



## Message to Members,

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of ASSET for their involvement and dedication. We are truly blessed to be able share knowledge and work through problems together. I would personally like to thank two executive board members who are rotating off the board. Joe Kostuch has just completed his 3 year role as President of ASSET. He did a great job in promoting the society from redesigning the webpage to organizing a great annual conference this past year in Las Vegas. Mike Shaffer has just completed his role as Member-at-Large which I believe makes the second time that I am aware of him serving on the Executive Board as he was formerly the President of the Society a few years ago. We thank you both for your outstanding service.

I would like to welcome our new members of the Executive Board; Kellie Bliven as President-Elect, Mark Lombardi as Secretary/Treasurer-Elect, and Sarah Jackins as Member-at-Large. I believe this is the first time both Kellie and Mark have served on the Executive Board and we appreciate your willingness to serve. As you may or may not know Sarah has served in every capacity in ASSET as she was one of our Founding members. You can see by the willingness to serve multiple times how dedicated our members are to making this a great society. I want to thank Sarah again for stepping up and serving on our Executive Board her experience and insights are innumerable. I would like to also welcome Steve Thomas as the new research chair as he is replacing Kellie as she has assumed the office of President-Elect. It is great to see so many relatively new active members becoming involved with the running of the Society and contributing to making it better.

We would like to welcome all of our new general and foreign members that have joined us recently; Aydan Aytar from Turkey, Gabriel Brooks from Texas, Elif Camci from Turkey, Julia Doty from New York, Tracy Elliott from Canada, Casey Hagan from Massachusetts, Eric Honbo from California, Todd Hooks from Alabama, Saba Kamal from California, Elizabeth Kovack from Georgia, Kimberly Kraft from Indiana, Catherine Lane from Canada, Rebecca McClelland from Massachusetts, Diana Minardo from New York, Osvaldo Patino from Argentina, Attilio Pensavalle from New York, Joshua Pniewski from Georgia, Janette Powell from Nevada, Wendi Sanny from Nebraska, Matthew Shaw from Canada, and Craig Wassinger from Tennessee. We are truly blessed to have you all involved in ASSET and we look forward to learning from you and sharing with you our common interest in shoulder and elbow rehabilitation.

One of our long standing members, Jean O'Toole, a former ASSET president and the 2003 Founders Award winner shared with me that she will be resigning from ASSET this year as she is retiring from Massachusetts General this upcoming October. I asked for her



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permission to share her letter to the membership as I believe it truly reflects the feeling of many of us and why we give so much time and energy to this society.

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Dear membership committee,

As it comes time to renew the ASSET membership soon, I will not be renewing my membership, as I have happily sent in my retirement letter.

The friendships and professional relationships that have come because of involvement in ASSET are some of the greatest gifts of my professional career. When I retire in October, it will be with a grateful heart for 44 years of fulltime clinical practice, so deeply enriched by all of the colleagues, mentors and patients who have so graciously shared so much with me.

I must say that the location of the annual meeting at Pinehurst looks very tempting, but it is time for a new chapter!

With warm wishes,

Jean O'Toole,PT, MPH, CLT-LANA  
Physical Therapy Services  
Massachusetts General Hospital

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***Jean you will be missed but we all wish you well and much joy in your new chapter. You have served the profession with distinction and you have brightened up our lives by your presence and enthusiasm.***

One of the goals for this year is to increase communication between members. One way of accomplishing this we will be providing communication via this format in lieu of a newsletter. Our goal is to share clinical insights, pearls, or even findings from a project if you are so inclined. I have asked Aaron Sciascia MS ATC PES to share his insights on an interesting case.

### **Using an unconventional intervention to gain success**

In 2010, a 46 year-old male patient presented at our office with severe scapular pain and inability to use his right arm in forward flexion or overhead. His initial injury occurred when he was attempting to open a steel trapdoor while at work (the door was embedded on the floor). The patient misjudged the weight of the door and felt an immediate pop and burning pain over the medial border of his scapula. He underwent numerous physician evaluations, receiving diagnoses of impingement, rotator cuff tendonitis, and cervical radiculopathy. After multiple months of physical therapy and little to no relief in pain, he was referred to our office where he was diagnosed with a scapular muscle detachment. Surgical treatment was selected which revealed that both his lower trapezius and rhomboids were detached from the scapula. The muscles were reattached and the patient performed approximately 8 months of post-operative physical therapy. The surgical intervention and subsequent post-operative rehabilitation reduced the pain however the patient began to develop fear of movement traits where he was afraid to move his arm forward due to the fear of the pre-



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surgical pain returning. On a follow-up visit over 1 year after the surgery, the patient stated that, “I can move my arm only if I think about it. When I move my arm without thinking, the pain in the shoulder blade and under my armpit takes my breath away”. Based on this statement, it was decided that the next treatment approach would be rooted in the principles of motor control, mainly neuroimaging. The thought was that the patient was having struggles similar to an amputee experiencing phantom-limb pain so an attempt was made to use a modification of the classic mirror-box regimen. During the same follow-up visit, the patient was positioned standing with 3 full-length mirrors 1) in front of him and 2 mirrors perpendicular to his body with one aligned to impeded the patient’s view of his surgical arm while only being able to view the non-surgical arm. The patient was instructed to focus on the reflection of the non-surgical limb so it appeared as though he was looking at a full image of his body. When the patient signaled that the image looked complete, he was instructed to elevate both arms forward up to 90 degrees of elevation. After performing 12 repetitions, he was then instructed to go as far past shoulder level as he felt comfortable with. To our surprise, he could raise both arms equally to approximately 110 degrees of forward elevation with little reported pain. When the mirrors were taken away, the patient began to become inhibited again only being able to perform 5 repetitions of elevation before pain prohibited him continuing. The patient was instructed to perform a similar regimen for 20 minutes a day, 5 days a week until his next follow-up which was 3 months later. On the next follow-up, the patient had full arm elevation (160 degrees) with little to no pain and without use of the mirrors.

If you would like to share with your colleagues please send your scenario to Tim Uhl at [tluhl2@uky.edu](mailto:tluhl2@uky.edu). We will attempt to repeat this message every other month to facilitate communication between members. If you would like to share a difficult case, ask a question to the group, or get feedback among your ASSET colleagues, we would like to remind you that on our webpage, under the [Contact Us](#) section, there is a link that automatically opens your default email program and allows you to [Email all ASSET Members](#) at once.

The screenshot shows the website for the American Society of Shoulder and Elbow Therapists. The top navigation bar includes 'Home' and 'Contact Us', with 'Contact Us' highlighted by a red box. The main content area features a 'Contact Us' section with contact information for the American Society of Shoulder and Elbow Therapists, including the address (5300 North River road, Suite 727, Rosemont, IL 60018), phone number (847) 698-1636, fax number (847) 823-0536, and email address [asset@asos.org](mailto:asset@asos.org). A red box highlights the 'Email all ASSET Members' link in the footer, which also includes a link to 'Email the ASSET Executive Board'.



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This is open to all members and I encourage everyone to use this mechanism to share information or ask questions. The cumulative knowledge of this society is immense and is invaluable when faced with a challenging or unique problem. This is how you got this message from me. The other link [Email the ASSET Executive Board](#) will do the same thing but is directed only to all Executive Board Members so that you can communicate with us all at once.

In keeping with this same goal the Research Committee is continuing to develop the concept of matching researchers with clinicians that are interested in participating in research, or has an idea and needs some guidance. Steve Thomas, the committee chair, is continuing these efforts started by Kellie Bliven. He is organizing a survey that is forthcoming, but in the meanwhile, if you are interested in participating you can contact him directly via his email, [sjthomasatc@gmail.com](mailto:sjthomasatc@gmail.com).

We look forward to another exciting year serving ASSET members and we want to wish you all a Happy New Year. If we can be of any assistance feel free to contact us.

Best regards,

Tim Uhl  
President

Kevin Laudner  
Secretary/Treasurer

Aaron Sciascia  
Member-at-Large

Eric Sauers  
Past- President

Mark Lombardi  
Secretary/Treasurer-Elect

Sarah Jackins  
Member-at-Large

Kellie Bliven  
President-Elect

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