Dear Colleagues

Your EXCO met on Sunday for the last time before the SAGES/SASES meeting, 9-11 August, in Durban. We are very excited by the programme arranged both by ourselves and SAGES. Our local LOC is Masee Naidoo and Dick Brombacher. The ECCO (European Crohn's and Colitis Organisation) program arranged by SAGES, is a unique opportunity for a world class update on these diseases. Professor Pradeep Chowbey from India is our SASES guest and we are thrilled to have tempted him over here. He is a legendary surgeon in the sub-continent and we hope will help us build links with India. Do look at his CV on the website link.

The Covidien/SASES and the Storz/SASES travelling fellowships have recently both been advertised and we are expecting a good response. These represent a huge amount of effort from your exco, Masee Naidoo in particular, and we are very proud to offer these. No other society in SA matches them annually.

The Surgical Skills Training Centre (SSTC) at Red Cross Childrens' Hospital is the result of huge effort and creativity by Alp Numanoglu who administers it. We have courses running now and it is set to play a central role in laparoscopic and other skills training in the country. Already it is well utilised by the gynaecologists. Alp is a member of the EXCO and is our Roche lecturer in Durban this year.

2012 is an election year and a new EXCO will be elected in Durban at our AGM. We had the largest turnout at an AGM in the Society's history last year, at Champagne Sports Resort, and it would be great to have a strong turnout again this year. Let me take this opportunity to encourage you to support the meeting and the society and register on line via our website, www.sases.org.

Finally, we have persuaded Discovery to pay for Applied wound ring retractors for laparoscopic colorectal surgery. This is an important victory for both us and our patients.

Enjoy your mid year holidays with your families, travel safely, and see you in Durban.

Best wishes

Bob Baigrie