

WITH A SETTLED MIND

The first Thanksgiving in the new world, celebrated by the pilgrims and Native Americans, happened somewhere between September and November in 1621. Harvest festivals were held by Native Americans centuries before the arrival of European colonists. More than 240 years passed before Abraham Lincoln declared an official national holiday in 1863. Historically, these festivals celebrated the bounty of the harvest and as well as the opportunity to give thanks.

I have wonderful memories of Thanksgiving and look forward to it every year. It's the one day of the year when I am allowed into the kitchen to make and bake a pumpkin pie! It is a time for travel for many, allowing families to reunite as they share a Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings. I'm sure each one of us could write an essay about our most memorable moments, from the still-frozen turkey because someone (I am not pointing fingers!) forgot to turn on the oven, to those heart warming moments when parents get to see and hold their grandchildren for the first time. Memories can be so powerful...

As physicians, I believe that most of us could fill several pages listing the reasons why we are thankful. We could keep these reasons on our computer desktop, daily planner, or things to do list and review them from time to time. It is so easy today to become distracted by the external forces that threaten our very existence as physicians. In fact, focusing on this negativity is a great way to make oneself perfectly miserable. There is no need for me to list them for you. We know them too well. Unfortunately, we have not been able to offer any global solutions that will magically make everything right. However, I believe that all of us would be in a more peaceful state of mind if we occasionally reminded ourselves of the things in our lives for which we are thankful. With a settled mind we could, perhaps, work together to achieve solutions for these threatening external forces.

I am thankful for many things:

- My parents, who brought me into this world, raised me in a nurturing home environment and recognized the importance of education. They could not pay for my schooling, but offered me a place to live while I went to college. They taught me to 'do my best' and to look for the good things in all people.
- My wife and our children
- My four brothers
- Peepers
- Living in Phoenix
- The Sonoran Desert, saguaro cacti and spring flowers
- Summer thunderstorms, winter rains
- The White Mountains
- Fishing for trout and king salmon
- Being able to go to work every day, pay my bills, and meet office expenses every month
- Having MICA as my malpractice insurer

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- The Maricopa County Medical Society, The Arizona Foundation
- Having wonderful colleagues
- Being healthy
- The Jesuits

I could go on and on....

I am very thankful that the painful process also known as choosing a new American president has ended. The sub-prime mortgage debacle, bank buyouts and economic stimulus packages have obligated hundreds of billions of dollars that will not be available to address reform in health care, the economy and education. Time will tell.

Our annual meeting at The Arizona Club was a resounding success. More than 200 people attended the event, and I know that they had a wonderful time.

Happy Thanksgiving to all!

Warm regards,

Edward J. Donahue, M.D.
President

We welcome your comments at edonahue@mcmsonline.com or mcms@mcmsonline.com