

# Pennsylvania Surgical News

August 2022

## Newsletter Addenda

The August issue was distributed late last evening and did not include our regular monthly *Meandering of a Wandering Surgeon* article. Our apologies to Dr. Foster for the omission.

Please enjoy this special added feature to the August newsletter.

*Robbi*

Robbi-Ann M. Cook, CAE  
Executive Director



Shannon Marie Foster, MD, FACS  
Keystone Chapter  
Immediate Past President

## Meanderings from A Wandering Surgeon

### Finding Balance

Greetings friends, colleagues and interested readers.

I was hoping for a great season for us all – but I must be honest - it's been a trying summer.

Draught. Fire. Floods. Inflation. Ukraine. Continued political discord. Oh, and shootings.

And everything I plant in the yard is readily consumed by deer. Even bark off of the young trees. Hence, erosion wins as nothing can grow.

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**Editorial Team**  
Robbi-Ann M. Cook, CAE  
Shannon Marie Foster, MD, FACS

Let's be honest though – for all who know me, and have been able to read sometimes as clearly stated, but always in between the lines – my personal life has been dominated by the slow decline of my father, his transition to hospice, and the constant struggle to achieve dying with dignity and comfort.

I thank many of you for the words of wisdom and support, and the rest of you for allowing me my space and freedom to be present with my family to truly experience the moment-to-moment and the important minutia of this time. The needs of others, often secondary or neglected over the last 24 years of medical education and profession, are finally the forefront. Understanding this reality and owning it is both an enlightenment and a burden. I love what we do, I love operating and the patient-doctor relationship. But I have neglected many other things – parts of myself and certainly those close to me – to live this lifestyle we have chosen. Yes, it is the call of training and duty, but no, I have not gotten the balance right. So now I swing the other way for a while. May we all swing together and support each other in the process.

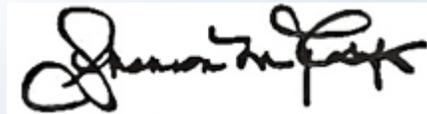
Having aides, nurses, social workers, deliveries, and the whole cadre of the hospice team in the home is a constantly revolving door – one we as surgeons can handle and are accustomed to – but most people are not and cannot. In particular, my near-80 mother is constantly overwhelmed and wants to “fire” every team member she doesn't like. An important reminder that we do not have to “like” everyone we work with. But we must respect and empower, communicate with an emphasis on listening, and allow a person to perform their role as best able without interference. If

you haven't learned yet: in our team-oriented approach to everything we do every day – you don't have to hang out with and be friends with the members and colleagues of your OR, office, or clinic staff (or professional organizations for that matter) – but you must optimally perform your role, supporting each of them to do so along the way, regardless of how you may or may not *like* each other. Do you really think that all of your patients and their families *like* you? Really? Try again.

As always – any comment or feedback is welcome.

Or raise any other area of interest. Or – even better - remember you are invited to write a contribution yourself! I (all of us at *PA Surg News*) would love to hear from you...

Respectfully,



**Shannon Marie Foster, MD, FACS**

Shannon Marie Foster, MD, FACS is Immediate Past President of the Keystone Chapter. She also serves as the PA Chapters Collaborative Task Force Chair, and at the national level as a Governor-at-Large, PA Liaison to CoT and WIS Committees, DEI Outreach Workgroup, Board of Governors Executive Committee, and the Communications Pillar Lead



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