

A Brief and Informal History of Advances in Mineral Metabolism 1984 to 2011

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The inspiration for the founding of AIMM was very straightforward. Its founders loved science and liked to ski.

In 1984 Hunter Heath and Steve Hodgson were on the staff of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. Hunter, with a major interest in calcitonin and parathyroid hormone, was a scientist working in the endocrine research laboratory, and Steve was a clinical endocrinologist specializing in metabolic bone diseases and directing of the Mayo Bone Histology laboratory. Their friendship and mutual interests frequently brought them together. Both had families with teen-aged kids, and they began to talk about skiing as a way to merge the joys of science, recreation, and family. The conversation occurred over the spring and summer of 1984, and that fall the idea was discussed with colleagues at the ASBMR meeting and was favorably received. At some point Hunter challenged Steve and their colleague in endocrine research, Rajiv Kumar, to make a plan and to put some money on the table. Each contributed \$100 and AIMM was born over lunch in the basement cafeteria of St. Mary's Hospital.

Steve Hodgson had attended a diabetes meeting in Snowmass, Colorado the previous year and had toured the Snowmass Conference Center with Snowmass Corporation representative Kevin Owen. It seemed to be an ideal venue for a small scientific meeting. The Janss Auditorium seated about eighty-five people in a mini-amphitheater format where no one was more than twenty-five feet from the speaker. The acoustics were perfect and an adjoining room could be used for breakfast, registration, social gatherings and family activities. Local hotels were in close proximity to the center and within easy access to the ski lift. Larger conference facilities were available in the same building. At that time the center was managed by the Snowmass Corporation and was used to market Snowmass as a multifunctional ski resort. The Wildwood and Silvertree Hotels were immediately adjacent to the center and a contract with one of the hotels allowed use of the Center at no cost.

Hunter Heath had a very clear vision for the organization: only a select group of respected friends and colleagues would be invited to the first meeting; the meeting was to be held during the Rochester School District's spring break; all presentations were to be no more than 25 minutes in duration and each talk would be followed by a full 20 minutes of discussion; the proceedings were not to be published - what was said in Snowmass stayed in Snowmass; anyone demonstrating hostile competitiveness was not to be invited back; younger colleagues were to be encouraged and mentored when appropriate; the membership must reflect the talent and the diversity of the contributors within the research community; collegiality was a basic qualification for membership.

Steve, who took charge of developing financial support, felt that a program that supported young investigators should be developed to provide the conference with new and fresh ideas, new talent, and future members.

Steve and Hunter agreed that on-site advertising by pharmaceutical representatives would not be allowed but representatives from supporting pharmaceutical companies were welcome to attend the meeting. However, pharmaceutical industry based scientists were encouraged to attend and to participate. Social and recreational activities that made inclusion of attendee family members part of the experience would be developed. Membership was for life and was achieved by paying for a single registration, initially \$50.

Bob Moore, a colleague from the Mayo legal department, friend and ski enthusiast, was asked to draw up and file articles of incorporation. AIMM was incorporated initially as a 501(c) 4 organization. Lori Ballou, then supervisor of the secretarial services in the Mayo Division of Endocrinology, was recruited to be the executive secretary. The origin of the name of the organization is not clear, but we recall that it was quickly selected, most likely because the legal paperwork demanded it. Rajiv Kumar designed the first logo. AIMM stationary was printed and letters of invitation were sent to prospective charter members.

The initial invitation immediately met with objections from the non-physician secretary of the Mayo Industrial Relations Committee, though no physician committee member expressed concern. Before it was learned that the secretary mistakenly had concluded that AIMM's organizers were running a for-profit scheme, AIMM was investigated by the full Mayo Board of Trustees. It was ultimately determined that there was nothing inappropriate about AIMM or its organizers. The founders admonished the secretary for not doing his homework but he remained unrepentant. Rajiv Kumar understandably became dispirited by the incident and withdrew from any leadership role.

In 1985 Steve and Lori met with Kevin Owen in Rochester, and a contract was signed for the first meeting which was to be held in 1986 during one of the final two weeks of the ski season ("low season") when hotel rates were significantly reduced. The official designated hotel was the Wildwood at a negotiated daily rate of \$49.00. Lori and Steve solicited unrestricted grants from industry through pharmaceutical representatives: Mr. Rafik Kahn (Ayerst), Mr. Dom Rodriguez (Roche), and from USV Revlon and Nuclear Data Inc. The budget for the inaugural meeting was about \$6000 which was sufficient to provide some support for at least four of the speakers. No young investigators awards were made the first year. An application for Continuing Medical Education certification was accepted by the Minnesota Medical Association, the sole provider of CME certification over the history of AIMM.

The first meeting of AIMM, in the opinions of Steve and Hunter, was a success beyond expectations mostly because of Lori Ballou's thoughtful planning, her friendly interest in all those present, her organizational and networking skills, and her dedication to the task at hand. From the initial registration and reception, to the general meeting schedule, the

breakfasts and family dinners, the board dinners and planning sessions, the format she established at the first meeting has remained essentially unchanged over the lifetime of AIMM. Guy Howard assumed the duty of operating the slide projector, later replaced by a computerized system, a duty he has never relinquished. Hunter provided an old bent ski pole which was used as a pointer. It has mercifully disappeared and has been replaced by a hand held laser.

All aspects of the inaugural meeting seemed to work and gave birth to the beginnings of a new culture of learning and recreation, friendship and collaboration that left many of the original members with a sense that something extraordinary had happened. A new environment for doing science had emerged in a spirit of friendship and good will among people of common purpose. It seemed to change the way that those present related to one another. The general feeling was that the meeting should be held annually and the first AIMM “board”, actually an unelected steering committee at that time, consisting of Hunter, Lori, Steve, Claude Arnaud and Hector DeLuca, outlined a program for the following year. The necessary contracts with the resort association and with the Snowmass Corporation were subsequently signed. AIMM seemed to have a future, and a small clone of bone scientists had discovered group therapy.

Hunter assumed the presidency, which the bylaws stipulated to be a three year term, Steve became the treasurer, general fund raiser, and liaison to the Minnesota Medical Association office of Continuing Medical Education in perpetuity, and Lori the Executive Secretary, the officer who actually organized the non-scientific aspects of each meeting, the person in charge and who did most of the work and who became the face of AIMM. To the benefit of AIMM Lori developed several long term personal and professional relationships with many of the Snowmass personnel with whom she worked, and with Jane Phillips of the Minnesota Medical Association Office of Continuing Medical Education.

Developing financial support was not difficult and only required that we meet annually with established sources. The Young Investigator program attracted financial support. It became clear, however, that industrial support from year to year was dependent on factors that AIMM could not control. Expenses increased the second year when the AIMM Young Investigators Award Program was initiated. Registration fees, initially \$50, remained stable for a few years, but were slowly and reluctantly increased thereafter. After the first year Young Investigator awards were provided by grants from industry, primarily from Proctor and Gamble and Merck.

Over the years, Pharmaceutical companies continued their support but costs increased and low season became shortened to include only the final week of the ski season. The conference center began charging a fee and use of the center’s catering services was mandatory. Alternative locations were considered, and an exploratory visit to the Vail resort by Steve , Gary Stein, Jane Lian, and Lori was made in the early ‘90’s, but it became clear that AIMM had established its identity and culture in Snowmass and thoughts of moving to another location were abandoned.

In 1993, it became clear that additional sources of support would be needed and AIMM began to position itself for the future. With information provided by Lori's records, Steve filed an application with the IRS to establish AIMM as a 501 (c) 3 charitable organization. This was done without legal assistance in order to avoid legal fees. The designation was granted on September 1, 1994, making AIMM eligible to receive tax exempt charitable contributions. Bob Marcus established an honorarium donation tradition among members, and several anonymous contributions were received. More recently a "Founder's Fund" was established by Bob Gagel's family estate whose purpose has been to support the scientific program. The fund accepts charitable contributions and is slowly growing. A few years later, Rene St. Arnaud filed an application for an educational grant with the National Institutes of Health which was awarded in 2009 and renewed for three years the following year.

Charter members were loyal supporters in succeeding years and, as the Young Investigator program became known, several began to include their postdoctoral fellows, residents and students in the annual meeting. Scientists from industry responded to AIMM invitations and helped make up a diverse group of peers with a common interest in mineral metabolism. The membership, mainly composed of academics and clinicians initially, broadened to include entrepreneurs, an engineer (Kevin Benet), a Danish veterinarian who specialized in treating a hoof disease common among race horses (Dr. Lenert Ostblum), a Danish pathologist and world renowned histomorphometrist and deer hunter with an interest in antler growth and development (Dr. Flemming Melsen), a chair of plastic and reconstructive surgery who studied the use of a lactate matrix as a template for new bone formation (Dr. Enrique Vasconez), dentists and oral surgeons, orthopedists, and industrial chemists. Because of the "what is said in Snowmass stays in Snowmass" rule, work could be presented and discussed with peers well before it appeared in scientific publications. Young investigators, selected by committee at the ASBMR meeting the preceding fall, presented their work and often received constructive criticism as well as a \$500 award. A special "open forum" session was held during which unusual clinical cases, new ideas and findings, puzzling problems, new techniques and unreported data were presented and discussed. In more recent years, informal Meet the Professor sessions were added in late afternoon time slots and were often held in local or mountainside bars and restaurants. But the ski runs and lifts became the most productive forum for science, collaboration, exchange of information, and the development of both professional relationships and personal friendships. Skiing became an integral element of the educational process and a facilitator of scientific discourse.

Continuing Medical Education was offered annually but on one occasion was used to attract individuals who were not interested in science. This posed a problem which Lori solved by refusing to award any unearned CME credits. Though this resulted in threats of legal action and blustering on the part of those involved, no more was heard from them and a policy that sharply focused on science and that discouraged similar behavior emerged.

The American Society for Bone and Mineral Research (ASBMR), founded thirteen years before AIMM, had become a large international organization of several thousand members. Its annual meeting had grown accordingly and had become the principal forum for the rapidly expanding body of scientific information in the field of bone and mineral research. The ASBMR annual meeting had become large and was considered by some to be impersonal, with the volume of new information being somewhat overwhelming. Its Board of Directors sensed a need for a less formal and more intimate way to share scientific information, and its leadership began to consider a relationship with AIMM.

Almost all members of AIMM were also members of the ASBMR and leadership of the two organizations commonly overlapped. Jane Aubin and Bob Nissenson became presidents of both organizations, and many others would hold leadership positions in both. John Haddad and his wife Julie were charter members of AIMM. John served on the Board of AIMM and as president of ASBMR. John's untimely death in May of 1997, and the existence of mutual interests and common leadership among both organizations, led the ASBMR board of Directors to propose the development of the AIMM – ASBMR John Haddad Young Investigator Meeting. Funding and selection of awardees were to be functions of the ASBMR Board of Directors. Presentations were to occur at annual meetings of AIMM. In about 1998, the executive director of the ASBMR attended an AIMM meeting and the following year (1999) the first group of awardees was named. As of 2010 there have been 166 AIMM and AIMM – ASBMR John Haddad Young Investigators in total. The program has continued and has benefitted both organizations.

Not recorded in AIMM's archives are the specific dates of unusual events within the resort that coincided with AIMM's annual meeting and of special AIMM social events that occurred over the years. Perhaps the only problem generally experienced by AIMM members was related to the Peace Officer's Annual Ski Tournament. This was a national event and, from all appearances, skiing was not its principle activity. Before the tournament was over, several police officers had been arrested and ultimately faced criminal trials in the Pitkin County Court House the following summer. The tournament was never held at Snowmass again. In contrast, the Disabled Veterans Ski Tournament has frequently coincided with AIMM and has been a source of inspiration. The courage of veterans, blind, hemiplegic, amputee disabled, all skiing and competing with one another, has been a testimony to the quality of American and Canadian servicemen and women.

In about 1993 AIMM held its first and last annual wine tasting party. It was organized by Russ Turner who also selected the wines. It was held in two hotel rooms. It was an orderly and fun party but was never repeated. The hotel insisted that, in the future, it must supply the wine and food and the hotel administration took a dim view of the whole affair.

One local bar will be remembered for its bartender. He worked evenings in the Tower Bar in the Snowmass Mall and was a natural showman doing magic tricks and providing a running and humorous dialogue with his patrons as he filled their glasses and used his considerable skills as a raconteur to prolong their evening. Every evening he would

solicit requests to perform a unique feat of magic but would actually agree to do so only after \$100 had been raised from the patrons. He never failed. The trick began with the shuffling of a deck of cards which he would eventually fan and present to a patron asking that a card be selected, withdrawn from the pack and shown to the crowd. This done, he would ask that the card be turned over and inserted back into the deck after which he would shuffle the deck again. Holding the deck in his right hand, he would then, quickly and with some force, throw the deck up through the whirling blades of an overhead fan. The cards, would scatter around the bar and fall to the floor – all except the card previously selected and inverted by the patron, which would appear behind the rotating fan blades pinned to the ceiling by a thumbtack. Having witnessed this, Lori Ballou was inspired to retain the magician to entertain an AIMM family dinner. This occurred on two occasions with the children all sitting on the floor in front of their seated parents.

Bob Marcus was an AIMM president who liked to share his many passions among which was a love of music. Bob played the clarinet in a jazz group in San Francisco, but also loved classical music. Each year during his presidency he would hire a concert pianist and play classical music in the lobby of the Silvertree hotel. This evolved into an annual musical event among AIMM members which lasted several years and featured a variety of musical talents including a string quartet, a harp concert, and Larry Malette on the Irish whistle.

It became customary for the President to host a dinner for Young Investigator recipients that over the years expanded to interested members as well. Larry Suva, a previous young investigator award recipient, subsequent AIMM President and natural party animal, together with Dana Gaddy, also a young investigator awardee, began to host a party for young investigators which featured home cooked food. It was held in their suite at the Laurelwood. This focus on young scientists has become an AIMM hallmark that has continued to be hosted by Dana and Larry and is an integral feature of the AIMM acculturation process.

Initiated by Lynn Kohlmeier, AIMM ski races have been held on the NASTAR course annually since about 1998 with all skiers being stratified according to skill level and age. Trophies and medals were awarded for each category at one of the two AIMM dinners held each year. The races have been very popular among the young and several friendships have emerged among the children of AIMM members who have skied together and competed over several years. Many have grown to adulthood and enough years have passed that even they are looking over their shoulders at the third generation of AIMM racers.

A milestone was reached over the 2008-9 seasons when Lori turned the administration of AIMM over to the able hands of Zoe Zampana. Lori was recognized by the leadership as the heart and soul of AIMM and was given a personalized academic chair. The transition was seamless. A new era had begun.

In 2010 AIMM held its 25th anniversary party!

The year 2011 finds AIMM financially healthy, well supported by loyal members, and fulfilling its educational mission. AIMM's leadership, headed by President Eileen Shore and supporting members clearly ensures success in the coming years.

Thoughts and Reflections

Steve Hodgson, M.D.

Among the attached appendices is a list of AIMM and John Haddad Young Investigators, many of whom have become leaders in the field of bone and mineral metabolism and leaders in AIMM, ASBMR, other major medical societies, scientific organizations, academic institutions, and industry. Through its first twenty-five years, AIMM has named a total of 166 young investigators who proudly list the award in their résumés. (see appendix)

In my opinion, the effective intellectual nurturing and support of our young colleagues is perhaps AIMM's major achievement, one that, in fact, fulfills one of our most sacred obligations as scientists, physicians and teachers, and an accomplishment in which the membership can take great pride. The very existences of AIMM, and the future of AIMM, need no further vindication.

In a time when the notion of "political correctness" tends to lead us to irrational behavior and faulty decision making, it is easy to ignore or overlook the very reasons for AIMM's success. Simply stated, AIMM would not have happened without the interest, collaboration, and support of industry. The pharmaceutical industry has been the critical partner over the years and has never asked AIMM for anything in return – never. Current concerns among some of our colleagues that scientist and physician credibility is compromised by this relationship need only to examine the AIMM / pharmaceutical industry partnership to realize its value and validity. When one further considers the magnificent history of collaboration among industry, scientists, government agencies, and the financial sector, little justification exists for the imposition of arbitrary and often politically motivated restrictions and regulations that interfere with the free flow of information. New thinking and an objective review of these realities is needed. Perhaps AIMM will serve as a template for an enlightened understanding of what can be accomplished by the exercise of free will and unfettered scientific collaboration.

Two remaining thoughts need to be expressed. I'm sure that the hundreds of physicians and scientists involved with AIMM over the years would join me in thanking Lori, not just for her hard work but for who she is, an intrepid force yet a gentle spirit, a real treasure who will always lie at the heart of AIMM. And Hunter has provided so much of the spirit and character of AIMM that his contributions have become the bedrock of AIMM's ethos and culture.

Thanks to you both, and my best wishes to those who follow you.

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(Dr. Hodgson has no contractual agreement of financial relationship of any kind with the pharmaceutical or medical device industries.)

Lori Ballou

I just happened to be in the right place at the right time. I worked with the best right from the very beginning. Steve and Hunter offered their expertise whenever it was needed on the how-to's of putting together a meeting. The people at the Snowmass Conference center and Snowmass Resort Association were the best and many I still consider my friends. Most of the original staffs have long since moved on. The ambience of the meeting is hard to describe. One needs to experience it, which, for me, every year had many "ah ha" moments.

The only distasteful memory that stands out is the incident with two physicians, who had registered for the meeting, came for breakfast and the first presentation of the morning early on, never to be seen or heard from the remainder of the day or, finally, the remainder of the week, until it was time for the evening events. We gave them only the CME credits they had earned for the meeting they attended. They immediately contacted MMA and wanted to file a complaint and even talked of suing us. I had already spoken with the representative, who stated that the action we took was appropriate, since their attendance had been monitored. It was a moment. The letters are in the files with Zoe.

Hunter and I spent many an afternoon struggling down the mountain, grateful that we had survived. The "jocks" were flexing their skiing muscles, but I reminded Hunter, an experienced pilot, that none of them could fly an airplane.

I loved the simplicity of the format with no abstracts. I was proud when the MMA complimented the concept of the smaller meeting and what AIMM had achieved, indicating MMA was looking to create a CME program for meetings like ours.

One year we put together a wine bash at the Silvertree, using some of the attendee's rooms as wine stations. What a night that was!

For me, when the ASBMR stepped in, it seemed to make AIMM a step-child.

I always fought for AIMM staying in Snowmass, no matter what, as it was the only place where the history of AIMM came to be.... The intimacy of the Janss Auditorium could never be replicated, especially the "magic" that took place there for 25 years. It has been

something to behold. I am still in awe of what this small group was able to bring about and so honored to have been part of it.

My thanks to Hunter and Steve for all the great memories.

Lori Ballou,
AIMM Executive Secretary, 1985 – 2008

Hunter Heath III, M.D.

I look back on the creation and success of the AIMM meeting with warm nostalgia and pride in what Steve, Lori, and I brought to life and our successors have sustained. As the above history says, AIMM was born rather whimsically, but after the first meeting, and the enthusiastic vote of the attendees, we knew this had to continue. Fortunately, we made a lot of “right” decisions early on—the location, the program format, the restricted attendance, the fostering of women and minority membership, and the insistence on collegiality and constructiveness, for example. There is a lot of talk today about organizations’ having “core values.” AIMM truly has core values, which have served it well. I want to say here that despite her modesty, Lori Ballou deserves a full measure credit for her critical role in AIMM’s success—*thank you!* In semi-retirement, I look back on my career with gratitude for the many opportunities I had to grow personally and contribute to our field; but I am most proud of AIMM, which has served science and scientists so well and for so long. It pleases me immensely that it lives and thrives beyond Steve’s, Lori’s, and my professional lives. May AIMM be around many years from now, stimulating and fostering science, friendship, and collegiality. Godspeed.

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Appendix

AIMM Young Investigator Awardees (*indicates YI’s who have become AIMM Presidents)

1987

Erik Eriksen
Richard Eastell
Karl Insogna
Pamela Robey

1988

Brendan Boyce

1989

Roberto Pacifici
Ruth Globus
Robert Friedler
Kyoji Ikeda
Henry Donahue
Giovani Rovera

1990

Diane Raab
Curtis Shellum
William Burtis
Mary Goldring
Marie DeMay
Steven Dworetzky

1991

Peter Ebeling
Michael Econs
Alan Gorn
Thomas Owen

1992

Harald Jueppner*
Lynn Kohlmeier
Baruch Frenkel
Larry Gelbert
Merry Jo Oursler
Sara Peleg
Lee Weinstein
Ronald Ingram

1993

Bart Clarke
Kyoji Ikeda
Robert Jilka
B. Jenny Kiratli
Kazushige Sakaguchi
Jane Love
Phyllis LuValle
Mona Calvo
Anne Looker

1994

P Fanti
Larry Suva*
Gerard Karsenty
A Karaplis
W Philbrick

1995

Roberto Civitelli
Mark Horowitz
Robert Campos
Janet Henderson
Thorsten Kirsch
Nicholas Koszewski
Robert Klein
Beate Lanske
Nalini Rajamannan
Stuart Sprague
Kirk Thomas

1996

Mary Bouxsein
Eileen Shore*
Graham Wagner
Robert Jilka
Lynn Kohlmeier
Tim Skerry*

1997

Patricia Ducey
James Hanken
Diane Cullen
Jonathan Graff
Johan Heersche

1998

B Cooney
K O'Brien
J Janko
C Kao
Carlotta Glackin
I Nemere

ASBMR – AIMM John Haddad Young Investigators

1999

Joseph Alexander
Tatiana Foroud
Geetha Gopalakrishnan
Roderick Hubbard
Chris Langub
Lance Lanyon
Charles O'Brien
Dana Gaddy-Kurten

2000

Theresa Guise
David Roth
Thorsten Schinke
Eileen Shore*
Rupangi Vasavada
John Wysolmerski

2001

M Hediger
S Kahonen
H Drissi
Robert Spurney

2002

Theresa Bellido
David Bonthron
Serge Ferrari
Shiguang Liu
Fanxin Long
Millan Patel
George Stroup
Matthew Warman
Karla Lee

2003

Heike Bischoff
Kurt Hankenson
Amjad Javed
Melissa Kacena
Richard Lund
Lynne Marshall
Takeshi Sakata
Laura Zanello

2004

Florent Elefteriou
Lorena Havill
Sophie Jamal
Yibin Kang
David Karasik
Benjamin Leder
Alexander Robling
M. Neale Weitzmann

2005

Paul Baldock
Gregory Clines
Roberta Faccio
Mary Beth Humphrey
Matthew Mahon
Neil McGowan
Shunichi Murakami
Stuart Warden

2006

Melita Dvorak
Richard Faragher
Jilang Li
Takua Notomi
Despina Sitara
Jean-Pierre Vilardaga
Majd Zayzafoon
Shuanhu Zhou

2007

Tamara Alliston
Mary Barbe
Simon Cool
Jacques Drouin
Renny Franceschi
G. David Roodman
Songtao Shi
Kunikazu Tsuji
Erwin Wagner
Stuart Warden

2008

Tania Crotti, Ph.D.
Christian Dombrowski, Ph.D.

Marco Eijken, Ph.D.
Pierrick Fournier, Ph.D.
Leopold Fröhlich, Ph.D.
Yi-Hsiang Hsu, M.D., Ph.D.
Shoji Ichikawa, Ph.D.
Laura Kooienga, M.D.
Joy Wu, M.D., Ph.D.

2009

Laura Armas, MD
James Edwards, PhD
Susan Krum, PhD
Ulrike Moedder, PhD
Pierre Moffatt, PhD
Hiroko Segawa, PhD
Yihon Wan, PhD
Vijay Yadav, PhD
Haibo Zhao, MD, PhD

2010

Jackie Fretz, PhD
Mohammad , PhD
Nan Hatch, PhD, DMD
Eric Hesse, MD, PhD
Dobrawa Napierala, PhD
Matthew Steensma, MD
Baohong Zhao, PhD
Wei Zou, MD, PhD

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Hoffman-La Roche
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