

Letters to the CSA

June 27, 2005

Dear Sirs:

I am sitting here looking at my membership renewal invoice wondering if I will continue being a member of the CSA. After reading the January-March *Bulletin*, I am outraged at the inappropriate content of our *Bulletin*. The article by Nancy Evans has absolutely no place in our *Bulletin*, and if I wanted my membership dues to be used to advance the agenda of The Physicians for Social Responsibility, I would join that organization. Otherwise, political pieces like this should be printed and distributed by them and not by the CSA. Please respond to my concerns and give me some good reasons as to why I should continue being a CSA member and assure me that this type of propaganda stays out of our *Bulletin*.



Thank you,
Vincent R. Okamoto M.D.

In Reply to Doctors Rogers (whose letter to CSA appeared in the Apr-Jun 2005 CSA Bulletin) and Okamoto:

I thank both of you for writing your letters. We have published them in consecutive issues in order that the readers might see that not every member is pleased with all of the material in the Bulletin. In fact, I am pleased that both of you not only had the interest, but also took the initiative to spend the time in writing of your disapproval of some of the Bulletin's content. It may well be that you both represent more of our colleagues who share your views.

As you know, the Bulletin is not a scientific journal, even if we do have quality articles of that genre, such as the one by Dr. Wallace in this issue. Rather, the Bulletin is intended to be a potpourri of informative articles, reports and opinions on a wide range of subjects dealing not only with "matters anesthesiological," but also with the more encompassing and global field of medicine. Assuredly, a preponderance of what we publish involves political (both internal and external to the CSA), economic and practice management news that we believe to be of frontline value to the practicing California anesthesiologist, regardless of one's mode of practice. Yet, it has been my intent to sprinkle onto this core some articles beyond the normal reaches of our specialty's interests, ones whose goals are to be educational, awareness arousing, and, occasionally, even provocative. Hence, the articles on ethics, social issues, history, occupational hazards, humanism, collegial human interest stories, and yes, the silly and playful humor found in our "Laughing Gas" section. Indeed, one of the most popular articles we ever published outlined how to make a slide whistle from a syringe!

As you now are well aware, during the more recent years, we have published a series of articles on environmental health, ranging from the "greening" of hospitals, to the conservation

of water, to (this year) global warming, environmental influences on gene expression and breast cancer, and toxic environmental chemicals found in our bodies. Although we choose our authors carefully for their qualifications and professionalism, we, on occasion, have chosen them from the ranks of physician controlled advocacy organizations (such as the Physicians for Social Responsibility in our last issue), always disclosing the source organization. Assuredly, printing “propaganda” is not the goal of your editorial board, one purposefully composed of members who, collectively, represent a full spectrum of political, economic, social and philosophical views. As I stated in the introduction to our article on “Smarter Energy Choices,” it is our hope that [these articles] will stimulate you to join the ranks of advocacy for a national commitment to the necessary research and policy analysis that will lead to environmental decisions informed by thoughtful insights.

When possible, the Bulletin presents “alternative” views, and in fact, your very willingness to express your thoughts constitutes such a counterbalancing force. We know that the CSA is a diverse and democratic society, and its members hold a wide range of opinions on a multitude of topics, be they mainstream or seemingly marginal to the practice of anesthesiology. Indeed, one of the functions of the Bulletin is to generate a forum for members to express their opinions, as well as to dispute other’s.

Finally, I am responsible for the expanded “biomass” of our paper Bulletin, and I plead guilty to additional assaults on our forests. It may well not be too long before our traditional and popular printed format will, for better or worse, be transmogrified to a solely electronic version!

The Editor

Editor’s Note: It should be noted that the letters published in this section represent the opinions of the individual authors, and no inference should be made as to the opinion of the California Society of Anesthesiologists or the editor. The views expressed here are not official policy of the CSA, and a letter’s publication does not imply agreement or disagreement with the author.

We are attempting to provide the membership with a forum to express their thoughts to other California anesthesiologists. We also make every attempt to publish the letters in their entirety and just as we receive them. Insofar as possible, related or opposing views will be published. If a letter deserves a reply, its publication may be delayed until the companion letter is available. Please remember, we do have deadlines and space limitations — thus, the publication of your letter may be delayed to the next issue for these reasons.