

## Memories of Arlington

Welcome to 2003 and all the adventures this year holds in store. I have a feeling this is going to be one of the most interesting years in the profession's history. Before moving on completely to 2003, I would like to share with you my experiences at the American Association of Oriental Medicine's (AAOM) most recent annual meeting in Arlington, Virginia. The seminar was a wondrous mixture of ideas, people and associations.

Earlier this year, the AAOM and the Acupuncture Alliance entered into a Memorandum of Understanding, whereby they agreed to work on various projects together. That memorandum marked the first step in building a solid foundation for the acupuncture profession. A second step was taken at the AAOM's meeting, with an open session on ethics and professional issues that was attended by elected leaders from both associations.

Sherman Cohen, Esq., a law professor at Georgetown University Law School, has been a longtime supporter of acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). Sherman and Ann Bailey, LAc, from Hollywood, California, have worked together with the Alliance's Ethics Committee to draft a model code of ethics. This group was established three years ago. At that time, sessions on ethics were held at the Alliance's annual meeting. During these sessions, issues regarding ethics; risk management; sexual impropriety; and patient management were discussed during panel presentations. I feel honored to have been part of these panels.

The product that has come from these sessions was presented at this year's AAOM meeting. Each item was discussed at the open session, and a consensus was reached. It was a very impressive meeting of professionals, and I was lucky enough to witness a piece of history being made.

The final document from the open session is currently in the revision process, with the next step being input from the profession at large. In future issues of *Acupuncture Today*, we will bring you information about this process and update you on the code of ethics' progress.

You may ask why our profession needs a model code of ethics. There are a variety of reasons. This profession is growing rapidly, and state boards are working hard to create and enforce laws and regulations. A document created by the profession can be a vital aid to regulatory bodies, and their responsibilities in this field of health care.

There are other reasons. All other health care professionals - medical doctors, chiropractors, nurses, etc. - have a code of ethics already in place. Having an ethical position paper is yet another step in the maturity of TCM in America, and I am proud to support it.

Another memorable experience of the AAOM's meeting was an "Acupuncture Legislation Day" at the U.S. Capitol. A group of practitioners and I met early during the weekend the meeting was held, and discussed who to visit on Capitol Hill. We were each given a collection of material to share with members of Congress. We lobbied for HR 747, a bill authored by Representative Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), which calls for the inclusion of acupuncture into the Medicare program. This issue is going to be increasingly important, as Baby Boomers are big supporters of TCM.

I went to the Hill and lobbied a congressman from San Diego, California. He was very receptive to the bill. He asked about its physical impact and who else had already signed on to support it.

Walking through the halls of Congress instills a feeling of great excitement for the process of democracy we enjoy - an environment that gives people the right to choose the health care they want to utilize. I want to thank the AAOM for giving our profession the opportunity to present itself to the country's legislative leaders. Efforts like these will go a long way toward getting acupuncture and Oriental medicine in the minds of our elected officials.

Yet another memorable experience that occurred at the AAOM meeting was a dinner for the college presidents and representatives, held in a venue overlooking the lights of Washington, D.C. Representatives from the schools and the profession met together in a social event. I always enjoy meetings like this, because it allows me to make new acquaintances while reconnecting with old friends.

I want to thank the American Association of Oriental Medicine for its recognition of *Acupuncture Today* and its continued support and sharing of information. I wish nothing but the best for their new leadership, and I look forward to working with them in the future. I also encourage the other organizations, associations and individual practitioners that make up our profession to continue to work together for the common good. Together, we really can make a difference.

Here's to making 2003 the best year ever!

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