



# To & Fro

A Publication of the Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists • Volume 74 • Winter 2014

## Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists CRNAs

- Represent nearly 150 years of quality anesthesia
- Safely administer approximately 34 million anesthetics in the US every year
- Represented by 47,000 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
- Provide high quality, safe, efficient and cost effective anesthesia care

### 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.

### Vision Statement

Recognized leaders who are committed to patient safety, practice autonomously to the fullest extent of their scope of practice, and are consummate professionals with 100% of its members belonging to the AANA/ GANA, and are fully reimbursed for all anesthesia services.

## *Report from the President*

### **GANA Priorities for 2014**

*by Mark Schmitz, CRNA*



While preparing the President's Message for the *To & Fro*, several topics came to mind that could be considered for the article. However, membership participation still remains high on the list. Actually, Past President Jim Masiongale asked to make it a top priority for topics for the upcoming BOD. I'm not sure we've found the answer, but I do think we're on the right path. We have a growing number of new board members and I'm thankful for their knowledge and contributions. Because GANA has moved to more virtual meetings and conference calls, BOD members throughout the state can have meetings on week nights for an hour which would have been impossible in the not-too-distant past. Travel time is less, making it less costly for the Association. These meetings are now more convenient for members to attend. Instead of the weekend being spent in the car traveling, Board members can now get online or have a conference call and all be informed of the most recent issues. Students are taking more active roles in GANA and committees. Students, in addition to the clinical and class time, are participating in Board meetings and PR events. Students and members are implementing a communication tool for helping disseminate key issue information more quickly to GANA members.

Since assuming the office of President for GANA, I have attended several meetings and workshops. The BOD held their Fall Workshop at the Emory Center in Atlanta. Ms. Donna Godfrey covered topics including changes in the healthcare environment, communication skills and work environment

and social media. I also represented GANA at the AANA Region 2 Leadership Retreat in Charlotte, NC. Strategic planning approaches were addressed as well as an introduction to media training session.

In December, I had the honor of presenting the GANA Student Award at the Georgia Regents University ceremony during their graduation weekend. I again want to express my thanks for the diligent work and time to all the people and institutions that work together to prepare the students in their journey to becoming CRNAs.

In the upcoming year I'm confident the Public Relations Committee will continue to work diligently to make CRNAs' presence more widely known throughout Georgia. The GRC and PR committees worked well together to host Capital Day in Atlanta. Thank you to the many CRNAs that rearranged their schedules to participate this year. Also thank you to the CRNAs that covered schedules for the CRNAs that would not have been able to attend without your support. The students from the GRU Anesthesia Program also participated in Capital Day. After writing letters expressing their concerns regarding CRNA issues to their Legislators, many of the students made office contacts to follow up.

With the Georgia House and Senate in session, I can't state enough how important it is for you to contact your Representative and Senator regarding the pertinent issues facing their constituents (and your patients) concerning access to safe affordable care. ■

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Anesthesia Patient  
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*Report from the Executive Director***From the Executive Director**

*by Christy A. Dunkelberger, Esq.*

**Non Deductibility of Dues for 2013**

As required by section 6033(c) of the Internal Revenue Code, GANA is required to inform you of the amount of your state membership dues that is allocated towards the expenses incurred for state lobbying efforts. For those of you who opted out of contributing a portion of your GANA dues money to the GANA-PAC, the amount of your state membership dues that is allocated towards the expenses incurred by for state lobbying efforts is \$35.00. For those of you who did not opt out of contributing a portion of your GANA dues money to the GANA-PAC the amount of your state membership dues that is allocated towards the expenses incurred by for state lobbying efforts is \$46.50. These amounts are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. All GANA members are also members of the AANA. The AANA will provide correspondence in the AANA President's letter about the amount incurred for lobbying activities from the national dues. GANA receives \$232.50 from the AANA for each full dues paying member.

**Legislative and Regulatory Issues**

The Georgia Legislature convened on Monday, January 13, 2014. With all of the members of the legislature up for re-election and the early primary slated for May 20<sup>th</sup>, the session will pass with amazing speed. The forty day session is already half over, with legislators counting snow days as legislative days in order to end as soon as practically possible.

Despite the speed, GANA is actively involved with two legislative matters. You may recall that last year HB 178 addressing pain management was passed over our objections. This year we are attempting to have the law amended to remove the restriction placed on CRNAs' scope of practice. As it stands now, a CRNA cannot work alone in a pain management clinic. A CRNA can only work in a pain management clinic if another advanced practice registered nurse with prescriptive authority, a PA with a job description with prescriptive authority or a physician is present with the CRNA. There is no other setting where such a restriction exists on a CRNA's practice. We are working with legislators to correct this unintended consequence of HB 178. Unfortunately, the Georgia Medical Board, the GSA and MAG do not want the legislation amended, but would rather try to correct our problem by rules promulgated by the Medical Board. We believe the fix should be legislative and we continue to pursue this avenue.

HB 830 was introduced by Representative Willard. The purpose of this Bill is to define the term "surgery" and identify the health care professionals who are authorized to perform surgery. The Bill defines surgery and goes on to define the providers who can perform surgery in this state. In the list of providers, the Bill includes "a nurse practitioner ... acting pursuant to physician delegation under protocols reviewed by the Georgia Composite Medical Board." Similar to the pain management law, the definition in this Bill excludes CRNAs. GANA presented its views to Representative Willard at a meeting of the stakeholders for this Bill. All disciplines who attended the stakeholders meeting spoke in opposition to the language or to the need for the legislation. Representative Willard has agreed to consider all comments.

**GANA Meetings**

**GANA Board Meeting** – The next GANA Board Meeting is a scheduled conference call on March 10<sup>th</sup>. The next in-person meeting is scheduled for May 17<sup>th</sup> in Fayetteville. If any member is interested in attending a Board meeting, please call the GANA office at 770.487.3900 to make a reservation.

*(continued on page 5)*

## **Growing a Strong Association**

*by Tony Chipas, CRNA, PhD*



**D**ear Region 2 CRNA, SRNAs and colleagues,

Thank you for allowing me to serve you as your AANA Director for Region 2. I am committed to making this a stronger association for you our great members.

Membership in our association is what keeps us strong. I want to thank all of you who have maintained your affiliation with the AANA for your continued support and belief in our common goals. Unfortunately this belief is not shared by all CRNAs. Over the past few years we have seen an increase in the number of CRNAs who do not feel that membership in our great association is a good value and have let their membership lapse. This decline encompasses not only existing CRNA members but also new graduates who do not join after graduation. One of the goals of the AANA Board of Directors is to assist the state associations in getting those members back and I am chairing a membership taskforce of board members and past presidents to look at this issue and make recommendations.

Membership in our association of more than just a journal and an annual meeting. It is about providing advocacy for all CRNAs on both the National and State levels. It is about making sure that CRNAs continue to practice and provide safe, cost effective anesthesia to our patients for another 150 years. I am sure that if the American Nurses Association did not exist that nursing would be little changed but I don't think that our practice would be the same if the AANA did not provide strong support for all of us. If you work with students in your clinical sites please take the time to tell them all the things the AANA does for them and most of all encourage them to become members after graduation. Mentoring of our Associate members on professionalism and the profession is an important part of their education and the role of all CRNAs. If you know of a colleague who has allowed their membership to lapse, please encourage them to rejoin or contact your state president, or me, and we will approach them about rejoining. Often times CRNAs let their membership lapse because of miscommunication or misunderstandings that are easily addressed.

In January we had a Region 2 Leadership retreat that was very successful. This gave our existing and future state leaders an opportunity for leadership development and to interact with each other to discuss common issues and to get solutions. All of the states in our region were well represented. I want to take this opportunity to thank Sharon Pearce, AANA President-elect for taking the time from her busy schedule to help me with this retreat.

We do need your assistance on addressing a national issue. As many of you may know the Veterans Administration has proposed changes in its Nursing Handbook that would allow CRNAs and all APRNs to practice to the full extent of their education. As predicted the ASA is fighting this change and in the process distorting many truths about CRNA practice. They have the support of several members of the U.S. House of Representatives who have signed on to the "Grimm-Kirkpatrick" letter. In this letter these members of congress oppose the VHA recognition of APRNs as full practice providers by saying these changes "could put veterans' lives at risk". Even if you are not a VA nurse anesthetist, please take the time to contact your members of congress and ask them not to sign on to this letter but to instead to support VHA efforts to ensure patient access to quality care. It is important for all of us.

As always please remember to be proud of being a CRNA, you have earned it and deserve respect. Make sure you introduce yourself as "I am "your name" and I am a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist. I will be doing your anesthesia today". We need to stop being the "best kept secret" in healthcare.

I want to take this opportunity to announce that I will be running this year for AANA Vice President and would greatly appreciate your support. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have problems, questions, concerns or suggestions. I am always at your disposal and together we can make this profession and our association greater.

Anthony Chipas CRNA, PhD  
Director Region 2  
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# The Student's Side

by Tripp Penick, SRNA



**T**he winter has been busy but good for all of the students at Georgia Regents University. This semester the junior class began some difficult courses such as pharmacology as well as pathophysiology, but we now have a better idea of how each professor teaches now that we have the first semester under our belts. We are all excited to be getting into more anesthesia-specific courses. We have been spending time observing CRNAs in the OR and enjoying more hands on in the simulation lab learning induction and intubations techniques.

Our senior students are a little over a month into the second semester of clinical rotations and I haven't spoken with any of my classmates who aren't having an incredible experience. Many of us have begun specialty rotations and are thrilled to finally be putting our book knowledge to practical use. Our class is spread out all over the state in multiple different clinical sites for 1 to 2 months for each rotation. This is a great way to learn how different a CRNA's job can be in different settings. Some sites are large and medically supervised while others are smaller and/or all-CRNA practices. I feel that this exposure

is invaluable and will be beneficial down the road in deciding in what type of setting we would prefer to work.

On January 22<sup>nd</sup> we had approximately 30 representing the Georgia Regents University Nurse Anesthesia Program in attendance at the State Capitol in Atlanta. This provided a good opportunity for us to contact and speak with our individual state representatives about the importance of supporting our profession. As most of you know we are currently addressing the unintended consequences of HB 178 – pain management legislation. Many students were able to meet with their state legislators and discuss this issue with them face to face.

Another exciting opportunity we have in the near future is Mid-Year Assembly. The assembly will be held April 5-9 at the Crystal Gateway Marriot in Arlington, VA and we should have a very strong student appearance this year. I would encourage as many CRNAs as possible to attend and meet some of our students. We look forward to seeing you all there! ■



## Georgia Regents University Class of 2013

*Front row: Malorie Brewer Globensky, Kristin Lane Huey, Taylor Hosner, Ryan Perry and Kelly Gowdy*

*Back row: Allison Jones, Regina Norton, Tiara McCaskill, Megan Joyner, Matt Stringer, Vito Crespo, Nathan Smith, Jon Speed, Blair Reeder, Shaundra Davis, Sarah Reed, Lori Alexander Boswell, Matt Gartner*

*Not pictured: Jessica Epperson*

## Nurse Anesthesia Issues for Mid-Year Assembly 2014

by Steve Smith, CRNA, MA



Members of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) will visit their members of the U.S. House and Senate in Washington, DC, April 5-9, as part of the AANA Mid-Year Assembly federal policy education conference. I would like for all of you to please seriously consider attending this very special and important AANA meeting. You can register online at [www.aana.com](http://www.aana.com). Learn about trends and issues shaping healthcare policy and how to influence policy on behalf of our patients and profession. Develop advocacy and communication skills you can use at the state and national level. It's a great opportunity to hear from and personally meet the AANA leadership and AANA staff members. Meet key members of Congress and their staffs and educate them about CRNAs. Now more than ever, with CRNA reimbursement at risk and CRNA practice under attack, make your voice heard by policymakers in Washington.

Once again, one of the ongoing issues we will be dealing with this year is the threat of a 24% cut in Medicare Part B reimbursement for CRNA anesthesia services due to the flawed Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) funding formula. Congress did adopt a short term relief to these cuts that expires March 31, 2014. Our mission will be to urge Congress to continue working to enact bipartisan legislation (HR 2810 / S 1871) permanently repealing SGR and Modernizing Medicare payment.

We will be promoting competition, choice and healthcare cost savings by protecting the provider nondiscrimination law that became effective January 2014. This new law 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 such as CRNAs solely on the bases of their licensure.

The Veterans Health Association (VHA) is updating its Nursing Handbook, a guide for healthcare facilities, to authorize full practice authority to CRNAs and other APRNs to practice to their full scope and be recognized as Full Practice Providers. This follows the recommendation of the Institute of Medicine that will ensure that our patients have access to quality care as well as the most efficient, effective use of healthcare expert workforce.

We will be advocating for the preservation of funding for the Title 8 Nurse Workforce Development program. Along with this we will be asking that the Medicare Graduate Nursing Education demonstration project must continue being implemented to ensure patient access to quality care now and in the future.

I understand that the majority of you can't make this meeting, so what I would like to ask of you is to contribute in other ways to our mission of full scope of practice, nondiscriminatory reimbursement and provider nondiscrimination for all CRNAs. How can this be done? Make sure that when you receive a blast email from the AANA asking for a support letter to follow through. In most instances these replies take all of 3 minutes. Voices in numbers make a difference. Contribute generously to the CRNA-PAC fund which is a nonpartisan fund that goes to federal legislators that support our cause. The CRNA-PAC is launching a new Advocacy website to begin in February 2014. You can still support your CRNA-PAC by contacting them at [info@aanadc.com](mailto:info@aanadc.com) or (202) 484-8400 for any other matters. ■

### From the Executive Director

*(continued from page 2)*

**GANA Meetings** – The GANA 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting has come and gone. Before passing the gavel, President Jim Masiongale presided over our largest meeting to date which proved to be an historic event full of many memorable moments. The gavel was appropriately passed to incoming President Mark Schmitz, one of our leaders who served as President back in 1996-97. Mark has personal knowledge of how the GANA has grown and changed since 1996. He is committed to attracting more member involvement while maintaining respect for everyone's busy lifestyle. GANA plans to have more frequent Board meetings, however, one half of the meetings will be held through electronic means. The Board will hold a total of three in-person meetings and three teleconference meetings. Teleconference meetings

prevent travel time and save time and expense. Please check the website at [www.gana.org](http://www.gana.org) for all meeting dates.

The 2014 Annual Fall Meeting will be held in downtown Atlanta this year. Save the date and mark your calendars now to attend from October 3-5, 2014 at the Westin Peachtree Plaza in Atlanta. The Westin Peachtree Plaza, is an Atlanta skyline icon, crowned by the revolving Sun Dial Restaurant. The 73-story hotel overlooks some of the best attractions and things to do in Atlanta. Located in the heart of downtown Atlanta, the hotel is attached to AmericasMart, and just steps away from CNN Center, Georgia World Congress, World of Coca Cola, Philips Arena, College Football Hall of Fame, and the Georgia Dome. Room rates for GANA are \$119.00/night. Visit [www.IPGE.com](http://www.IPGE.com) for complete meeting details. ■

# Georgia CRNAs in Action



*We had the pleasure of having Donna Godfrey from NC lead our Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists retreat. As you can see we had wonderful participation that included two students. We are working to make the GANA the best it can be and make all of our members proud!*



*Kay Argroves, Janice Izlar, Steve Smith, Leslie Jeter and Tara McCaskill at the AANA Fall Leadership Academy in Miami, Florida in November 2013. Not pictured but attending was GANA President Mark Schmitz.*



*Jannine Deraney, Blair Reeder, Sarah Reed, Megan Joyner, Steve Smith and Allison Jones at AmericasMart in Atlanta exhibiting for the GANA at the Georgia Association of Nursing Students (GANS) Convention in October of 2013.*



*The GANA scholarship recipients Malorie Brewer and Allison Jones with GANA President Mark Schmitz at the Georgia Regents University Nurse Anesthesia Graduation in December 2013.*



*Sarah Reed, Jannine Deraney, Megan Joyner, Leslie Jeter, Allison Jones and Blair Reeder at AmericasMart in Atlanta exhibiting for the GANA at the Georgia Association of Nursing Students (GANS) Convention in October of 2013.*



*Rose Synsmir, Steve Smith, Kay Argroves and Leslie Jeter attending the AANA Joint Conference Committee in Chicago in September 2013. Rose is on the AANA program committee, Kay and Leslie are on the AANA practice committee and Steve is on the AANA government relations committee.*



# GANA Capitol Day – January 22, 2014



*Steve Smith, State Senator Brandon Beach and Mark Schmitz*



*Governor Nathan Deal and the presentation of the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists Week Proclamation during the GANA Capitol Day – January 22, 2014*



*GRU Program Director Jim Masiongale, GANA Treasurer Jannine Deraney, State Senator Buddy Carter and GANA President Mark Schmitz*



*Governor Nathan Deal with GANA President Mark Schmitz*



## AANA MID-YEAR ASSEMBLY

*Registration online at [www.aana.com](http://www.aana.com)*

**April 5-9, 2014  
Crystal Gateway Marriott  
Arlington, VA**

The Mid-Year Assembly instructs members in regard to legislative issues affecting nurse anesthesia practice, helps them develop skills to become advocates for the nurse anesthesia practice and profession, and enables them to meet with legislative representatives for states and regions. The Mid-Year Assembly is for all CRNAs and student registered nurse anesthetists interested in issues, trends and influences related to practice and professional advocacy.



## A Fast and Furious Legislative Session

by Kay Argroves

This year's legislative session, which began January 13, was predicted to be fast and furious. It has been, and continues to be so. Last year a federal court decided that Georgia's election calendar was not providing enough time for overseas military personnel to exercise their right to vote in primaries. This was aggravated further if a primary runoff occurred.

This decision was only directed at federal election primaries. However, holding separate federal and state primaries would be very expensive for county and city governments as well as confusing to constituents. In response to this dilemma, the first week of the legislative session saw the passage of GA. HB 310 which moved the primaries up from July to late May. It also moves up to early March the time when those wishing to run can sign up to be on the ballot.

Compressing the primaries up by two months puts added pressure on those politicians seeking re-election by reducing the time they have to campaign. If the legislative session were to end in April, like usual, this would give incumbents very little time to campaign for reelection. By our state constitution there must be 40 legislative session days.

There are two bills which are garnering a lot of interest for us as a profession. One is GA. HB 830 and last year's HB 178. HB 830 is an attempt to define "surgery". This Bill includes an exemption for some provider's current scopes of practice, but fails to recognize CRNAs. There has been a lot of opposition voiced by many provider groups (including GANA) to the language and the intent of this Bill.



Go to [www.gana.org](http://www.gana.org), click on Facebook in the upper right hand corner of the home page and then "Like Us" on Facebook!

We continue to work towards an amendment to GA. HB 178 (pill mill legislation) in hopes of adding some language to eliminate the restriction placed on CRNAs' scope of practice. The fast and furious nature of this legislative session may make it hard to accomplish our goals. ■

### 2014 GANA Calendar

#### GANA Board Meetings:

*The conference calls will be at 8:00 pm and the in-person meetings will be at 10:00 a.m. Please call (770) 487-3900 or email [ganaoffice@bellsouth.net](mailto:ganaoffice@bellsouth.net) if you would like to attend a meeting. They are open to all GANA members.*

March 10	Monday Conference Call
May 17	Saturday meeting in Fayetteville
August 23	Saturday meeting in Augusta

#### Other Meetings and Events:

February 18-20	Assembly of School Faculty at the San Diego Marriott Marquis and Marina
March 5	"Georgia Rural Health Association Day" at the Capitol
April 5-9	AANA Mid-Year Assembly in Arlington, VA
September 13-16	AANA Nurse Anesthesia Annual Congress in Orlando, FL at the Orlando World Center Marriott
October 3-5	GANA Annual Fall Meeting in Atlanta, GA
November 7-9	AANA Fall Leadership Academy

*Proposed calendar for To & Fro 2014: May and September*



## **Barbara Waldron Receives The 2013 Rosalie McDonald Award**

*The 2013 GANA Rosalie McDonald Award was presented to Barbara Waldron, CRNA, at the 2013 GANA Annual Meeting held in Stone Mountain, GA. Following is the letter of nomination received by the Board:*

Dear GANA Board of Directors,

Barbara Waldron is a most deserving recipient of the GANA Rosalie McDonald award and for her enduring friendship, we nominate her as the 2013 recipient.

A friend is someone who truly cares about you, nurtures you and checks in with you. Some other definitions of friend are one who advocates for you and one who is your ally. Aristotle said, "Friendship is essentially a partnership." Someone else said, "A true friend is someone who is willing to share his or her precious time with you."

Barb is a friend of GANA. When Barb was asked to serve GANA she did not hesitate and accepted the position with dedication to her profession. When she was asked to accept leadership positions a little earlier than she had anticipated, including running for GANA President, Barb said, "yes." Though it may not have been the optimum time in her personal life, she forged ahead for the GANA. She gave then and still gives today of her time, energy and talents for nurse anesthesia.

Throughout her years of service with the GANA, Barb has held many positions and done much for the organization. Anticipating the move toward electronic, fast-pace communication, as President, she began the GANA listserve, a valuable tool to keep members informed at a moment's notice via email. She continues to serve on the Peer Assistance Committee, as she has since her first involvement over 10 years ago. In addition to her peer assistance work, Barb is currently serving on the Wellness Committee for GANA. With knowledge about the subject, she reaches out to those CRNAs with chemical dependency problems and writes articles for the *To & Fro* encouraging personal wellness for all Georgia CRNAs. She advocates for wellness education and treatment of chemical dependency. She stays informed and practices much of what she "preaches" through exercise, healthy eating and being active with family, friends, and work.

Barb is a personal friend to many GANA members. She is personal friend to Martha Kral who shares, "when Barb is a friend, she acts like a friend. She is there to share your high and low moments. I have known Barb for 29 years and I know her well. She is one of my dearest friends in the world." She is a personal friend to Janice Izlar who shares, "When she recognizes a friend's need she quickly fills the void for them. This was demonstrated throughout my years of services on the AANA Board. She continually arranged her schedule to work at the facility I manage anesthesia services so high quality anesthesia care was provided in the CRNA-only practice of the busy ambulatory surgery center. This gave me the freedom to travel as needed for my AANA commitments.

One of her strongest qualities is her resiliency. If she sees something that needs to be addressed, whether it is in her personal or professional life, she seeks the best solution and proceeds with commitment and perseverance.

Barb is one of the most resourceful, loyal, ethical, and moral individuals we know. She supports the GANA and its members during their time of need as well as their accolades.

With much pride, we nominate Barbara Waldron, CRNA, for the 2013 Rosalie McDonald Award.

*Warmest regards,  
Martha Dukes Kral, CRNA  
Janice J. Izlar, CRNA, DNAP*

# Georgia Regents University Nurse Anesthesia Program Report

by James Masiongale, CRNA, MHS  
Director and Clinical Coordinator

Georgia Regents University recently celebrated its one-year anniversary since the merger between Augusta State University and Georgia Health Sciences University. This first year has seen many changes as we moved from a health sciences only university to a university that consists of health sciences and liberal arts with three campuses in the Augusta area. The major impact felt by the nursing anesthesia program was the need to schedule classes far in advance due to the increased demand for classrooms. While this did not impact the students' education, it has affected things like attending Capitol Day and Mid-Year Assembly, but I am happy to report the effect has been minimal. One very nice thing that occurred as a result of the merger was a formal graduation in December where the 19 graduates of the Class of 2013 was the first class to ever graduate wearing regalia. The program was very pleased to have GANA President Mark Schmitz join us and present the two GANA awards to Malorie (Brewer) Globensky and Allison Jones. Malorie was also the recipient of the Program Directors Award, which is chosen by the faculty for going beyond what is required by the program. Most of the class have taken and passed boards and almost all had jobs lined up prior to graduation.

The Class of 2014 students are well into their second semester of clinical and have now started doing specialty rotations. Since the beginning, there has been a strong belief by the program that students need to be involved at the state and federal level

in hopes that they will remain involved after graduation. The majority of the Class of 2014 will be attending the AANA Mid-Year Assembly as part of the Professional Aspects class and they all participated in GANA Capitol day January 22<sup>nd</sup>. We also have a student serve in the role of student representative to the GANA Board. This year Tripp Penick is serving in that capacity and doing an outstanding job.

The Class of 2015 (all 30 of them) have started the second semester of didactic. The second semester, while extremely demanding, is more exciting because of the focus on anesthesia related materials and simulation. The majority of the Class attended Capitol Day, but unfortunately some were scheduled for simulation training that day and there was no way to reschedule. Interviews were conducted the first week of December and we have a very qualified group that will be joining us as the Class of 2016 in August.

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. ■

## Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists PAC

*I am contributing \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to further  
the legislative efforts of the GANA.*

*Thank you for  
your contribution  
to this worthy  
cause for your  
profession!*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Best time to call \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Do you work in ☐ an office based setting? ☐ a rural hospital? ☐ a surgery center? ☐ an urban hospital?

Nurse Practitioner \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (Mandatory for all donations greater than \$100)

Are you interested in lobbying with the GANA during the 2014 legislative session? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you acquainted with any of Georgia's legislators? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, who? \_\_\_\_\_

Please clip and send to: **Robbie Pope, GANA-PAC Treasurer, P.O. Box 887, Tifton, GA 31793**

Forms available at [www.gana.org](http://www.gana.org)



## Wellness 2014

by Barb Waldron, CRNA

Welcome to 2014! Is it resolution time for you? I don't know about you but I gave that up, because change does not come with resolutions. Change can only come with deliberate ACTION on a daily basis. Set the goal, commit to it, and take some action toward that goal every day, even if it's a day of rest once in a while.

I'm experiencing shoulder and neck problems and pain. I have been doctoring for it for a while (after procrastinating and living in denial), doctor said "no more injections", which left me with no more choices but to help myself. Just coincidentally, there was an article in the AANA bulletin for January, *Maximizing Your Work Time to Prevent Injury*. In the article it suggests several exercises/stretchers that you can do while giving anesthesia. In actuality, you can do them anywhere; it relieves tension and loosens up the joints. So I visited my friendly physical therapist, we reviewed the stretches that would get the job done, many of which were suggested in the bulletin article, we planned how many times a week I would do the vigorous exercises and I committed to the program. I do have to tell someone what my plan is so that they can remind me to do them until it becomes a HABIT, or the CHANGE comes about. So I do that by staying in touch with my sister through texting. The reward for me will be less pain and I will be able to get back to the activities I enjoy.

Nationally, injuries account for \$45-54 billion in lost productivity. We, as practitioners, tend to ignore our pain and continue to work usually adding to the injury; or we tend to self-medicate. Here is where I say, "DON'T TAKE THAT ROUTE."

For those of you that could not make the Fall GANA meeting at Stone Mountain, the 75<sup>th</sup> year of the GANA, it was wonderful. The committee that planned the activities did an excellent job. The Friday night activity was great fun, food excellent, and oldies but goodies music games. Rose Synsmir, Michele Womble, and Katie Truitt need to be recognized for their effort. I know they were rewarded by seeing how much fun everyone had. Saturday night banquet was wonderful; I salute everyone for making the night so nice. We did celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> year of GANA in grand style. It was great fun to be part of that celebration.

We still need people to volunteer their time, as much as you want or as little as you want, to make GANA a more amazing organization then it already is. Just ask those involved with GANA how they have been rewarded. Each person will tell you something different but most will say "I have received more than I have given."

Peace to you and your family in this New Year.

Remember drug addiction does not discriminate. Choose not to be a statistic. Be Well. ■

### Shadow a CRNA

Contact the GANA office  
by email at  
[ganaoffice@bellsouth.net](mailto:ganaoffice@bellsouth.net)

[www.aana.com/  
peerassist.aspx](http://www.aana.com/peerassist.aspx)

Helpline  
Peer Assistance  
800.654.5167

Anesthetists in  
Recovery (AIR)  
215.635.0183



# **GANA 75th Annual Meeting & Gala – October 4-6, 2014**



*Janice Izlar was presented with a Frabel magnolia sculpture during the GANA 75th Anniversary Meeting in honor of her being Georgia's Steel Magnolia.*



*GRU student Malorie Brewer was the 2013 winner of the Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists Outstanding Student Nurse Anesthetist Award. Pictured with Malorie are Steve Smith and Mark Schmitz*



*Barbara Waldron was the winner of the 2013 prestigious Rosalie McDonald Award, pictured are Leslie Jeter, Barbara, Jim Masingale, Ann Thompson and Janice Izlar*



*Lori Boswell, Blair Reeder, Jim Masingale  
and Matt Gartner*



*Ann Thompson, Mark Schmitz, his wife Beth,  
and Lucy Hitchman*



*2013 GANA President Jim Masiongale, Georgia  
State Attorney General Sam Olens and GANA ED/  
Legal Counsel Christie Dunkelberger*



*Region 2 Director Dr. Tony Chipas  
and his wife and Larry Hornsby*

## More from the GALA!



*GRU Professors Lisa Stephens and Amy Masiongale and Katie Truitt*



*Tyler Campbell, Rose Synsmir and Jennie Kelson*



*AANA ED Wanda Wilson, Barry Cranfill and Past President Janice Izlar*



*Kay Argroves and Barbara Waldron*

*Katie Truitt and the DJ*



☒ **Yes!**

*I want to be actively involved in the GANA!*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

*Interests – Check all that apply:*

**Committees:**

☐ Bylaws ☐ Communications ☐ GRC ☐ Public Relations

☐ Obtain a seat on the Board of Directors

I'd like to become a legislative contact for my legislative district:

☐ State ☐ Federal

☐ I can participate in GANA Lobby Day

☐ I will participate in any area needed

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please clip and return to:*

GANA, 1832 Hwy. 54 West • Fayetteville, GA 30214

### GANA BOARD MEETING

The next GANA Board Meeting  
is scheduled for  
Monday, March 10, 2014  
at 8:00 p.m.  
(conference call)

This meeting is open to  
all GANA members.

If you would like to attend  
this meeting, please RSVP to  
ganaoffice@bellsouth.net  
or call 770-487-3900.

# Questions, Questions, Questions!

by Barry Cranfill



**A**s the GANA State Reimbursement Specialist and Chair of the GANA Practice Committee, I routinely answer queries from our members regarding billing, compliance and contracting. The average practicing CRNA, working day in and day out in operating suites across the state, has little to no experience regarding the myriad of compliance requirements or the liability they have regarding the billing and contracting of their services. So, please take a moment to review some of the “Frequently Asked Questions” below. I think you may be surprised at the answers.

**Q:** *I work in a practice that bills payers for “medical direction” provided by anesthesiologists in our group. However, these anesthesiologists are frequently documenting participation in cases when, in fact, the service was not provided as required by CMS in the medical direction rules. Do CRNAs have liability in this circumstance?*

**A:** Practitioners that participate in Medicare are required to complete the CMS-855I form to become a participant in the Medicare system. That form includes the following certification: “I will not knowingly present or cause to be presented a false or fraudulent claim for payment by Medicare, and I will not submit claims with deliberate ignorance or reckless disregard or their truth or falsity.” The presentation of a false claim would result in an improper Medicare overpayment. Form CMS- 855I goes into great detail regarding the provider’s responsibilities and duties as well as the penalties for violations. I would highly

recommend every CRNA read CMS-855I. It can be located with a simple internet search.

Furthermore, assignment of your billing rights to your employer (or other entity) does not relieve you of your personal liability regarding the Medicare claim made on your behalf. According to CFR 424.809(d), in the event of reassignment of payments, the parties (CRNA and employer) are jointly and severally responsible for any Medicare overpayment. Therefore, a CRNA may be liable for the presentation of a false or fraudulent claim made by their employer on the CRNA’s behalf.

**Q:** *I am trying to negotiate a contract with a small Ambulatory Surgery Center (ASC) to provide anesthesia services. The facility is requesting that I provide the anesthesia drugs and equipment, at my expense, for the ASC as a condition of the exclusive contract. (Please note that these items would be supplied without reimbursement by the ASC at fair market value). I plan to bill the patients for the drugs that I provide to the ASC. Can I legally provide the drugs and equipment?*

**A:** This request by the ASC may be improper and may be in violation of the Federal Antikickback Statute (AKS). Providing the anesthesia drugs, equipment or supplies to the ASC at less than fair market value may constitute remuneration to the ASC. There are numerous HHS OIG Advisory Opinions that have addressed this type of issue and each time it has been found that the “...arrangement could result in prohibited remuneration under the Antikickback statute...”

*(continued on page 15)*

## **AANA 2014 Nurse Anesthesia Annual Congress**

*(Formerly known as the AANA Annual Meeting)*

**September 13-16, 2014**

**Orlando World Center Marriott**

You can earn half of your required CEs for recertification in a little more than one weekend at the Nurse Anesthesia Annual Congress. This annual meeting is the largest clinical education meeting for CRNAs and SRNAs.

Attendees will be provided with the insight and tools necessary to practice in the evolving field of anesthesia.

Hands on workshops will allow participants to have access to simulation-based instruction including partial

task trainers and anatomical models (depending on the workshop attended).

Comprehensive sessions will focus on pediatrics, pharmacology, crisis management and rare complications, practice management, cardiothoracic and new for 2014 – a comprehensive CPC pre-convention workshop. These will be taught by faculty who are experts in their field.

*The preliminary program and registration will be available in early March.*



## Questions, Questions, Questions

(continued from page 14)

Medicare and most commercial insurers consider the anesthesia drugs, equipment and supplies “bundled” with the ASC fee. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the ASC to provide those items (at their expense) to the patient as part of the facility claim for payment. If the facility is receiving the items at less than fair market value, directly or indirectly, from an entity or individual that is receiving referrals from the ASC (the services provided under the anesthesia contract), then the arrangement is most likely improper.

Furthermore, billing the patients for the drugs separately (remember the drugs are “bundled” with the ASC payment) may constitute improper unbundling and the presentation of a double charge to the patient for the drugs. Improper unbundling has been identified by the HHS OIG Work Plan as an activity that warrants their attention and investigation.

Finally, the purchase and sale of drugs is regulated by the Georgia Board of Pharmacy. The acquisition, transport, storage and sale of the anesthesia drugs by the APRN/CRNA may be a violation of several Georgia laws.

**Q:** *I am currently billing for my CRNA services as an “out of network” provider. I have chosen to bill out of network because the commercial carriers are not offering adequate reimbursement for my services as an “in network” provider. Therefore, I am able to make more money simply by billing my services “out of network.” Unfortunately, this practice often exposes patients to greater financial burden due to separate “out of network” deductibles and greater “patient responsibility” on their insurance claims. The facility that I work with is getting complaints from patients about these higher costs. Due to the poor “in network” payments offered by the insurers, I can make more money “out of network” even if I waive the patients’ higher out of pocket costs. Can I waive the out of network costs for my patients?*

**A:** The routine waiver of deductibles, copayments or coinsurance is not allowed by either Federal or State law. Georgia law considers it a “misleading, fraudulent or deceptive act...” The patient has entered into a contract with the insurer that incentivizes the patient to utilize “in network” providers (providing savings to the insurer and the insured). If a patient opts to utilize an “out of network” provider, there is typically a disincentive in the form of separate and higher deductibles and greater patient financial liability due to the higher costs of the service to the insurer. Routine waiver of these deductibles has been identified by the HHS OIG as an improper inducement for the patient. This is viewed by the “powers that be” as giving patients money for using your services. Additionally, the insurers routinely view waiver of the patient liability

as “improperly representing charges” to the insurer, since the provider had no expectation that the patient liability would be collected. This may constitute insurance fraud and the insurers may opt to withhold future payments for services provided by the CRNA or demand repayment of the insurer’s payment for the service.

**Q:** *I am considering becoming an Independent Contractor (or employee) to provide anesthesia services. I am concerned that I may be at risk if the anesthesia practice is found to be engaging in improper activities such as kickbacks, improper billing/unbundling, etc. I’m not an expert in these areas, but I also don’t want to expose myself to trouble. What can I do to protect myself?*

**A:** Every CRNA that bills for their services, either for themselves or through the assignment of the billing rights to another entity, is jointly and severally responsible for the presentation of their claims made for payment. So be sure that your claims are being presented accurately. But the responsibility doesn’t stop there. Remember, every claim made to Medicare includes the attestation that the services were provided in compliance with “...such laws, regulations and program instructions (including, but not limited to, the Federal antikickback statute and the Stark law)...” If you are concerned about the specifics of a particular situation, I would recommend that you contact an independent attorney specializing health care compliance (for a balanced opinion I recommend NOT utilizing your employer’s attorney). Additionally, the HHS OIG has an Advisory Opinion Procedure whereby, specific situations may be presented directly to the OIG for their review to ensure compliance. The factual presentation of the arrangements in question will allow the OIG to opine on the propriety of the arrangement.

Should claims be presented on your behalf for services provided where there are violations of the antikickback statutes or other laws or rules, you may be held responsible for Medicare overpayments made on your behalf.

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Please note, the above information is not intended to be legal advice. It is intended to provide practicing CRNAs with the information they need to analyze and evaluate their own personal and professional situation. The fines and penalties for violation in any of the above areas can be staggering, so it is vitally important that our members become more informed of their potential liability.

If YOU have a questions for the GANA State Reimbursement Specialist or the GANA Practice Committee, please contact the GANA. ■



## 2013 GANA Outstanding Student Nurse Anesthetist Award

by Steve Smith

*It was an honor this year for me to present the 2013 GANA Outstanding Student Nurse Anesthetist Award to Malorie Brewer at the GANA 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Meeting. Malorie is now married and her name is Malorie Brewer Globensky. She is also now a CRNA. Congratulations Malorie!*

*Students have always been important to me, even before I became involved with the GANA Board of Directors. I realize as we all should that students are our future leaders. We need to do all we can to support them and be proper role models for them.*

*The GANA Outstanding Student Nurse Anesthetist Award was first given in 1997, and has been given annually ever since. The winner receives \$250, an individual plaque, and their name inscribed on a perpetual plaque with the previous winners that remains at the school of the last winner. The award is based on academic excellence (Malorie had a 4.0), exemplary clinical practice (she had outstanding evaluations), leadership capability and planned future contributions to the GANA and AANA.*

*Malorie's list of achievements is impressive. She was involved in GANA Capitol Day, Georgia Association of Nursing Students (GANS) Convention, GANA Board of Director meetings, GANA state meetings, AANA meetings, AANA Mid-Year Assembly, Georgia Rural Health Association (GRHA) Day, and she participated in many of these events more than one time.*

*In August 2013, Malorie attended the AANA Annual Meeting in Las Vegas and then flew back to Atlanta and for the next two days exhibited for the AANA at the National Conference of State Legislators at the World Congress Center. Last year Malorie served as the Georgia Regents University student representative and liaison between the students and the GANA. She was one of last year's winners of the GANA scholarship. She has written many articles for the To and Fro and served as an academic advisor to junior students.*

*Malorie, if I have left anything out, my apologies. Oh, by the way, she is a great singer and a beautiful person inside and out. Congratulations Malorie!*

## Legislative Summary

by Monty Veazey



The Georgia Legislature convened on January 13 to start what will be a 40-day session. Due to elections having been moved up to May 20th, 2014 promises to be short session, disbanding around March 15<sup>th</sup>.

In many respects, The General Assembly will look the same in leadership with Governor Nathan Deal, Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle and House Speaker David Ralston. The Georgia House of Representatives increased the number of Republicans in addition to the State Senate where they now have a super majority. The most substantial change is a new President Pro Tem Senator David Shafer, Majority Leader and Senator Ronnie Chance and many new Committee Chairs as well as the balance of power being transferred back to the Lieutenant Governor.

As in years past, the budget will be the main issue of discussion. Revenue has increased and substantial cuts are not expected. In addition to the budget, the unexpected issue of medical marijuana has arisen and a restricted marijuana bill seems likely to pass.

Many thanks to each of the CRNAs who came to the capitol on January 22<sup>nd</sup> to participate in "GANA Day". The association made significant contacts and stood out as a successful organization.

As you know, all politics start at the local level. While GANA is an active organization, its members must continue to reach out to their Senate and House members. With a part time legislature, it is our responsibility to educate the legislators on your issues. There are 180 House members and 56 Senators, 87 of them have a 2-year or less tenure, keep in mind we are always educating new members on the role of CRNAs. ■

**Need Malpractice Insurance?**  
Contact AANA Insurance Services at  
1-800-343-1368 or obtain insurance  
information from the AANA website.



## “Like Us” on Facebook!

If you have not yet “liked us” on Facebook, please go to [www.gana.org](http://www.gana.org) and click on Facebook in the upper right hand corner of the GANA home page and then “Like Us”. I routinely place information of value for CRNAs including everything from GANA information, clinical and legal issues, articles and other CRNA stories from around the country. Much of the information you read in our newsletter, the To and Fro, along with the pictures and events is placed on Facebook as it happens. It’s a great way to keep current with issues that are important to you as a Georgia CRNA.

While visiting the GANA website please take time to explore the different sites. There is a wealth of information contained in the different links. Also, be sure and sign up for the members-only side by clicking on the “Members” link. This will allow you access to information we cannot post on the public side and to vote electronically in the GANA elections held every Fall.

As your communication’s chair of the GANA since 2008 I have enjoyed providing you the information I feel is pertinent and necessary to help you keep up with the current events and issues that affect your practice in Georgia. We have done this through our newsletter, the To and Fro, the GANA website, [www.gana.org](http://www.gana.org), GANA Facebook, US mail and blast emails through our Listserv.

Just recently, we have updated the GANA brochure. We have gone from a 6 panel to an 8 panel brochure that now includes a distribution map of Georgia anesthesia providers. Contained in this map are 33 counties in Georgia with CRNA-only anesthesia providers and the fact that CRNAs are the sole anesthesia providers in the majority of the 34 critical access hospitals where anesthesia is provided. If you would like some brochures for your personal use, please contact the GANA office at [ganaoffice@bellsouth.net](mailto:ganaoffice@bellsouth.net) or (770) 487-3900.

Steve Smith CRNA, MA  
GANA Communications Chair  
[sldt@comcast.net](mailto:sldt@comcast.net)  
404-429-8553

## A Government Relations Minute: An interview with Tripp Penick, SRNA

*by Kay Argroves, GRC Chair*

**T**ripp Penick, SRNA, is a senior anesthesia student at Georgia Regent University in Augusta and a member of the GANA Government Relations Committee (GRC).

I would like to thank Tripp for agreeing to help the GRC with some of its needs. I especially want to send a shout out to Reed Halterman, SRNA, senior anesthesia student at GRU for assisting as well. Thanks also to Michele Womble, CRNA for helping with this effort.

**Q:** Tell us a little about your personal background, Tripp.

**A:** It is my pleasure to get involved and help out. I am from Habersham County, and I attended UGA after high-school. I got my nursing degree from the University of West Georgia, and worked in the Neuro ICU at Grady for 2 years before going back to anesthesia school at Georgia Regents University in Augusta.

**Q:** How did you come to choose a career in anesthesia? Who helped mentor you to come to that career choice?

**A:** Growing up I always knew I wanted a career in the medical field. My senior year of high-school I was introduced to Major Scott Fuller, a CRNA at our local hospital in Habersham. MAJ Fuller graciously let me shadow him in the OR any time I wanted that year and I knew instantly that I wanted to become a CRNA. MAJ Fuller helped me make the proper academic choices along the way to get me where I am today and I am very grateful for that.

**Q:** What are your future plans after graduation from Georgia Regents University this December?

**A:** I joined the US Army Reserves in May of 2011. This summer I will submit my packet to go Active Duty and I am praying it gets approved. My goal is to land a spot on an Airborne Forward Surgical Team (FST) upon graduation and go from there. If these plans do not work out I would like to find a CRNA position in Georgia.

**Q:** Since many members in GANA feel that students represent the future of our organization, do you have any suggestions for making membership in our organization more appealing to young CRNAs?

**A:** As I mentioned at the GANA board retreat this past fall, I feel that somehow getting students involved on a more individual level would be beneficial. As everyone knows, students stress about simply keeping our heads above water with classes/rotations, which makes it tough to place much precedence on anything else. For instance, I did not realize how important being involved with GANA was until I became the GRU Student Representative and realized I could actually contribute.



## **Obituary for Thomas Jerry Barron**



Thomas Jerry Barron passed away on January 20th, 2014 at Gracemont Assisted Living in Cumming, Georgia, after a 7 month battle with cancer. Born in Carrollton, he was the son of the late Allie Maude Barron. He is also preceded in death by his brother, Bobby Lee Barron.

Jerry was born on December 23, 1942, and graduated from Carrollton High School. After serving in the United States Navy, he graduated from Georgia Southwestern School of Nursing in Americus and from Harris Hospital School of Anesthesia in Fort Worth, TX. He received an award for clinical excellence upon graduation. Jerry had a long and successful career as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist and worked in several different hospitals and surgery centers all over the country, including Northside Hospital in Atlanta. He was an avid reader, a true movie buff, and an expert on WWII history. With an unmatched wit and wisdom, Jerry was always the favorite of every anesthesia department, and as his long time friend Phillip Durst said, "There will be many people who will be smiling at 'Jerryisms' for many years to come."

Jerry is survived by his daughter Holly Planthold and son-in-law Jeff Planthold of Carrollton; grandchildren, Jonathan Roe and Stephanie Roe of Kansas City, KS; nephew, Jeff Barron and great niece Ashley Barron of Carrollton, his former wife and long time friend Elaine Barron Nix; many, many, dear friends whom he cherished.

In lieu of flowers, please make online donations to [www.kidsconnected.org](http://www.kidsconnected.org) or [www.wish.org](http://www.wish.org).

As Jerry requested, there will be no funeral or memorial service. His cremated remains will be spread in Ireland. That was the country where he loved and visited several times and was the home of his ancestry.

Ingram Funeral Home & Crematory, Cumming, Georgia is in charge of arrangements.

# **SAVE THE DATE!**

## **October 3-5, 2014**

The Georgia Association of  
Nurse Anesthetists

## **The Annual Fall Meeting of the GANA**

*Presented at:*



**The Westin  
Peachtree Plaza Hotel**  
(rooms \$119.00)

210 Peachtree Street  
Atlanta, Georgia

**20 CE Credits**

**See details at  
[www.IPGE.com](http://www.IPGE.com)**