



Mark Kossick, CRNA, DNSc

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Jim Henderson, Editor

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

MARK KOSSICK EARNS DNSc

Dr. Mark A. Kossick, Associate Professor, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Nurse Anesthesia Program, received his Doctor of Nursing Science degree on December 5, 2003 from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center - Memphis, College of Nursing. The title of his dissertation was **“Evaluation of a New Modified Chest Lead for Diagnosing Wide QRS Complex Beats of Unknown Origin.”** Dr. Kossick’s clinical residency was completed at the University of Alabama at Birmingham Electrophysiology Laboratory. This residency further enhanced his electrocardiographic interpretation skills and permitted him to rigorously investigate his new modified chest lead (MAC1_L) by incorporating His bundle recordings in the methodology. The outcome of his research demonstrated MAC1_L was statistically equivalent in diagnostic accuracy to chest lead V1. The implications of his research include the possible improvement in patient care provided by physicians and critical care nurses/CRNAs when challenged with wide QRS complex ectopy of unknown origin. Dr. Kossick continues post-doctoral research in the electrophysiology laboratory examining other variables associated with his modified chest lead.

Dr. Kossick is married and the father of three daughters. He has been a nurse anesthesia educator for 18 years. He has been on faculty at the UAB nurse anesthesia program for almost 11 years, currently serving as the associate program director and director of academic education. His didactic obligations include pharmacology and most of the program’s cardiovascular topics. He has also lectured extensively across the country teaching CRNAs, critical care nurses, emergency room physicians, and anesthesiologists how to interpret and manage evidence of myocardial ischemia/infarction, and arrhythmias recorded on 12 lead ECGs and on oscilloscopes in the OR, PACU, and ICU. Dr. Kossick has also been an invited lecturer at the AANA national meetings and many state meetings across the country. His publications include a textbook and handbook on ECG interpretation as well as two chapters in the textbook *Nurse Anesthesia (Inhalational Anesthetics and Clinical Monitoring in Anesthesia)*.

A strong commitment to nurse anesthesia education is also evident by his service within the local community and on the national level. He has served on the ALANA Board of Directors and established a collaborative relationship with the faculty at GW Carver High School in Birmingham, Alabama to promote minority enrollment in the study of nurse anesthesia. Dr. Kossick also recently completed service as the educator representative for the Council on Recertification of Nurse Anesthetists, and as a member of the AANA continuing education task force. Presently, he serves as an on-site reviewer for the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs, and is a member of the AANA Education Committee.

His most rewarding educational experience involves lecturing to nurse anesthesia graduate students at UAB and other universities. The graduate students at the UAB Nurse Anesthesia Program also benefit from having as part of their curriculum a three

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semester hour course on advanced electrocardiography. Dr. Kossick states this course prepares his students to meet the challenges presented by patients with significant ECG changes and enables them to serve as a resource person for anesthesia providers and surgeons. It is his educational philosophy to set and maintain academic standards that permit his students to achieve national recognition and serve as mentors for their peers across the nation. Dr. Kossick believes high academic standards empower students to achieve excellence which ultimately contributes to their ability to deliver quality anesthesia care in diverse anesthesia practice settings.

Member Spotlight: Kerry Gossett Inducted into Sigma Theta Tau International

Kerry L. Gossett, CRNA, a graduate of both the Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing and the Samford University / Birmingham Baptist Nurse Anesthesia Program, was inducted into the Gamma Eta chapter of Sigma Theta Tau on December 12, 2003. Mr. Gossett is President of Anesthesia Resources Management and an officer in several anesthesia-related corporations serving the southeast. Mr. Gossett has contributed much in the way of support during the reestablishment of the Department of Nurse Anesthesia at Samford University. Of particular note, he re-vitalized the Samford anesthesia alumni association which in turn has provided financial support for a yearly Lonnie W. Funderburg Lectureship. The Lectureship is named in honor of Birmingham Anesthesiologist, Dr. Lonnie Funderburg, himself a graduate of Samford University (then Howard College). Dr. Funderburg served as director of the Birmingham Baptist Nurse Anesthesia Program for over two decades and enjoys an outstanding reputation as an anesthesia educator.

ALANA Call for Nominations

So you've been feeling a little guilty lately. You've been reading the ALANA NewsBulletin and the AANA NewsBulletin and you see all these CRNAs who year after year give of themselves to preserve and protect our profession and you feel guilty that you've not been doing your part. You go to the ALANA State Meetings and see those same folks. But reading the publications and attending the state meetings doesn't make the guilt go away. So when the phone rings asking for you to contribute to the ALA-CRNA PAC and the AANA PAC, you send thousands upon thousands of dollars, but still the guilt persists. There is only one thing left to do.... call Dr. Phil? No way! Want to make all that guilt disappear? Call Michele Snow, CRNA and ask her to place you on the ballot for the coming ALANA Fall Elections. (205) 620-5224.

Seriously, there is no finer way to make a lasting contribution to your profession than service on the ALANA Board of Directors. Call Michele or any member of the Board of Directors to find out more about the demands and rewards of service to ALANA. You'll sleep better!



From the ALANA Student Representative from UAB

Christine Carr, SRNA

Calling All Volunteers!

Hello and Happy New Year! By the time this letter goes to publication, I hope we can all report excellent results from the PAC fundraiser and phone-a-thon held on February 29th. Thank you to all the wonderful Seniors from UAB's Nurse Anesthesia Program, the ALANA Board Members, and active CRNA's for your help and enthusiasm. If you have not yet contributed to your PAC, please do so very soon. This election year is crucial.

Fortunately, there is another opportunity brewing for you to volunteer your talents to the ALANA. I am starting a new program I hope to be extremely beneficial to all Nurse Anesthetists in the near and distant future. Combining the efforts to increase public awareness of our noble profession and recruit the best individuals, the ALANA will begin the development of Career Day Teams! Reaching out to area high schools and nursing programs, CRNA's can embolden their profession and continue to raise awareness.

So, if you are interested in developing or sharpening your public speaking skills while connecting with young people, this is the opportunity for you! As an essential part of the Career Day Teams, you will be assisted with sample scripts, video examples, power point slides, and opportunities to share with like-minded CRNA's. You can choose how often you want to speak. Students and professionals are welcome!

Please contact me as soon as possible if you believe you may want to contribute your time and talent. You may reach me by phone at (205) 408-0550 and by email at c3rn@hotmail.com

I hope to hear from you soon!

Christine C. Carr

ALANA Sends Delegation to AANA Mid-Year Assembly in Washington

The AANA sponsors numerous annual meetings, but none are more important to the effective operation of a State Association than the Fall Assembly and the Mid-Year Assembly in Washington, DC. Unfortunately, this year the date of the AANA Mid-Year Assembly coincides with our ALANA Spring Meeting at Sandestin! After much deliberation, the ALANA Board of Directors has put together a delegation of members to represent us at the Washington, DC meeting and meet with our elected officials on Capitol Hill. The delegation will include Jim Henderson, Tom Mallory, and Leigh Stevens from the ALANA Board of Directors. Joining them will be our two student representatives, Chris Camponatta and Christine Carr. Our special guest is Shannon Scaturro, CRNA from Mobile. Our Executive Director, Joe Knight, will attend the ALANA Spring Meeting and join the Washington Delegation on Sunday.

While the members of the delegation hate to miss our own Spring Meeting, we are looking forward to representing ALANA at this important national meeting. The focus of the meeting this year is to prepare participants to deal with legislative and regulatory issues on the national and state level. There are training exercises in successful lobbying. Finally participants are briefed and prepared to make visits to Capitol Hill to meet with our senators and representatives from Alabama. You can expect a full report upon their return.



From the Office of the Executive Director

Joe Knight, CRNA, JD

I am happy to report that at the time of this writing, all is quiet for our association in the legislative and regulatory arena. It is refreshing to be able to work on the positive aspects of the association's business that the present officers and board members of the ALANA are doing. Looking back over the past five years of activity reveals an interesting journey.

1. From 1998 to 2000, we were heavily involved in the HCFA battle. As you may recall, this was the federal regulation that required physician supervision of CRNAs in order for hospitals to be paid by Medicare. The Clinton administration removed this antiquated requirement. When George W. Bush came in, he was persuaded by anesthesiologists (big bucks spent) to reverse Clinton's decision, which he did. Bush did however, leave a door open for states under certain opt-out provisions. To date 12 states (24%) have opted out. Contrary to propaganda that people, especially senior citizens, would be dying right and left if this supervision requirement for CRNAs was not left in place, there has been no such mass murder. Anesthesia is safer now than ever before.

2. In 2001, we got involved in the fight for our professional lives in the Alabama legislature when the state anesthesiologist society

and the medical association teamed up in a stealth manner and attempted to re-define CRNAs using the Alabama Board of Nursing Sunset bill. The ALANA expended tremendous resources, time and

energy in this coup attempt and as a result, we were not legislated into oblivion.

3. In 2002, we became heavily involved in the gubernatorial race and landed on the side of the victor who has recently issued a proclamation designating January 25 through January 31 as Alabama Nurse Anesthetists week.

4. Also, in 2002, we were able to thwart the efforts of those who attempted to place further

restrictions on CRNA practice in a regulation proposed, but then withdrawn, by the Workers Compensation Division of the Alabama Board of Industrial Relations, which stated that Nurse Anesthetists could not do certain pain management procedures.

5. In 2003, at the national level, we lobbied diligently in order to oppose the efforts to allow AAs to be the equivalent of CRNAs in the VA Health System and in Tricare, which is the health program that administers to our military and their families.

6. Also in 2003, we got involved in a regulatory matter when the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners introduced new office based surgery rules that contained language that was detrimental to CRNAs practicing in an office setting. Through persistence, networking and negotiation, we were able to get some of the more troubling language removed and were able to get other ambiguities resolved.

As I have said before, the past five years has been quite a ride. We rank 10th in the number of CRNAs practicing in our state. We rank in the top three of state PACs as far as donations received and contributions made. Your present board is working on some positive aspects of the business of running a professional organization. We are sitting down with anesthesiologists

Looking back over the past five years reveals an interesting journey.

both nationally and in our state in an attempt to resolve some of our differences. Hopefully, these talks will benefit all and especially, the patient. We have arrived at this point through strength, hard

work and a lot of sacrifice by those who have served on your Board over the last five years. It has been a rough journey and yet, we are better off for having been through it.

So, the next time you hear of someone complaining about having to pay dues or someone raises the question of "What has my Association done for me," tell them to give me a call. I'll be happy to enlighten them.



From the Office of the Federal Political Director

John Morris, CRNA

Congress Returns Jan. 20, Senate Budget Vote

Congress returns to Washington Tuesday, Jan. 20, for a Senate vote on a huge, overdue budget package that includes increases for nurse education. The budget package adopted in the House Dec. 8, includes a \$30 million increase for nurse education, a \$9 million increase for advanced practice nurse education that helps increase the supply of APNs and nursing faculty, and at least \$3 million for CRNA education. The increases and the CRNA funding had been long sought by AANA, starting with springtime testimony in the House by AANA President Tom McKibban CRNA and advocacy by CRNAs at the AANA Midyear Assembly. The increase for APNs was particularly critical, since the President's budget had recommended cutting advanced nursing education funding from \$50 million in 2003 to \$26 million for 2004.

As with any huge bill, it is not to everyone's liking and its enactment is not certain. Therefore, before the Senate can vote on it, the body must first vote on a "cloture" motion to end debate, which requires 60 of 100 Senators' votes. If the Senate fails to adopt the measure, much of the U.S. Government including HHS and its Division of Nursing can still operate on "continuing resolution" funds through January 31 at the same levels provided in Fiscal Year 2003. The increases for nursing education in HR 2673 would be thrown into doubt. FPD's , Presidents and Program Directors from each state have been asked to FAX their state senators to encourage support in passing this bill.

Healthcare Costs Continue Rising Unsustainably

Recent reports by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) indicate that U.S. healthcare spending rose to \$1.6 trillion in 2002, up from \$1.4 trillion in 2001. Healthcare spending now accounts for approximately 15% of the gross domestic product up from 14.1% in 2001. The spending increases are considered unsustainable because they rise faster than economic and population growth. This trend is of particular importance for nurse anesthetists, as insurers, other payors, health systems and patients look for ways to manage costs and utilization.

The CMS report published in the January stated that the 9.3% growth rate for 2002 was up from a rate of 8.5% in 2001 marking the sixth consecutive year that healthcare spending grew at an accelerated rate. Per person healthcare expenditures averaged \$5,440 in 2002, up from \$5,021 in 2001. The report concludes that the increase is driven by rising costs for hospitalization, physician services, home health care and especially by the cost of prescription drugs. Prescription drugs accounted for the largest rise in health expenditures, with an increase of 15.3% in 2002. The recently passed Medicare bill that will offer Medicare beneficiaries the opportunity to purchase inexpensive prescription drug coverage will likely cause prescription drug expenditures to continue to increase.

VA Clarifies Rules for Anesthesia Cases

When the Veterans Administration charges CMS for anesthesia provided to non-service connected Veterans, it will follow an AANA recommendation clarifying that "medical direction" of nurse anesthetists is not required, according to a final rule published in the Federal Register Dec. 19, 2003.

In October 2003, the VA had proposed using the term "medically directed" when describing and establishing charges for services provided by CRNAs and anesthesiologists. The agency used the term in such a way that some could interpret it as requiring that CRNAs must be medically directed for the VA to charge primary insurers for the anesthesia services CRNAs provide. AANA President Tom McKibban CRNA MS and Association of VA Nurse Anesthetists (AVANA) President Carol Craig CRNA, (Birmingham VA), provided comment to the VA, clarifying that federal law does not require that an anesthesiologist medically direct care delivered by a CRNA (66 Fed. Reg. 56762, November 13, 2001). Additionally, AANA and AVANA further noted that the VA need not require CRNAs to be medically directed for the VA to receive payments from primary insurers for CRNAs' services. The agency's decision is important for both CRNAs and the VA. Had the VA named medical direction as a prerequisite to charge for CRNAs' anesthesia services, VA would have had to establish a host of new compliance requirements that would not have aided the VA in garnering more in payments for anesthesia services.

The U.S. Government's Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) recommends a 2.5 percent Part B update for 2005. The recommendation, made at the panel's last meeting January 14-15, equals projected price increases of 3.4 percent less improvements in efficiency of 0.9 percent.

ALANA Annual Spring Meeting Information

Welcome

Mark your calendars and complete the registration form for the Annual Spring Meeting of the Alabama Association of Nurse Anesthetists to be held in beautiful Destin, Florida at the Sandestin Hilton Beach Resort, April 30 - May 2, 2004. Every year the attendance at this meeting grows bigger and bigger. Is this growth due to the outstanding faculty assembled at this meeting to present the state-of-the-art in anesthesia continuing education? Is it the fabulous accommodations and resort amenities offered at the Sandestin Hilton? Is it the time of year, held at a time when we all need a spring break? Whatever the reason, find out for yourself why the Annual Spring Meeting of the ALANA is consistently rated as one of the top ten anesthesia meetings in the nation!

Speakers

This year's meeting again highlights speakers of both national and regional repute. Among the speakers known nationally are Rodney Lester and Deborah Chambers, both past presidents of the AANA, Michael Geisler, former AANA Region Seven Director, and Ronnie Whorton, past president of ALANA. Our special guest speaker is Genell Lee, Executive Director of the Alabama Board of Nursing.

Special Features

Your registration fees include all of the meeting's special features, including: printed syllabus, complimentary continental breakfast, snacks, and a box lunch. Also included is your invitation to the Opening Night Reception and the Beach Party.

Continuing Education Units

The American Association of Nurse Anesthetists has approved this program for 20 CEUs (AANA Prior Approval Number 26420).

Accommodations

Reservations should be made directly with the Sandestin Hilton to assure you get the group rate. Rooms blocked for the ALANA are at a discounted group rate of \$180 per night, plus 7% state tax and 3% occupancy tax, and \$12 per day resort fee. There are also a limited number of beach view rooms at \$210 and beach front rooms at \$270. Check in time is 4PM and checkout is 11AM. Deadline for receiving rooms at this special pricing is March 27, 2004. Contact the hotel directly to make your reservations and identify yourself as attending this meeting: **1-800-367-1271**

Meeting Fees

AANA Members:	Before 4-15	After 4-15
3 Days:	\$300.00	\$350.00
1 Day:	\$125.00	\$150.00
Non-AANA Members:	Before 4-15	After 4-15
3 Days:	\$375.00	\$425.00
1 Day:	\$175.00	\$200.00

Sponsor-A-Student Program

This year the ALANA is offering each of you an opportunity to show your support for the future of our profession by sponsoring a student to attend the Spring Meeting. The ALANA does not charge a fee for attendance by students, so all of your contributions will be combined to offer additional hotel rooms for the students to share. A ribbon will be added to your nametag designating you as a Sponsor-A-Student Donor. Wear it proudly!

Announcements

March 27, 2004 Deadline for receiving group rate for hotel reservations.

April 15, 2004 Deadline for receiving pre-registration pricing for seminar.

ALANA Annual Spring Meeting Information & Registration

The Sandestin Hilton Beach Resort

This is Northwest Florida's premier luxury Gulf-front hotel. Located along Florida's Emerald Coast, the Hilton Sandestin is situated on a 2,400-acre playground overlooking the most beautiful beaches in the world. The hotel boasts a heated indoor pool, two outdoor pools, two whirlpools, private beach, a full-service spa, salon and fitness center, and the finest dining options, from elegant to casual. Resort amenities include fourteen tennis courts, four championship golf courses, and a full-service marina and bicycle rental. Children's recreational programs and beach equipment rentals are also available.

Opening Reception

Friday, April 30, 2004, 6:00PM

Typically held poolside when weather permits, this casual reception features heavy hors d'oeuvres and cocktails. It is the perfect place to meet your friends and make some new friends, as the sun begins to set over the beautiful Gulf of Mexico.

Beach Party

Saturday, May 1, 2004, 3:30PM

This event has made the ALANA Spring Meeting famous! This is the time to relax at the beach and enjoy seafood treats with a cold beverage. Chat with your friends, classmates, speakers, and board members at this fun-filled event. Thanks to the following sponsors for making this event possible:

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Patti Case, CRNA, MSN

ALANA Program Director

2503 Audubon Lane

Owens Crossroads, Alabama 35763

For those with special needs or questions about the meeting, call Patti Case at 256-536-9799 or send e-mail to: bchbum14@comcast.net

Refund policy: Refunds on tuition will be honored upon receipt of a written request prior to April 15, 2004, subject to a \$50.00 cancellation fee.

ALANA Spring Meeting Sandestin Hilton

APRIL 30 - MAY 2, 2004

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