

## Why Is the National Meeting Important? Reflections of an SGIM Groupie

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I attended my first rock concert in 1982: Queen at Madison Square Garden—orchestra seats! There was nothing like having a chance to see Freddie Mercury live. Critics and fans said he had the broadest vocal range of any rock singer ever. I attended my first Society of General Internal Medicine National (SGIM) Meeting in 1991 in Seattle, Washington. What does one have to do with the other? Both are milestones in my life that I can vividly remember and that I often brag about to junior colleagues and those who don't remember what real music was like.

As a young college student and budding air guitar virtuoso, I admired the talent and innovative music of Queen, and the band was among my favorite artists. As a primary care resident and later chief medical resident at Jacobi Medical Center in the Bronx, New York, I admired the commitment and talent of Pam Charney and Steve Hahn, my mentors, who inspired me to pursue a career in academic general internal medicine. The National Meeting in 1991 was one of the first glimpses of the career I wanted, but had no idea as to its national scope. I was to start my health services research fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh the following July.

The 1991 meeting was my first and, as luck would have it, the chair was Wishwa Kapoor, who would become a key mentor, and whose ap-

proach to research and leadership I have since emulated throughout my career. In addition, the people I met and the workshops and abstracts I attended exposed me to the breadth and depth of general medicine in a way that has been hard to shake.

I've attended many concerts since 1982 (sadly none of them included Freddie Mercury) and I've attended every SGIM National meeting, save two, since 1991. Each year, it remains the highlight of my year and is the charge that I need to keep the spark of academic generalism strong within me. This year's meeting theme was devoted to resilience and grit. That's appropriate as the meeting had been the best way to recharge with like-minded colleagues. Every time I recommend the Society and meeting attendance to a medical student or trainee, I know that it can ignite a spark to choosing general medicine as a career. The following are similar sentiments from a couple of *Forum* associate editors:

*"The most striking aspect of the annual meeting was the huge number of attendees who are somehow involved in the meeting—giving talks, workshops, or posters. It really made me appreciate the ethos of SGIM—we are a very inclusive, participatory organization—not one where a few people are the leaders and the rest are along for the ride."*

—Somnath Mookerjee

*"Every time I give a lecture or a motivational talk on the topic of burnout, I begin with the caveat that I hate talking about burnout; I want to talk about the good things. So, I was pleased that the organizers of SGIM 2017 chose to emphasize "Resilience & Grit," as opposed to their absence. As clinician educator, I'm constantly searching for new ways to access the deep wells of meaning that lie beneath our work, and I found the many workshops and presentations on narrative medicine particularly inspiring. I also found it fitting that we gathered in our nation's capital at a time when our patients and our healthcare system require our advocacy and activism more than ever. Leaving SGIM feeling energized and recommitted to our work is nothing new, but there's nothing like a march on Washington to punctuate the experience."*

—Gaetan Sgro

As is the tradition, the August issue of SGIM's *Forum* is dedicated to our Annual Meeting where readers will see engaging photographs, read incisive recap essays, and congratulate again the award winners. In addition, we recap the 40<sup>th</sup> annual event celebrating Generalism, the LEAHP program, and a piece on residency competencies around rapid response teams.