When fiction mirrors reality: 2010 Odyssey Two

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In 2010 Odyssey Two, Arthur C. Clarke describes the adventures of a multinational crew of US and Russian space explorers working towards a better understanding of problems during a previously unsuccessful 2001 space mission. Clarke’s space explorers have several other goals to achieve including the need to urgently reach Jupiter. The US/Soviet team believes their technological capability will guarantee success. In a surprise twist, they learn that another nation previously unknown for space expedition capacity has achieved remarkable growth and development and is also rapidly pursuing a landing on Jupiter.

It could be argued that subtle similarities exist between the tasks and circumstances facing APIC’s leadership in the real 2010 and those experienced by Clarke’s US/Soviet crew in the fictional 2010. Both teams comprise a blend of backgrounds and viewpoints. To successfully achieve their respective goals, each team must have a healthy respect for divergent opinions and an ability to understand the perspectives and roles of others. The most notable perspectives and roles being those for whom each team serves. APIC’s 2010 leadership is a robust crew indeed, and it is with respect and gratitude that I look forward to embarking on this mission with co-pilots President-Elect Russell Olmsted; CEO Kathy Warye; and APIC’s talented volunteers, staff, and elected crew members.

The direction and priorities of the work plans of Clarke’s team and the APIC team are both informed by and reflective of the achievements, experiences, and learnings of those that preceded them. As APIC nudges ever closer to its fifth decade, its foundations paradoxically become both more solid and more vulnerable. We are compelled to periodically reflect upon our course and at all times ensure that the direction of our own critical mission is not only one which our members share, but one whose destination has appeal across the membership. When necessary, our course may change, as evidenced by APIC’s timely employment of a range of measures to withstand the serious short- and long-term challenges of the 2009 global economic crisis.

Clarke’s crew recognizes and is inspired by the rapid and surprising advancement of their international colleagues. Similarly, APIC recognizes that the world of infection prevention is ever expanding. Now more than ever, APIC’s work is far reaching. Importantly, we too are being informed by developments and success in infection prevention efforts from all around the globe. The 5th Decennial to be held in Atlanta in March 2010 will be a vibrant and exhilarating opportunity for members of the international infection prevention community to showcase their respective local achievements and to harness their collective power as the agenda for the next decade is established. APIC is proud to be a co-joint sponsor of this event.

In this analogy, the science fictional crew finds strength and determination through processes of restoration, renewal, and rejuvenation. At our Annual Conference in July, APIC members and our guests will be offered similar opportunities for self-development as we share and learn from additional research, education, public policy development, and networking; all of this occurring in the beautiful restored, renewed, and rejuvenated city of New Orleans.

While the ending of Clarke’s novel is known to us, the end of the real 2010 is distant and perhaps unpredictable. As we begin our own unique journey, APIC’s 2010 leadership looks forward to having you aboard, and we trust that you will enjoy the ride.