

Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

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It was in the mid-nineties when a senior colleague of mine, Dr. Bojan Biocina, introduced me to something called “OpenHeart-L” on The Heart Surgery Forum website. Suddenly, a whole new world appeared in front of me! The possibility to communicate with colleagues from all around the globe was amazing. And not only that—one could ask anything, and there was always someone who had an answer, gave a piece of advice...what to do, what to avoid...it was magic! The person responsible for this whole idea of sharing information and interactive communication was Mark Levinson. At that time I was more a lurker than a poster, eagerly waiting for discussions to develop and learning from other people’s posts.

Then, a whole new world unfolded again during the STS meeting in San Diego, when Mark Levinson proposed an informal dinner, a get-together of some kind. There we were, and I was thinking: “Wooow, so this is Mark Levinson, and this is Hal, Tohru, Michael Firstenberg, Bob Frater, Ed Bender ... and this guy I know, this is Bill Novick...” It was magic; I was able to put together faces and names! Again, this was thanks to Mark Levinson.

Years went by, and we HSFers would meet at various meetings and sometimes grab an opportunity for a bite or a drink. I had the thought that we should hold our own meeting, but I did not have the courage to act on that at the time. It was in 2010 when we met for the first time at our own gathering (Figure 1), and next in 2014 (Figure 2). And again, this was thanks to the enormous support of Mark Levinson.

During HSF #1 and HSF #2, we were interacting, communicating, debating, and—among many professional

discussions—we were discussing the future of HSF, and the necessity of formal gatherings to keep the fire alive and include younger colleagues. Then, in September 2016, Mark asked me if I would be the next Editor-in-Chief! I was humbled by his idea, and terrified as well, because I know I could never be as innovative as Mark is. But I know I am not alone in this role, as Mark is and shall forever be my friend and guide. And it is not only Mark Levinson, but also all of you HSFers, who contribute on a daily basis to our discussions, and keep OpenHeart-L alive. All of you keep the light of The Heart Surgery Forum aglow.

In the new era of electronic communication and social media, we are exploring new ways of keeping OpenHeart-L vivid; before too long, we may be able to move it to a completely new platform. I hope you shall adopt it, because it is only as good as all of us cardiac surgeons from around the world. We need to communicate and to share!

I would like to take this opportunity to announce our HSF #3 meeting in Croatia, this time in Zagreb, in December 2017. All of you are cordially invited to participate, join us in open-minded discussions, and enjoy the company of equals (no ivory-tower talks).

Mark, from the bottom of my heart, I thank you for everything you have done so far for HSF, and for everything that is still ahead of us together. God bless you!

Igor Rudez, MD, PhD
Editor-in-Chief



Figure 1. HSF #1

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Figure 2. HSF #2