

President's Newsletter, January 2009

Dear Members:

Happy 2009 to all of you!!

This is the year of Scotland for the SGI: from March 17-21 we are all invited to go to Glasgow for our 56th Annual Meeting which, is being held for the first time outside of North America. Scotland occupies the northern third of Great Britain and Glasgow is Scotland's largest city.

The Kingdom of Scotland was independent until 1707 when it joined the Kingdom of England to create the United Kingdom. The most well known English writer, William Shakespeare, in 1606 wrote the Tragedy of "Macbeth" who was King of Scotland from 1040 through 1057. His real name was Mac Bethad mac Findlaich, then anglicized as Macbeth and nicknamed Rí Deircc, the Red King.



The duel between Macduff and Macbeth
The tragedy of Macbeth, William Shakespeare 1606

Macduff is the other major character in Shakespeare's tragedy and represents the moral order within Macbeth. He first appears in Act II, when he discovers the corpse of King Duncan in Macbeth's castle and suspects Macbeth of regicide.

Therefore Macduff went to England to persuade King Duncan's son, Malcolm, to take the Scottish throne by force and restore the peace in Scotland, marching north and assaulting Macbeth. Meanwhile, Macbeth murders Macduff's wife and children.

During Act IV in the cavern of the witches, Macbeth received three cautionary visions: the first was "beware of Macduff!" the second "none of woman borne will harm Macbeth"; the third "you will never be defeated before the great forest of Birnam will come marching against you". On this basis Macbeth comforts himself and his supporters, saying "Fear not Macbeth; no man that's born of woman / shall e'er have power upon thee". However, in the Act V, Scene VIII, the revelation comes: Macduff says "Despair thy charm /.../ Macduff was from his mother's womb/ ripped". He was a "not-born newborn", a baby cut out of his mother's belly by C-section. This is why he was destined to be able to kill Macbeth, and thus put a proper end to his wickedness.

Studies on the putative difference between babies born naturally or via C-section are inconclusive in terms of health, personality or intelligence. Caesarean babies have shown some susceptibility to food allergies, asthma, schizophrenia, and pulmonary hypertension, but many of the infants in these studies were premature and delivered by emergency C-section. The advanced age of primigravidas, the complexity of some pregnancies (autoimmune diseases, transplanted organs), and the proliferation of medical malpractice lawyers all influence the increased number of C-sections in modern medicine.

At the beginning of 2009, SGI boasts a membership located in 30 different countries throughout the world (from the 5 Continents). Our aim is to widen that spectrum even more. Each one of us should select our best colleagues and invite them to become SGI members. While membership in the SGI has its own inherent prestige, we need to offer some more practical advantages if we are to continue to grow in the competing world of the scientific societies. *Reproductive Sciences* is becoming a top class journal within our discipline. Our Annual Meeting is considered one of the most exclusive in terms of translational medicine in Obstetrics and Gynecology. Other summits or forums represent world formula for reproductive scientists. While all of these increase our profile, one of the most exclusive aspects of the SGI is the sponsorship of the fellows program for PhD, MD, and young Faculty candidates. SGI also supports travel and presentation award for in-training members. At the 56th Annual Meeting in Glasgow the Trainee Plenary Session will open the Scientific Sessions and an in- training get together is scheduled, but the entire Scientific Program is devoted to stimulate the future generation of scientists and physicians working in Obstetrics and Gynecology to perform the best research to improve the women's health.

If you have not done so already, please be sure to book your hotel accommodations using the housing form on the SGI web site. It is also a great time to book your flights while the airfares are very affordable.

We look forward to seeing you in Glasgow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Felice Petraglia', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Felice Petraglia, M.D.
SGI President 2008-2009