



SCCACS NEWS

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

SUMMER 2009
VOLUME 14

Editor's Note

In this brief *SCCACS News*, we've tried to summarize some of the many activities of your Chapter officers, committee chairpersons and representatives. The Southern California Chapter has an aggressive socioeconomic and educational mission, and seeks to represent the needs of its members in all of its activities. Please let us know how we are doing, give us your thoughts on the complex issues of the day, and tell us if there are ways in which we can better serve you.

*Michael J. Stamos, MD, FACS
President-Elect, SCCACS*

Calendar

• Abstract submission deadline

Friday, Sept. 18, 2009

Visit www.socalsurgeons.org/acs/pages/meetings.html for details

• 2010 Annual Scientific Meeting

Jan. 22-24, 2010

Four Seasons Biltmore Resort
www.fourseasons.com

1260 Channel Drive, Santa Barbara
Call 805/565-8299 by **Dec. 21, 2009**
to get the discounted room rate.

• 2011 Annual Scientific Meeting

Jan. 21-23, 2011

Four Seasons Biltmore Resort
www.fourseasons.com

1260 Channel Drive, Santa Barbara

President's Message

Greetings to members of the Southern California Chapter of the American College of Surgeons. As the summer winds down, it's once again time to plan for your whole family to attend the Chapter's highly anticipated Annual Scientific Meeting at the Four Seasons Biltmore Resort in Santa Barbara, Jan. 22-24, 2010. We have arranged for a block of rooms at a discounted rate. Reservations can be made by calling the hotel at 805/565-8299 prior to **Dec. 21, 2009**. Please mention the SCCACS to get the discounted group rate.

The scientific program, put together by Program Chair O. Joe Hines, MD, and Associate Program Chair, Vince Rowe, MD, has been designed to include material of interest not only to general surgeons, but also to those in major sub-specialties. Additional highlights of the program will be a luncheon with speaker specifically designed for Women in Surgery and a Breakfast for Young Surgeons, where our guest speakers will specifically address professional and family issues of concern to those completing training and entering practice. Highlighting the social program will be the Friday evening cocktail reception, with its traditional abundance of food.

Our guest speakers will address a broad range of topics: Featured are Dr. Michael Harrison of UCSF, the developer of the fascinating field of Fetal Surgery, and Dr. Charles Brunicaudi, chair of the Michael DeBakey Department of Surgery at the Baylor University College of Medicine, addressing Personalized Genomic Surgery. Both topics are likely to be of interest not only to surgeons, but also to their significant others.

Health Care Legislation

It is no secret that the main topic of discussion for most surgeons has become the

pending health care legislation before Congress. The American College of Surgeons has taken an active role in these negotiations, strongly pushing to make the eventual outcome favorable for the surgical community. A major player for the ACS is our third guest speaker, Dr. Thomas Russell, currently acting executive director of the College. He will update us on the eventual outcome, and discuss how best to work with new rules that may be in place by January.

The ever-popular, What's New Sessions,



will cover Complex Abdominal Wounds, Critical Care, Surgical Education, and Vascular, Colorectal and Pediatric Surgery. There will be specialty sections on Colorectal, Cardiothoracic, Head and Neck, General, Plastics, Pediatric, Trauma and Breast Surgery.

Introduced last year, Surgical Jeopardy, the surgical knowledge competition between Southern California residency programs, was a hugely popular success. It will return in an expanded format, with all programs participating. Make sure to be present to cheer on your favorite team and witness the presentation of the newly introduced Dowden Cup (soon to be more highly

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Commission on Cancer Liaison Report

This update will summarize the previous year's activities as SCCACS's cancer liaison for the Commission on Cancer:

1) A number of agenda items were covered during our Chapter's January '09 Cancer Liaison Physician (CLP) meeting. First were introductions and also a welcome to the new CLP members for our state.

We had a videoconference with other state members, including a remote presentation on TMN recording as part of the "Surgical Time Out."

Another presentation centered on the collaboration with the American Cancer Society and resources they offer. Emilia Jankowski, vice president, American Cancer Society, joined us with a presentation on physician volunteerism and services available to the Chapter from the American Cancer Society. I have since been appointed as the co-chair of the Physician Engagement Committee for the American Cancer Society.

Our next Chapter Liaison Physician meeting will be in Santa Barbara on Jan. 24, 2010.

2) I was re-elected to the ACOS, Commission on Cancer. This is an additional three-year membership in the governing body of the ACOS Cancer program. It was an honor to be re-elected and represent the SCCACS on a national level.

3) I was re-appointed as your chapter state chair for the Commission on Cancer, CLP program. This is a three-year ap-

pointment expiring in 2012.

4) I was awarded the annual State Chair Outstanding Achievement Award at the ACOS Clinical Congress in San Francisco last October. I wish to thank all of you, especially the CLP physicians, who helped me throughout the year as your state chair.

5) Last May, I attended the ACOS State Chair meeting in Chicago. This was a three-day meeting with workshops in CLP recruitment and support. Also covered was tumor registry support and community outreach participation. This meeting was a worthwhile experience, which will help in my interaction with our local Cancer Liaison Physicians.

6) On Aug. 25, 2009, I attended the Cancer Liaison Program Summit in Chicago. The Summit brought leaders from around the country together to talk about the Cancer Liaison Program. Attendees include those involved in the Cancer Liaison Program from different vantage points. This approach will facilitate a review of the Cancer Liaison Program, a discussion of the potential for program growth and development, a look at opportunities for program enhancement, and development of a strategy and plan for the future of the Cancer Liaison Program.

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sought after than the Stanley variety) to the winner!

Call For Abstracts

Abstracts for scientific program participation are now being accepted through **Friday, Sept. 18**. Most presented papers selected for oral presentation will be included in a special issue of the American Surgeon. This is, therefore, a great forum for young surgeons and surgical trainees to get started on their publishing careers.

And finally, we need the assistance of all members in recruiting industry participation for the meeting. The vendors give us an opportunity to view the latest



technology and have one-on-one discussions regarding the technology, pharmaceuticals and tools that we will be utilizing in our practices. They also provide much-needed support for our Scientific Meeting. If you have any special association with industry representatives who have supported us in the past or expressed an interest, please forward your contact information to Jim Dowden, our executive director (310/364-0193, administrator@socalsurgeons.org). He will do the follow-up and provide the vendor with a selection of opportunities that are available for participation.

Please contact the administrative office if you have not received specific information on abstract submission, registration or hotel reservations. Once again, I hope that you and your family find time to come to Santa Barbara and enjoy the program and the many opportunities for education, recreation and relaxation that are offered.

*Harry Applebaum, MD, FACS
President, SCCACS*

Chapter seeks feedback

SCCACS is your organization. The Chapter leaders below want to hear from you with any comments and suggestions:

OFFICERS

President Harry Applebaum, MD, harry.applebaum@kp.org

President-Elect Michael J. Stamos, MD, mstamos@uci.edu

Vice-President H. Gill Cryer, MD, hcryer@mednet.ucla.edu

Secretary-Treasurer Marianne E. Cinat, MD, mecinat@uci.edu

Recorder Christian de Virgilio, MD, cdevirgilio@rei.edu

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

J. Craig Collins, MD, J.Craig.collins@kp.org

Joshua D I Ellenhorn, MD, jellenhorn@coh.org

Howard Kaufman, MD, hkaufman@surgery.usc.edu

Beverly A. Petrie, MD, bpetriemd@yahoo.com

Edward "Bill" Taylor, MD, taylor@kernmedctr.com

Shirin Towfigh, MD, Shirin.Towfigh@cshs.org

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Program Chairman O. Joe Hines, MD
joehines@mednet.ucla.edu

Associate Chairman Vincent L. Rowe, MD
vrowe@surgery.usc.edu

Assistant Chairman Ali Salim, MD, ali.salim@cshs.org

Commission on Cancer State Chairman
James A. Recabaren, MD, recabare@usc.edu

Committee on Trauma
Daniel R. Margulies, MD, daniel.margulies@cshs.org

CMA Council on Legislation and CMA Delegate
Donald J. Gaspard, MD, irondutchess@hotmail.com

Representative, Association of Women Surgeons
Farin Amersi, MD, farin.amersi@cshs.org

Young Surgeon Representatives
Brian Smith, MD, docbrsmith@aol.com
Talar Tejirian, MD, talar.x.tejirian@kp.org

Executive Director
James Dowden, administrator@socalsurgeons.org

Membership Report

Current membership in the Southern California Chapter of ACS is 1,499 members. This breaks down into 875 Active Fellows, 590 Senior Fellows and 34 Associate members. The Chapter membership represents just over 58% of all ACS Fellows in the Southern California region. We need your help in reaching your colleagues.

Chapter membership in the California Medical Association's legislative bodies is directly proportional to the number of members that the Chapter has. We need a bigger voice in CMA to ensure that we have the opportunity to appropriately represent the interest of surgeons on legislative matters and other policy issues that come before the CMA. The more members we have, the more seats at the table we have to represent your interests.

Membership also provides the resources that the Chapter needs in order to continue to provide an outstanding annual Scientific Conference, financial support to surgical Residents to attend and participate in that meeting and to reward those who submit outstanding papers, and to carry out other activities of the Chapter.

The Southern California Chapter of ACS provides member surgeons with unique services not offered in most other areas of the country. We are the only Chapter that provides a free subscription to *The American Surgeon*. This journal is provided to active members throughout the year. The Chapter also funds the cost of participation on the various CMA legislative bodies and meetings by surgeons representing this region. We are one of the few Chapters that conducts a major Scientific Conference, bringing outstanding nationally known surgeons to present to our members.

As articles elsewhere in the newsletter indicate, your Chapter leaders are representing you in a variety of ways at a time when medical practice is in great turmoil and under significant stress. To ensure your voice continues to be heard, your continued support of the Chapter is vital. But equally important is your assistance in reaching out to your colleagues who are not currently part of the Chapter to encourage their membership and their involvement.

We have invited area ACS Fellows to join the Chapter to represent the surgical profession at all levels affecting our practice. We have a full-color recruitment brochure available listing membership benefits. You can view this on the Chapter's Web site at www.socalsurgeons.org/acs/pages/membership.html (click on View or Download next to Membership Brochure).

If you know a colleague who's not part of the Chapter, please encourage him/her to accept this invitation to join SCCACS. Or invite them to download the Chapter membership application posted at www.socalsurgeons.org/acs/pages/membership.html.

The Chapter is doing much and providing many services for a relatively modest annual investment on your part. Much more can be done. Please contact us (310/364-0193) if you need membership applications and brochures to give to your colleagues, or if you have suggestions on how we can encourage them to join.

*C. James Dowden, Executive Director
Southern California Chapter, American College of Surgeons*

California Medical Association Report

Signs of the Apocalypse – National and State Socioeconomic News

The American College of Surgeons has done something brilliant. By backing HR 3200 (healthcare reform) they have -- at least for now -- bought surgeons a seat at the table.

During the run up to actual reform, my take has been that physicians were marginalized. Any article one chose weighed in on who the major players would be... big business, health insurance lobbyists, various think-tank gurus, big pharma, union bosses, the hospital lobby, but only a footnote that the AMA was even alive. Obama kicked off the big push with a rose garden speech surrounded by nurses. HHS's Sebelius spoke in glowing terms of cost-efficient models of healthcare delivery such as Kaiser, Mayo and Geisinger – all staffed by salaried physicians. I am not opposed to salaried physicians but don't hear anyone wailing from the fee-for-service private practice folk.

Many battles remain to be fought, but HR3200 contains some good news:

First, the SGR will be reworked to remove the huge pay cut we are about to endure, plus a tiny raise.

Second, with the bill's push for increased preventive care, there is clear intent not to pay for that with diminished surgical fees.

Third, there is increased support for trauma systems and trauma centers. The College has pledged to work hard to keep these items in the final bill.

Fighting Bad Provisions

Equally important, there are some bad provisions for surgeons that the College is lobbying hard to modify or remove. Most important, there is no provision for a MICRA-like fix for malpractice; thus the practice of defensive medicine, with its costs, will continue to thwart cost-efficiency. There are provisions under debate to either create an Independent Medicine Advisory Council (IMAC) or elevate the current Medicine Payment Advisory Commission (Med

Pac) to an executive branch agency, removing Congress as the watchdog of Medicare rates and policy. The ACS strongly opposes both. The great danger being a small group of unelected people (probably few doctors) deciding health care policy.

The President has repeatedly said health care reform will be revenue-neutral over 10 years. Everyone else gives it a price tag of one trillion dollars (a little more or a little less). This disparity is disquieting. Even more disturbing are some of the ideas being floated to help pay for reform. My favorite is a 10% tax on unnecessary procedures, from teeth whitening to various reductions or augmentations. The problem is who decides. However goofy you believe this to be, it's the law in New Jersey.

If one wishes to "flatten the curve" of health care expenditures, it seems clear that costs must be controlled. There are two "cost centers:" The overhead/profit of private insurance companies and payments to hospitals, pharmacies and physicians. If limits on executive pay, advertising and profit are placed (with moderation so as not to spook the entire industry into leaving the field), my guess is the curve won't change much. That leaves the second group to fix the curve. Gazillions of dollars are going to be removed from us "providers." How to do this is the subject of much debate. One way would be to reduce the fee to \$1/hernia (which might have serious workforce consequences); another would be to ration care (think Oregon Medicaid).

The age limit on dialysis in Britain abstractly seems reasonable until it's your grandma. Their adjusted life – year calculation seems reasonable since 75% of our Medicare budget is spent on patients during their last year of life. If some percentage of those patients are denied treatment, I'll bet the curve will do more than flatten. I'll also bet the American public will have a hard time signing on.

See CMA REPORT on page 5

CANCER continued from page 2

7) The Commission on Cancer (CoC) has partnered with the American Cancer Society (ACS) for more than 90 years to help prevent, diagnose and treat cancer through research, education, advocacy and service. As a CLP, your role is to serve as a physician champion, keep your cancer committee abreast of CoC initiatives, and help facilitate the relationship with the ACS. Is your local ACS representative attending your Cancer Committee meetings? Consider a collaborative project for 2009. Please let me know if your hospital has had a particularly successful CQI project that would be of interest to other facilities as well. I have recently participated with my local American Cancer Society chapter presenting Colorectal Screening Prof. Ed. to primary care physicians. We need more physicians who would be willing to be local presenters for this American Cancer Society CRC project. A PowerPoint presentation is avail-

able. I will continue to solicit participants for this collaborative venture.

8) Annual CLP Breakfast Meeting at Clinical Congress

Don't miss this opportunity to meet with your State Chair and network with other Cancer Liaison Physicians in your state! The CoC is hosting its Annual Cancer Liaison Physician Breakfast on Monday, Oct. 12, 2009 in conjunction with the American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress in Chicago.

I have been honored to be your state cancer chair for the past year. Contact me at 626/449-6606 or recabare@usc.edu regarding any Commission on Cancer problems or questions.

James Recabaren, MD, FACS
*State Chair, Southern California Chapter ACS
 Commission on Cancer*

ACS donations fund member benefits, activities

The American College of Surgeons holds a restrictive 501c(3) tax-exempt status that limits the range of services it can provide to and on behalf of its Fellows. Notably, the College's tax classification forbids participation in any kind of political activity. When the ACS Board of Governors voted unanimously in favor of a College affiliate establishing a Political Action Committee (PAC), a new organization with the more flexible 501c(6) tax-exempt status had to be created. That affiliated corporation, ACS Professional Association (ACSPA), can offer a broader range of activi-

ties and services of benefit to surgeons and their patients, including an expanded legislative action program that features a PAC.

This corporation allows the College to continue the standard-setting and educational activities that have always been at the heart of its mission. ACSPA also expands opportunities to provide more direct benefits to surgeons and their patients.

For further information about ACSPA-SurgeonsPAC, visit www.facs.org/acspa/about.html.

CMA REPORT continued from page 4

Pilot programs exist that bundle all charges for a given intervention/procedure into a lump sum. This will be given to the hospital who will then dicker with docs as to who gets what. It seems that this would evolve into putting the doc on salary. This scenario is a close cousin of capitation, which paid the same for operating as not. In my experience, this led to fewer operations – a curious thing re: necessity.

The mandate that breathing requires health insurance raises the question as to how to enforce it. State law requires car insurance, but if you don't get a ticket or have an accident, you can drive for a least a year.

Health Care Reform

While everyone seems to agree that health care reform is necessary, it may not happen. 85% of Americans are happy with their insurance and care. Obama's approval rating is falling. Forcing 40 million people to buy insurance -- a daunting task in itself -- will be very expensive, and as I have previously noted, bipartisanship + a dollar will buy you a cup of coffee.

What with California's budget fiasco, healthcare dollars will be in increasingly short supply. Nonetheless, CMA has achieved some notable successes. In June, the 5th District Court of Appeals upheld the Constitutionality of MICRA in a suit brought by a lawyer who argued that MICRA prevented his client from his day in court because there wasn't enough money in it for the lawyer. CMA argued the case and won. In the courts' opinion, "the state has an interest" in providing patients access to health care which might not be available absent a lid on judgments and thus on premiums. This is a big deal both positively and negatively. Consider this: if the state has such an interest, organized medicine must be very careful about using "access" as a substitute for "money" in reimbursement discussions. If the state feels its interest is not being met due to hard-nosed approaches (e.g. no see medi-cal or Medicare patients), it might use this decision to mandate care. Remember the threat, during the ER coverage crisis, of linking licensure to coverage.

If all the above drives you to drink -- or worse -- CMA sponsored successfully to create a new physician diversion program that will be a boon to those who need it.

"Truth in Advertising"

CMA is happy with sponsorship of its "truth in advertising" law that will require "providers" to display diplomas and certificates of societal memberships in a prominent manner. Nice try, but I think most patients won't see the difference between the Society of Dermatologic Surgery and the American College of Surgeons.

California is one of only two states that bar hospitals from directly hiring physicians. This is why Permanente Medical Group is "separate" from Kaiser Hospitals and may provide an obstruction to a salaried physician model working in California. CMA has defended this bar for years, but there is ever more erosion. This year, legislation allows rural districts hospitals to hire physicians, but only with CMA-supported limitations seeking to prevent replacement of local docs.

Peer review as an educational tool is widely supported; however, examples of reviews that are something else surface and have triggered legislation that attempts to improve peer review--CMA supported.

Final Word About Quality

If the goal is to attract the best and brightest to our profession, attractive recompense is the answer. Without this, a dumbing-down is unavoidable. Preventive care can be reduced to computer algorithms that, at least theoretically, don't require a rocket scientist to operate. I see much of preventive care becoming the purview of mid-level providers or, worse, physicians who aren't much more learned. Bottom line: Talent comes at a price. While we may never be paid what we're worth, we can never accept a plumber's pay... and, please, I hold plumbers in high regard.

In closing, I'd remind you that the College efforts are constrained by our support. Latest data shows only 4% or so of fellows have donated to the Colleges' PAC. If you can't support CMA, the College is a good alternative. Time is not on our side

Football season is near.

Comments to dgaspard@iopener.net.

Donald J. Gaspard, MD, FACS
Delegate, California Medical Association

Young Surgeons Representatives' Report

The 2010 SCCACS Annual Meeting is shaping up to be of particular interest for local young surgeons. While the previous Young Surgeons' Breakfasts have been very successful and enlightening for the younger contingent, plans are underway to provide an even greater appeal to the resident and associate members of SCCACS, along with younger fellows attending the meeting.

This year's breakfast will be a full breakfast on Saturday morning, and all Chapter members under 45 years of age are invited and encouraged to attend. Speaking at the breakfast this year will be Charles Brunicardi, chairman of the Department of Surgery at Baylor College of Medicine and champion of resident education. Dr. Brunicardi will provide his insights on creating and maintaining balance between professional and private life, as well as finding ways to maximize professional productivity while achieving personal fulfillment outside of work.

Surgical Jeopardy

Back by popular demand, Surgical Jeopardy will return to the Annual Scientific Meeting in 2010. This year, residents from nine Southern California residency programs will compete for the annual trophy, as well as bragging rights in the battle of the brains. This year will mark the second year the competition will take place. This year's winners will enjoy their names listed on the Dowden Trophy, along with that of their residency program. Three preliminary rounds will pit three programs against one another, with the winner of each round advancing to final jeopardy for the tournament of champions.

Last year's competition was one of the highest-attended events of the Annual Scientific Meeting, and 2010 will be an all-inclusive opportunity for residents from each of our local programs to prove their worth. We will be contacting the program directors and residents of the various local programs to start encouraging them to attend the meeting and take part in this event.

2009 ACS Leadership Conference

Nationally, healthcare reform is currently taking shape in congress. This year, three local surgeons attended the 2009 ACS Leadership Conference. This annual event serves several purposes, including providing surgeons at the local level with a substantial experience with lobbying efforts undertaken by ACS, improving insights into healthcare policy, and assisting surgeons in meeting their representatives and expressing their concerns regarding

political changes that affect surgeons. Each of the local surgeons attended meetings in the offices of their respective representatives, and had the opportunity to convey their own issues, as well as those of the College to policy-makers.

Other highlights of the meeting included an insightful talk from Paul Begala, former advisor to President Clinton and now political commentator for CNN. He provided some insider insights as to how political policy evolves from idea to law.

In addition, Chapter officials attended political events on Capitol Hill and helped raise funds for the Political Action Committee of ACS, which helps support the political missions of the College. It was clear at the time of the meeting that healthcare reform was on the horizon, although details of such are only now emerging and taking shape. It appears that a national plan for universal health insurance will ultimately be the foundation of upcoming reform, with increased access via affordable plans and penalties to those that choose to go uninsured. In addition, a permanent fix to the threatened Medicare physician reimbursement cuts appears a likely key aspect of upcoming legislation. Regardless of the final product healthcare reform evolves to, ACS will continue to play a significant role in surgeon advocacy.

Young Surgeon's Travel Stipend

This year will mark the third year the Young Surgeon's Travel Stipend will be awarded on a competitive basis. The purpose of the stipend is to encourage young surgeons to participate in local Chapter and national College activities by providing a stipend (this year \$2,000) to be used at the discretion of the young surgeon over 18 months for meeting attendance. The only restrictions are that the stipend be used for meeting attendance expenses, that it be applied toward any meeting of the local Chapter or a national ACS meeting, and that the winners be present at the breakfast to receive the award. Three travel stipends will be awarded at the Young Surgeon's Breakfast in Santa Barbara for a total of \$6,000. Stipend applications are posted on the chapter's website at www.socalsurgeons.org/acs/pages/young.html. The deadline for submission is Monday, January 4, 2010.

We look forward to an outstanding attendance this year, and to seeing all of you in Santa Barbara in January.

*Talar Tejirian, MD
Brian R. Smith, MD*

SCCACS 2009 Young Surgeons Representatives

2010 Annual Scientific Meeting

Four Seasons Biltmore Resort
www.fourseasons.com/santabarbara
 1260 Channel Drive
 Santa Barbara, CA
 Jan. 22-24, 2010

Plans are under way for the 2010 Southern California Chapter ACS Annual Scientific Meeting, which will be held January 22-24, 2010 at the fantastic Four Seasons Resort, The Biltmore in Santa Barbara. The Program Committee — Chair O. Joe Hines, MD FACS; Associate Chair Vincent Rowe, MD, FACS, and Assistant Chair Ali Salim, MD FACS — are working to make this another educational and fun meeting.

Highlights of the Annual Scientific Meeting include:

Guest Faculty

Charles Brunicardi, MD, FACS

DeBakey/Bard Professor
 Chair, Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery
 Baylor College of Medicine
 Houston, TX

Michael R. Harrison, MD, FACS

Director Emeritus, Fetal Treatment Center
 Professor Emeritus of Clinical Surgery, Pediatrics,
 Obstetrics, Gynecology and
 Reproductive Sciences
 University of California
 San Francisco

Thomas E. Russell, MD, FACS

Executive Director
 American College of Surgeons
 Chicago, IL



*View from Four Seasons Resort
 The Biltmore*

Program Highlights

- * High-quality oral presentations of original papers
- * Expanded Southern California ACS Resident Jeopardy Contest
- * Young Surgeons' breakfast
- * Women in Surgery luncheon — Students, residents and practicing surgeons welcome
- * Poster session to run concurrently with Wine & Cheese Reception
- * What's New in Surgery topics: Pediatric Surgery, Complex Abdominal Wounds, Surgical Education, Surgical Critical Care, Vascular Surgery, Colorectal Surgery
- * Friday evening Cocktail Reception with hors d'oeuvres
- * Kids for All Seasons program for families with children ages 4-12.

Specialty Sessions and the Chairs:

- **Breast Surgery Chair:** Karen Lane, MD, FACS; UCI
- **Cardiothoracic Surgery Chair:** Craig Baker, MD, FACS, USC
- **Colorectal Surgery Chair:** David Etzioni, MD; USC
- **General Surgery Chair:** Ninh Nguyen, MD, FACS; UCI
- **Head & Neck Surgery Chair:** Vishad Nabili, MD; UCLA
- **Pediatric Surgery Chair:** Tamir Keshen, MD, FACS; Cottage Hospital
- **Plastic Surgery Chair:** Christopher Crisera, MD, FACS; UCLA
- **Trauma Surgery Chair:** Angela Neville, MD; Harbor-UCLA

We look forward to seeing you in Santa Barbara January 22-24, 2010. Sign on to www.socalsurgeons.org/acs for meeting registration and hotel reservation information. Early-bird discounted conference registration deadline is **Dec. 28, 2009**. The block of hotel rooms sells out early, so make your reservations right away (discounted rate cut-off is **Dec. 21, 2009**).

O. Joe Hines, MD, FACS
Program Chair

And, others to be announced for the General Meeting and Specialty Sections!

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Save The Dates!

2009 Annual Scientific Meeting
Four Seasons Resort, The Biltmore
Santa Barbara, CA
Jan. 22–24, 2010

Surgical Residents and medical students may register free of charge
