

## FAER and Others

### *Thanks for 25 Years of Doing More than Funding Research*

**H**I, I'm Don Stanski. Welcome to the ASA Committee on Research!" Nearly a quarter century later, I remember well that boyish, welcoming smile and warm handshake. As a new and rather intimidated member of the committee, whose biggest job is to evaluate and rank applications for the Foundation for Anesthesia Education and Research (FAER) grants, I was surprised by his informal and helpful manner. He would not be the last on that committee to strike me this way during the next 18 yr.

This month's issues of *ANESTHESIOLOGY* and *Anesthesia & Analgesia* celebrate FAER's 25th anniversary and its pivotal contribution to our specialty and the care of our patients. Between the two journals, there are nearly two dozen original investigations, editorials, and other educational articles written by individuals supported by FAER. This is a remarkable response to a request sent earlier this year jointly from the two journals to FAER grantees. We include in this journal an editorial by FAER's leadership that provides an historical overview, and Steve Shafer provides personal vignettes by FAER-funded investigators on the importance of that funding to their work in advancing our specialty.<sup>1</sup> In this editorial, I want to highlight one often-ignored aspect from each of these points of view that has been essential to FAER's success at developing research for our patients.

Research is like writing a book. The background has to be thoroughly understood, a compelling story line created, and the characters of that story must engage readers in the broader stories of their personal and communal lives. Although a research report is not fiction, it must be creative in all these aspects to succeed. Rejection is a regular response to



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research submissions, just as it is to book submissions, and rejection can be particularly destructive early in one's career.

“I really like this person's enthusiasm and training, she is in a great environment, and I would love for us to get her the message that we want her to succeed and that she *will* succeed,” Don said at that meeting a quarter century ago. I quickly observed that most of the people in that room wanted to fight hard to fund these junior investigators—to mentor them anonymously through this intimidating and discouraging grant submission and review process. I have since learned, especially from Don Stanski, Simon Gelman, Roger Johns, and Evan Kharasch, members of the ASA Committee for Research, and from Richard Hotchkiss, Tim Brennan, and Piyush Patel, at the National Institutes of Health, that this is precisely how one should approach grant (and manuscript) reviews.

Research is highly competitive to the point of being cut-throat at times, but what I learned through scientific review for FAER has been invaluable to my own career as a scientist as well as to my role as a personal or anonymous mentor to other scientists. For medicine to advance, we need the right people asking the right questions in the right place. FAER has taught me and many others how to make these judgments in a more compassionate, encouraging, and supportive manner.

From the more historical point of view, FAER charted a path through conflicts of interest that allowed industry and a nonprofit society (the American Society of Anesthesiologists) to support research. Marty Helrich, and Alan Sessler were able to get well-intentioned individuals on both sides together while sorting out and encouraging ways for industry and society members to foster research to the benefit of all. I never felt that a pharmaceutical or device manufacturer influenced in any way the review and subsequent funding of FAER grants. This is something only a third party can do, and FAER has done it superbly. In the end, we are celebrating and thanking industry *and* the American So-

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In conjunction with the FAER 25th anniversary, articles and editorials in the *ANESTHESIOLOGY* October 2011 issue celebrate the accomplishments of FAER. For additional information visit [www.FAER.org](http://www.FAER.org).

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ciety of Anesthesiologists for making FAER and its work possible.

Finally, it's important to acknowledge that FAER is not unique and that other organizations contribute importantly to the development of research in our specialty here and abroad. For this reason, there are several editorials in this issue highlighting some of these other organizations and approaches. Yes, we are celebrating FAER in its 25th anniversary of pivotal influence, but others have and are contributing importantly.

So your contributions to FAER and other organizations have made a difference. In addition to the obvious impact on research that leads to better patient care, FAER and others continue to teach leaders the proper handling of conflicts of

interest and how to encourage talented investigators struggling to move forward. I know that I apply lessons learned from FAER on a regular basis to the ethical and scientific judgment decisions I make at ANESTHESIOLOGY every day. Thank you, and happy anniversary, FAER!

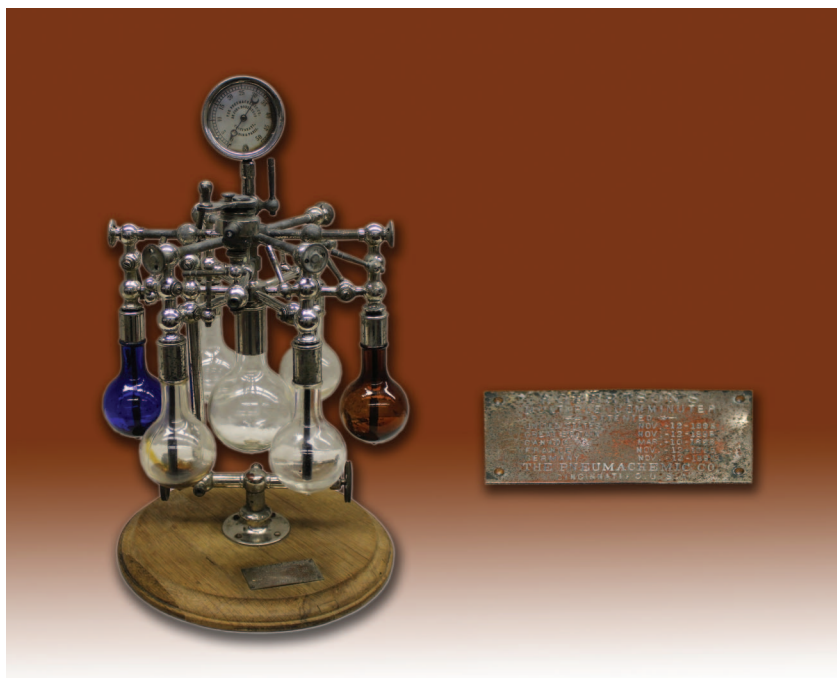
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## Reference

1. Shafer SL: Happy 25th anniversary, FAER! *Anesth Analg* 2011; 113:675-6

## ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS

### Robertson's Multiple Comminuter



Nowadays, we think of comminuters as devices that pulverize or shred solids. However, back in November of 1895, John Robertson of Cincinnati was granted a U.S. patent for his "Atomizer" (*left*) that he would advertise as "Robertson's Multiple Comminuter." As its corroded nameplate records (*right*) this "Comminuter" was also patented in Great Britain, France, Germany, and eventually Canada. Robertson eventually perfected a vibrating valve "for administering pulmonary, nasal, or aural massage with scientific accuracy." With its two to eight colorful glass globes with different liquid contents, Robertson's Multiple Comminuter was a commercially successful forerunner of nebulizers employed today in respiratory therapy. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc. This image also appears in the *Anesthesiology Reflections* online collection available at [www.anesthesiology.org](http://www.anesthesiology.org).)

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