Meet Our Advisors

Michael Davies is the President and Publisher of Davies Publishing Inc. Mike has been involved in publishing, education, and continuing medical education for most of his adult life. Before launching this company in 1981, Mike held editorial positions with Springer-Verlag (Heidelberg) and Houghton Mifflin Co. (Los Angeles), served as a member of the Committees on Postgraduate Medical Education and Postgraduate Medical Publications at the UCLA School of Medicine, and pioneered the wide distribution and availability of AMA-approved CME activities through books and periodicals. Mike also has taught at UC Riverside, California State University San Bernardino, and University of New Mexico. He is a member of SDMS, SVU, and AIUM. One of Mike's many authors, Bart Bean, summed it up best: “I've known Mike professionally for over 20 years. He is friendly, professional, helpful and considerate of authors and their “problems”. He has a great sense of humor and whenever we talk there seems to be laughter involved. He will be an asset wherever he is.”

Welcome aboard, Mike!

New Officers

New officers were elected at the February board of directors meeting. Officer terms are one year. The new president is Salvatore LaRusso M.Ed, RDMS. The Vice President is Sue Blenzonelli-Blanchard BS, RDMS, RDCS and the Treasurer is Darla Matthew, RDMS. The new Secretary is Susan Raatz Stephenson, Ma.Ed, RDMS, RVT. Congratulations to all the new officers and a big thank you to Salvatore LaRusso and Carolyn Coffin for all the hard work they did as the former Treasurer and President!

Donations

Like many organizations, we rely heavily on personal contributions large and small, to survive. We are a registered non-profit 501(c)3, so your contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. If you’d like to support our organization and see projects like those listed in this newsletter continue, please visit our website www.ifser.org/donate or send an email to danderson@ifser.org for more information on donation options.

Donate
The International Foundation For Sonography Education and Research is dedicated to improving access to quality education and information for the global sonographic community.

The mission of the International Foundation for Sonography Education and Research (IFSER) is to make a positive contribution to the global sonographic community through high quality grant programs and educational products. By offering assistance to all who practice the science of ultrasound worldwide or who are engaged in ultrasound research, we can elevate the profession and advance the practice of this valuable medical technology to all in need. The sonographers we profile personify our mission statement.

**Halo For Rent: The Lonnie Hlusko Story**

Lonnie learned her ultrasound in the 70s, that era when a technologist was given an instruction manual, an unfamiliar piece of equipment, and told by her radiologist, to learn how to use it. She was fortunate to have the mentoring of ultrasound luminary, Dr. Atis Freimanis. She grew with the field and through a combination of intellectual curiosity and persistence she was able to successfully pass her registry exams (both didactic and clinical!) when the ARDMS was in its infancy. Like many of us, she marveled at what ultrasound could do to better the lives of her patients and how rapidly the technology and clinical applications grew.

In the late 80s, now a resident of Denver, Colorado and a newly “single” mother, she returned to the field, to work with Reproductive Endocrinologist, Dr. Ray Gottesfeld... and, in the process became a skilled infertility specialist. Life was good, and by the late 90s, she was inspired to join her colleague, ichard J. Worley MD, as a member of Trips with a Mission, bound for Nepal. Her first visit there consisted of helping at health camps conducted at schools in the capital city of Kathmandu, as well as in rural villages. She was eager to use her knowledge of radiology and ultrasound there, only to find there were no machines to be had. Instead, she found herself commandeered by one of the team dentists to pull teeth! Inexperienced, but undaunted, she successfully completed 200 extractions and in the process, fell under the spell of the Nepalese people. “It’s a magical place”, she told me.

Nepal! The very word conjures up visions of mountain climbers struggling up icy, cloud piercing mountains at the “top of the world”. But, to Lonnie Hlusko, Nepal means many more “down to earth” things, because Lonnie has discovered the people of Nepal - the villagers in remote areas without roads, telephones, electricity and all the things we take for granted. How, you may wonder has a sonographer from Ohio and points west, came to have first-hand knowledge of them?
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Returning with the group a year later, she was assigned to the OB-Gyn Women’s Health team – but, once again - without any ultrasound machines. It was during an unplanned visit to the remote village of Phaplu, home to Mt. Everest and the Sherpas, that Fate stepped in and she met Dr, Mingmar Sherpa at a small village hospital. Dr. Mingmar possessed an ultrasound machine and asked her to guide him in its use. She spent three days observing his work at the hospital then, teaching him how to get the most from the unit and how to apply the scanning techniques she taught him (Dr. Mingmar) quickly became the ‘resident expert’ in ultrasound and asked her to return every year to join him in holding clinics in remote villages. Phaplu is accessible only by several days walk or a short flight from Kathmandu. There are no roads, motorized vehicles or even bikes. People are poor but appear to live better than their urban counterparts. Still there is little to no electricity beyond Phaplu, and most live in small, dark houses heated by the wood fires they also use for cooking. As many as half the population is illiterate and life spans are short. Lonnie saw how sturdy and determined the Nepalese people are – not just the mountain guides - but also the pregnant women and mothers with children, who would walk for days to reach medical care.
On this trip, the group was initially scheduled to go to Tibet, but a political uprising forced a change of plans. Instead, they went to an outlying Sherpa village, Phaplu, where the first of many friendships would take root. Lonnie visited her patients in their homes and gained first-hand knowledge of what their lives were like. Staying with Dr. Mingmar’s Sherpa family was a precious time for her. One of her fondest memories is meeting and teaching Bibek Lal, a brilliant Nepali physician who eventually got a scholarship to Johns Hopkins and earned a Master’s Degree in global health. They developed a deep friendship and to this day, stay in touch often. She felt honored to attend his graduation and proud to share his happiness.

Lonnie witnessed how the culture of Nepal regarding women could be even more inhospitable than the brutal winter weather. In one instance, a man brought his tiny, pregnant wife who had been in labor for two days. He was very concerned, because their previous baby had died during delivery. Her ultrasound study revealed an 8 to 9 pound fetus in breech presentation. Clearly she needed a C-section, but the husband’s parents would have to make that decision, because when a woman marries she becomes the property of her husband’s family. The problem was compounded by the fact that they lived 2-days journey away. Though it was against protocol, Lonnie “mentioned” that the baby was a male. The C-section was performed the next morning and Lonnie was happy and relieved to hold their new son.

The women she has visited have rewarded her with their gratitude and kindness for the concern and care she shows them. It was something they were unaccustomed to, since women are considered “replaceable”. During those home visits she got to meet their husbands, children, parents, aunts and uncles, as well as their goats and chickens. In getting to know them, she shared their problems, joys and aspirations. On one of her first solo trips to Phaplu, she and Dr. Mingmar saw 600 patients in four days.

Lonnie quickly understood that in order for the level of care to continue when she returned home, it would be necessary to teach the local nurses how to scan. Her first impromptu attempts were limited to hands-on scanning with a first class of 4 nurses. In following years the classes would become more formal, but they would still cover basic OB-GYN, with a smidgeon of physics. The sessions would be expanded to classroom in the mornings and hands-on scanning in the afternoons.
Realizing that she had found a very special calling, in 2001 Lonnie founded Hands for Humanity, Inc. to help bring ultrasound to the rural areas of the world. Any spare time away from work and her children was devoted to making presentations at churches, social groups and schools. She began collecting books, supplies, equipment and anything else she could cram into her suitcases. Those same suitcases would return, filled with art and crafts made the Nepali women, which she would sell to help fund Hands for Humanity, Inc.

In 2003, Lonnie went to work for SonoSite, Inc. as a clinical application specialist. The portable ultrasound unit that SonoSite had developed was heaven-sent for work in the slowly developing countries of the world. She was eager to learn and to work hard and quietly held hopes that this position might open doors to organizations and people who might be interested in aiding Hands for Humanity, Inc. Within two years, she made contact with Stan Brock a member of Remote Area Medical Care (RAM). This meeting resulted in RAM and the University of Virginia sponsoring Lonnie and Dr. Becky Kightlinger’s trip to Guyana, where Stan Brock would fly them to many of the remote villages of the Rupanuni.

Her trips to Nepal had settled into a two-year pattern, because that was how long it took her to save enough money to pay for her humanitarian missions. By 2007, she was preparing for another trip to Nepal and wondering about the possibility of having to cancel because of lack of funds. A very real set-back loomed when learned that Dr. Mingma’s ultrasound machine was no longer working. She approached Ann Bugge, a SonoSite Vice President and told her of the dilemma. Ms. Bugge and Dr. Gordon Perkin of Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest (PPGNW) collaborated in working out a solution. Sponsored by PPGNW, she returned to Phaplu carrying a MMX unit provided by SonoSite. Together, Dr. Mingmar and Lonnie scanned over 300 women, during a four day medical camp.

At the end of each day they would discuss the need for and possibility of teaching nurses in the future. So successful was this trip that PPGNW agreed to sponsor another trip to Phaplu! This time she took with her a SonoSite 180 donated by SonoSite, Inc. She held her first formal classes with two of the local nurses, and despite the language differences, those students worked hard and accomplished enough so that she left Nepal with a new level of confidence.

In April of 2008, Dr. Mingmar was brought to the USA by SonoSite, Inc. and PPGNW. At San Francisco’s Highland Hospital, they were invited by Dr. Dan Price, to observe the use of ultrasound in a busy trauma center. Dr. Mingmar, Lonnie, Chris Cluett (PPGNW) and Gordon Perkin (PATH), spent many hours together as they joined Dr. Mingmar in a succession of meetings. It was at Highland Hospital’s busy ER that she met Dr. Mary Beth Johnson. They shared their medical mission experiences and discussed Lonnie’s plans for educating the nurses in Nepal. And then, Lonnie began to share her aspirations for Hands for Humanity, Inc.

After San Francisco, they all went on to Seattle to attend a PATH tour hosted by Dr. Gordon Perkin. The Program for Appropriate Technology in Health, or PATH, is an international, non-profit organization that creates sustainable, culturally relevant solutions to enable communities worldwide to break longstanding cycles of poor health. Formed by Richard Mahoney and Gordon Perkin in the mid-1970s, PATH bridges public health agencies and private industry to make sure couples around the world have access to the modern forms of pregnancy prevention.
The two-year cycle was finally broken, and four months later Lonnie was Nepal-bound once again, this time accompanied by Dr. Mary Beth Johnson and Gina Kelly a fellow SonoSite colleague. They inaugurated the Village Ultrasound Project – Class of 2008, providing 3-weeks of formal classroom and hands-on training sessions for their ten students!

SonoSite Inc. provided Lonnie and Gina’s expenses and PPGNW funded Dr. Johnson. Over 300 women lined up for ultrasound scans over the 6-day period. Women finding out that they are likely to have a difficult birth were advised to walk to the hospital (for some a trip of several days) to give birth there rather than in their rural villages. Suzanne’s Shelter would answer that need, as many women would be there for days waiting with family or neighbors to give birth or to have a C-Section. The Village Ultrasound Project proved to be so valuable that the following September, Lonnie presented a 2-weeks session to four students – the Class of 2009. Michelle Saylor, a sonographer and sales rep for SonoSite, along with Chris Cluett (PPGNW) trekked to distant villages with Pema Sherpa (a nurse from the training in 2007), to see the results in the field.

What is amazing about all that Lonnie Hlusko is accomplishing is the fact that 6 months after joining SonoSite, Inc. she developed Multiple Sclerosis, yet managed to continue working for 7 years before retiring with disability. Lonnie is fond of saying that while she may have MS, MS doesn’t have her!

It’s just one more example of her indomitable inner strength. When asked how she manages to do all that she does, she said that she’s energized by seeing the babies she has scanned and the lives of women she has helped to change for the better. She becomes the voice of women who are voiceless. She feels that she’s empowering the local nurses by giving them a powerful tool that they could never have dreamed of. They tell her often how wonderful their new “video x-ray” is, and she can see the level of confidence they have attained. However, Lonnie is also a realist who understands that the challenges are overwhelming and that what she does is only the proverbial drop in the bucket. What drives her is the belief that if you help only one person live a better life – that’s what you’re supposed to do. She feels that she’s been given a gift and now bears the responsibility of giving it to others by sharing her story to encourage them and continuing to contributing in every way that she can to the improvement of global health.

Another Village Ultrasound Project is scheduled for March. Plans call for a 3-week class for 12 to 14 physicians and nurse mid-wives from rural health posts, who will be instructed on how to use the SonoSite MMX and how to perform basic OB-Gyn ultrasound studies. Once again, SonoSite is providing Lonnie’s travel expenses to Nepal, the support of Clinical Specialist, Alka Saini – from India for one week of hands on training, and a laptop computer for record keeping in Nepal.
PPGNW, Suzanne's Fund is providing travel for Mary Beth Johnson MD and additional educational supply expenses. Mobisanti Ultrasound – is providing $5,000 toward the travel expenses for 3 resident physicians from Mary Beth's program at University of California San Diego. Lonnie is concerned for the first time about making this trip, because physically, it will wipe her out. Yet she continues pushing and prodding within her means, optimistically believing that something will happen!

Conclusion
It is estimated that there are 700 maternal deaths for every 100,000 births in Nepal, compared to 7 maternal deaths per 100,000 births in the US. Through the hard work and dedication of Dr. Mingmar Sherpa and Lonnie Hlusko, and the generous support of people in the commercial sector and Hands for Humanity, Inc., Phaplu is now a district hospital. Plans for trips into Indonesia, Uganda and Bangladesh are on the horizon. Still there is such need....

Marveen Craig

Listed below are the estimates of expenses for the 2011 Village Project. Many people may be moved to help, but not everyone has the funds to make the trip. If there are any other items, such as books, equipment, supplies, etc....Any help, no matter how small, will be gratefully accepted.

Hands for Humanity, Inc.
Estimate of Expenses
Nepal Village Ultrasound Project 2011
January 2011

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<td>Estimated printing costs for teaching materials 14 students (based on previous years costs)</td>
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References:
Trips With a Mission:  http://www.tripswithamission.org/
Remote Area Medical: http://www.ramus.org/
Program for Appropriate Technology in Health:  http://www.path.org/
Suzanne's Shelter