encourages our member's comments for publication.

Please submit electronically prior to the 15th of the month preceding publication.
hdncms@sbcglobal.net

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Physician Mentors and the Role of Equanimity

Scott Sattler, M.D.



The idea for this editorial was born in the hall of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Arcata following the memorial service for one of my mentors in medicine, the surgeon Scott Holmes. After the service I spotted Ted Humphry, a pediatrician who, like Scott and me, was part of the influx of docs that settled in Humboldt County in the 1970's. We talked about Scott's life and what it was that made him special to so many people. Our conversation triggered a host of memories and I am drawn to share them with those of you who didn't know Dr. Holmes and his colleagues, this older generation of physicians, my much needed mentors, so many of whom have now passed.

A Bit of Background:

I started med school in 1968 and soon realized that my idea of a physician was someone who could diagnose and stabilize critically ill or injured patients and transfer them to definitive care when needed. That included delivering babies. Since women delivering at Stanford in the late 60's often weren't open to a med student doing their delivery, I worked out an OB/GYN clerkship at the University of Hong Kong. They delivered 40 or more babies a day and were glad to have the help. My wish to learn practical orthopedics led me to organize an orthopedics clerkship at the Tahoe-Truckee hospital in the middle of ski season. That year it was dubbed by the SF Chronicle as "The Fracture Factory" when over the 3-day President's weekend of 1972 the hospital dealt with over 200 fractures.

Through a stroke of fate, the day in

February 1973 that I learned I had completed the required courses to earn my medical degree, the dean's office got word from the Santa Clara Valley Medical Center (Valley) that they needed an intern as soon as possible as one of their interns had been severely injured in an accident. Valley just happened to top my list for a rotating internship and I started there the next morning. It turned out to be a great experience. It offered the highest 'learning to time spent' ratio that I had ever experienced. It was a busy county hospital and it came with great teachers. I received training in anesthesia, dermatology, general surgery, plastic surgery, neonatal intensive care, internal medicine, ENT, OB/GYN (got to do a vaginal hysterectomy), pediatrics (met this incredible pediatric ICU nurse who is now my wife) and a ton of emergency medicine. When it was over I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. Emergency medicine, family practice and anesthesia topped my list. So I went hitchhiking again.

I'd picked up the hobby of thumbing rides in med school. I owned a car but I often found myself wanting to take a break from being surrounded by people focused so intently on disease and dysfunction. I'd find myself sitting at a sidewalk café analyzing abnormal gaits of folks walking by...sorting out cerebral palsy from polio (we had a fair amount of polio survivors back then) and hip arthritis.

When I found myself doing this kind of thing (cataloging people's moles was another worrisome habit) I knew it was time to take a backpack, a bag of gorp, a sleeping

bag and my little white gas stove and go out to highway 101. I'd flip a coin 'north or south' until I soon learned that I liked 'north' a lot better. I'd stick out my thumb and see what adventure the world had to offer. I met a lot of good folks that way. Healthy folks. Refreshing. Escaping the dense population of the Bay Area I soon discovered Humboldt County and the Eel, Trinity, Klamath and Salmon rivers. I didn't like Eureka much back then. It was impossible to hitchhike through town and the three pulp mills on the Samoa peninsula put out such a stench that I promised myself I'd never live there.

One summer day the Eureka fog was so cold that I headed east on 299 just to get some sun, and got dropped off in the middle of the Hoopa Indian Reservation where the Trinity and the Klamath meet. It was a beautiful valley. Then I got a ride from a mill debarker named Jerry McManus who was to become my best friend. He took me down to the banks of the Trinity and sat me down on a big sun-warmed mossy rock. I watched an osprey shoot out of the sky, dive into the stream and take a steelhead up and out to his fledglings waiting for dinner upriver in their huge nest. It was a balm to my soul. And that's where my thumb led me once again after my internship.

While visiting Jerry and his family that spring I was invited to tour the local Indian Health Clinic that was out by the Hoopa airport and the Hoopa Hospital, an 11-bed facility with the only emergency room within hours in any direction. As fate would have it yet again, while I was visiting the Clinic two critically injured folks from an 'over the cliff' auto accident hit the hospital ER next door and the county doc on

"Mentors", Continued on Pg. 20

***SOMETHING ON YOUR MIND? WANT TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES?
PLEASE SEND THOSE THOUGHTS FOR PUBLICATION IN THE NORTH COAST PHYSICIAN OR
IF YOU'RE INSECURE ABOUT YOUR ABILITY TO WRITE - LET US HELP YOU.***

“Mentors”, Continued From Pg. 4

call asked the Tribal clinic doc for help. He was a 70-year-old retired ophthalmologist locums, and he asked if I'd like to go over instead. So I helped out and surprisingly got offered a job for a week because the county doc needed to be elsewhere. I took it, and to make a long story short, the week turned into a year which then turned into 8 years, a marriage, a geodesic dome house-raising and a whole lot of life.

Here's where Scott Holmes comes in. We had both moved to Humboldt in 1974, he to Arcata and Mad River Community Hospital (MRCH) and me to the reservation. Back then the Hoopa valley had three full time lumber mills, roads with 300-ft drop-offs guarded by 10-inch rotted fir logs, open range with cattle and horses traveling freely throughout the valley, a lot of alcohol and frequent auto accidents. The hospital had a small lab, a delivery room and a surgery suite, but no obstetrician, no surgeon and only a 'walk in' blood bank of typed donors. At times the roads to the valley were closed by rockslides. In catastrophic emergencies we gave warm, type-specific transfusions. The closest ambulance came out of Willow Creek, about 15 miles upriver. Mad River was closer to Hoopa than were the three hospitals in Eureka, and Scott Holmes became my go-to surgeon. The ambulance ride from our ER to MRCH's took about 75 minutes. I could call Scott day or night and he was always gracious and ready to help. I usually rode the ambulance into town with critical patients, often pushing IV Ringers, and he would always be there when we arrived, the O.R. prepped and the crew ready. I routinely assisted on all my patients' elective surgeries as well. We did that in those days. So I often scrubbed with Scott, observing him in action for years. He possessed a certain personality trait that I came to greatly admire, namely an innate equanimity. He was firmly, confidently grounded in his being. His condition was not dependent on circumstance. He had perfected an unshakable balance of mind

seasoned with intrinsic happiness and unanimity. He loved what he did and he did it very well. He loved teaching and sharing his knowledge. He was a bright light.

As Ted and I talked that day my thoughts went to my other Hoopa mentors, for I had many. Going to Hoopa after a one year internship had been an intense challenge and I had needed a medical support system. The names and images of these now deceased mentors poured into my memory and I have need to honor them today.

Keith Sturges, my primary orthopedic surgery mentor, died way too early, flying his homebuilt KR2 airplane. He was a great consultant and mentor, and a true gentleman.

Mike Hitchko was the orthopod I called for non-surgical advice. He had practiced in Eureka for years and unhesitatingly offered practical commonsense advice graciously, with kindness and humor. He loved sharing what he'd learned in his decades of practice.

Ted Loring was my OB/GYN mentor. I'll never forget calling him about a woman who presented in labor to the Hoopa ER with significant vaginal bleeding. I'd done a careful speculum exam and found her dilated to 4cm with a hemorrhaging marginal placenta previa filling about a third of the cervical os. His advice was to augment her labor with i.v. Pitocin, enhancing the strength and frequency of her contractions, pushing the fetal head down and thus tamponading the previa, hastening the delivery and solving the problem. I would never have thought of that. It worked just like he said. I went on to deliver about 200 kids in Hoopa, and Ted made it possible by his unfailing guidance and generosity of spirit.

Jerome Lengyel was my go-to internist. He'd been a veterinarian before he found himself staying awake all night worrying about a cow and decided he wanted to take care of people and worry about them instead. I often sought his common sense clinical insight. I'd learned

medicine at a tertiary care institution and Hoopa was waaay at the other end of that spectrum. Jerome helped me bridge the gap. I remember calling him one night when a middle-aged woman with end stage primary pulmonary hypertension presented to the ER in extremis with florid CHF. She and her husband had been taking a 'final tour' of the western states, aware of her terminal diagnosis, and passing through Hoopa her condition bottomed out. I'd given her the standard CHF emergency workup with oxygen, morphine, Lasix, then double Lasix, to no avail. She had no urinary output but was cogent, dyspneic, frightened. I called Jerome and asked if he would take her in referral as she was 'out of my league'. I told him what I'd done and how it hadn't helped, and his response was that I'd done everything he would have done, and what she needed now was to be made comfortable and be close to her husband for the time she still had. There was nothing more medically that could be done for her disease. He'd been to this place many times before with other patients, and he knew. He shared his knowing with me and knowing that he was right, I took his sage advice.

There are a host of other mentors that deserve mention in this space, but I'm running out of room, so I'll just mention them and save their stories for another time.

Joe Antony was my pediatrics consult. I still remember his constant sense of humor and his infective joy from practicing his art.

Edward Clark was a Redding dermatologist who enjoyed our phone consults. He diagnosed the scabies I acquired after I lent my sleeping bag to a friend. I couldn't believe it could happen to me. But he was right.

John Machen, my urology consultant, first awakened me to the realization that PSA cancer screening carried dangers and that for many men living with cancer of

“Mentors”, Continued Next Page
North Coast Physician

CMA WEBINARS

“Mentors”, Continued From Pg. 20

the prostate, watchful waiting was better than hormonal/radiation/surgical treatment when subsequent quality life-years were measured.

Peter Burgess and John Carolan of Humboldt Radiology not only read our Hoopa films but also took time to teach as well.

John Burnett, the Hoopa doc who asked me to take over his practice for a year, turning it over to me on a handshake, and who died in an accident before he could return.

In retrospect it became clear that these men all shared similar characteristics. Like Scott Holmes, as colleagues they projected an equanimity that made the mentoring process a joy. I never felt that I was imposing upon them. And to a man they manifested that paramount attribute of a good practitioner: they knew that the secret of caring for patients was caring for patients, treating them as you would want yourself and your family to be treated. And that was how they practiced.

In 1978 I took the family practice board exam and easily passed it. My mentors had taught me well ... and I'm still working on that equanimity thing. §

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ASSEMBLY BILL 72: WHAT PHYSICIANS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE NEW LAW ON PAYMENT AND BILLING FOR OUT-OF-NETWORK SERVICES

MAY 17, 2017 12:15 PM - 1:15 PM

In September, Governor Jerry Brown signed a controversial bill, Assembly Bill 72, into law. This bill, effective on July 1, 2017, will change the billing practices of non-participating physicians providing non-emergent care at in-network facilities including hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers and laboratories.

This webinar will provide an overview of the new law, when it applies, the interim payment plans/insurers will be required to pay, the process to “opt out” of the AB 72 payment scheme, how to challenge the interim payment, how you can lend your voice to California Medical Association (CMA) advocacy efforts, and resources available for CMA members.

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## **HOW CA PHYSICIANS CAN ACCESS FREE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR MACRA TRANSITION**

**MAY 31, 2017 12:15PM - 01:15PM**

The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA), also known as the Quality Payment Program (QPP), authorized \$100 million in funding over five years to provide free technical assistance to Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) eligible clinicians in small practices, defined as 15 or fewer clinicians. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has announced that Health Services Advisory Group (HSAG) was selected as the contractor to provide this assistance in California.

The assistance is geared toward helping small practices comply with MIPS and transition to new payment models. In this webinar, HSAG will discuss the assistance available, which includes, but is not limited to:

- Selecting and reporting on appropriate measures and activities to satisfy the requirements of each reporting category under MIPS
- Engagement in continuous quality improvement
- Optimizing health information technology
- Evaluating options for joining an Advanced Alternative Payment Model

This webinar is open to practices of all sizes as HSAG also provides similar technical assistance to large group practices.

**THESE WEBINARS ARE FREE TO CMA MEMBERS AND THEIR STAFF.**

**TO REGISTER: GO ON LINE TO CMANET.ORG - EVENTS OR CONTACT CMA AT: CMA MEMBER HELP CENTER (800) 786-4262 MEMBERSERVICE@CMANET.ORG**

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**Refer to Practice Opportunities on our website for a list of Practice Opportunities for Physicians. Separate listing for Advanced Practice Clinicians is also posted. Recruitment Brochure & Video; Links to Local Recreation; Links to Loan Repayment Programs; Norcal Medical Partners Facebook, and more....**  
[www.hdncms.org](http://www.hdncms.org)

## OFFICE EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

**MEDICAL OFFICE EQUIPMENT AND FURNITURE FOR SALE.** Items include, office chairs, desks, bookcases, file cabinets, Toshiba phone system, side chairs, small refrigerator and one Summit 10.1CU ft. for Medical Storage, a Microwave, two treatment tables and one Clinton Family Practice Exam table, Misc. office supplies and medical instruments. There is also an autoclave, a Contec SP10 digital Spirometer, Eye-level scale, HP print, scan, copy, machine, and a Detecto DHS Digital Grip tester. These items and more will be available after 4/18. Please call (707) 497-6342.

**EQUIPMENT FOR SALE.** Midmark ECG Portable Unit - Barely used. Contact Lorraine at Lorraine@efpdocs.com or (707) 407-4591.

**EQUIPMENT FOR SALE.** Cryotome CM 1510 for doing Mohs Surgery (\$1,500.); Dermasonic Sorisa US-6000 Cellulite US Unit (\$5,500.); MegaPeel Plantinus Microdermabrasion by DermaMed (with heads, etc) (\$1,500.); Microline 390 OKI Turbo 24 Pin Printer (\$200.); Contact Dr. Davies at (707) 442-7979.

## PROPERTY FOR SALE/ RENT/ LEASE

**OFFICE BUILDING FOR SALE IN HENDERSON CENTER.** 3 exam rooms, 2 bathrooms. Can be a live-in office situation since zoned for residential and business. Contact Teresa Marshall, M.D. - 442-6584 for more information.

**FOR SALE OR LEASE:** Medical Office building in McKinleyville which is approximately 1500 sq. ft. It has three large exam rooms, two bathrooms, a generous waiting room, receptionist office, two additional offices, a lab room and a small additional work station. This includes all furniture, computer system hardware, EMR software, medical equipment and supplies. Currently the medical office is a well established primary care practice and it is offered as a "turn key" operation with the option of taking over the care of the currently established patients. If interested, please contact Bob at (707) 498-6688 or email: [drdramott@gmail.com](mailto:drdramott@gmail.com)

## MISCELLANEOUS

**MEDICAL STUDENT HOST HOUSING NEEDED.** Do you have an extra room? Empty nest? Want to play a part in mentoring and welcoming a medical student to our rural county? Please call Kate McCaffrey at (707) 599-7832. In some cases a housing stipend is available. Thank You!

**FIREWOOD for Sale.** Contact Lee: (707) 499-2805

### **Did You Know....**

Members may run classified ads in *North Coast Physician* at no charge for the first six months for business-related ads and ½ price for personal ads (*on space available basis*).

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| Business Card Ad       | \$65.00         | Copy Ready 2" x 3.5" |
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*DEADLINE: 15th day of the preceding month to be published*