A Review of

*The Transplant Web*  
... a novel  
*Author: SR Maxeiner Jr. (2016)*

Reviewed by Jim Gleason, heart recipient

“A surgical practice isn’t just a job, you know. It's a way of life.” And the truth of that insight comes out strong in this novel, a story of fiction that is hard to keep in mind that it’s not a real-life tale, the detail being so true to life throughout. But then that’s what makes novels authored by medical professionals so much fun to read. You just have to believe that the fictional storyline parallels the life experiences of the practicing storyteller. With medical practice and processes described so accurately, the reader gets drawn in to its characters coming to life in the narrative as they are challenged and deal with stressful life conflicts and situations. One has to wonder how much of the story is the author’s real life experience and not a work of total fiction.

This story telling is unique in its first-person background narrative that introduces and sets the stage for most chapters. Real medical ethical issues are woven into the storyline, challenging the reader more to focus on the novel's fiction. His is a story of romance and conflict with a young new female surgeon earning her way up the medical leadership ladder to chief resident, then chief surgeon in a typical male world of glass ceilings. The personal vs. professional conflict surrounds the hospital she works in, but with risk taking when a new heart transplant opportunity presents itself. The overall goal for the hospital is the creation of a full service organ transplant program and with that comes mystery and ethical conundrums that keep the pages turning towards a final resolution.

Personally I particularly loved when on page 86 the chief describes the successful heart transplant as “Like clockwork.” But our heroine pushes back that only a man would say that with the words: “No. Clockwork is human work, mechanical. It's done right, it works.” But she goes on to describe it this way: “But a heartbeat? That's more like a miracle.” Living with my own heart transplant out more than two decades now, I like her description much better!

I found two faults in the narrative. The use of the word ‘harvest’ to describe the ‘recovery’ process for the organ procurement process is today’s more sensitive word. Also, the story describes ‘live support’ when “mechanical support” after declaring brain death is the correct term. Those two nit-picks aside, this is a recommended read to anyone working in the organ transplant field as well as being a great read for anyone who enjoys a novel with such realistic connections to actual life. I totally enjoyed the read and hope that you will too.

*Note: The Transplant Web* is available in paperback and Kindle formats at Amazon.com

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**Brief bio:**

Jim Gleason, receiving his own heart transplant Oct. ’94, retired after 37 years with Unisys Corporation in 2005, is a volunteer with The Gift of Life Donor Program, NKF and UNOS as well as a nationally recognized speaker and author. His own book, *A Gift from the Heart*, is offered free in thanks to his donor family and can be obtained online at [http://gleasonjim.com](http://gleasonjim.com) or on CD by contacting him at GleasonJim@aol.com.