



# THE OBSERVER

Volume 137  
July, 2016

## President's Message

Greetings to all our valued TMAA members!

I know I speak for the entire TMAA Board when I state how VERY MUCH you are sincerely valued by your TMAA.

As we finalize plans for our 30<sup>th</sup> Fall Seminar, “The Pearls of Auditing,” I wonder if anyone has considered what a pearl represents? Well, I have done some research and I have found that pearls symbolize wisdom acquired through experience—much like the expertise gained in our field. Pearls also represent strong relationships, just as TMAA has for 30 years.

I can promise you that this seminar will provide REAL pearls of wisdom and association!

When Carolyn Rich trained Nancy Kaiserman and I, she imparted the importance of sharing our knowledge and extending patience with a goal of achieving wisdom and understanding. Thanks to her examples and guidance the contentious, *good guy/bad guy* days between internal and external auditors are now a part of our past. I am sure Carolyn is smiling down at how those grains of knowledge and sharing have become a multitude of pearls!

A pearl also symbolizes new beginnings, balanced emotions, and relieved stress. Again, with new auditors joining our field and new members joining our forces, we all have the opportunity to share new pearls. Here's to learning, sharing, and growing as individuals and as an association.

I absolutely cannot wait to see all of you on the Riverwalk for our **SPECIAL CELEBRATION**, and all the **AWESOME** new information your TMAA has in store!



Linda Hutchinson, RN, CMA



## Meet Your TMAA Candidate

I am Barbara Thompson and I would like to run for Treasurer of TMAA. My involvement with TMAA spans 20 years—serving on the board for several of those years. I have held positions of President, Treasurer, Membership Chair and Bylaws Chair.

Additionally, I served as Executive Director of the AAMAS Board for several years prior to my retirement.

Though I am retired, I've decided to return to TMAA because I miss the social interaction with my fellow auditors and would like to assist in helping revitalize the organization. We need to keep TMAA going to nurture new medical auditors as we were nurtured in our entry to this field.

Please vote for me as your new Treasurer for TMAA. Thank You!

**Barbara Thompson, RN, CMAS**

## Meet Your TMAA Candidate

My name is Neta Morse and I am running for TMAA Vice President. I am a Retired

Nurse Auditor. I received my AD RN in 1978 and started my in nursing career in labor and delivery. I received my BSN in 1981. During the 1980's I taught the LVN programs in rural areas for Cooke and Paris County Junior Colleges. In 1989 I returned to Arlington Memorial as a nurse auditor and completed my MS in Healthcare Administration in 2003. I retired after 26 years of auditing for Texas Health Resources (Arlington Memorial Hospital) in June 2015.

During my nurse auditor career, I joined the local and state organizations for cost containment/ medical auditing, and also very involved in AAMAS and its development. I took the first CMAS exam and carried CMAS certification until I retired last year. I have held positions as a board member and education provider in both organizations, and served one term as President for TMAA.

Since retiring last June I have been learning a new life style since I have worked full time since 1970. Coming from what use to be a small town—Arlington—I am still involved with friendships since grade school, and continue to be on the reunion committee for Arlington High School class of 1967. I am also slowly remodeling my parents' home built in 1954, when our backyard was not in the city limits of Arlington! Now I am dead center Arlington just a couple of miles from UTA. I am in a book club and meet Thursday mornings for breakfast with classmates from class of 1967. I finally have more time to devote to TMAA, and if elected I can assist the new board members through their new terms on the board. **Neta Morse, RN, CMAS**



## Family Picnics and Two Visitors You Don't Want to Invite to your Blanket

Eggs are a great source of protein and often show up at family picnics in the form of egg salad, deviled eggs and as an addition to salads.

Improper egg handling can lead to Salmonella “food poisoning,” that, for some, can lead to life-threatening consequences.



The [CDC](#) has the following tips to keep you and your family safe:

- Throw away broken or cracked eggs.
- Only buy refrigerated eggs.
- The maximum amount of time to keep cooked eggs at room temperature or warm is 2 hours. If the temp is above 90 degrees, the limit is 1 hour.
- Always wash hands, utensils, cutting boards, and countertops with soap and water after contact with raw eggs.

- Keep eggs refrigerated at 40 degrees or cooler.
- Avoid eating raw, unpasteurized or lightly cooked eggs.
- Discard “dirty” eggs.

Salmonella can be especially serious for older adults, infants, and those with weakened immune symptoms, leading to fever, diarrhea, vomiting and dehydration. For others, it can mean diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps that may last 4-7 days.

## Stay Healthy this Summer!



According to the CDC, 30,000 people develop Lyme disease each year. THAT'S A LOT!!!

Avoiding tick bites is important, especially as we prepare for more outdoor activities. The infection can cause chronic problems that interfere with quality of life. Steps to minimize the risk of Lyme disease or Rocky Mountain spotted fever include:

(Continued on next page)

- Hiking or walking on open trails.
- Avoid tall grasses and brush.
- Inspect your body thoroughly if you have been in an area that is tick infested.
- Wear tick repellent with DEET, but make sure to follow the directions on application and re-application.

*Natural tick repellents are also available commercially*

- Check your pets too. Tick bites can spread a variety of diseases in animals. Speak with your veterinarian about products to keep your pets safe.
- Mow your lawn frequently.
- Consider placing a 3 foot cedar wood chip barrier between your lawn and wooded areas to stop tick migration.
- If you find a tick on your skin, follow CDC guidelines for removal. Avoid internet suggestions such as applying nail polish or using petroleum to “smother” the tick.

**How to remove a tick:**

1. *Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.*
2. *Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth-parts with tweezers. If you are unable to remove the mouth easily with clean tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal.*
3. *After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub, or soap and water.*
4. *Dispose of a live tick by submersing it in alcohol, placing it in a sealed bag/container, wrapping it tightly in tape, or flushing it down the toilet. Never crush a tick with your fingers.*



**Shonna Macaulay, RN, BSN, CCM  
TMAA Bylaws Committee Chairman**



**Thanks For the Memories!**

As I look over my many years of auditing, I often think of this quote from Dr. Seuss.

I cherish the memories and the relationships I have made with other internal auditors over the years. Our mutual education, shared enthusiasm for the work, and candor built lasting friendships. Many of us began our journey from many different backgrounds, learning case reviews together and establishing career-long bonds.

Like many of you, I found the transition and process very intimidating at first. Now, not only work with confidence built on experience but we continually adapt our process to ever-more complex procedures. As medical care—and medical auditing—changes we enhance our skill set while extending our experience and knowledge to each other. (Continued next page)

Memories are a treasure for the most part and the value of the memories birthed from this organization so very long ago are most near and dear to my heart. I want to thank each and every one of you for being who you are and where you are....and please know how appreciated you are.

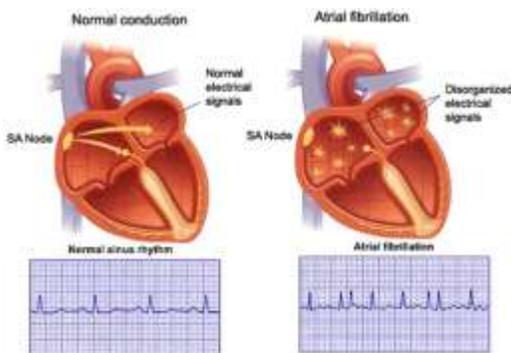


Debbie Hewitt, RN, BSN, CMAS  
Vice President

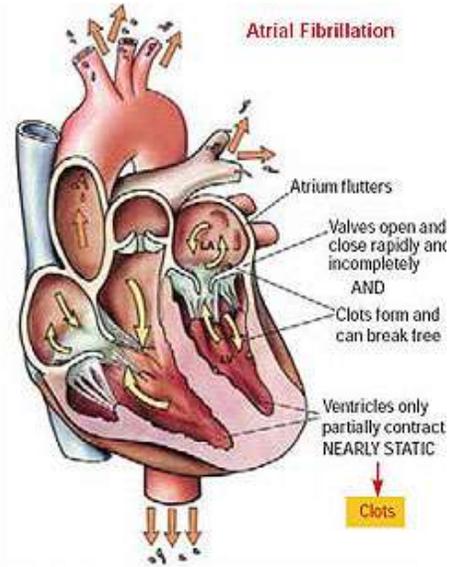
## Nurse Notes

### Atrial Fibrillation

Okay, guys—many of you know atrial fibrillation or A-Fib is a HOT TOPIC for me. Maybe some of you also deal with atrial fibrillation in your family. For those who don't, here is a wake-up call. Some individuals never feel the irregular heartbeat and actually don't know they are in fibrillation.



The risk of developing a blood clot with resultant stroke is higher, so even asymptomatic atrial fibrillation is NOT something you want to deal with!

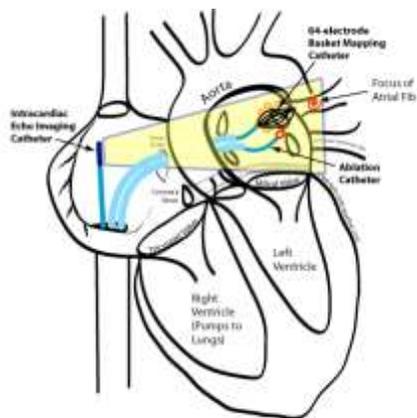


Tim, my husband, unfortunately felt the first irregular heart beat and the last, akin to turning on and off a light switch.

Tim started paroxysmal a fib 15 years ago, and THANKFULLY it was under control with meds EVERY 8 HOURS around the clock... until two months ago. Then all of a sudden, he dealt with disabling episodes of atrial fibrillation every 2-3 days, with each episode lasting up to 20 hours. Sleeping was ROUGH to impossible—waiting to see when the next fib would start—as it often started during sleep awakening him.

When we spoke with cardiologists 15 years ago, we were encouraged to wait until the cryoablation, (freezing) which was available only in Europe, would be in the US. Cryoablation verses then-normal RF, (burning) showed higher success with less risks. That sure proved true for Tim. (Continued on next page)

Tim underwent cryoablation three weeks ago Friday, and the toughest part was the lying flat for 6 hours afterwards. Today, as Tim will say it's ONLY a memory! No irregular beats post op AT ALL!



**Pulmonary Vein Isolation for Catheter Ablation of Atrial Fibrillation:**  
 An ablation catheter applies electrocautery lesions (burns) around the pulmonary veins to electrically isolate them from the rest of the heart. The procedure is imaged using x-ray and intracardiac echocardiography.

The first 3 months after ablation are called “blinking” period, and anything can happen during that time. But the longer one goes without ectopy, the more likely the ablation was successful.

Charges, you ask? The TEE and CT of the heart before the procedure was \$14,000 and the procedure with an overnight in the hospital was \$100,000. Yes, I reviewed the line item billing and it was correct!

Please get the word out for those with afib that are symptomatic, there IS a good option to living with a-Fib now. If anyone has any questions, we will be happy to talk with them. We are feeling very BLESSED!!!

I'll look forward to seeing you guys at the conference!



Linda Hutchinson, RN, CMA  
 President



"Pearls of Auditing," is the theme for our 30<sup>th</sup> annual Texas Medical Auditor Association Conference. Most find pearls a lovely gift as pearls go with everything! Most of all it's TMAA's 30th Anniversary!

The Program goal for this special conference is to provide a variety of topics that will "go with everything," to peek your interest, food for thought, maybe a review of forgotten information and meet your current educational needs.

The Board and many members have worked together assemble just the right topics for this conference by professionals to share their expertise of exciting and interesting topics. We are truly honored to bring this special program and hope you will make your arrangements to participate. I am so excited to share some of the topics to be covered:

- Current Concepts in Stroke
- Federal, State Healthcare Legislation
- Not Your Mama's UTI
- Wound Care
- Physician Assisted Suicide
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)—  
What we Know Today
- Financial Impact of Congestive  
Heart Failure

(Continued on next page)

- ICD-10—Update
- Disability and SSI Financial Impact on Healthcare
- Journey of Self

We have been working hard to assist Judie Spafford, Nurse Planner, to assemble the required paper work for the applications for CNE units and CMAS credits as well. It is going to be a wonderful opportunity to network, have some fun, meet new and old friends and continuing education as well.

See You in San Antonio in September!

Mary Barrientos, RN  
Education/Program Committee  
Member



### Audit Asides

"Far and Away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing" Winston Churchill

From the Culture of Audit by Egusquiza  
Day, Goal of Audit Culture:

- To ensure billed services are reflected in the documentation in the medical record

- To ensure billed services are in the medically correct setting for the patient's condition
- To ensure billed service reflect the "rules" regarding billing for the specific service
- To ensure documentation can support all billed services according to the payer rules

Mary Barrientos, RN  
Education/Program Committee



### Proposed Updates to TMAA Bylaws

Two changes to TMAA's bylaws will be presented for a vote at our conference in September. See below for current state and the proposed update.

#### Current Bylaw:

Article VI - Section 3. Powers of the Board of Directors.

E. To provide for means of financing the operations of the Association and its acquisition of property upon approval of the membership for amounts exceeding two hundred dollars (\$200).

#### Proposed Bylaw:

E. To provide for means of financing the operations of the Association and its acquisition of property upon approval of the membership for amounts exceeding \$500.  
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**Current Bylaw:**

Article VII— Committees —Section 2 —  
Special Committees

**B. Dispute Resolution Forum.** The Dispute Resolution Forum is an ad hoc committee established to provide a means of consideration of unresolved problems whereby involved individuals or agencies representing each position may be objectively heard and encouraged to reach an agreement that is mutually satisfactory. The committee chairman shall be appointed by the President and shall be a non-voting member of the Board of Directors. The committee shall consist of a representative of a healthcare provider, and audit vendor, and a third-party payer. The committee shall convene only upon request of a member desiring mediation of a specific dispute.

**Proposed Bylaw:**

Deletion of this bylaw is proposed.

Please come to the conference ready to vote on these changes. If you have any questions or concerns between now and the conference, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I can be contacted at: [shonnamac@satx.rr.com](mailto:shonnamac@satx.rr.com) or 210-386-7593.



**Shonna Macaulay, RN, BSN, CCM  
TMAA Bylaws Committee Chairman**



**Path To TMAA**

We have been working diligently on obtaining all necessary documentation for our application for CEU's and we're almost there!

Two speakers have still to submit their documentation.

I spoke with one who works here at North East Baptist today, and he is submitting today. It's amazing how much is expected for this, but we will make it



happen. **Judie Spafford,  
RN, BSN, MSN Nurse Planner**



## Last Call

I hope everyone is enjoying their summer!

It is hard to believe that the annual TMAA conference set for September 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> is right around the corner. There's still time to reserve your place and join us to expand your knowledge base and network with others in our field.



Hotel Indigo has been a pleasure to work with in planning this event. They are located at 830 N St. Mary's, San Antonio, Texas 78205. We have a block of rooms reserved for this event at \$124 per night plus applicable state and local taxes. Parking is available at the hotel for \$6 per night plus tax.

They have also agreed to extend the rate 2 days before and 2 days after the conference for those that want to take in the local sights.

If you haven't made your reservation, please contact them directly to arrange your stay at [210-527-1900](tel:210-527-1900) (a must if you plan on staying outside the 9/21-9/22 dates) or you can go online to [www.hotelindigo.com/sanantoniotx](http://www.hotelindigo.com/sanantoniotx).

You will enter the arrival and departure dates of 9/21-9/23 for online booking. The Group Code is TMA. Reservations must be made by August 21, 2016. After this date, reservations will be on a space and rate available basis.

The conference fee includes the usual amenities but more importantly breakfast, morning and afternoon breaks, and lunch! If you are attending the conference and have specific dietary needs, please send an email to [dmoore1010@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dmoore1010@sbcglobal.net) to let me know ahead of time so we can make (Continued on next page)

alternate arrangements.

Don't forget that we are also planning dinner for Thursday evening to celebrate new, current, and old TMAA members (or should I say former instead of old).

Bet you can't guess what we are having for dinner?

Please note: the hotel does not offer shuttle service to/from the airport. If you are flying into San Antonio visit <http://www.sanantonio.gov/> and select "Visitors" then "Airlines and Flight Information" under the transportation tab to make reservations for the shuttle. Shuttle cost is \$17-\$19, (plus tax) each person, one-way or you can also purchase a round-trip ticket. If you have a group, you may want to share a cab.

I know I am certainly looking forward to seeing everyone in September. Send in your

conference registration and make your room reservations as soon as you can. I do have to turn in conference attendance numbers by September 6<sup>th</sup> for meal-and-break planning per the contract.

See you in San Antonio!!!



Gaye McClellan, RN  
President Elect



Debra Moore, RN, CMAS  
Event Coordinator



## What Do You Do When Nothing Everything Else Fails—History Lessons to Treat Staph

In “Staph Retreat,” Radiolab joins historians on the hunt to find a treatment for the scourge of modern medicine—in ancient medical text. Click the link to listen to the podcast:

<http://www.radiolab.org/story/best-medicine/>



## Membership Memo

Happy Summer to all! After all the rains here in Texas, we now get to experience the steamy HOT weather and all the flies and mesquites summer brings. Oh, well, that is Texas in the summer! Just look for the shade and the pools to stay cool in. I hope you are experiencing some fun this summer, I sure plan to!

Meanwhile TMAA membership count is still lower than we want. I know there are several of you procrastinators out there that plan on joining but haven't taken the time to send it in. Well that time is NOW.

Please take a minute out of your busy day to fill out that membership application and mail it in. I know we all have so much happening with our jobs and personal life, but I don't want your professional life to fall behind either, so excuse me for being a pest sending you so many reminders to join up.

We want you to be a continued member of TMAA!

It is a big year for TMAA—the Big 3-0, as we all have been saying, so we are going to have the photo directory again this year. We have been publishing this every 5 years for the last 15 years, and it's been a personal keepsake for each of us, plus serves as a professional networking tool of what that person looks like if you need to communicate with them.

So, please, send in your photo so you won't be left out of this roster. I can use pictures previously taken at our seminars, but all newcomers need to send one to me, or if you have a personal preference photo, I will be happy to use that instead. Email it to me, at: [dlbraddo@baptisthealthsystem.com](mailto:dlbraddo@baptisthealthsystem.com). I will respond back to you when I receive it, so we will know the firewall didn't stop the delivery. Better yet send it also to: [kbraddock@satx.rr.com](mailto:kbraddock@satx.rr.com), which is the home computer.

Please continue to share your TMAA info with your co-workers and encourage them to join our group. They won't be disappointed.

Enjoy your job and your life, and I will see you in September, to network, learn and celebrate!



**Debbie Braddock,  
Membership Chair**





Texas Medical Auditors Association  
Membership Application for \_\_\_\_\_ (year)  
Tax ID: 752127331

~~1-20~~  ~~0-1~~  ~~0-2~~  ~~0-3~~  ~~0-4~~  ~~0-5~~  ~~0-6~~  ~~0-7~~  ~~0-8~~  ~~0-9~~  New Member  Renewal

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Home Fax: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 RN  LVN  Other: \_\_\_\_\_ List credentials: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of years in Medical Auditing: \_\_\_\_\_  Internal  External

**Employer:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Please do not publish my contact information in the membership directory or newsletter**

**Committee Preference:** *(Rate top three preferences for serving. #1 being the most preferred)*  
\_\_\_\_ Continuing Education    \_\_\_\_ Newsletter    \_\_\_\_ Standards and Bylaws  
\_\_\_\_ Historian    \_\_\_\_ Nominations  
\_\_\_\_ Membership    \_\_\_\_ Programs

**Leadership/Organizational Skills:** *(List positions held and/or qualities you possess)*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Annual Dues:** \$60.00  
*(Dues received prior to March 1<sup>st</sup> will be included in the current year's membership directory)*

**Mail membership application and annual dues to:**

TMAA - Membership Chairman  
P.O. Box 541227  
Houston, TX 77254

This application may be reproduced  
Membership fees are non-transferable  
Membership expires December 31<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year  
Website address: [www.TMAA.info](http://www.TMAA.info)

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For Membership Chairperson Use

Date Received: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_    Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_    Check#: \_\_\_\_\_  
Received by: \_\_\_\_\_    From: \_\_\_\_\_    Directory: \_\_\_\_\_

## TMAA BOARD of DIRECTORS

### **PRESIDENT**

Linda Hutchinson, RN, CMAS  
[abiznurse@hotmail.com](mailto:abiznurse@hotmail.com)  
210-497-3218

### **PRESIDENT ELECT**

Gaye McClellan, RN  
[gamezgaye@yahoo.com](mailto:gamezgaye@yahoo.com)  
832-248-5144

### **VICE PRESIDENT**

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[hewitt@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hewitt@sbcglobal.net)  
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### **TREASURER**

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713-729-7303

### **SECRETARY**

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### **NURSE PLANNER**

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### **PROGRAMS**

Mary Barrientos, RN  
[barrientosmary@gmail.com](mailto:barrientosmary@gmail.com)  
956-364-0440

### **EVENT COORDINATOR**

Debra Moore, RN, CMAS  
[dmoore1010@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dmoore1010@sbcglobal.net)  
281-437-4499

### **HISTORIAN**

Terri Harding, RN  
[Terrif\\_harding@yahoo.com](mailto:Terrif_harding@yahoo.com)  
972-965-7316

### **MEMBERSHIP/WEBSITE**

Debbie Braddock, RN, CMAS  
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210-341-7900

### **NOMINATIONS**

Lupita Flores, RN  
[Mrsjcarflo@yahoo.com](mailto:Mrsjcarflo@yahoo.com)  
956-445-9966

And

Leticia Roth, LVN  
[lroth@stjoseph.org](mailto:lroth@stjoseph.org)  
979-219-2654

### **NEWSLETTER**

Gaye McClellan, RN  
[gamezgaye@yahoo.com](mailto:gamezgaye@yahoo.com)  
832-248-5144

