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Ambulance Corps**

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The Sum of Many Small Things.

During this past winter of living in the shadow of the pandemic, I remember how blessed were the bright spots - spending time with two of our four grandchildren who lived half a mile away. It is surprising how the very young can advance and change even week to week. The pure pleasure of saying "see ya" to a departing two-year-old for the first time and hearing "see ya" right back at you. The remarkable (I may be prejudiced) artistic achievements of a six-year-old, bursting with color. That first vaccination after 45 minutes in a windy 20-degree parking lot... worth every minute of it!

During the waning days of winter, the PAC finance committee finally met in person! All were vaccinated. There was a review of the year to date and how its dynamic compares to 2020 which, by a narrow margin, actually ended in the black. That achievement is rather like a gymnast successfully completing a double pike vault for the first time ever. You wonder...can it really happen again?

The conversation went from substance to format...how we could improve it to make analysis easier. Exciting? No, but in the background was information such as the successful 2020 annual appeal and how key it was to ending the year in the black. And how emotionally inspiring it was, and is, to feel that confidence and support from you, the public.

Our manager, Alan spoke about how good he felt about the staff; how honored he and they felt to have been asked to participate in the vaccination campaign for first responders. He brought out a show and tell: a Lucas 3 Chest Compression System recently acquired through a generous grant from a charitable trust. This is a device that provides heart massage in the case of cardiac arrest. It is very consistent, it doesn't tire. In critical circumstances it is like having another person in the ambulance. It wasn't all peaches and cream, but this meeting felt good!



In the meantime, Medicare left us twisting in the wind.

In the background of the positive news at the meeting was the fact that Medicare hadn't paid us since January 1. It started with the death of an emeritus member of our board. Medicare withheld all payments because they claimed that this was a key change in our structure. With that issue resolved further inquiries found that payments were also being held up because of an error in Medicare payment practices. Long story short, it became clear that it was **Medicare's Error**, and we are finally on the road to resolution.

On the road, perhaps, but no payments as of May 15, with an outstanding balance north of \$150,000! We started to aggressively drive our message, cracking into the internal communications lines of Medicare and NGS, a subcontractor that authorizes payments. Dick Marshuetz, Finance Committee chair, crafted a stiff letter and between his and Alan's efforts it got to an upper-level person who seized the problem, acknowledged the fault of NGS and promised quick action.

As of May 22, we have received a small amount with promises of more — at some point. Slow, but the cash is flowing again!

Needless to say, this has stressed our thin capital reserves mercilessly. We appear to be on the road to recovery, but this points out only too harshly the need for reserves adequate to dealing with the ponderous governmental system. That, unfortunately is the world we operate in.

As always, we depend on our generous friends and neighbors to allow us to weather these unpredictable times. Your support is always greatly appreciated.



Robert Vaughan, President
Peninsula Ambulance Corps



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