

- **More perioperative care and management.** With the changes above, anesthesiologists will have an expanded role in the care and management of many hospitalized patients. To provide sufficient experience in managing complex medical problems, the internship year will be more tightly structured, with required exposure to primary medical and pediatric problems. Traditional transitional year programs already are developing anesthesia-specific internship tracks.

Our department is well positioned to meet these new requirements. We are blessed with terrific young physicians who enter our residency program. As always, we will provide them with the experiences that position them to be great clinicians and contributors to the future of our specialty. Our alumni provide great examples of the bounty reaped by combining good training with dedication to patient care and service to medicine and our communities.

Thank you for representing Mayo Clinic and our department so well.

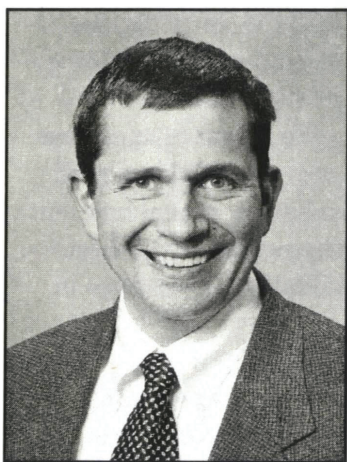
## Editor's Note

**Peter Southorn, M.D.**

I hope you enjoy this issue of the newsletter. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to it. Responding to your suggestions, this issue for the first time prints some of the letters you have sent in. Please stay in contact.

## How Old is the Mayo Department of Anesthesiology?

**Douglas Bacon, M.D.**



*Douglas Bacon, M.D.*

Every birthday, the question "How old are you?" is asked. Depending on which birthday it is, the answer is either said with pride or the question is discretely deflected. In the last edition of this alumni newsletter, Mark Warner suggested, following common assumptions, that the department is eighty years old. In this view, the department started with John Silas Lundy's arrival. What evidence is there to back up this claim? Is there anything to suggest that the department may even be older?

The *Record of the Administrative Board of the Mayo Clinic* is a compilation of the available minutes of the Board of Governors from the inception of the group. On February 6, 1924, the minutes record that a telegram was read

from William J. Mayo. The contents of that message were "Mayo Clinic, Attention Mayo, Judd, Balfour, Dr. John S. Lundy, classmate of Dr. Walter specializing in Anesthesia 318 Cobb Building, Seattle. I believe he is just the man for the head of anesthesia. Start at five thousand. Shall send him to talk it over at our expense. Wire me Western Union Tacoma (signed) W.J. Mayo." The minutes further record that after some discussion Dr. Lundy was appointed "as head of the Department of Anesthesia at a salary of \$5000 per year".

At first blush it appears that Dr. Warner was indeed correct about the date the department was founded. Yet, reading a few previous pages in the *Record* brought the date into question. On February 23, 1921, the following statement appeared in the minutes. "After discussion, it was decided that an effort be made to secure a young man to take charge of

anesthesia in the Clinic: to bring him in first for thorough training under Dr. Labat in local anesthesia, gradually taking over the entire subject, and at some future time, assuming management of that department." Does this mean that there was an anesthesia department in 1921 that needed to be 'taken over'?

Several months later, a similar statement appears in the pages of the *Record*. On May 18, 1921, it was recorded that "The question of finding someone to study local anesthesia under Dr. Labat and eventually take charge of the Department of Anesthesia in the Clinic was discussed." Thus, it would appear that in 1921 there was a department, and Labat was the chair. It is also important to note that the modern organization of the Clinic and the modern meaning of "department" did not exist in the 1920s. Rather, care was organized in clinical divisions around senior clinicians, but the same can be said of many modern administrative structures. However, the minutes reflect that an effort was being made to separate out anesthesia, and this begs the questions when was the "department" created?

Unfortunately, as often happens in history, the *Record* does not contain any minutes of meetings for 1920, the year Gaston Labat was appointed to the staff. He arrived on September 29, 1920, and left for Bellevue

Hospital on October 1, 1921. William Meeker took over from Labat, and trained Lundy in regional anesthetic techniques when Lundy arrived from Seattle. Interestingly, a letter from Labat to Lundy survives in the Mayo Foundation Archives. Labat wrote on March 5, 1927, "Under separate cover, I am sending you the available reprints I have of the articles written in recent years". Lundy's response, a carbon copy of which exists in the archive is dated March 11, 1927. Lundy wrote, "I thank you very much for your kindness in sending me your reprints. I am preserving yours and Dr. Meeker's so that the early history of the Department of Anesthesia of the Mayo Clinic will not be too meager as time goes on."

In the end, we are left with the question which began the essay—How old is the Mayo Department of Anesthesiology? Looking at all the available data, it appears that Dr. Lundy believed the department was founded when Gaston Labat arrived at Mayo in September of 1920, and the available minutes of the Administrative Board support this assumption. Thus, I believe that this department is celebrating its eighty-fourth birthday in September 2004. Of perhaps broader interest, that date makes our group the oldest department of anesthesiology in the world!

## Reflections on 14 Years at Mayo

**Glenn Fromme, M.D.**

**Anesthesiologist, Springfield, Missouri**

How fast time flies. It's been 14 years since I left Rochester, and 14 years prior to that I had arrived, fresh out of the University of Wisconsin Medical School, not lacking in confidence but recognizing I had a lot to learn. Despite this being over half my life ago, I remember it like it was yesterday. It was without a doubt the most important time of my life. I had only visited five residencies the previous fall and felt all along the University of Wisconsin would be my first choice, and I, maybe naively, thought I would be ranked

high enough there that the others were "just in case". Mayo was our first stop on a four-day, three-stop interview road trip, and I remember spending the majority of my time with John Tinker and Alan Sessler. John was always the sort of guy who could sell ice cubes to an Eskimo, and of course, he made Mayo sound like "the Promised Land". I can still remember Alan Sessler asking me what I expected out of a residency program to which I replied "I want to go someplace where I'll be exposed to all aspects of anesthesia and feel competent and