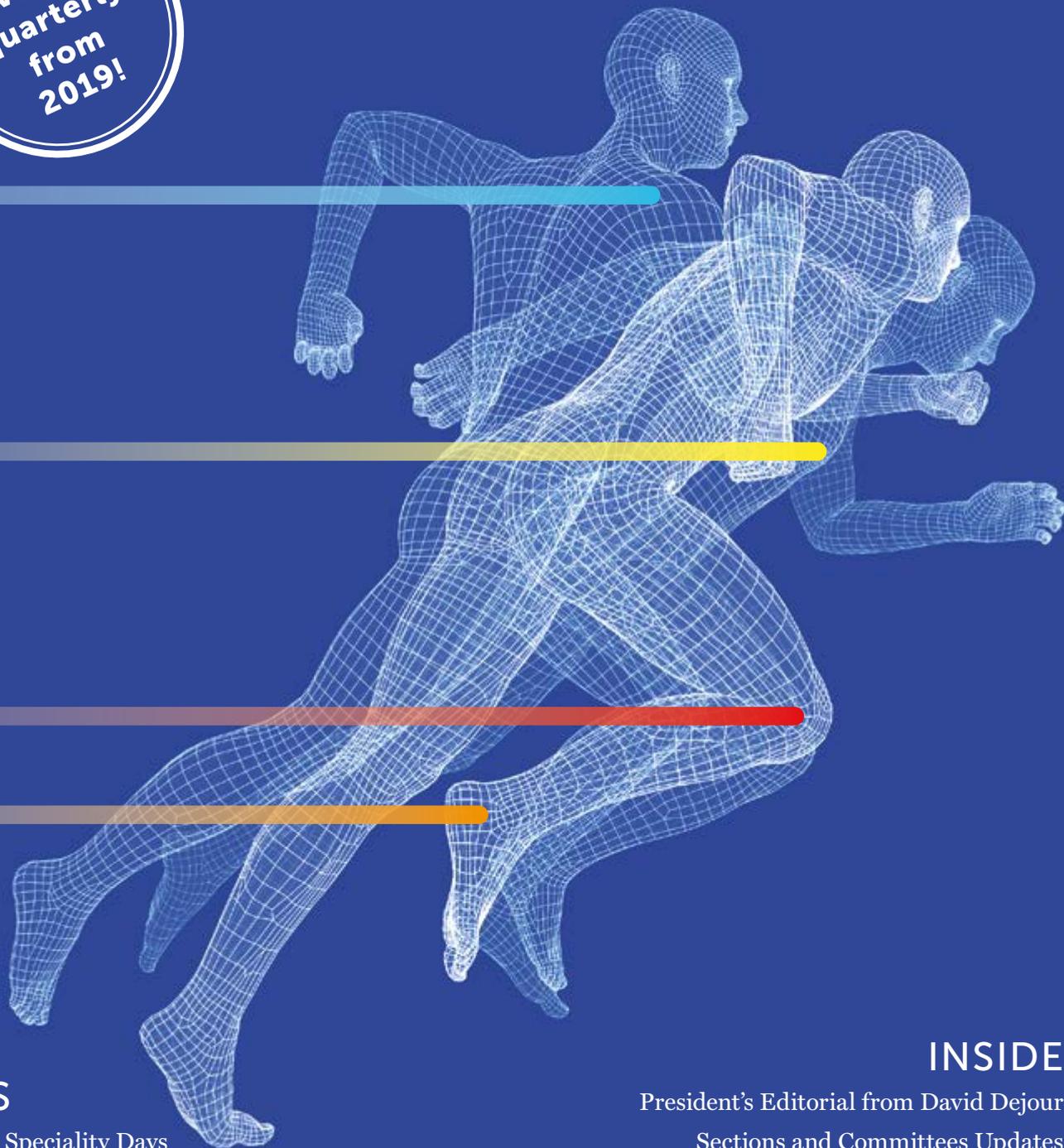


# ESSKA NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2018



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## NEWS

- ESSKA Speciality Days to be held on 8-9 November 2019 in Madrid
- Presentation of ESSKA's new Board Members and Committee Chairpersons
- Pillar of ESSKA interview with Peter Hertel

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# PILLAR OF ESSKA

ESSKA HONOURS THE INDIVIDUALS THAT HAVE BEEN THE "PILLARS" OF OUR SOCIETY.  
IN THE CURRENT ISSUE, WE WILL FOCUS ON PROFESSOR PETER HERTEL.

## *Interview with Peter Hertel, by Roland Becker*



It is Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2018, and I am meeting Peter Hertel at a hotel in Potsdam, a city close to Berlin. We have breakfast together, and discuss his life, his career in arthroscopy, and of course talk about ESSKA, with two "S"s. Peter Hertel was a founding member of our society, when its name was the *European Society of Knee Surgery and Arthroscopy (ESKA)*.

**RB** PETER, THANK YOU FOR MAKING TIME FOR AN INTERVIEW ON SUCH A SUNNY SATURDAY MORNING. LUCKILY WE CAN SIT OUTSIDE. PETER, TELL ME PLEASE, HOW DID YOUR CAREER BEGIN?

**PH** I grew up in West Berlin, which was then surrounded by East Germany, the GDR. And it was there that I studied medicine, at the Free University of Berlin. I love sport — I have been active throughout my life — and in my school and student days I got involved in rowing. The rowing club was very close to my parent's house, where I still live. I started rowing when I was 14 years of age. A group of us young guys were dreaming — with the guidance of Hans Lenk, Olympic gold medallist from the German 'eight' in Rome 1960 — to win Germany's national championship. I was in the coxed-four boat. A couple of years later, in 1965, we won the National Championship. In the same year we became European Champions. But we wanted more, we wanted to be World Champions. The four of us joined the coxed-eight boat — "the Deutschlandachter". I was already studying medicine at the University of Berlin, so I trained during the weekends. We flew to Hamburg on Friday nights, met the rest of the crew, and trained in Ratzeburg close to Hamburg. Two days

of intensive training with our coach Karl Adam, then back to Berlin on Sunday night, ready for medical school on Monday, and weekday training at the local club in Spandau. It all came together in 1966, when our eight won the World Championship in Bled (Yugoslavia). Despite all this rowing, I managed to finish medical school in the regular six years.

**RB** WHAT HAPPENED AFTER MEDICAL SCHOOL, AND BEING A WORLD CHAMPION?

**PH** I went on to Saar-University of Homburg, and specialized in Traumatology in Prof. Schweiberer's Department. I then did my PhD, and my lovely wife had our three children. My PhD thesis was about lesion and tension patterns of the ligaments of the knee. The knee has always been my major interest. I remember the first time when I performed a knee arthroscopy. Wolf®-company was one of the biggest companies in the arthroscopic field at those times. In 1977, Richard O'Connor from Los Angeles was sponsored by Wolf®, and travelling with his nurse across Europe, performing knee arthroscopies at different places. He came to Homburg University and we did the first arthroscopy together there. We used punches, originally invented by neurosurgeons, and used for removing herniated discs. Using a camera and a monitor was something very new. Our camera was about 30cm long and 10cm wide and, believe me, it was very heavy. O'Connor was holding the camera in his hand. It wasn't sterilized, but O'Connor said sterility wasn't an issue for arthroscopy: there would be so much water running through the knee during the procedure that we didn't need to bother about

the risk of infection. Later, I went to California for a month to spend the time with Richard O'Connor, and watched how to do arthroscopy properly.

When I returned to Berlin, I became the Head of the Traumatology Department at Virchow Hospital, one of the biggest in West Berlin at that time in 1981. I stayed at the Virchow Hospital for 10 years and then moved to Martin Luther Hospital to take over its Department of Traumatology. I worked here until my retirement, in 2008, and took care of many professional athletes. I still see athletes today.

**RB** BERLIN WAS THE PLACE WHERE ESKA/ESSKA WAS FOUNDED. WHEN AND WHY BERLIN?

**PH** Ejnar Eriksson came from Stockholm in Sweden, and he was the engine for founding a European knee society. He's a great speaker, and he showed impressive arthroscopy knee videos, which he had recorded with a 32mm camera. Enjar got invited to many congresses in the US and throughout the world. However, a Swedish doctor's income was low, and in the US it was already common — even for invited speakers — to pay their congress fee, and cover their own travel expenses.

If we wanted to become more independent in Europe, and compete with international societies, we needed to have our own congresses, and we needed our own society. At one of the international congresses Ejnar Eriksson met Günter Böhm, the exhibition manager of the Messe Berlin in 1982.

Remember that West Berlin was an island, surrounded by East Germany. It felt very isolated, and it needed exhibitions and congresses, to get us an international reputation. I was a young and aspiring Berlin surgeon, so I immediately got involved. Ejnar contacted 8 or 9 knee surgeons throughout Europe, and together we founded the European Society of Knee Surgery and Arthroscopy (ESKA), as a non-profit organisation, in Berlin in 1983 (Figure 1). There were six founding members: Ejnar Eriksson from Sweden, Werner Müller from Switzerland, Edward Lorden Trickey from England, Theo van Rens from The Netherlands, Jean Yves Dupont from France and myself from West Berlin (Figure 1). We needed six people, according to German law, to register an organisation. Werner Müller became the ESKA's first President, Ejnar Eriksson was the Secretary, and I was Treasurer. Organising all this required a great deal of work. Having established the name ESKA, and founded the new society, we also needed a logo. I thought about it, and drew ESKA's logo at my writing desk at home. The

Board accepted it immediately. My ESKA logo has basically never changed, except when we added the second "S" for Sports traumatology, a few years later (Figure 2). I have to admit that I'm rather proud of the logo, knowing it's become the distinctive sign for one of the world's biggest sports surgery societies. The world connection was deepened by Werner Müller and John Feagin. They founded the ESKA-AOSSM travelling fellowship, which became a wonderful transatlantic experience for surgeons specialized in this field.

**RB** YOU WERE ONE OF THE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY, AND YOU DESIGNED THE LOGO FOR ESKA/ESSKA. BUT YOUR BASIC IDEA WAS TO ORGANISE CONGRESSES IN EUROPE?

**PH** Yes, we needed a congress in Europe in order to develop a scientific platform. We decided to organise our first congress at the International Congress Centre (ICC) in West Berlin, in 1984, because the council of West Berlin agreed to cover part of the risk (Figure 3). That was a great relief for us. However, in the end, that first congress was a great success, with over 700 attendees (but little financial benefit). We had organised something unique, because surgeons from Warsaw Pact Countries were also invited, and able to attend. The congress fees for these people were either waived by ESKA, or covered by the companies like Wolf® and Storz®, because none of them were able to meet the costs.

The abstracts were anonymously evaluated by two reviewers, and even some well-known surgeons had their oral presentations refused (one head of the university department refused eight abstracts). So, we had already a fair evaluation process.

We needed simultaneous translation into French, German, English and Italian. Can you imagine how many translators were sitting in the back of the audience, considering that most of them were trained for translation in one direction only? This consumed the largest part of our budget.

As a surgeon from West Berlin, I was already able to pass through the Iron Curtain, in the 80's. You remember that Berlin was divided in two separate cities, belonging to East and West Germany. Dr Heinz Wuschech from East Berlin visited me at my hospital several times in order to learn about arthroscopy. From then on I was regularly invited to congresses in East Berlin and East Germany. I received special permission in order to visit the other side of the Curtain, and was able to see the fast development of arthroscopy in what we called the "other side".

**RB** PETER HERTEL. YOU ARE 75 YEARS OLD NOW. WHAT ARE YOU DOING TODAY?

**PH** I have a wonderful wife, Jutta, a former Olympic 200m runner, and I have my family, which makes me very happy. I have to look after my parent's house where we live, and you can imagine there's always something to fix because this house is eighty years old. I am still a member of the same rowing club in Spandau, where I joined when I was 14 years old. I still row with friends once a week. And finally, I love being an orthopaedic surgeon, seeing my patients in the outpatients' clinic at the Ku'damm in Berlin, and operating on some of them in the Klinik Sanssouci, a private hospital in Potsdam, and in my old Martin Luther Hospital. In general, I start my surgery at 7 o'clock in the morning, so that I don't waste any of my day.

**RB** WHAT ARE YOUR WISHES FOR ESSKA?

**PH** ESSKA is an amazing society, and I am very impressed about its growth. ESSKA has a unique friendliness as a society, which I always feel when I attend the biennial congress, which I have never missed! Congresses are so important, even in an internet-age, because it's something different to say 'hello' to somebody, and shake their hands, and discuss orthopaedics and sport traumatology face-to-face.

I would also like to emphasize the work of Ejnar Eriksson, who launched our KSSTA journal, one of the best journals in the field of knee surgery, sport traumatology and arthroscopy in the world.

Finally, I have a little wish: I hope that people will never forget where ESSKA came from, what it is now and to value all the friendships which ESSKA has created.

I want to thank Peter Hertel for giving us some insight about his life and the life of ESSKA which I am sure is new to many of you. Peter has just left for the Berlin Rowing Championships, with his wife Jutta, and to meet his old friends.

FIVE OF THE FOUNDING MEMBERS IN BERLIN IN 1983 (FROM RIGHT TO LEFT: ENJAR ERIKSSON, LORDEN TRICKEY, PETER HERTEL, JEAN YVES DUPONT, WERNER MÜLLER)



THE FIRST ORIGINAL DRAFT OF THE ESSKA LOGO INVENTED BY PETER



PROGRAMME OF THE FIRST CONGRESS IN 1984



PETER PRESENTING AT THE FIRST ESSKA CONGRESS

THANK YOU PETER FOR JOINING THE BREAKFAST

