



THE LATEST NEWS AND UPDATES

VOLUME 17/ISSUE 8-NOVEMBER 2025

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FROM THE CHAIR'S DESK
ALAN WILSON, MD,
CHAIR

A SACRED DAWN: WAKING THE
DUOMO IN FIRENZE
SHAWN C. JONES, MD, FACS

SED SCHEDULE

FROM THE CHAIR'S DESK

BY ALAN WILSON, MD



Good day. This will be my first "From the Chair's Desk" column. Thank you for the honor of being your current Chair. We have the Interim meeting coming up shortly in National Harbor, MD. I hope to see you there. We will be meeting at Tom's Watch Bar for the Board of Director's Reception on Friday after the Opening Session. It will be a great time to re-engage with each other and make new friends. It seems since the end of the quarantines from Covid that there are a lot of negative interactions on the internet. And that can carry over to 'real life' up close and personal. More can be conveyed by a handshake and a smile in person than you parse out on Zoom. I am glad we have been back to in person meetings and feel that so much more can be achieved that way. My wife and I had the pleasure to attend the Medicinal Bourbon Tours hosted by Dr. Gregory Cooper. It was an excellent time to make new friends and visit a different part of the country. Thank you Dr. Cooper!

The online testimony for the Online Reference Committees is becoming more popular before each meeting. Because of the amount of business to come before the House of Delegates each meeting, this has really facilitated trying to work on each piece of business that we we. This year they are considering the Online Reference Committee reports as consent calendars, therefore if you want to address something in the resolutions you may need to extract it. We've discussed the resolutions we feel are pertinent to the SED in the Resolutions Committee meeting last week. Dr. Woody Jenkins from Oklahoma is our new Resolutions Committee Chair.

With the government shutdown we should keep those workers in our thoughts. As tough as we have it with Medicare reimbursement, those folks are working without current compensation. How many of us would work totally for free? We need to think about those in Jamaica after the hurricane. Lastly, we need to keep Miranda in our prayers as well. She and her staff work at the KMA work very hard for us everyday. With this being Thanksgiving month here in the US, those are some of the things we need to think about.

See you in Maryland.

Alan

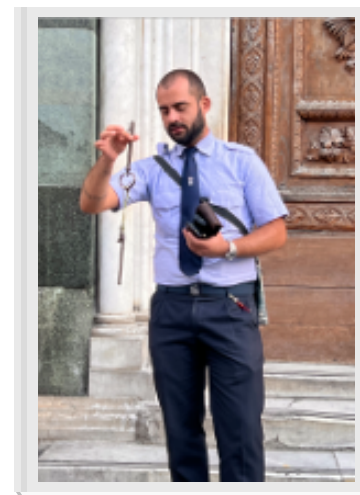
A SACRED DAWN: WAKING THE DUOMO IN FIRENZE

SHAWN C. JONES, MD, FACS

The Living Heart of Florence

As the figurative cradle or birthplace of the Renaissance, Firenze(1) or Florence has no shortage of iconic destinations: the haunting geometry of Michelangelo's David in the Accademia Gallery, the intellectual corridor of the Uffizi, the sun-dappled symmetry of Boboli Gardens. Yet among these, a singular experience awakens something deeper, even more mystical. It is an early morning journey through Santa Maria del Fiore, or what is more simply known as 'the Duomo'.

This daybreak encounter with the Florence Cathedral or the Duomo offers history, art, engineering, architecture and sightseeing, but these elements combine in such a novel way that one is introduced to awe and reverence simultaneously. The tour begins in silence, with the chiavigero, Florence's historic key bearer, unlocking the vast bronze doors for your small group just before dawn. As the city stretches awake, you step inside the cathedral's cool stone interior in stillness, with only the echo of your footsteps in the nave of the sanctuary.



The chiavigero with the key



A famous 1465 painting by Michelino depicting Dante standing before his Divine Comedy is located on the left aisle wall, near the presbytery. Dante is holding his book, with a scene of the Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso behind him along with the dome of the Duomo. Due to a lifetime ban from Florence, he would have only seen the first six years of construction of the cathedral and would never therefore have seen the dome.

The Duomo was begun in 1296, but its magnificent crown—Brunelleschi's Dome—would not grace the skyline until 1436. For over a century, the cathedral stood roofless, awaiting an engineering miracle. Filippo Brunelleschi, a goldsmith with no formal architectural training, delivered it: a double-walled octagonal dome with no internal scaffolding to support it during construction, a feat so bold that it still confounds modern engineers.

Climbing the 463 stone steps of this structure as part of the Waking the Duomo experience is a pilgrimage of its own. Your breath quickens in the narrow stairwells. One tends to brush the curved inner wall, then the outer, following the hidden catwalks the builders once used.



The stairs between the inner and outer shells of the dome

A SACRED DAWN: WAKING THE DUOMO IN FIRENZE-CONT

At the base of The Last Judgment fresco, which is Vasari's and Zuccari's apocalyptic masterpiece, you emerge into divine chaos: angels, demons, saints, and sinners swirling just above your head.

But the final ascent delivers the true miracle. As you step out onto the lantern, Florence yawns below you in golden light. The Arno glimmers. The terracotta rooftops glow. There is only you, the rising sun, and the city awakening like scripture.



The Last Judgment Fresco: Inset from an upper catwalk

Contrast: Masterpieces on the Move

Unlike the hushed sacredness of the Duomo at dawn, Florence's other masterpieces thrum with secular energy. At the Uffizi Gallery, you will encounter Botticelli's Birth of Venus and da Vinci's Annunciation in perfectly lit halls, but also elbow-to-elbow with other tourists. The Accademia, home to Michelangelo's David, offers perhaps the most staggering expression of human beauty in marble (2), though your reverie may be punctuated by camera clicks.

The Ponte Vecchio was once a medieval fish market. Thanks to the Medici family who hated the smell of fish on their way home through the Vasari corridor to the Pitti Palace, the fish market was moved and replaced with jewelers. For nearly the last 500 years, the bridge has glittered with gold merchants and street musicians. It is charming and chaotic, alive with the clang of commerce, unlike the disciplined hush of the cathedral nave.



The Pitti Palace and Boboli Garden demonstrate royal excess long since turned to public pleasure. Walking the garden's manicured symmetry and sculpture-lined paths is a delight, but one rooted in the aristocratic display of power, not the architectural and spiritual humility of Brunelleschi's dome.

What distinguishes Waking the Duomo is its interplay of intimacy and grandeur. You are not just looking at history; you are momentarily an inexorable part of the sacred rhythm of the city. Where other sites demand observation, the Duomo invites contemplation.

A SACRED DAWN: WAKING THE DUOMO IN FIRENZE-CONT

You climb with the builders. You suffer with the sinners and see with the saints. You begin the day as the Florentines once did and all of us arguably should do every day.... by looking up.

What to Know Before You Go

- Physical Requirements: The dome climb is strenuous and not advised for those with heart conditions, vertigo, claustrophobia, or pregnancy. (Interestingly a young woman who was 7 months pregnant and in our small party climbed the dome with us.)
- Dress Code: Knees and shoulders must be covered to enter the cathedral—this is strictly enforced.
- Bags: Large bags and umbrellas are not permitted on the climb and must be checked.
- Timing: Tours begin before sunrise and often include a small Italian breakfast at a nearby café across the piazza.

Florence or Firenze as it is known in Italian, offers many ways to encounter beauty. But if you long not just to see the city, but to feel its soul stir as the sun breaks the skyline, Waking the Duomo is your moment. It is a rare travel experience that doesn't just elevate your day—it elevates your soul.



The David



Ponte Vecchio



The Duomo

¹ Firenze is the Italian name for the city. The name is derived from the Latin Florentia, which means "flourishing" or "prosperous". Florence is the English name which arose as a simplification of the original Latin name, with a path through French influence

² The Pieta in St. Peter's Basilica may be tied with David for first position. Both are Michelangelo's.



SOUTHEASTERN DELEGATION TO THE AMA SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

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CHAIR CONTACT: [ALAN WILSON](#), MD 870-500-0595

NOVEMBER 14, 2025 FRIDAY		
8:30AM-12:00PM	SERVICE PROJECT <i>Invitation only</i>	ATRIA I
8:00-10:00PM	SOUTHEASTERN DELEGATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS RECEPTION <i>Invitation only</i>	TOM'S WATCH BAR 200 AMERICAN WAY
NOVEMBER 15, 2025 SATURDAY		
8:45-11:30AM	SOUTHEASTERN DELEGATION INTERNAL CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS	CHESAPEAKE K
5:30-6:30PM	SOUTHEASTERN DELEGATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING	NATIONAL HARBOR 3
NOVEMBER 17, 2025 MONDAY		
6:30AM	SOUTHEASTERN DELEGATION BREAKFAST	POTOMAC C
5:30PM	SOUTHEASTERN DELEGATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING	CHESAPEAKE ABC

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