

The Society for Computer Applications in Radiology

“SEEN anything new?” is the question constantly asked by nearly everyone attending the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA), because no one wants to go home having missed some exciting development. This year had its share of exciting developments, but the most striking aspects of the meeting were the ubiquity of digital imaging and the enthusiasm of attendees for digital image management and information systems. PACS, RIS, and teleradiology have finally come of age.

Acceptance of these systems has been a long time coming. When the first International Society for Optical Engineers (SPIE) Conference on PACS was held in 1982, it was thought that all-digital radiology departments were just around the corner, likely to be commonplace within 5 years. But early visionaries did not fully appreciate the height of technical and economic hurdles that PACS would have to cross. Not all of those hurdles are crossed today, but designers of systems now have a much more realistic view of what available technology can accomplish. As a result, the systems being proposed and widely implemented are more modest, but they work reliably, solve real problems, and do not require inordinate expenditures.

There is no question that the Society for Computer Applications in Radiology (SCAR) and its active members have played key roles in these developments. I hesitate to start enumerating them for fear that I will omit important names, but a glance at the Editorial Board of this journal or the Author's Index in the November issue will make the point. SCAR set out to bridge the gap between the technical community that designs these systems and the clinical community that uses them. That gap still exists, of course, and there is a continuing need for thoughtful, constructive interchange between them, which is the role that SCAR aspires to play. We have come a long way, but we still have a long way to go.

SCAR's Annual Meeting was held as usual during RSNA on Monday, November 27, 1995

where the slate of officers was presented: Philip Drew, PhD, chairman; David Avrin, MD, PhD, chairman-elect; John Strauss, secretary; John Vanden Brink, treasurer; Osman Ratib, MD, Melvin Greberman, MD, Anna Chacko, MD, and Atsuko Heshiki, MD, directors-at-large. Shridhar Seshadri of Kodak Health Imaging gave a well-received talk, *The Well-Tempered PACS: How to Create It, Grow It, and Sustain It*. He foresees comprehensive patient records embracing both images and data, not merely available to users but routed automatically and held ready for those who may have a use. His vision supports the thesis that we still have a long way to go.

Turning to upcoming events, SCAR is one of the “cooperating organizations” in sponsoring SPIE's International Symposium, Medical Imaging 1996, which will return this year to its accustomed venue in Newport Beach, February 10-15. Information is available from SPIE [Tel: (800) 483-9034; Fax: (800) 982-2376; E-mail: spie@spie.org]. The meeting embraces image display, physics, processing and perception as well as physiology and function from multidimensional images and PACS design and evaluation. SCAR itself will have its (now annual) 13th Conference on Computer Applications in Radiology. S/CAR 96, in Denver, June 6-9, 1996 hosted by the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. Information is available from SCAR, 1891 Preston White Dr, Reston, Virginia 22091 [Tel: (703) 716-7548; Fax: (703) 648-9176; E-mail scar@acr.org].

I hope to see everyone with an interest in this now-rapidly-developing field at these meetings. I look forward to a year of growth for SCAR. If you have concerns or suggestions about the future of our organization, I hope you will let me know.

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