



To & Fro

A Publication of the Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists • Volume 66 • Spring 2011

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists CRNAs

- Represent nearly 150 years of quality anesthesia
- Safely administer approximately 32 million anesthetics in the US every year
- Represented by 44,000 CRNAs nationwide and over 1100 here in Georgia
- Are the sole anesthesia providers in nearly 100% of rural hospitals throughout the country.
- Practice in every type of clinical setting.

Mission Statement

The Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists is a non-profit organization committed to advancing patient safety by supporting and furthering the practice of nurse anesthesia in Georgia.

www.gana.org

Report from the President

“One Bad Apple Doesn’t Spoil the Whole Bunch”

by Rose M. Synsmir, CRNA, MSN, MS



As early as 1916, patient advocacy has been at the core of Georgia’s nurse anesthetists responsibilities, and it is incumbent to never take that responsibility lightly. On April 11, 2011, after a bench trial, a former CRNA in Georgia was found guilty of 34 charges including sexual assault of a person in custody, aggravated sodomy, aggravated child molestation and unlawful surveillance of patients. He faces a possible life sentence and up to \$1.8 million in fines. His patients and their families’ lives continue to be profoundly affected in negative ways. As a result, our profession is faced with having to make sure the world understands that this CRNA’s actions were in no way representative of over 42,000 CRNAs who safely care for more than 32 million patients in the United States each year.

Patients are never more vulnerable than when they are under anesthesia, and as CRNAs it is our duty to be their voice if there appears to be even the slightest threat to their well being. We serve as our patients’ protectors while they are under our care, safeguarding their passage through the various stages of anesthesia. They put their absolute trust in us; likewise, their families entrust their loved ones to our care. This is an enormous responsibility, and respecting it is vital to being successful in our calling as anesthesia professionals.

Ensuring the Confidence of the Patients We Serve

One of the most rewarding aspects of working as a nurse anesthetist is when patients wake up after surgery and say with surprise, “Is it done?”

To them, it seems like the procedure only took a few seconds. Little do they realize that while they slept and the surgeon worked, a nurse anesthetist was watching over them like a “guardian angel,” monitoring their every heartbeat and breath, and ensuring a successful operation.

As advanced practice registered nurses specializing in the art and science of anesthesia, CRNAs are patient advocates. The care we provide allows patients to endure surgery and other procedures that a little more than a century ago would not have been possible. At the same time, anesthesia renders our patients incapable of advocating for themselves. That’s why it is crucial for us to be vigilant on their behalf. Your GANA Board recognizes the significance of the events that lead to this individual’s conviction. Although very unfortunate, this isolated incident does not define the entire profession. At the risk of sounding cliché, it bears repeating that “One bad apple doesn’t spoil the whole bunch.” ■

GANA Board of Directors Meeting

Saturday, May 14, 2011
at the Spring Meeting
in Atlanta

(Meeting is OPEN to all GANA members)

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Communication

www.gana.org

From the Executive Director

by Christy A. Dunkelberger, Esq.

AANA Elections

Help put Georgia on the map! Two Georgia CRNAs will be on the AANA ballot in 2011. Janice Izlar, Georgia CRNA and current AANA Vice President, is running for AANA President-elect. GANA is extremely proud to support Janice in her endeavor to lead the AANA in the coming years. Janice has served Georgia in many capacities as a CRNA, including serving as our President in 2000. Her many years of dedication to CRNA practice and her proven leadership make her an excellent candidate to serve as AANA President-elect and succeed on to become President. Please join GANA and show your support for Janice Izlar.

Steve Smith, GANA Vice President, FPD and Communications Chair is running for the AANA Resolutions Committee. Steve has been diligently serving and actively involved in GANA for many years. He joined the GANA Board in 2006 and has been working nonstop for CRNAs ever since. He became President in 2009 and remains active and committed to being an advocate for CRNAs. Please join GANA and show your support for Steve Smith.

2011 Legislative Session

The gavel sounded on Georgia's 2011 legislative session which adjourned sine die on April 14th. Some Bills of interest are as follows:

HB 47 was introduced by Rep. Matt Ramsey (R-Peachtree City) to allow individual accident and sickness insurance policies approved for issuance in another state to be sold in Georgia. These plans would not have to comply with Georgia insurance plan requirements. Therefore, certain services may not be covered to the extent that Georgia residents are accustomed. HB 47 passed the House and the Senate and now awaits the Governor's signature to become law.

HB 303 was introduced by Rep. Sharon Cooper (R-Cobb County) to revise protocol language of the medical practice act related to delegation of authority to physician assistants and advanced practice registered nurses. Medical delegation was expanded to include the authority to request, receive, and sign for professional samples to patients. Further it grants the authority to sign, certify and endorse all documents relating to health care provided to a patient within one's scope of practice, such as, physical examination forms of all state agencies, and verification and evaluation forms of the Department of Community Health and the Department of Corrections. The authority to sign death certificates or assign disability ratings, however, was specifically restricted. HB 303 passed the House and the Senate and awaits the Governor's signature.

SB 100 was introduced by Mitch Seabaugh (R-Sharpsburg) adds a new type of nursing education program that the Board of Nursing may approve. The new type of program includes a nonprofit postsecondary institution of higher education that is four years, but that is not accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. The curriculum has to meet criteria not less stringent than that of other Board approved programs. The Board is given the discretion to decide if the curriculum meets the standards. This Bill became the vehicle for other measures that did not pass on their own. For example, language was added from SB 67 that prohibits the use of the title "nurse" unless the individual is a R.N. or L.P.N.

(continued on page 4)

2011 GANA Calendar of Events

GANA Board Meetings

(Begin at 10:00 a.m. unless otherwise noted)

May 14, 2011
at the GANA Spring Meeting in Atlanta
at 12:15 p.m.

August 27, 2011
MCG in Augusta

GANA Events

GANA Spring Meeting
May 14-15, 2011 in Atlanta
Waverly Renaissance at Cobb Galleria

Georgia Public Broadcasting – TV Telethon
Spring of 2011 – TBA

GANA Annual Fall Meeting
September 30-October 2, 2011 in Atlanta
Crowne Plaza Ravinia at Perimeter Mall

AANA Events

AANA Annual Meeting
August 6-10, 2011 in Boston, MA



Nominations for the 2011 Rosalie McDonald Award Now Being Accepted

GANA is seeking nominations for a CRNA to receive the 2011 Rosalie McDonald Award. Please nominate a worthy CRNA for this prestigious award. All nominations must be submitted by August 1st to the GANA office. Nominations can be submitted by mail, fax or email to

GANA, 1832 Highway 54 W. Fayetteville, GA 30214; facsimile: 770.632.1625; or ganaooffice@bellsouth.net.

Rosalie McDonald spearheaded the GANA in 1938. She was the first GANA President and the 6th AANA President. Be proud of your profession. Honor a fellow CRNA by nominating him or her for their contribution to our profession. The honoree will be presented with the award at the GANA Annual Meeting this year in Atlanta at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Atlanta Perimeter at Ravinia on October 1.

Keep Georgia On Your Mind When You Vote

Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists proudly supports its proven leaders for AANA 2011 ballot

**Janice J. Izlar, CRNA, DNAP
for President-elect**

**Stephen D. Smith, CRNA, MA
for Resolutions Committee**

This paid advertisement does not signify or imply AANA endorsement of the candidates.

Passionate • Visionary • Dedicated • Experienced

2011 Rural Health Day



During Rural Health Day on February 16, 2011, students and a group from the GANA met with Governor Nathan Deal for the GANA Proclamation signing.



Brittany Schmitt, Whitney Huffman, Jim Masiongale, Brent DuBois, House Appropriations Chair Terry England, Kellie Tinley, Lacy Staten, Pierce Cannington and Amy Masiongale meeting during Rural Health Day

AANA Mid-Year Assembly



Steve Smith, Jim Masiongale, Brittany Schmitt, Congressman Rob Woodall, Rose Synsmit, Tanya Ifill, Maggie Williams and Amy Masiongale

Report from the Executive Director

(continued from page 2)

Also clinical experience requirements were added from SB 187 for graduates of non-traditional nursing education programs. SB 100 passed both chambers and awaits the Governor's signature.

The legislature will reconvene in August for a special session for the purpose of addressing redistricting.

GANAPAC

The purpose of the GANA-PAC is to oversee the funds our members contribute and make disbursements to state candidates and legislators who have demonstrated an interest and willingness to support legislation and policies favorable to CRNAs' scope of practice. Our PAC intake is minimal with approximately three percent (3%) of our membership making contribution. GANA-PAC is smaller in comparison to other membership associations in the State. The Board of Directors and the PAC committee has been discussing a new strategy to increase and improve the PAC. A model utilized by the State of New Mexico is under review as an option for Georgia. This model is an opt-out model that allocates a small percentage of the annual member dues to the GANA-PAC. Each GANA member would be asked to authorize a designated amount of his or her membership dues that GANA receives from AANA to be allocated to the GANA-PAC. As an opt-out program, anyone wishing to not contribute to the PAC in this manner would be asked to notify GANA. Implementation of this model is still under review and you will hear more about it in the future. The GANA-PAC is vital in allowing GANA to be active in the legislative arena and in its work of promoting CRNA practice and protecting CRNA interests. Please make your contribution today.

Part of GANA's Evolution

Several times each year, I meet with the members of the GANA Archive Committee. A few weeks ago, Mary Flister, CRNA, and I were in one such meeting looking at pictures and documents from the Charter members of GANA. All the pictures were in black and white and all of the documents were hand written. Today GANA is preserving volumes of color photographs in digital format as well as neatly typed documents in Word format that are stored in computer databases and on a variety of discs. Back in earlier days, individuals worked on GANA business without the use of our modern day technology and electronic gadgets that we take for granted today. Mary and I also discussed the endless hours the CRNAs have contributed to the GANA since its inception. Many years ago, and up to fairly recent years, all GANA activities were carried out by the voluntary efforts of dedicated caring CRNAs. Today a good portion of the GANA work has been delegated to paid professionals. GANA now enjoys dedicated office space, and an executive director, a lobbyist, a printer and editor of the To & Fro, a financial planner, a web hosting company; and more. I would like to thank all of our past volunteers who actually performed the work of GANA with their own time, energy, sweat, and in some cases their own funds. They laid the groundwork for the successful membership organization that exists today. We still rely on volunteers to carry out the activities of the GANA board and committees; however, the work of our predecessors has made for a smooth operation today. ■



and



Presents:

The GANA Spring Meeting in Atlanta

The Business, Economic and Legal Aspects of CRNA Practice

May 14-15, 2011

at the

Waverly Renaissance Atlanta

2450 Galleria Parkway
Atlanta, GA 30339
(770) 953-4500

Program Description and Faculty Members

This is one of the most important CE programs on Business and Economics that we have ever offered. An outstanding faculty consisting of CRNA's, business persons, and attorneys including AANA President Paul Santoro, CRNA, MS; Amsol Executive Vice President Larry Hornsby, CRNA, BS; Sleepy Anesthesia President Juan Quintana, DNP, CRNA; GANA President Barry Cranfill, CRNA, MHS, MBA; Mr. Pat Everett, ProStat Anesthesia Advisors; and David Kuzava, JD, Attorney at Law.

These well qualified faculty members will share with you their experiences in building and managing anesthesia practices and their vast knowledge of what you as a practicing CRNA need to know about the value that you bring to the economic table. Core didactic lectures will focus on practice management, legal and liability issues, malpractice concerns, cost-effective practice models, contract law, negotiation skills, billing and collections, and a myriad of other topics designed to enlighten you, the CRNA practitioner, and make you more aware of your worth.

More details on tuition costs and CE credits will be available soon

Hotel Information

Room Rates for GANA Registrants and Guests:

\$109.00* (run of the house single or double)

* Plus Taxes and Fees

For reservations please call 1-888-391-8724

Exercise Your Right – VOTE

by Janice J. Izlar, CRNA, DNAP



It is that time of year again, the AANA election. As we enter this exciting time, I wanted to briefly update you on the important voting process.

You should have already received notice from the AANA asking if you prefer an electronic or paper ballot. If you did not respond to the email from the AANA, then the default method for your ballot will be electronic. However, if the AANA does not have a valid email address for you, you will automatically be mailed a paper ballot. Depending on your preference selection, ballot information will be sent via email or United States Postal Service on May 13, 2011. If you have selected a paper ballot but prefer to vote on-line, that is no problem. Information will be included in your mailed ballot. The cut-off deadline for voting is noon, June 21, 2011. All ballots must be received by the deadline regardless of whether you vote on-line or by mail. Therefore, remember if you are voting by mail, please ensure appropriate time for the election company to receive your completed ballot.

During a membership survey last fall, the number one reason members did not vote was because, “they did not know the candidates.” Fortunately, that is not an excuse for any GANA member this year. You have two candidates on the AANA Ballot. Steve Smith for AANA Resolutions Committee and myself, Janice Izlar, for AANA President-elect. The same survey also asked members the reason they voted. The top two reasons members selected were: first, “it is my right and responsibility” and second, “belief that their vote matters.” I can assure you your vote does matter. Many races are decided by only a few votes, so every vote is very important. It is absolutely your right and responsibility as an AANA member; however, I view it also as your privilege. Many professional organizations do not allow every member to express an opinion and vote, but the AANA values a system that allows every member an equal voice. Please take advantage of your privilege of membership and vote.

In order for members to make informed decisions, the AANA continuously seeks to improve the available candidate information. Please look at the AANA's website (www.aana.com) for candidate bios, position statements and photos. In addition, you can view videos of the candidates for the Board of Directors' Mid-Year Assembly speeches. Also, this is the third year in which we have had the on-line candidate forum, which is an opportunity for members to ask questions of the candidates. Please take a look at the candidate forum in the members' section of the AANA website. By reading the candidates' respective viewpoints about various key issues facing the AANA, you will be able to learn more about the candidates and assess their thoughts on addressing your concerns.

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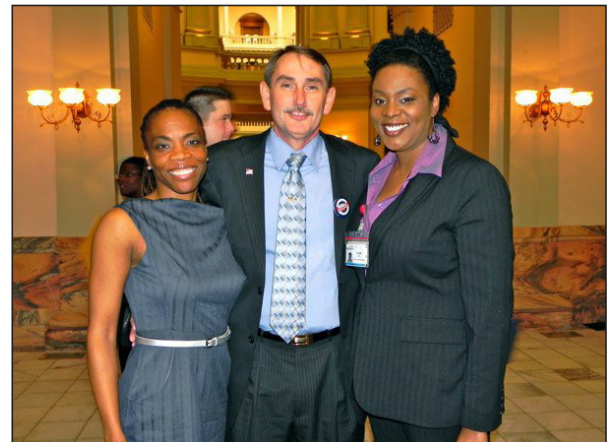
GANA Capitol Day



GANA VP Steve Smith, GANA President Rose Synsmir, Christy Dunkelberger ED/Legal Counsel, GANA Lobbyist Monty Veazey and GRC Chair Jim Masiongale at GANA Legislative Agenda meeting in January, 2011



January 28, 2011 – CRNAs and SRNAs at GANA Capitol Day



GANA President Rose Synsmir, GHSU Program Director Jim Masiongale and GHSU Student Tanya Ifill

Tough Times and New Challenges Call for a Return to the Basics and Innovative Ideas

by Bill Agudelo, CRNA



As practicing CRNAs we are facing tremendous challenges on several fronts as result of the financial state of the economy and the constant threat to our scope of practice. Failure to act in a concerted effort may make our current lifestyle a thing of the past.

We are still in the shadows of the “The Crash of 2008-2009”, the worst financial crisis since the “Wall Street Crash of 1929”. As stated by a senior colleague, who should have retired 2 years ago, “after this downturn, I’ll be completing my 2 weeks notice, 2 weeks post mortem”. Retirement accounts were lost in an instant, forcing many to come out of retirement into an already competitive job market. Just take look at the number of jobs in Georgia on gaswork.com and compare it to 10 years ago. The AANA membership survey for 2010 has around 30,000 members with the average age as 48.7 years old. Of those surveyed, 36% have more than 20 years experience and 49% don’t expect to retire until after 2022. Additionally, educational institutions are turning out high numbers of anesthesia graduates. In the law of supply and demand, this could equate to a drop in salary in the future.

Our buying potential is also taking a hit. Despite the fact that we are experiencing the highest salaries ever, the value of the dollar will be affected by the recession. It is forecasted that the price of gasoline will reach \$6/gallon this summer. And as we all know, the price of fuel makes everything else go up. The recession along with potential tax hikes will eventually be cancelling out some of the increases in salary. Our country is experiencing the highest debt ever recorded and in the name for fiscal responsibility Medicare cuts stand to be more menacing than ever.

On the home front, what we can do now is to conserve. As direct caregivers we can have tremendous impact on cost cutting measures to make a difference on the bottom line of our employers and our businesses. A proactive approach will give you control of your practice and how it impacts our patients.

On the horizon, we need to look inside the box first and facilitate proper utilization of our services at our place of practice. If anesthesia is not being utilized outside the OR, you should propose it to your hospital administrator. Anesthesia is being utilized in GI suites, interventional radiology, MRI, catch labs, pain management facilities and electrophysiology labs. An increase in demand will equate to job security for you.

As CRNAs, historically we have been for the most part, anesthesia revenue machines. We have been at the head of the table, in the trenches, making money for somebody else. While I understand that investors are taking a financial risk and should be entitled to make a profit, we cannot impact something we don’t truly understand.

The business of anesthesia is a complex topic that is barely understood by most CRNAs. This has to change in order for us to take control of our future. Information is power. I encourage everyone to take advantage of the educational opportunity GANA is offering this spring in the business of anesthesia.

Now let’s look outside the box. As a profession we need to expand into new frontiers. We need to exercise our full scope of practice and be independent. In order to make the transition into nonhospital settings such as ASCs, we should be proficient at regional blocks, ultrasound, neuro-axial anesthesia, and difficult airway skills. Continuing education and the willingness to step outside of your comfort zone will be essential. An emerging trend is office-based anesthesia. Currently one in ten surgeries in this country are done in the office. Pain management is another frontier for CRNA practice.

The only way to tackle these tough times and new challenges is through a collective and concerted effort of all CRNAs. We have over 1100 CRNAs in Georgia. It’s obvious we have the resources. In order to protect our scope of practice we need your support through donations, votes, service and your business. If you have not donated to the GANA PAC, please do so. When ballots come out please take a moment to cast your votes for your favorite candidates. We also encourage you to partake in the GANA meetings, AANA meetings and all educational opportunities that are made available to you. There is no better way to impact your profession than through involvement with your state and national organizations. As a profession, we have to recognize the success of other professional groups that stick together and backup each other. I encourage supporting CRNA owned businesses first. There are many non-clinician owned and operated anesthesia businesses that do not give back to the profession. It is imperative that as CRNAs, we support CRNAs in any and every way. Our future will depend on it. ■

Shadow a CRNA

Contact the GANA office
by email at
ganaoffice@bellsouth.net

De-stressing at the Mid-Year Assembly

by Barb Waldron, CRNA



Never Give Up

Do you ever feel like this? Now you're probably wondering if I'm referring to the heron or the frog. Sometimes I feel like the frog and sometimes like the heron.

I recently went to the Mid-Year Assembly, in Washington DC, and it has been quite some time since I have traveled anywhere by airplane. You can probably see where I'm going with this. Flying causes me anxiety and like the frog, I feel like I'm being swallowed up by the airlines. I have anxiety, not of crashing, but of all the hassles of air travel, things that are out of my control. STRESS, and that starts from the time I am securing my tickets all the way through being frisked at security (I have a knee replacement) to

getting on the right van to my hotel. So that's a while to be under stress.

Once I am participating in the meeting, the stress evaporates. All of it is so worth it. Janice Izlar is running for President-Elect of our national association! I have known Janice for many many years as a friend, co-board member, and co-worker. I am proud to call her my friend. She gave an outstanding speech and is so ready to take the reins of leadership as President-Elect. If you have never voted now is the time to start! Janice will represent us well. Steve Smith is asking to be elected to the Resolutions Committee. Steve has been a tireless dedicated worker in the service of our profession, and in particular, GANA. He is worthy of your vote!

It was great to see faces that I have not seen in a while, with their enthusiasm and dedication for our profession. It fills me with pride and renews my enthusiasm for the work I do.

Speaking of wellness, we had several opportunities for walks and/or runs during the meeting. I didn't participate because I was at the 1/2 price clothes sale at the bookstore – that was de-stressing enough for me. The Wellness program has added pocket pals, small pocket cards promoting stress management, 100 calorie snacks, heart healthy snacks for busy people, and walking for fitness tips. My friend, Martha Kral, picked the pocket pals up for me because again, I was at the 1/2 price sale.

We again visited our legislators, and you know it didn't stress me at all. They seemed to be glad to see us ... and you know why! We are part of the solution, part of the healthcare solution.

By the time I left Washington I felt like the heron in the picture, I had a pretty good grasp on what was happening in Washington. We represented CRNAs well, and I felt confident in my profession and those that represent me in our profession. If you have never been part of the political process now would be a good time to start and if you have been part of the process, renew your commitment to it. Write your legislators.

Whether you are the heron or the frog, Never Give Up! I know for sure that Janice and Steve never give up, never give up working on your behalf. Please vote! ■

Report from the AANA Vice President

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Finally, I humbly ask for your support in my bid for AANA President-elect. It has been my distinct honor and privilege to serve you as a GANA and AANA leader. I have devoted 20 years to association activity and I am continually grateful for the privilege of working for and knowing many of you. With your vote, I have the chance to become only the second GANA member ever to achieve the highest honor of serving as AANA President and the first in over 60 years.

Please remember, it is your right and responsibility to vote. Don't miss this opportunity. Now is Georgia's time to make history. ■

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— George H. Cox, CRNA
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Some Significant Upcoming 75th Anniversaries in Georgia

by Mary P. Flister, CRNA

In 1937, Margaret Mitchell won the Pulitzer Prize for *Gone With the Wind* – the only book she published in her lifetime.
75th anniversary – 2012.

In 1939, the film *Gone With the Wind* won 10 Oscars.
75th anniversary – 2014

In 1938, seventeen committed and prescient nurse anesthesia providers gathered in Atlanta to establish the Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists.
75th anniversary – 2013

In the run-up to the 75th anniversary celebration, the archives committee is developing a display for the 2011 GANA Annual Meeting which features biographies of selected nurse anesthetists who signed the founding charter of GANA. We want to make this a yearly display until all 17 have their contributions to our profession recognized.

The display will be entitled “CRNA’s of Distinction.” Rosalie McDonald was recognized and honored at the 2009 GANA Annual Meeting and at the 2010 AANA Annual Meeting. Mrs. McDonald’s is the first signature on the Charter.

The next 3 signatures on the Charter are:

Caroline E Hohenschutz
Halo H. Warren
Grace M. John Rapp

We are asking anyone reading this *To & Fro* article who may have information, pictures, or stories about these women to please contact Mary P. Flister, CRNA, 404-963-6003 mpfgana@juno.com; Leslie Jeter, CRNA 404-274-1721, lesliejeter@comcast.net; or the GANA Office.

AND as long as we have ‘Georgia On Our Mind’ and to make the 75th Anniversary of GANA complete, please be sure to vote for the GANA nominated candidates running for AANA office:

Steve Smith, CRNA, MA for Resolutions Committee
Janice Izlar, CRNA, DNP for President-Elect, 2012.

Georgia’s Janice Izlar would then be
AANA President in 2013.

Georgia Health Sciences University Nurse Anesthesia School Report

A couple months have passed since the name change became official. Do not worry if you are still struggling to get the name correct. Those of us employed here are struggling as well.

I am happy to report that the graduating Class of 2010 was 21 for 21 on the national certification board examination. This is quite an accomplishment considering all the class endured during their education. This success rate speaks highly to the caliber of individuals that are entering into this wonderful career. I am extremely excited to see the impact they have on the future of our profession and delighted to have played a small role in their development.

The Class of 2011 just returned from the AANA Mid-Year Assembly in Washington D.C. as part of their Professional Aspect Class. It was a wonderful opportunity for both CRNAs and SRNAs. The program would like to thank Steve Smith, GANA’s Federal Political Director for an outstanding job arranging all the legislative meetings. We would also like to thank the Georgia CRNAs that mentored our students during these visits. Hard to believe they will be graduating in two semesters. SRNA students tend to be extremely competitive, so I think this Class will work extremely hard to see that 100% pass rate continue.

The Class of 2012 has one final semester of didactic before we turn them loose to the clinical preceptors to mold into great CRNAs. So in August when you see the mask with really big eyes, that’s our new clinical students. Also remember we were all there at one time: for some of us it was longer ago that we like to think.

The Class of 2013 will begin in August with 20 new energetic individuals that can’t wait to begin the journey.

As always I want to thank all of the clinical instructors. You are the heart and backbone of our program and without you we could not exist. Taking the time to share your knowledge, experience, and skills is one of the greatest gifts you can give back to this wonderful profession. You are true Heroes in the eyes of the students and didactic faculty, and we are forever grateful to you.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to send me an email or give me a call.

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Mercer/MCCG Nurse Anesthesia Program Update

by Sheree Wolfenden, CRNA, JD

The class of 2010 graduated in December and everyone passed their Boards as first-time test takers. The Medical Center hired four new graduates from the class and they are all doing very well in their new role as graduate CRNAs. Welcome-Leroy, Guoli, Heather, and Courtney to the work-world of the Medical Center in Macon.

The class of 2011 has about 7 months until graduation and they are counting down the days. The class of 2012 has completed 2 semesters and will begin full-time in the O.R. this May. They have been in the O.R. 1 day per week since the second semester.

Myself, along with two senior students, Davida and Brooke participated on an 8 day medical/dental mission trip in March 2011 through SCORE International based out of Chattanooga, Tennessee to the Dominican Republic. The work kept us all very busy from dawn to dusk. The medical volunteers provided medical/dental care to residents of the Dominican Republic in outlying villages and elementary schools and also cared for inmates at a male prison. Additionally, we visited a remote nursing home where we witnessed extreme conditions of discomfort for the residents; and we also visited an orphanage which was surprising clean and the children seem to thrive in this environment.

My daughter, who is a high school junior, participated too, as our assistant and French interpreter. Though the official language is Spanish; many residents have fled neighboring Haiti on the other side of the island of Hispaniola and fled to the Dominican Republic to try and start a new life. As you may recall, the island of Hispaniola is an island in the Caribbean Sea lying southeast of Cuba and west of Puerto Rico.

We did not enjoy the amenities of the capital and heartbeat of the island, Santo Domingo. Instead, we stayed in a mission lodge with the enclosed compound secured with a fence adorned with razor wire and patrolled with armed guards. Our accommodations were modest and we were mostly comfortable. I felt somewhat safe and secure, but we were keenly aware that we had to abide by all the rules and

that we could encounter physical harm if we did not follow all the apprised precautions. This was an adventure in accepting and adjusting to what was available and learning to live in this manner for several days.

I did wonder what would happen to one of us if we were attacked outside the compound or became sick or injured. In the 8 days I was in the Dominican Republic, I saw only 3 policemen and they were all sitting under a tree talking at a fruit stand. Additionally, we also never saw an ambulance or a police

motorcycle or other vehicle on the roads that I can recall. If anyone had anything of value in their home; a armed guard was stationed in the driveway with a visible machine gun or other assault weapons.

In summary, the amount and extent of human suffering we encountered was at times, unbearable. The medical group adjusted with encouragement from the full-time SCORE Medical Group Leader (a registered nurse) and from veteran missionaries. We did,

however, quickly settle-in to our new environment and became focused on our work. We also did experience overwhelming sense of pleasure from relieving a patient's suffering-even if for a short time. The medical care delivered by the medical volunteers to the outlying remote areas of the country is the only medical/dental care that is available. We were also educated that modern medical care is only available to a patient if one can pay for their care.

This experience reminded all of us from the CRNA Program that we should be very appreciative of everything we have or can acquire in the United States. We should take absolutely nothing for granted-including good health and the comforts available in life and personal security. If you have never given your professional time for a volunteer medical mission trip; I encourage every CRNA to have this experience at least once in your career. The personal satisfaction, over-all experience and feelings of giving medical/nursing care to those less-fortunate is beyond expression. ■

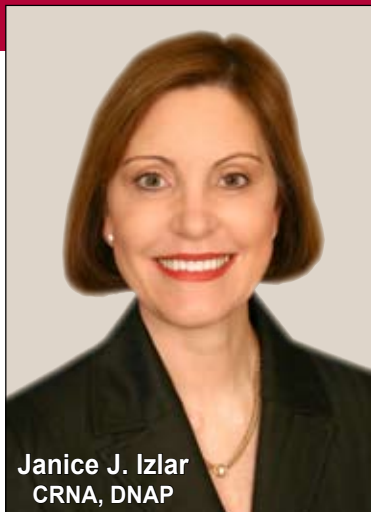


Pictured from left to right are MCGG student Davida Hilton, Program Director Sheree Wolfenden and MCGG student Brooke Kesler in the Dominican Republic.

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CRNAs in Action ...



Representative Ben Harbin with GANA CRNAs and SRNAs



Secretary of State Brian Kemp, Senator Jackson, GHSU SRNA Julie Jackson, and GHSU Program Director Jim Masingale at Capitol Day.



Krissie Hooson, Maggie Williams, Kellie Tinley, Jennifer Rhodes, Brent DuBois, Congressman Austin Scott, Brittany Schmitt, Mary Leary, Whitney Huggman, Lacey Staten and Steve Smith



Martha Kral, Ann Thompson, Barbara Waldron, Congressman Lynn Westmoreland, Cristy Cole, Brandon Reddock, Lacy Staten and Jennifer Rhodes

A Message from the GANA-PAC Committee

*by Richard Douberly, CRNA
GANA-PAC Chairman*

The GANA political action committee wants to renew the call for all members to consider the role of GANA in promoting our profession and securing our right to practice. A strong voice is required to gain the attention needed in order to sustain the rights of our members to function in the full scope of our profession. There are several key ways that we can accomplish this, but without an influential PAC, our voice will only be a whisper. We currently have a lot of momentum for advancing our profession, based on the recent studies and articles that support the fact that CRNAs are highly skilled professionals who have been providing the quality of care and safety that is commensurate with other anesthesia professionals and in the most cost efficient manner. In fact, the most financially feasible model is one in which an independent CRNA is the sole practitioner. Given the uncertainty with all the numerous changes that have recently been suggested in health care, these are the truths that we need to communicate to those who may be unaware of what our profession has to offer.

The new political season is well underway and our legislators need to hear from us. We have a new governor as well as many new members of the state legislature from whom we need to actively and aggressively seek support. GANA PAC was able to begin this effort during the election process because of the contributions of our members and we should continue to support the legislators who will give us a return on our investment. This is one of the best advocacy mechanisms for advancing the future of our profession and protecting what we have struggled to achieve through the long history of nurse anesthesia. A strong PAC that is well funded is one of the single best ways for us to empower ourselves as individual practitioners, regardless of the practice model or setting that we as CRNAs may currently be involved in.

The GANA PAC committee encourages each member to become engaged in the process by going to the GANA website where you can make a one-time donation or enroll for a monthly contribution. In addition, we are seeking support from corporations who may have an interest in the practice of nurse anesthesia, such as CRNA-owned practices, or even groups with a mixed provider model, office and ASC owners who benefit from CRNA support, Locums companies who profit from our profession, and any other non-professional entity or individual from whom we can solicit a donation. If you are a part of one of these groups or know anyone who is, please encourage them to support our PAC. There is a lot to be optimistic about in our profession, but we must all be active participants in order to secure our futures.

CRNAs Promote Access to Safe, Accessible, Affordable Care

by Steve Smith CRNA, MA



I'm happy to report that this year's Annual AANA Mid-Year Assembly (MYA) on April 10-13 in Washington DC was well attended by 31 CRNAs/SRNAs from Georgia. Thank you so much to all of you who attended. You made my job not only easy, but a pleasure. You were all great! Overall, there were more than 700 CRNAs and SRNAs who attended from around the country. We spent the first two days learning about nurse anesthesia policy issues that affect CRNA practice, how those policies get decided and how to be an effective advocate on Capitol Hill. The next two days were actually spent on Capitol Hill visiting our 13 Congressman and 2 US Senators from Georgia discussing our issues. Additionally, on Sunday evening the CRNA-PAC hosted a fundraising event on a Capitol Hill rooftop that was attended by 7 of us from Georgia. An all CRNA group, The Laryngospasms was the featured entertainment. On Monday we had the opportunity to listen to candidates for the 2012 AANA Board of Directors and to attend a fund raising event for US Senator Debbie Stabenow from Michigan, this year's AANA National Health Leadership Award winner. The social highlight of the meeting was on Monday afternoon at the GANA hosted reception for Janice Izlar and Steve Smith. Just in case you don't know by now, Janice Izlar CRNA, DNAP from Savannah is running for AANA President-Elect; and Steve Smith CRNA, MA from Atlanta is running for AANA Resolutions Committee. The reception turned out to be a full house and fun for all.

Our message this year to the legislators was simple, "CRNAs Promote Access to Safe, Accessible and Affordable Care". Evidence shows CRNAs help make healthcare work better and cost less. Studies reported in the *Journal of Health Affairs* (August 2010) and *Journal of Nursing Economics* (June 2010) show that there is no difference in anesthesia patient safety by type of anesthesia professional and that nurse anesthesia care is not only safe but 25% more cost-effective than the next most cost-effective practice model. The Institute of Medicine (October 2010) says it would be good to allow APRNs such as CRNAs to practice to the fullest extent of their education and training. It recommends the removal of legislative and regulatory barriers such as Medicare Part A physician supervision of CRNAs which is already in effect in the current 16 opt-out states. Our action to Congress was to recognize the contributions that CRNAs make to improve patient access to high quality healthcare and reject attempts to use federal policy to impair patient access to anesthesia and pain management services provided by CRNAs.

Also on our agenda was to protect the Provider Nondiscrimination Law, which will take effect January 2014. This law is important because it protects patients and employers from out-of-control healthcare cost growth and promotes access to care by prohibiting health plans from

discriminating against qualified licensed healthcare providers solely on the basis of the providers' licensure. As always, we asked the legislators for their support of Nurse Workforce Development Funding and the Stabilization of Medicare Part B Reimbursement. Unless Congress acts this year Medicare Part B will be cut by more than 30% in January 2012.

Now that the AANA 2011 Mid-Year Assembly program is done, we all need to realize that it is not over. Now is the time our work begins at home. There are a multitude of opportunities to develop professional relationships with your legislators by way of visits in the state or district offices, or through town-hall meetings, and particularly through CRNAdvocacy Alerts to send emails on critical and timely issues. We need to let our legislators know that we are the answer to high quality, safe and affordable anesthesia care. What we need from them is their help in removing barriers to prevent all CRNAs from practicing to the fullest extent of their training and education.

In closing, I would briefly like to talk about the newly launched CRNA-PAC "Care to be Counted" campaign. Please visit the new website www.aana.com/caretobecounted.apsx. Your voluntary contributions will help strengthen the profession's voice on Capitol Hill by helping to build nurse anesthetist relationships with members of Congress who are helpful and influential with policy matters critical to CRNAs' patients, practice, and profession. Also, on this site such things as "finding your elected officials" and "one-page briefs for legislator visits" can be found. As always, it is a pleasure serving as your FPD and don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns dealing with federal policy, legislation, or regulation. ■



CRNAs and SRNAs from Georgia at the 2011 Annual AANA Mid-Year Assembly (MYA)

The Students' Corner

Leading in a Profession of Constant Change and Challenges

by Davida M. Hilton, SRNA
Mercer University/MCCG Nurse Anesthesia Program

Greetings to all! My name is Davida Hilton and I am a senior student at Mercer University. I am the new Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthesia Student (GANAS) President. I am your president. It is with great honor and pride that I serve, the student body, each and every one of you. Thank you all so much for this opportunity and wonderful experience. Also, I would like to begin by thanking each of you for the support demonstrated this year at Capitol Day. I think the student presence was an awesome statement to the growth and future of the nurse anesthesia profession.

In reflecting on my article, I realized, if we had the active support of each student present at Capitol Day, how much our organization would strengthen. I thought a lot about the supporting members and the role of leadership. I also pondered what it means to us as future anesthesia providers. Each of us serves as a leader every day in the operating room. As many of you may know, our profession is changing and there will be many challenges we will each face in the future.

The healthcare system is evolving and our patients are becoming more aware of the role we each play in their care. Through change comes a challenge to adjust and become stronger providers in nurse anesthesia. As students, we must become more active members and leaders now in our schools and in the association. The association provides so many opportunities to serve and

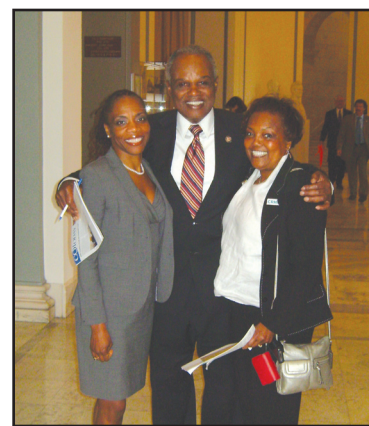
become active. It is through your support that the association is a cornerstone for our nurse anesthesia profession. We all have the ability to make a difference and improve our profession.

It is my hope for each of you to stop and reflect on what you can do to become a more active member in our association. I know our current commitments are profound. However, we all have something the association desires and needs. The support of the membership is crucial to the success of the future of the nurse anesthesia profession. The leaders of the association are only as strong as the members supporting the association. The supporting members provide a framework for the future of anesthesia. Remember no matter what role you play in the association it is your role that makes us strong and united.

Leading is not an easy role or responsibility. However, it is through members like you that the association flourishes and grows. I hope over the next few months, each of you will take a more active part in our association. I desire for each of you to know that it is your support that makes our association. The future changes and challenges of the profession will be surmountable with your increasing role and support. I look forward to seeing the results of your support in the near future. If you have any comments or suggestions please email me at davidahilton@hotmail.com. Again, thank you all for this opportunity to serve you. ■



AANA 78th Annual Meeting, August 6-10, 2011, Boston



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A Student's Perspective of Mid-Year Assembly

by Tracie Abplanalp, SRNA

This month, I had the opportunity to attend Mid-Year Assembly in our nation's Capitol. I really had no idea what to expect at this meeting. However, everyone I spoke to said it was the best meeting to attend and I would learn so much about the profession. I found they were right! As a SRNA, I am focused on learning about the didactic and clinical aspects of anesthesia. The Mid-Year meeting was a good experience to learn about the legal and political areas that affect the profession. The right to practice is not a given to those in the CRNA profession and we have to be involved to retain those rights.

In Washington, I learned some of the current issues facing CRNA practice. Over the first day and a half of the conference, I heard from some of the major leaders and influential people in our practice. Some of those individuals included, Frank Purcell and Ann Walker-Jenkins, from whom I learned a great deal about current healthcare and CRNA practice issues. Hearing the various speakers gave me an appreciation for the great leadership we have in our profession. Also, I realized that no matter how much I would like to avoid being politically active it is the only way for us to preserve our practice rights.

After hearing the political issues, the Georgia nurse anesthetists set out to meet with our elected representatives. I was involved in three meetings with the representative's staff member. In the three meetings, the legislative assistant heard our information and asked questions. I was surprised by how little they knew about CRNA practice.

These meetings brought me to the realization of the importance of being politically aware and active. Our elected representatives make decisions about our practice and yet many have a knowledge deficit about the role of a CRNA. Out of the three meetings I attended, there was only one staff member who knew about nurse anesthesia. A Georgia CRNA had met with the staff member during past Mid-Year Assembly meetings. This represented the importance of political activism.

Now, it resonates how important it is to form relationships with our representatives and their staff members. In the future, I hope I have the opportunity to be involved. The political activities and interaction with political leaders is truly the only way to protect our practice. ■

Report from the Government Relations Committee

Get To Know Your Elected Officials

by James Masiongale, CRNA, MHS



The Georgia Legislative Session came to a close mid-April with the major focus being budgetary issues. GANA monitored a few bills introduced this session; however, it was overall an uneventful session for GANA and the Government Relations Committee. This does not mean we were not actively educating elected officials of the roles of CRNAs.

In January, we had the largest turnout ever for Capitol Day, totaling over 100 CRNA and students. There were numerous visits to discuss the importance of CRNAs to the citizens of Georgia. This event has seen substantial growth the last couple of years, thanks to both CRNA schools allowing their students to attend. We look forward to seeing the number of CRNAs attending continue to grow.

We were back at the Capitol in February as President Elect Brent DuBois, Executive Director/Legal Counsel Christy Dunkelberger, Amy and Jim Masiongale, three Mercer SRNAs, and five GHSU SRNAs displayed on behalf of GANA during Rural Health Day. During this event, we had the opportunity to have a great visit with Representative Terry England, the newly appointed Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. In April, the GRC was represented at the Nation's Capitol as part of the AANA Mid-Year Assembly. This event will be discussed in the Federal Political Director's Report.

So now that the session is over, what can we as CRNAs do to help our profession? The elected officials are back at their hometowns. This is a wonderful opportunity to make an appointment to meet with and talk to them. I am still amazed at how little most of them know about our profession, and I have found that they are truly interested and enjoy meeting with us. The best time to get to know them, and more importantly them to know you, is before an issue arises that could affect our practice. Feel free to contact GANA or myself if you need talking points for your visit and we will be happy to assist you.

CALENDAR of upcoming events:

- GANA Spring Meeting – May 14th-15th, 2011 in Atlanta, GA
- GANA Annual Fall Meeting – September 30 – October 2, 2011 in Atlanta, GA
- AANA National Meeting August 6th-10th, 2011 in Boston, MA

I have enjoyed serving my second year as GRC Chairman. It has been both educating and rewarding. ■

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