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## A Word from the AMSRO President

Anita Mantri

Dear new and returning AMSRO members,

I can't wait to see what the coming year brings for us!

The 2015 AsMA meeting in Orlando this past May had everything: astronauts, Disneyworld, new t-shirts, Mark Campbell! At the AMSRO general meeting, AsMA President Dr. Kris Belland spoke about how valuable students and residents are within AsMA as a whole and as its future. AMSRO's presence is definitely being acknowledged. So, thank you to everyone who came out to Orlando! Our members truly are the heart and soul of AMSRO and make the organization so successful. With amazing members like you, I'm sure that the best is yet to come for our organization. As a reminder, please renew your membership if you have not done so already.

A special thank you goes out to all of our new members who jumped in and became involved from the beginning. We are so glad to have you join. Also, thanks to our 2014-2015 officers for all the time and effort they have put in this past year. Angie, Heather, Dana, Joe, Rahul, and Craig, I am incredibly grateful for everything you have done. AMSRO wouldn't be where it is today without you!

Our first AMSRO meet-and-greet event was a huge hit and allowed new members to socialize with returning members, leaving us all more inspired and enthusiastic about aerospace medicine. We do have plans to continue this Monday night event for future meetings. If you have any photos from this event or any other parts of the AsMA meeting, please send them to [amsro.webmaster@gmail.com](mailto:amsro.webmaster@gmail.com) to be posted on our website.

In the coming year, we plan to implement our mentorship program. If you are interested in serving on the guidelines committee or becoming a mentor or mentee, please e-mail [amsro.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:amsro.treasurer@gmail.com) to get signed up. Additionally, we plan to increase our web and social media presence and further outreach efforts for aerospace medicine as a whole.

Please join our Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/Aerospacemed>), follow our Twitter handle (@RocketDocs), and feel free to contribute to the conversation. Furthermore, we always need submissions for our newsletter, the Orbiter. These articles can be reflective pieces about aerospace medicine, writings on your research, or even commentaries about particular experiences. Please e-mail articles to [amsro.orbiter@gmail.com](mailto:amsro.orbiter@gmail.com).

Lastly, what do you want to see from AMSRO in the coming year? Our organization has so much untapped potential! Please e-mail me at [amsro.president@gmail.com](mailto:amsro.president@gmail.com) with your ideas. I would love to hear from you! As always, if you ever have an idea, a comment, or a question for any of the AMSRO officers, please do not hesitate to contact us! We look forward to seeing everyone in Atlantic City!

Sincerely,  
Anita Mantri  
AMSRO President

## That Place Where You Belong

Brian Di Giacinto

Dan Berry is an astronaut who has flown on three separate missions and holds doctorates in both electrical engineering/computer science and medicine. He has made countless contributions to both bioastronautics and medicine. However, Dan Berry is not a well-known athlete, nor a famous celebrity actor (though he did appear in one season of Survivor). So dropping his name in everyday conversation tends to conjure up blank stares rather than a sense of communal understanding. As an aerospace enthusiast this was the type of response that I had grown accustomed to when initiating a conversation about most space-related topics.

That was before I discovered the Aerospace Medical Association<sup>1</sup> (AsMA) and its student branch, the Aerospace Medicine Student/Resident Organization (AMSRO). After joining AsMA and AMSRO I learned two things very quickly:

1. Everyone in AsMA is a social aerospace nerd. (I mean this with the deepest respect)
2. They all want you to feel welcome in the group.

To illustrate my first point, let me describe one of the time-honored traditions of the conference, the “RAM Bowl.” Residents in Aerospace Medicine form teams that go head-to-head in an aerospace medicine style Jeopardy contest to the “Ooh”s and “Aah”s of at least half the conference. The winning residency program gets bragging rights until the next year. Only at an AsMA conference would an academic competition about aviation, space, and medicine command the same respect as a major sporting event.

Other popular programs involved laughing at the scientific inaccuracies of aviation and space films, some of which were put on by AMSRO members like Tom Swaffield, and entertaining talks by Apollo astronauts. The majority of the conference was saturated with more technical talks, such as the technical design of crew cabins for future Mars missions, VIIP syndrome, and advances in deep-sea medicine. However, there are always talks and events for people that do not understand, or don’t enjoy, the more technical aspect of aerospace medicine.

Despite all of these programs, I ended up spending most of my time just talking to other AsMA members. It was so exciting to have a conversation with fellow aerospace enthusiasts that I often lost track of time in the exhibition halls and talked right through programs that I had planned to attend. For the first time, I could drop names like Neil deGrasse Tyson, Dan Barry, or Michael Barret and assume that people understood the reference. I could carry on conversations about VASIMR engines, solar sails, or the NASA 2030 Mars Objective. Instead of the blank stares and glossed over gazes that I had grown accustomed to, I was met with interest and understanding. I even got the opportunity to speak face to face with residents and fellows in aerospace medicine programs about their experiences in aerospace medicine and the opportunities that they had to work with flight surgeons.

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<sup>1</sup> Oh and for any new people, AsMA members almost always refer to the aerospace medical association by the acronym (AsMA) and pronounce it asthma. So rest assured that you are in the correct place and have not accidentally arrived at a conference for respiratory therapists.

The last reflection I want to make is about the members of AMSRO and how instrumental they were in shaping my experience at the 2015 AsMA scientific conference. I had only joined AMSRO a couple of months before the conference and I had no idea what to expect. I felt overwhelmed by the massive amount of activity at the conference and just being around so many of the people that I had previously seen as larger than life. After all, the conference is commonly attended by Apollo astronauts, aerospace scientists, engineers, and medical professionals, many of them experts in their respective fields. After getting to know other AMSRO members I realized how much I had in common with the other people attending this conference. AMSRO members also tend to meet up for social gatherings in the evenings. Having a small group of familiar faces to talk to at the end of the day made the experience feel much less foreign. The single most valuable piece of advice I would give to any new student attending the AsMA scientific conference for the first time is to get involved with your peers in AMSRO as early as possible and as often as possible.

Advice for first time conference attendees:

- 1. Get a room at the conference hotel:** I promise you that being at the center of the action is so much better than having to commute no matter how much you are saving on your room. There is just so much going on that I really regretted wasting time flipping between the conference venue and the hotel I was staying at.
- 2. Dress Code:** Unlike previous conferences that I have attended, the dress code is business formal. Most people wear suits & ties, military uniforms, or dresses. I felt fairly underdressed in dress pants and a button-down shirt.
- 3. Funding is Available:** So long as you apply early enough there is funding available to cover travel expenses for students.

*Brian Di Giacinto is an OMS-III at Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine Carolinas Campus.*

## Welcome, New Members!

AMSRO would like to extend a welcome to our new members!

Adil Ahmed  
Radil Bialczak  
Christopher Caroway  
Aaditya Chandrasekar  
Ilaria Cinelli  
Brian Di Giacinto  
Arthur Formanek  
Joanna Funk

Christopher Haas  
Samuel Iglesias  
Michael LaPelusa  
David Lerner  
Gilbert Melson III  
Veeshal Modi  
Thomas Painter  
Sultana Peffley

Sophia Petraki  
Katherine Pratte  
Katie Samoil  
Anthony Schiemer  
Nathan Skelley  
Monica Stewart  
Joelle Thorgrimson

## An Enlightening Experience

Anthony Schiemer

Attending my first AsMA scientific meeting was certainly an enlightening experience. Coming from Australia, where aerospace medicine is a small but emerging field, it was eye-opening to see the various world leaders in the field come together to share their knowledge and discuss recent advances (as well as have a few beers, swap war stories, and generally have a good time at Disney World).

As an Australian Navy doctor with an interest in aviation and space medicine, I am getting used to the quizzical looks from colleagues when I mention my particular interests in the aerospace field. Fortunately, AsMA meetings provide a unique opportunity to attend talks and get involved in discussions on a myriad of topics in the various aerospace medicine fields, from the long term effects of helicopter vibrations on military aircrew, through to discussions on inflatable habitats for long duration space missions. As well, the chance to meet heroes of the field, including Jo Kittinger and Story Musgrave, was also an incredible opportunity that allowed for bragging rights back home that persisted (much to the annoyance of my colleagues) for months on end.

Of particular interest to me was the work being conducted by young researchers from the world over. These talented young PhD students were delving into concepts that have applications across a variety of fields. Learning about visual scanning techniques for military pilots, through to the effectiveness of surgical drains in a microgravity environment, certainly reinvigorated in me a keenness to get involved and contribute to these particularly exciting developments.

As I write this, approaching the Malacca Strait in Australia's finest warship, I am reminded once again how grateful I am for the interesting opportunities that have arisen throughout the course of my career to date. AsMA, the events they run, and the wonderful people I have met on such occasions are certainly highlights I will not soon forget. I sincerely look forward to AsMA 2016 and catching up with old friends and making new ones in Atlantic City.

I would be remiss if I failed to point out just how thankful I am for the truly warm welcome received from the AMSRO crowd (Aerospace Medicine Students and Residents Organisation). Knowing very few people on arrival, I recall randomly chatting with a clutch of young people clustered around the King's College table that just happened to be most of the AMSRO executive, and a fine bunch of people all round. Particular thanks to Anita, Craig, Kseniya and Lisa for looking after me, making sure I didn't get lost too often and sharing a beer or two at the end of each day. The karaoke sessions are a story for another time, I think...

*Lieutenant Anthony Schiemer is a Medical Officer in the Royal Australian Navy, and currently serves aboard the HMAS Arunta.*



## Upcoming Opportunities

### **NASTAR CENTER SEEKS VOLUNTEERS**

The NASTAR Center is recruiting volunteers for a centrifuge trial. Interested volunteers must fill out a medical questionnaire to become registered. Volunteers selected to participate in the experiment are responsible for their own travel and lodging. See <http://www.utmbamc.com/research.cfm> for details.

### **AsMA PROMOTIONAL VIDEO**

AsMA is creating a promotional video that will include a photo montage featuring aerospace pros in their native environment (e.g. flying, clinic, deployed, in the labs, NASA, hyperbarics). If you have any photos to contribute to this, please e-mail them to [amsro.president@gmail.com](mailto:amsro.president@gmail.com).

### **AsMA CAREER DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

AsMA is creating an ad hoc committee aimed at furthering career development efforts. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please e-mail [amsro.president@gmail.com](mailto:amsro.president@gmail.com).

### **INTERNATIONAL SPACE UNIVERSITY**

ISU is hosting its 2016 Space Studies Program in Haifa, Israel from July 12 – September 1. A variety of scholarships are available and applications are accepted on a rolling basis. The Space Studies Program is an intense nine-week course for postgraduate students and professionals of all disciplines. The curriculum covers a range of fields including policy and law, business and management, life sciences, engineering, physical sciences, and space applications.

### **CURRENT AMSRO OFFICERS:**

President	Anita Mantri	<a href="mailto:amsro.president@gmail.com">amsro.president@gmail.com</a>
Vice President	Craig Kutz	<a href="mailto:amsro.vp@gmail.com">amsro.vp@gmail.com</a>
Secretary	Monica Stewart	<a href="mailto:amsro.secretary@gmail.com">amsro.secretary@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Kseniya Masterova	<a href="mailto:amsro.treasurer@gmail.com">amsro.treasurer@gmail.com</a>
Parliamentarian	Joe Butterfield	<a href="mailto:amsro.parliamentarian@gmail.com">amsro.parliamentarian@gmail.com</a>
Editor	Heather Panic	<a href="mailto:amsro.orbiter@gmail.com">amsro.orbiter@gmail.com</a>
Webmaster	Daniel Leiva	<a href="mailto:amsro.webmaster@gmail.com">amsro.webmaster@gmail.com</a>

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