Report on the 1981 Polystan Educational and Travel Award: A Look Across the Atlantic for Future Influence on American ECC Techniques

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The 1981 Polystan Educational and Travel Award was presented for the manuscript "A Technique for Computer Assisted Monitoring in the Management of Total Heart Lung Bypass," (J.E.C.T., 13:171) as the "most educationally useful article submitted to the Journal" that year. In November 1982, my family and I embarked on a tour of the Netherlands, Belgium, and Denmark to visit open heart centers and participate in the seventh annual meeting of the Scandinavian Society for Extracorporeal Technology in Copenhagen. We were delightedly surprised. Instead of "stepping back five years" in the technology, we were stimulated with original applications of techniques and progress!

We arrived at Schiphot Airport in Amsterdam on November 6 as guests of Tom Hockstra, the local Polystan representative. Tom was hospitable, and transported us from Amsterdam to Rotterdam, then to Aalst, Belgium, and saw us off to Denmark four days later.

Dick deJong greeted us in Amsterdam. We toured the Dutch countryside and were the guests of Dick's family. I was able to observe surgery in "Dijkzigt" hospital in Rotterdam. The effectiveness of the cardiovascular monitoring system that Dick has assembled and coordinated is unmatched in my observations. By tapping the technical expertise of Jan Omen, Dick has successfully assembled a computer and x-y plotter that accepts analog signals from several monitoring devices and automatically maintains the perfusion record.

Dick has also assembled an automatic arterial pO2 control device. The design and effectiveness of the device were presented in Philadelphia at the AmSECT meeting.

Tom brought us to a small Belgium inn in Ergedem just west of Aalst and Brussels. We were the guests of Rita and Theo Gooris. I observed surgery at O.L. Vrou w-Ziekenhuis in Aalst where Theo and his assistant Filip work.

Colin Green greeted us in Copenhagen and personally assured our pleasant stay for the Scan SECT Meeting. He also introduced us to Copenhagen, the Danish people, and their cuisine.

On the first morning in Copenhagen, I had the privilege of speaking to the section of cardiovascular thoracic surgery and anesthesia at Rigshospitalit. Dr. H. Rahbek Sørensen is the professor, and Dr. Rigg is associate professor.

Dick deJong and I were the guests of Inge Lise Nordahl and Gert Krogager in surgery at Rigshospitalit, to observe their operation. I was impressed by the sincere professional efforts that the nurses-turned-perfusionists devoted to their educational gatherings, such as Scan SECT. These perfusionists are using AmSECT as a model for professional growth. We must remember to be responsible in our image and correspondence abroad.

Dr. Sørensen served as host and protector, i.e., producer of the Scan SECT meeting. The scientific content and professionalism at Scan SECT was exceptional, due to the dedication of Annette Löwenmark and Tommy Madsen, and to the high level of participation of thoracic surgeons, anesthesiologists, and perfusionists from twelve countries.

Scan SECT met in the Hotel Admiral on the deep water harbor in Copenhagen. The opening reception and remarks were conducted at Kobenhauuns Universitet (University of Copenhagen) in a great hall graced by paintings that are two or three centuries old, and larger than life.
Denmark's history is twice the length of that of our country, and that sense of history put me and other participants in the proper frame of mind as we entered the scientific forum.

My expectations for a great learning experience at Scan SECT were fulfilled by the first speaker, Paul Astrup, who presented "History of Acid Base Balance." Astrup provided us with knowledge of the contributions that Danes such as Bohr, Hasselbach, and Sørensen brought to acid base chemistry. His paper alone can justify the cost of a copy of the forum's proceedings.

I was also impressed by the high scientific content of the other papers presented. Much of the Scan SECT sessions dealt with "Nutritive Microrheology"—conserving formed blood elements, neutralizing damaging enzymes, improving capillary microrheology, and supplying cellular energy requirements.

Scientific papers were offered on prostacylin infusion, urea infusion, and potassium cyanate infusion and their protective effects on red blood cells.

One highlight was hearing the paper "Reasons for the use of procaine infusion during extracorporeal circulation" and meeting the presentor, the East German anesthesiologist/perfusionist, Dr. Oethoff.

Scan SECT was truly an international meeting that was represented well by Americans: Suzanne Wilds, her mother, Richard Chan, and my family.

Scan SECT and our tour ended with a banquet which demonstrated the hospitality, humor, history, and humanity of Dr. Sørensen, the Scandinavian Society, and neighboring country participants.

My family and I owe a special debt of gratitude to Dick deJong, Theo Gooris, Annette Lowenmark, Dr. H. Rahbek Sørensen, and especially to Colin Green and his wife, Inge.