

UVM Anesthesia News

A Newsletter From The University of Vermont Department of Anesthesiology

Volume 4 Issue 1

Spring 2009

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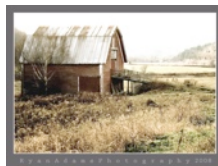
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Olga Torbin

Olga breezed into our lives from Russia via Baltimore and New Orleans. That alone is remarkable: a well-respected pediatric surgeon who emigrated from Perm, a city in the Ural Mountains, 800 miles east of Moscow. She came with her husband and young son, in search of freedom. Olga was so appreciative of her opportunities at UVM, and upon completion of her residency she proudly accepted an appointment as an Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology at UVM. She then went on to sub-specialize in pediatric anesthesiology.

Many of us knew that Olga was also using her talents to work with friends in France and Russia, to find adoptive homes for Russian orphans. However, it was not until her death (see page 4) that we realized the depth of her friendships and effectiveness across three continents, for she was soft spoken and never sought recognition. Over a hundred people attended the funeral of Olga and Ilya in their hometown of Perm. She is survived by her beloved niece, Svetlana Koroleva, and Svetlana's two children there.

Mitzi Garahan MD, San Diego CA

UVM College of Medicine 1991, FAHC Anesthesia Residency Class of 1995, Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology UVM 1996-2001



CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



Welcome to the UVM Anesthesia News, where Spring is arriving in Burlington. The skiers and snowboarders are thinking

about putting away their equipment or taking that last run of the season. This week, the grass is noticeably greener and the trees are budding.

It was a difficult winter for the department as we tried to comprehend the news of Dr. Olga Torbin's passing. For those who did not know her, take a moment to read "In Memorium" on page 4 as well as Dr. Garahan's comments on page 1. Olga was a remarkable woman. The department was able to come together in December for a service in celebration of her life. Organized by Jude Schofield, it was a moving event that gave comfort to those of us able to attend. Dr. Garahan, in testament to her friendship for Olga, flew cross country to be with us and express her feelings that day. Mark Hamlin's slide show & Shelagh Shapiro's poem "For Olga" were especially poignant. Kaila Merrill, Jude's daughter, recorded and sang "Amazing Grace". Her beautiful rendition left us all with tears in our eyes. On a personal note, and as I write this, a smile comes to my face when I think of Olga's feisty spirit and her remarkable competence as an anesthesiologist.

We have been quite busy in the department since our last newsletter. We received almost 400 applications for our residency, offered interviews to 95 applicants and interviewed approximately 70 medical students this past winter. Ultimately we ranked 65 students for six positions in the "Match". This is the first year we offered two of our six positions as categorical positions. Dr. Alison Fitzgerald from UVM and Dr. Brian Monroe from the Univ. of Illinois College of Medicine will be the first two categorical anesthesiology residents in our history.

We have been fortunate to be using an electronic anesthesia record for over a year now. The rest of the hospital will be going live on the inpatient side with an electronic medical record from the folks at EPIC. Locally this record is called PRISM and we have been busy learning how to use it and how to work between our anesthesia record and PRISM.

Finally, I look forward to welcoming three new physicians to our practice in July: Dr. Kathleen MacDonald (one of our former residents, completing a Regional/Acute Pain fellowship at Dartmouth), Dr. Patrick Bender (completing an Intensivist fellowship at Beth Israel), and Dr. Melissa Covington (completing a Chronic Pain fellowship at the Brigham). We will be collaborating with Gifford Hospital in Randolph,

Vermont where Dr. Bender and MacDonald will share a full-time position. They will work the rest of their time in Burlington.

I know you will enjoy reading this newsletter. Please feel free to contact me with your comments at howard.schapiro@vtmednet.org. Enjoy your summer.

Howard Schapiro MD

The Dinger Is Back

Although many attending anesthesiologists have left the UVM Department of Anesthesiology only to return a few years later, Michael Oberding has set what we believe to be a record - he recently rejoined our department after nine years with Adirondack Anesthesia Associates in Saranac Lake, NY. Welcome back Michael.



Michael Then



And Now

It Begins Again

New anesthesia residents and pain fellows are due to arrive July 1st. They are:

Residents

Emily Anderson MD
Willamette University - Chemistry & Spanish
UVM College of Medicine

Troy Finlayson MD
University of Utah - Applied Physics
University of Utah School of Medicine

Erin Flaherty MD
Carroll College - Biology
UVM College of Medicine

Thor Hallingbye MD
Univ of Wyoming - Electrical Engineering
University of Washington School of Medicine

Abel Luksan MD
Midland Lutheran College - Respiratory Therapy & Chadron State College - Biology
University of Nebraska Medical University

Steven Silvonek MD
William & Mary - Chemistry
Penn State Hershey College of Medicine

Categoricals (for 2010 Start)

Alison Fitzgerald MD

Bates College - Psychology & Boston College School of Education - M.Ed.

UVM College of Medicine

Brian Monroe MD

Mary Washington College - Biology
University of Illinois College of Medicine

Pain Fellows

Jason Holt MD

Univ of Arkansas College of Medicine
Residency: University of Arkansas

Jill Patzner MD

Univ of Wisconsin School of Medicine
Residency: University of Wisconsin

Jagjeet Singh MD

Saint George's University School of Medicine
Residency: Boston Medical Center

And It Ends Again

Leaving us soon are eight graduating residents and pain fellows:

Jessica Bland MD

Pediatric Anesthesiology Fellowship
Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville FL

Matthew Breckenridge MD

Portsmouth Naval Hospital, Portsmouth VA

Amanda Colgan MD

Stormont-Vail Health Care, Topeka, KA

Shaina Drummond MD

To be determined

Ithiel Fuller MD

Brattleboro Anesthesia Assoc, Brattleboro, VT

Jason Lewis MD

To be determined - Louisville, KY

Neal Saxe MD

Bellingham Anesthesia Assoc, Bellingham WA

Yukako Suzuki MD

To be determined

Michael Sutherland MD, who has worked for our department as a Clinical Instructor for the past year, will also be making the trek out west to Bellingham, WA with his family.

We feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with all these wonderful men and women, and wish them well wherever their paths may lead.



Dr. Chris Abajian enjoys his time off.



Is Anesthesia Neurotoxic In Young Children?

Is it possible that what we have always perceived to be an uncomplicated general anesthetic may cause developmental delay and other cognitive deficits in children years later? This is the premise behind controversial research emerging over the past few months. For a number of years, it has been generally accepted that administration of common anesthetic agents (both volatile and intravenous) impair the process of synaptogenesis in immature animals. When anesthetics are administered to rat pups and the animals later examined, convincing evidence of CNS degradation can be documented on a histological level. Behavioral tests on exposed rats indicate impaired learning, memory and other cognitive functions. However, the obvious question is whether there could be any translation to humans in the course of an ordinary general.

Recent epidemiological research performed in separate studies at Columbia and the Mayo Clinic has begun to hint at a link between surgery (and general anesthesia) at an early age and the subsequent development of learning disabilities and other cognitive deficits later in life. Although it is very early in the process and there are numerous confounders involved in this type of epidemiological research, it is disturbing that these associations are appearing in exactly the location that the animal data is pointing towards.

Could we really have missed a link between general anesthesia and developmental delay all these years? Needless to say, this data has caused quite a controversy in the lay press and a swift reaction from the anesthesia community. Because of our legacy of utilizing infant spinal anesthesia, UVM will be involved in exploring this issue. We have formed a partnership with the team from Columbia in pursuit of an NIH grant to compare the outcomes of children treated with spinal anesthesia at UVM and general anesthesia at Columbia. Remember all those infant spinal data sheets you have filled out for the past twenty years? They will play a key role as we look back and try to sort out this conundrum.

Rob Williams MD

Ryan Adams Photography

Ryan Adams MD is a UVM anesthesia resident who recently decided to turn his passion for photography into a web-based business: An Interview.

Ryan, how did you get interested in serious photography?

It started as a hobby, I guess. After learning what style works best for me and getting comments from friends about how much they liked my work, I joined some online forums and started getting similar feedback from strangers. So I thought that this was something that I could take a little further and began developing the website.

Do you have any background in art, photography, or design?

No, not really. In high school, I was into drawing and took a lot of art classes. That's about it.

Your work is very understated.

Yeah. A lot of people think digital photography is cheating, but a digital picture is meant to have some manipulation, post-processing it's called, done to it. The idea is to really fine-tune it to what you saw in nature. Some people take it further, adding trees, for instance, or light that wasn't there. I tend not to do that.

How much work is involved after a picture is taken, to get it where you want it?

The actual process can take many hours, depending on the picture, but part of that is due to my obsession to get it perfect.

What technology do you use?

I have a midlevel camera, a Canon XTi, and I use Photoshop CS3 and a program called Photomatix which allows me to blend different exposures. It's a complicated process.

Do you hope to make this a full time career?

Realistically, it's going to stay a serious hobby. Every time I shoot a successful photo, I think about how much I would love to do this for a living, traveling to other countries. That would be fantastic. But I'd have to sell an awful lot of pictures to make that happen.



Ryan's photos can be seen and purchased at:
<http://www.ryanadamsphotography.com>



A Place That People Go To Die: Mary Fletcher Hospital in 1900

UVM anesthesia history - part 5 of a series.

A century ago, Mary Fletcher Hospital was a much different institution than it is today. Once described by Dr. John Dodds, UVM's first anesthesia instructor, as "a place that people go to die," MFH was little more than a warehouse for the sick and indigent. It was bedeviled by obsolete facilities, ineffective infection control, and lack of money. MFH was, in other words, a typical American teaching hospital.

Statistics of the era are revealing. In 1900, 863 patients were admitted to MFH with an average length of stay of 24 days. The average cost of care per patient day was \$1.20. Even though many operations still took place in Vermont homes (to avoid dreaded hospitalization at all costs), a dozen MFH patients died of acute appendicitis.

MFH was also crippled by the inferior quality of some of its medical staff. In 1900, the requirements for admission to UVM College of Medicine were minimal. That year, the faculty (only one of whom was full-time) first asked applicants with less than a three-year high school education to take an entrance exam. A passing grade on the test wasn't required. Only 6% of the medical students held a college degree, by far the lowest rate of any New England school. Many UVM medical grads were functionally illiterate. A few years later, the Flexner Report recommended the closure of the school, stating "there is no good reason why (UVM) should be concerned with medicine at all." MFH and UVM responded. MFH began to upgrade its facilities, opening the Private Pavilion (later renamed Brown) and a new surgical building in 1908. UVM's Dean, Henry Tinkham, tightened medical school admission standards, revamped the curriculum, and hired four new full-time professors. The medical care of Vermonters began the long slow march toward respectability.

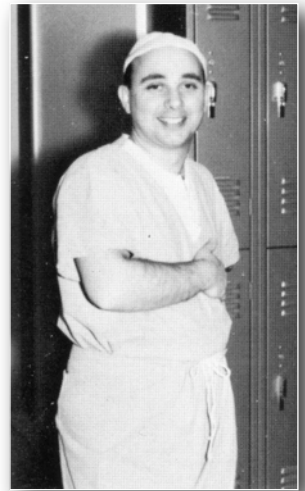
Next issue: The Mysterious Dr. "Francis" Ford, UVM's first anesthesiologist.

In Memorium

Olga Torbin MD died unexpectedly in Hollywood, FL on November 23rd, a victim of domestic violence. Her son, Ilya, was also tragically killed. Olga was born in Perm, Russia on March 6th, 1956 and received her MD degree from Perm State Medical School in 1979. After graduation, she joined the faculty there as a pediatric surgeon, where she worked for over a decade. In 1993, Olga immigrated to the USA, settling in Maryland with her family and studying for entrance into the American National Board system. She was accepted by the Tulane University anesthesiology residency program in 1998, transferred to UVM in 1999 and completed her training with a pediatric anesthesia fellowship at Children's Hospital in Boston in 2001. From July 2001 through October 2007, Olga was employed as a UVM attending anesthesiologist and assistant professor, specializing in the care of infants and children. She also organized and directed a program facilitating the adoption of Russian orphans. Olga was a beloved teacher, caring mother, and wonderful friend. She is greatly missed by all of us in her UVM Anesthesia family.



George Lucia Jr. MD, an attending in the UVM Division of Anesthesiology from 1962 until 1968, died March 7th from complications of a 2004 traumatic head injury, the result of a freak ice skating accident. Born in Plattsburgh, NY on Nov. 11, 1932, George attended St. Michaels College and McGill University College of Medicine prior to his 1960 to 1962 UVM anesthesia residency. After leaving Vermont, he worked at Madison General Hospital in Madison, WI until 1983, then relocated to Alice Hyde Hospital in Malone, NY where he served as Chief of Anesthesia until his retirement in 1994. George is survived by his ex-wife Sheelah and children Beverley, George III, David, Karen, and Michael. Donations in his memory, to support developmentally disabled athletes, may be sent to the Montgomery Cheetahs Hockey Club, c/o Sean Twombly, 8232 Inverness Hallow Terrace, Potomac, MD 20854.



Upcoming Events

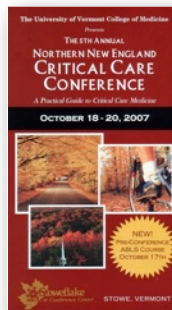
UVM Anesthesia Resident/Fellow Class of 2009 Graduation Dinner
6PM, June 10th, 2009, Burlington Country Club, Burlington, VT

4th Annual Mazuzan-Abajian Classic Golf Tournament
A fundraiser for the UVM Department Of Anesthesiology Johns' Fund
1PM, June 20th, 2009, The Links at Lang Farm, Essex Junction, VT
Contact: Mitchell Tsai MD at mitchell.tsai@vtmednet.org for details.

UVM Department of Anesthesiology Annual Summer Picnic
1:30PM, July 11th, 2009, The Schapiro Residence, South Hero, VT
All current and former members of the department are invited.
RSVP to: Kellie Dutra at kellie.dutra@vtmednet.org.

7th Annual Northern New England Critical Care Conference
October 22 - 24, 2009, Stoweflake Resort & Conference Center, Stowe, VT
Contact: Mark Hamlin MD at mark.hamlin@vtmednet.org for details, or visit <http://cme.uvm.edu>.

Tax-deductible contributions to The Johns' Fund (named in honor of former UVM Anesthesia Chairmen John Abajian, Jr. MD and John Mazuzan, Jr. MD) and the UVM Anesthesia Research & Development Fund are welcome and should be directed to Howard Schapiro MD, Chair - UVM Dept. of Anesthesiology, Fletcher Allen Health Care, 111 Colchester Avenue, Burlington, VT 05401.



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