

In my first Presidential message, I thought it might be worthwhile to review my and our Board's goals for 2015.

But first it may be worthwhile to review AACH's mission and vision.

Our mission is to serve as the professional home for researchers, educators, practitioners, and patients committed to improving communication and relationships in healthcare. We strive to be a home that provides opportunities for collaboration, support, and personal and professional development.

We envision and work toward achieving a healthcare system where all patients, providers, and trainees feel valued, are treated equitably with respect, compassion, understanding, and are actively engaged in healthcare processes and decisions.

For expanded discussions of each please see our website.

So what are some of our specific goals for 2015?

- Of course an important responsibility of the board and myself is to maintain and improve the financial well-being of our organization, which enables us to pursue our mission and expand our programs, e.g.
 - Maintaining fiscal responsibility for core programs
 - Achieving profits in our external programs
 - Increasing philanthropic gifts
- We want to preserve and strengthen or expand our already existing programs:
 - Core faculty development programs: ENRICH, Winter Course
 - Research meetings: ICCH and Forum
 - DocCom
 - External programs we conduct for institutions that contract for our services
 - Publications, such as Medical Encounter and Patient Education and Counseling
- We want to increase our membership.
- We want to increase the diversity of our membership (and board). We have a broad perspective on diversity. It involves diversity in professions, specialty, interests (research, education, practice), skills, race/ethnicity, gender, and geography.
- We want to assess member needs and desires and appropriately enhance member benefits.
- We want to develop mechanisms for increased and meaningful input from patients.
- We want AACH to be recognized widely for its work and excellence, and to advocate for the realization of its vision.

Of course, to accomplish such lofty goals takes incredible contributions from not just the board but from many members. I/we need you to contribute your ideas, your time, and yes your membership fees and even donations. Please email Laura Singler at singler@amrms.com or me at dkern1@jhmi.edu to let us know your interests and willingness to help.

In future emails, I hope to keep you informed on some of our progress.

Finally, I imagine some of you would like to know more about me as a person, so I am posting our family's holiday letter as well. If you are interested in learning more about our board members, please visit our website for descriptions of each.

Happy New Year to all!

Dave Kern

HAPPY HOLIDAYS! Dear Friends, it is time to reconnect and report the news of the Gauvey-Kerns.

David continues in his semi-retired state, attending 4 weeks per year on the inpatient services at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, teaching in the Johns Hopkins Faculty Development Program, and working on the 3rd edition of a book on curriculum development which he is writing and editing with colleagues. He has traveled to Saudi Arabia and Qatar to teach curriculum development. After a year as President-Elect of the American Academy of Communication in Healthcare, he will spend a year as President in 2015. He has also found time to take courses on U.S. First Ladies and terrorist novels in the Hopkins Osher Program. One of the things he likes best about retirement is waking up without an alarm clock several mornings per week.

Susan officially retired from the court in July. In January, before retiring, she presided over a citizenship proceeding that included Heidy, our daughter-in-law (see picture). After retiring, she immediately enjoyed a yoga retreat in the Berkshires and a visit to her sister, Judith and her family in New Hampshire. Susan had great plans and a firm schedule to clean up the house and organize her life. Alas, she has fallen miserably behind schedule. She continues with her work on various boards, including the Enoch Pratt Library and United Way. And she is investigating some part time professional commitments, while sitting for a portrait for the court! Who knew? And our children

G-K was promoted early in 2014 to research program manager in the Institute for Clinical and Translational Research at Hopkins. She is working on a challenging study that integrates medical data from several academic medical centers and health plans while also recruiting patients into 3 consented cohorts to study specific disease conditions. The study involves synthesizing data from different electronic records and addressing privacy / IRB issues. She is moving to a new apartment in Fells Point, a very old part of the city, near the water. G-K dotes on Tig, her cat and our grand cat, as she likes to say, and plays in bocce and soccer leagues.

Kevin is in his fourth year of medical school and is in the middle of interviewing for residencies all over the country, including Cincinnati! Heidy is in her second and final year of nursing school. She continues in her internship at Howard County General Hospital, giving her valuable bedside experience.

Lizzie released her first EP ('extended play - 4 songs) in August. She is getting more and more gigs, including a hometown performance at Germano's cabaret over the Thanksgiving weekend. She started teaching music at Brooklyn Jesuit Prep - the school that Aunt Patty runs - one day a week. She and Patrick moved to the West Village and continue to have a very busy and interesting life in NYC.

Susan and David have enjoyed a lot of travel. In February, they hiked in Patagonia, first visiting Yamil (a former Humphrey fellow) and Maria Jose and their darling daughter, Amalia, in Santiago, Chile, and ending in Buenos Aires. We are happy to report that we kept up with the group, though definitely did not lead the pack! We all went to the Jersey shore for a week in July. David and Susan spent a week in Chautauqua, NY, in August with friends Kathy Sabatier and Rick Funkhouser, then visited David's father in Cincinnati for his 101st birthday at the end of the August. In November Susan and David traveled to Qatar (where David taught for a few days) and Oman, where we toured. At the end of the year, in early December, Susan, David and G-K enjoyed a fabulous trip to Northern India - Udaipur, Rankapur, Jodphur, Jaipur, Agra, Varanasi, ending in Delhi for the unforgettably joyous several day wedding of a young friend of ours - Aditi to Arun - complete with saris.

We enjoyed a visit from Ed Bough, a roommate of Dave's from medical school, and his wife, Joan Merdinger in August. In November, the Ebadis arrived to resettle in the USA from Afghanistan. Dr. Hamida Ebadi was a Humphrey fellow a couple of years ago for whom we were her host family. She, her husband and two younger children are living with us for a while as they settle in and find jobs. They and another former Humphrey fellow, Abeyah and her family and Patty, John and David joined us - our entire family plus Patrick - for Thanksgiving dinner.

We hope to see more of friends in 2015 with our more flexible schedules. So, hope you will make Baltimore part of your plans. Warm regards and happy holidays.

Susan and David

Over for photos →



Susan and Heidi, after Heidi's swearing in as a U.S. citizen



Susan & David (upper left) with National Geographic group in Patagonia



Lizzie, back up singers, and band at her EP release in August (visit www.elizabethhuntermusic.com/)



Kevin and Heidi at our house in September on their 5th anniversary



Susan and David at the Taj Mahal



Susan, David, G-K, and friend Raphaelle at wedding party in Gurgaon, India