

From the President

These Are the Times That Try Physicians' Souls

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On Oct 2, 2021, I became president of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons. It is quite an honor for me, as I have many pairs of big shoes to fill.

While it seems an unlikely course of events that this honor and task would fall to me, we've seen some strange things happen lately. Shakespeare wrote in *The Tempest* in 1610, "Alas, the storm is come again! My best way is to creep under his gaberdine; there is no other shelter hereabouts: misery acquaints a man with strange bed-fellows." Perhaps it is the storm that approaches and swirls about us, and Liberty herself that throws AAPS into the position where this most unlikely of humans would be at its lead.

I had the great blessing of being born and raised in central Illinois; thus, it is NOT a "grilled cheese sandwich," but a "cheese toastie." When visiting my sister in the state's capital city, I still want to find the best horseshoe sandwich in all of Springfield, Illinois. Like a good girl, I attended the University of Illinois in Urbana, where the undergraduate library was built underground so that no shadows would be cast over Morrow Plots, the oldest experimental corn field in the U.S. By thy rivers gently flowing, Illinois, Illinois. It was where I was married, where my children were born and educated, where I attended medical school and residency, and where I served my first four years as a family physician.

Then my husband and I made the best decision of our lives when, in 2006, we moved to the great State of Missouri. Even better, we moved into the heart of the Missouri Ozarks. Once when my sister and I took the Southwest Chief, the Amtrak train that runs between Chicago and Los Angeles, upon learning where I lived and owned a stamp-sized amount of acreage, our sleeping-car attendant declared to me, "You are rich!" If you've ever had the opportunity to visit the Ozarks, you may understand her sentiment.

But Missouri is not called the "Show Me State" for nothing. While we may be nearly last in the nation to get the latest styles and fads and the latest technology, there are many aspects that make me glad to live here. We were the last in the nation to adopt a PDMP (Prescription Drug Monitoring Program). While I'm sorry it did just pass here this year, our ability to hold it off for years was something of which I was proud.

My State is flanked by two large cities—Kansas City on the west, St. Louis on the east, but most of our State is rural and small town/small city. Right in the center of the state is the beautiful Lake of the Ozarks, where I've had the privilege to own and operate a direct primary care practice for nearly nine years. This is the same Lake of the Ozarks (abbreviated by many as LOTO but known affectionately as the "Magic Dragon" due to its shape) where the scandalous maskless-lack-of-social-distancing-private pool party was reported nationally on Memorial Day weekend of 2020.

LOTO relies largely on tourism, and brags that it was voted Best Recreational Lake in the US by readers of *USA Today*. It was going to take a lot more than a little "pandemic" to halt tourism

here. Previously averaging 5.4 million visitors every year, the number surged to more than 10 million after that great advertisement, and this year the lake expects to top 12 million visitors, some of whom visit and then decide to stay.

Though tucked away in the heart of the U.S., and distracted running a busy, direct-pay private family practice with two locations (all clinical, no hospital), I have been not immune to the issues facing Hippocratic physicians throughout not only the country but the world. At liberty to dispense non-controlled medications from my office, I have at least not faced the prescribing issues many of my colleagues have experienced.

AAPS has been of tremendous help to physicians, collecting good studies and providing a common ground for the like-minded, i.e., physicians who do not allow themselves to be spoon-fed propaganda, but who rather seek the truth. I have heard from many local physicians who sense that there is something just not right about what is happening in what I call mainstream medicine. Now many of my colleagues find themselves at a crossroad, feeling alone and confused. Do they sell their very souls for the sake of pursuing their American Dream, or do they follow what their heart is telling them?

Immediately after Dr. Paul Kempen transferred to me the title of president of this great organization, my first task was to provide closing comments at our 78th Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh, Pa. Speakers like Dr. Robert Malone, Dr. Li-Meng Yan, and Dr. Peter McCullough were very hard acts to follow, but I attempted to express my conviction with the words of Thomas Paine, in *The Crisis No. 1*, in 1776:

These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.

Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.

What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated.

In that December of the year of our declared independence from monarchy, things were not going well for our fledgling confederation of states. We were fighting a formidable enemy with the world's largest navy, and a superior army that outnumbered and outgunned ours. We also had enemies within, British monarchy loyalists who worked against us at every turn.

As our souls were tried then, so are physicians' souls tried now. Physicians who take their Hippocratic Oath seriously must now search through piles of junk to find good studies, good information, that which has not been colored by political or financial gains. They must look to old therapies, ancient treatments, and what we have on hand, that which is provided to us by Providence.

Tyranny, like hell, whether from the hand of federal, state, or local governmental agencies, hospital administration, or propagandists, is not easily conquered. In the same year Thomas Paine was writing his words, Benjamin Franklin is reported to have said, "We must, indeed, all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately."

There has never been a more important time for like-minded physicians, nurses, and other medical caregivers to "hang together." We Hippocratic physicians face an equally formidable enemy as the American colonists faced. The conflict will be hard, and is only just starting. We risk being marginalized. We risk loss of income and security. We may risk censorship, and even licensure discipline. Yet we cannot afford to stand quietly by as our great field of medical science and art is choking on lies, manipulation, and propaganda. On our side is the consolation that the harder we fight, the more glorious is our triumph. We will triumph. Because failure is not an option.

Winston Churchill once gave a beautiful speech, wherein he urged his countrymen: "Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in, except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force. Never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy." The harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.

What we obtain too cheap—from the "easy A" to free medical care—we esteem too lightly. Unless we give of ourselves, unless something requires time, effort, hard-earned income, or something we worked hard to produce, we find it empty and unrewarding. While I might refer to the wall in my office where hang my diplomas, certificates, and licenses as "the wall of shame," I hang them there because they were not cheaply obtained. Churchill might have said they represent my blood, toil, tears, and sweat, so I only jest when I downplay what that wall displays. It is dearness only that gives everything its value.

The freedom to counsel, treat, and prescribe to my patient is threatened by the enemy. The freedom to travel, to enter a place

of worship or commerce, to visit my loved ones is challenged by ignorance and blind subservience to a false authority. The Author of our very lives bestows the rights of life, liberty, and personal property; Heaven knows how to put a proper price on its goods. And it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated.

The Association of American Physicians and Surgeons is the *only* physician organization to stand, like the lone man before the tank in Tiananmen Square, fighting back against tyranny, fighting against a tyrannical system that would tell every physician *how* they may diagnose and treat, with *what* they may treat, *whom* they may treat, and that if they resist, they will be silenced and emasculated.

AAPS has stepped up, through the expert counsel of Andy Schlafly, through the support of Dr. Larry Huntoon's expertise in sham peer review, through the excellent writings of our executive director Dr. Jane Orient, through the meticulous research of our business office manager Jeremy Snavelly. AAPS past presidents such as Dr. Marilyn Singleton continue to write excellent commentaries, and Dr. Craig Wax has stretched his neck out via radio. At our Annual Meeting you have heard from excellent teachers and speakers, who want to help you fight the good fight, who want you to take home information and use it, to better help your patients.

This is what AAPS is all about—your patients. Our patients. "All for the Patient" is not just a slogan, something that fits on a T-shirt (though it is a great motto, and it does fit on a T-shirt). Everything always comes back to the question: how does this better me to better serve my patient?

Originally, I wanted to give this Annual Meeting the theme of *Les Misérables*. But I think *Atlas Shrugged* may have been a better idea. Who is 24601? Or, better yet, Who is John Galt?

As one voice, we should reply, WE ARE.

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