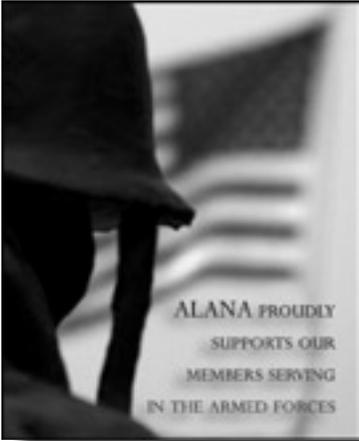




ALANA News

A Publication of the Alabama Association of Nurse Anesthetists

Bulletin



Members Elect New Board

The results of the 2005-2006 election were announced at the ALANA Annual Business Meeting in Birmingham on October 8, 2005. Thanks to the efforts of Jason Wilson and the members of the Nominating Committee, the ALANA Board of Directors is composed of CRNAs from every geographic area of the state and from many diverse practice settings. The ALANA Board of Directors wishes to thank each of the members who ran for office this year, volunteering to do the work of the Association. The Board also wishes to thank Paul Harvey, CRNA, Chairman of the Teller's Committee, who received and tabulated the ballots.

Two new Student Representatives were inducted to the ALANA Board at the Fall Meeting: Tara Ray from Samford and Yvette Marsden from UAB. Our thanks and best wishes to our outgoing Student Representatives, Chris Campanotta and Debbie Hayes, who will be graduating soon.

Volume 23, Number 4, 2005
Jim Henderson, Editor

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ALANA NewsBulletin

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December 2005

Publisher

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From the Office of the ALANA President *Brent Ledford, CRNA*

Good Day CRNA's! I know the header says something about this article originating "from my office", but if you are like me, the closest thing you have to an office is a chair in a cold operating room. That is OK with me though, and judging by the numbers, it must be OK with you as well. When I represented Alabama in Washington DC this past August, the members at the meeting voted on a scale of 1-10 on how satisfied they were with their career choice as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist. Over 90% of the CRNA's rated their satisfaction level at 9 or better, indicating an overwhelming happiness with their career choice. I wonder how many other professional organizations can boast of that level of career satisfaction amongst their members! Jim Henderson and I have spoken often that our phones do not ring off of the wall with calls from members that are upset or unhappy, and perhaps now we know why. I may not always love my job, but I truly love my career, and I love to talk with people about nurse anesthesia. Every day I offer thanks for what I do, and I ask for guidance in doing it well. My hope is that each of you is so completely satisfied with your career choice that it shows in every anesthetic you give.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of our parent organization, the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA). On June 17, 1931, pioneer nurse anesthetist Agatha Hodgins founded the National Association of Nurse Anesthetists (NANA) in Cleveland, Ohio. Eight years later NANA officially changed its name to the present day American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA). AANA is the oldest national organization of anesthesia providers in our county. Did you know that we are the 2nd (many still say the 1st) oldest state organization in the AANA? This year marks our 75th anniversary as well, and you will be hearing more about this as the year progresses. This is going to be a great party, and I can think of no better way to celebrate our heritage than by sending 75 of our future anesthetists to Cleveland. Please consider how you can help with this challenge, and watch for future information.



If you usually participate in the sponsor a student program, please specify that your contribution go to a student from Alabama. If you have ideas on how to help us meet this goal, please feel free to contact any member of the board or me. Our contact information is posted on our website, at www.ala-crna.org. If you want more information on the 75th anniversary celebration in Cleveland, the link to the website is <http://www.aana.com/75th/main.aspx>. The dates for this event are August 5-9, 2006.

I know that it can sometimes be difficult to get your vacation requests fulfilled, particularly if you are not the first name in the pile. I want to remind you that our Annual ALANA Spring Meeting in Destin is April 28-30, 2006, at the San Destin Hilton Resort. Last year we had to release some of our block rooms because folks did not register in time, and then we had a few people who had to get lodging elsewhere because the Hilton was full. I can assure you that this is a great place to bring your family or meet old friends, and you will help your state association carry on the work we do for you in the process.

The Destin meeting in the spring and the Birmingham meeting in the fall are the only ALANA sponsored meetings each year, and the only ones that benefit your professional organization. I can only imagine what projects we could undertake on your behalf if each of you came to at least one of these a year. We are tentatively planning on hosting a fundraiser in Destin for the state

associations of Louisiana and Mississippi, as they were not able to hold their state meetings because of hurricane damage. We are considering either a golf tournament or an auction, or both. So please, put in your vacation request, register early, bring your clubs, and I will see you in Florida.

Please take just a moment and visit the following link to order a FREE promotional packet for National Nurse Anesthetist Week.

<http://www.aana.com/news/2005/news110405.aspx>

It only takes a few minutes to spread this information throughout your hospital, ASC, or office, and it is one of many effective ways to educate the public about our existence, and what we do so well every day. At my hospital we use this as an excuse to have food brought in, and I encourage you to celebrate the week of

January 22-28, 2006 in a similar manner.

I hope each of you manages to grab a little time away from work over the holidays. Enjoy your friends and family, and please take time to remember and pray for our friends and colleagues who are away from theirs while they are in the service of our country. Thank you for the kindness you show your patients every day, and may God bless each of you this season.

Sincerely,

Brent Ledford

Every man's work, whether it be literature, or music or pictures or architecture or anything else, is always a portrait of himself.

Samuel Butler, 1612-1680

Are We Too Satisfied?

Mick Jagger couldn't get "no satisfaction." Aretha Franklin just wanted "a little respect." I'm not sure who these sentiments were written for, but I am certain neither artist was singing about CRNAs! When surveyed, nine out of ten CRNAs are highly satisfied with their career choice as a CRNA. CRNAs consistently express a great deal of pride in their profession and often encourage others to consider a career as a CRNA. This level of satisfaction and pride in the profession are the main reasons that the AANA enjoys the highest level of participation of any professional organization in history. CRNAs recognize that the AANA is the foundation of our profession and membership in this noble organization is both an obligation and a privilege.

Beyond membership in the AANA, the nurse anesthesia community has some serious problems. The sad truth is that fewer than twenty percent of CRNAs contribute to the CRNA PAC. Fewer than fifteen percent of Alabama CRNAs fund the ALA-CRNA PAC. Even fewer support the efforts of the AANA Foundation. Even fewer volunteer to serve on the various committees or run for elected office in the ALANA and AANA. The obvious question is why do individual CRNAs universally support membership in the AANA, yet fail to meet the other responsibilities and obligations of being a member of this profession?

I can't afford to fund the PACs and the Foundation. Yeah, right! Each of you earns an annual salary that exceeds what you expected to earn when you finished anesthesia school. You decide how to prioritize your expenses. Your home budget reflects your values. Each of you can easily afford to spend \$90.00 per month to meet ALL of your professional advocacy obligations. Here's how to do it: Give \$30.00 per month to the CRNA PAC, give \$30.00 per month to the ALA-CRNA PAC, and finally \$30.00 per month to the AANA Foundation. Each of these endeavors offers a monthly credit card draft program that makes contributing automatic and painless.

My contributions won't make any difference. Someone else will do it. Yeah, right! This argument doesn't work in the workplace, at church, in the neighborhood, or anywhere else that people come together for the communal good. As a group of professionals, we are taught and indoctrinated with the value of pulling our own weight. We are taught the value of individual effort. We come in to work early and stay late. We don't call in sick. We know the value of individual effort and that extends to funding our professional obligations.

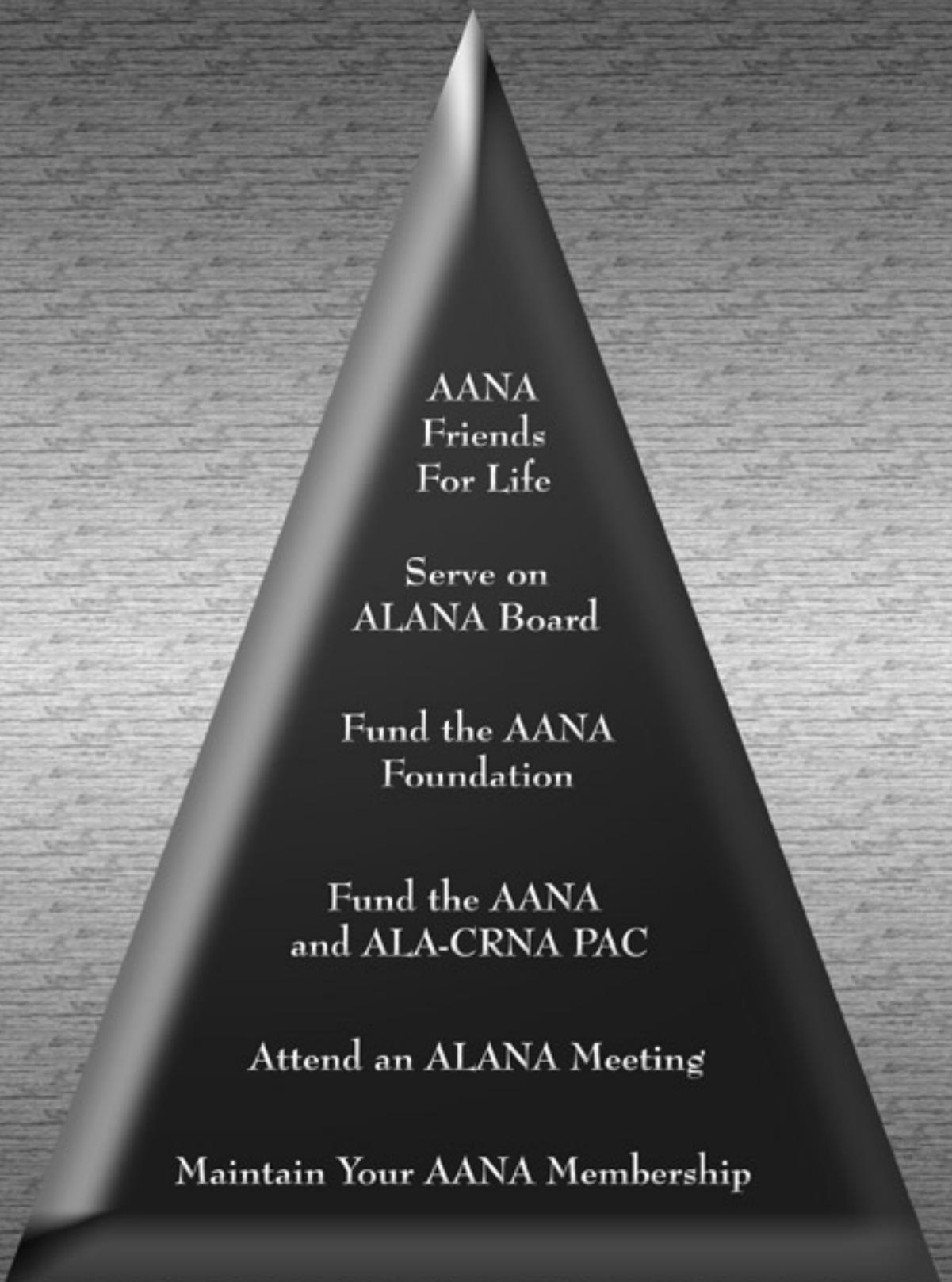
Going back to my original question, I believe the real reason CRNAs universally support membership in the AANA, yet fail to meet the other responsibilities and obligations of being a member of this profession IS our satisfaction ~ we feel a sense of satisfaction with our career choice, satisfaction with our daily work, satisfaction with the respect and recognition we receive from others in the healthcare arena, satisfaction with our income and station in life, and satisfaction with our personal accomplishments. Consider a meal at a fine restaurant. After the appetizer, a salad, an entree, and dessert, your appetite is completely satisfied. It will be challenging indeed for the waiter to convince you to order anything else to eat! I believe you are so satisfied with being a CRNA, you simply don't *need* the additional sense of satisfaction that comes from funding your professional obligations. While you may not *need* the additional satisfaction that comes from knowing you are funding your professional advocacy concerns, know that the profession does *need* your participation.

Carefully heed the warning offered below from William Osler. Our biggest adversary may not be outside the profession, but within.

Jim Henderson

By far the most dangerous foe we have to fight is apathy - indifference from whatever cause, not from a lack of knowledge, but from carelessness, from absorption in other pursuits, from a contempt bred of self satisfaction.

William Osler



AANA
Friends
For Life

Serve on
ALANA Board

Fund the AANA
Foundation

Fund the AANA
and ALA-CRNA PAC

Attend an ALANA Meeting

Maintain Your AANA Membership



From the Office of the Region Seven Director

Bonnie Mackin, CRNA

Fall is in the air, the leaves are turning and, finally, we are having cooler weather. There are, however, several “hot” national topics that you will want to be aware of. The topics for this article include:

1. CMS teaching rules and the differing opinions of ASA and AANA
2. The Special Committee on Regional Realignment suggestion for AANA realignment
3. The DNP proposal announced by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.
4. AANA membership relief fund initiated as a result of the devastation caused by hurricane Katrina.

CMS Teaching Rules

On August 30, 2005, your AANA leadership received a letter from the ASA leadership, in regards to our stance on their request to change the CMS teaching rules. They accused us of “disingenuous action”, and “a serious breach in the trust and openness engendered by the ThoughtBridge process.” The AANA Board of Directors were disappointed that the ASA choose to ignore the Procedural Guidelines that both groups worked so hard to develop. The AANA leadership has not changed its stance on the CMS teaching rules. We have always said that we are in favor of changes in the teaching rules only if they are changed for both nurse anesthesia and anesthesiology. We would like to see **practice** drive payment rather than the current system in which payment drives **practice**. We have been honest with the ASA leadership. They knew that we could not support a unilateral approach that we felt jeopardize our teaching programs, and they choose to go ahead anyway.

The ASA is seeking a change that would put them on par with the surgeons, in other words they would be able to bill at 100% for supervising two residents at a time. We feel that this would be a financial disincentive for anesthesiologists to supervise students nurse anesthetists. Furthermore, it would cost \$34 million to fund this measure should it be approved. The question

becomes: Where will CMS get the \$34 million? It will have to come from cuts somewhere else. I do not believe the anesthesiologists in private practice or CRNAs will be willing to get paid less so that teaching anesthesiologists can get paid more.

Although we do not know what the final outcome will be, Dr. Sinclair, current ASA President has said that they will be at the next ThoughtBridge Leadership Committee meeting in November. The AANA Board of Directors does not know where we will go from here. The future of any dialog with ASA will be determined by meetings held on November 12th and 13th. You will know the results of these meeting before this article is published. So stay tuned to the AANA web site for future developments as they occur.

Special Committee on Regional Realignment

Last year, President Maziarski reconvened the ad hoc Special Committee on Regional Realignment, and told them to come back to us with a proposal. Each region is represented on this committee, they have spent numerous hours researching past AANA regional structure and examining the result of a survey given to a cross section of AANA members. As a result of this work, the committee has come up with the following proposal:

1. Redistribution of the current 7 regions into 5 regions of relatively equal size.
2. Two regional directors per region, serving two year staggered terms.
3. The regions would maintain geographic proximity.
4. The regions would maintain approximately the same number of states per region.
5. The voting mechanism would change to allow members to vote for regional directors in their regions only.
6. All members would vote for the President-Elect, Vice President and Treasurer.
7. All members would vote for Nomination and Resolutions committee members.

There have been three public hearings on this proposal and there will be hearings at the Assembly of School Faculty, with a Bylaws

amendment scheduled to be presented at our 2006 Annual meeting, based on the outcomes of these hearings. This is a very important proposal and deserving of input from all members. If you will not be attending this meeting, please let your representatives know what your feelings are. You can also let the committee know about any concerns you may have by going to the AANA web site "members only" section and click on the Special Committee for Regional Realignment.

American Association of Colleges of Nursing DNP Proposal

In the fall of 2004, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing adopted a proposal that would require Advanced Practice Nurses to have a Clinical Doctorate in Nursing as of 2015. As a result of this proposal, the AANA held a Summit in May 2005 to discuss this subject and its implications for practicing nurse anesthetists and the education of future nurse anesthetists. Participants at this summit included a cross section of program directors, AANA board members, and members of the AANA Councils and Foundation. At the end of this summit we agreed that today's CRNAs are competent providers of anesthesia services and that today's educational programs produce CRNAs of the highest quality. We also agreed that in the future nurse anesthetists will require additional training and education in areas such as technology, research and ethics.

As a result of this summit, president Thorson will be forming a Blue Ribbon Panel that will be charged with looking into the future of healthcare and the educational needs of future nurse anesthesia student so that they can better meet the needs of their patients. Some of the things this panel will be asked to look at include:

1. AANA support for a doctoral program
2. The future practice environment
3. Strategies to achieve a doctoral education
 - how do we incorporate the current AANA membership into this program, as well as the incoming students. What will the additional cost be to current CRNAs and students entering into the program in regards to lost wages as well as educational costs?
4. Faculty development and retention
5. A realistic timeframe – is 2015 unrealistic?
6. Credentials/ Titles – what will we be called?
Not all of us have a Masters in Nursing.
7. Concerns and needs of other stakeholders
 - what is the value added to our patients and to our practice.

As you can see, this is a complicated proposal

that needs to be looked at closely. We need to be able to go forward with confidence as we address the future needs of our CRNAs and our patients.

Katrina Membership Relief Fund

Because of the devastating losses sustained by many of our members as a result of hurricane Katrina, the AANA Board of Directors has developed a new AANA program, the Membership Dues Relief Fund. The purpose of this fund is to help pay the dues of members who have lost their jobs or homes as a result of a natural disaster. This fund is supported by donations from the general membership. It is our hope that by helping our members in need, we will be able to:

1. Maintain AANA membership long term
2. Maintain state funding needs
3. Be a resource for CRNAs to help other CRNAs during a crisis.

All monies donated to this fund will be used specifically to support members in need secondary to a natural disaster.

As you know, three major hurricanes have hit Region 7 since September, so the need for help is great. Members in your own state may be in need of assistance. If you have the ability to help your fellow CRNAs, please do so. Make your checks payable to AANA and put Membership Dues Relief Fund in the memo section. Mail your checks to AANA financial services department. These donations are not tax deductible.

Members in need of assistance must fill out an application indicating the reason for the displacement and the expected time of the financial hardship. Applications will be reviewed and approved by the finance committee.

We are a generous association and have always come to the aid of those in need. I know that you will all do what you can to help the states in Region 7 maintain the funding needed to support their members. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

As always, I represent your needs as the AANA Region 7 Director. If you have any questions, ideas, or concerns please contact me. I will do my very best to address all issues brought to my attention.

Since this will be the last newsletter article for the year I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Remember to take time to enjoy this season with family and friends and to thank God for all He has given you. God Bless each of you.

Highlights from the 2005 A

Finding a weekend in October when there is a lull in the SEC Football schedule is perhaps the biggest challenge faced by Ronnie Whorton and Bruce Von Hagel, as they plan every detail of the ALANA Annual Fall Meeting in Birmingham at the Wynfrey Hotel. For 2005, that weekend was October 7 - 9 and, for the participants, it was a weekend to remember.

The Educational Sessions

In a special Friday Afternoon Session, an ACLS Refresher Course was offered. For the past four years, the ALANA Fall Meeting has featured this special session to offer ACLS and PALS in alternating years. This course was specially designed by Scott Karr, MS, NREMT-P of Bevil State Community College to meet the educational needs of CRNAs. This course always receives rave reviews from the participants. This year was no exception!

The Friday Evening Session focused on the Difficult Airway. Dr. James Boyce, chairman of the department of anesthesiology at University Hospital in Birmingham was the guest speaker. Following a series of lectures, the participants had an opportunity to try their newly-learned skills in the Difficult Airway Workshop. During the lecture series, the students from UAB and Samford University were asked to stand to be recognized (as in previous years, our nurse anesthesia students are never charged a registration fee to attend an ALANA Meeting). It was an awesome sight to see almost 50 students in attendance!

The Saturday Session started out bright and early with an enlightening session on chemical dependency by Tom Mallory, CRNA, chairman of the newly-formed ALANA Wellness Committee. Far beyond a mere coverage of the science and physiology of addiction, Tom's lectures touched the hearts of all, as he presented a number of case studies of real CRNAs whose lives have been forever changed by addiction.

Steve James, CRNA of Huntsville Hospital gave a stirring account of his volunteer efforts in Kenya and the events that led to his founding of the Brittney James Child Fund. Steve was the subject of a feature article in the June Issue of the ALANA NewsBulletin and his story was featured in the AANA NewsBulletin.

Bonnie Mackin, CRNA, our AANA Region Seven Director gave us the AANA Update. Following this, Jim Henderson, CRNA, outgoing ALANA President, gave the ALANA Update. Following the Updates, the members were invited to a buffet luncheon for the ALANA Annual Business Meeting.

The ALANA Business Meeting was called to order by ALANA President Jim Henderson. The Invocation was given by Leigh Stevens, CRNA and was followed by the National Anthem. Jim gave a brief President's Report, Joe Williams gave the Treasurer's Report, and Joe Knight gave the Executive Director's Report. Two students were recognized: Shea Spradlin, SRNA was awarded the ALANA Student Scholarship and Heather Rankin, SRNA was awarded the Frank Maziarski Student Scholarship. In addition, the ALANA Board of Directors issued five other awards. Following the awards ceremony, Shannon Scaturro, chairman of the By-laws Committee, presented the members with the proposed amendments to the ALANA Bylaws (see the June Issue of the ALANA NewsBulletin). The membership voted to approve all of the proposed amendments. Jim praised each of the members of the ALANA Board of Directors for their hard work and presented each with a plaque of appreciation for their service to ALANA. Brent Ledford announced the results of the ALANA Election. The Business Meeting concluded with Jim passing the gavel to incoming President Brent Ledford.



The Educational Sessions continued with Bonnie Mackin speaking on stress and burn-out in anesthesia. The day concluded with two senior student research paper presentations. The first by Debra Hayes, our outgoing ALANA Student Representative from UAB, was on the topic of Airway Management in the Pediatric Patient Undergoing Tonsillectomy. The second by Marvin Martin was on the

topic of Blind Digital Intubation. The quality of these student research presentations reflects the quality of the education our students are receiving from UAB and Samford. Not only are these informative for the experienced anesthetist, they are also a source of pride to see our students doing so well!

The Sunday Educational Sessions were more focused on clinical anesthesia, and started out with Michael Humber, CRNA from the UAB Nurse Anesthesia Program. Michael spoke on the Basics of Pediatric Anesthesia for the Non-pediatric Nurse Anesthetist. Terri Cahoon, CRNA from the Samford University Nurse Anesthesia Program spoke on Implantable Cardiac Devices and on Strengthening Your Clinical Skills. Dawn Holsombeck, CRNA spoke on Anesthesia Implications of Methemoglobinemia. The educational sessions concluded with a number of Senior Student Research Presentations from David Sanford, Blair Perkins, Deidra Sheridan, David Fort, and Colleen Mellon.

ALANA Annual Fall Meeting

ALANA Awards

During the Annual Business Meeting, a total of five service awards were presented to members of the ALANA who have made significant contributions to the nurse anesthesia profession in Alabama.

The ALANA Humanitarian Award

Steve James, CRNA of Huntsville Hospital was presented with the first-ever awarding of the ALANA Humanitarian Award for his volunteer efforts with the orphan children of Kenya and his founding of the Brittany James Child Fund. Every CRNA in Alabama and beyond are proud of the extraordinary work of this humble nurse anesthetist. Congratulations Steve!

The ALANA Meritorious Service Awards

This year three individuals were presented with the ALANA Meritorious Service Award. Frank Saliba, CRNA, JD of Montgomery was the first to be honored. Frank has served a number of terms on the ALANA Board of Directors and this past year served on the finance committee, devoting tremendous hours of research and work. Congratulations Frank!

Also honored were Ronnie Whorton, CRNA and Bruce Von Hagel, CRNA from University Hospital. Ronnie and Bruce have volunteered hundreds of hours to our association in their roles as Program Directors for the two ALANA Annual Meetings. They plan every minute and every detail of these two meetings ~ making them top-notch in every way. Every member of ALANA benefits from the great work that you do. Congratulations Ronnie and Bruce!

The ALANA Distinguished Service Award

First presented to John Morris at the 2001 ALANA Annual Meeting, the ALANA Distinguished Service Award was established to honor those members who have demonstrated a lifetime of leadership and service to the profession and the ALANA. It is the highest award conferred by the ALANA Board of Directors. This year, the ALANA Board of Directors presented Resa Culpepper, CRNA, PhD with the ALANA Distinguished Service Award.

Dr. Culpepper is a 1971 graduate of the Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing in Charlotte, NC. She received her Certificate in Anesthesia in 1973 from the Charlotte Memorial Hospital Nurse

Anesthesia Program. Her academic career culminated with earning her PhD in Health Services & Health Behaviors from Walden University.

Dr. Culpepper is currently the Director of Clinical Anesthesia Services, Department of Nurse Anesthesia, Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing, Samford University. She served as Assistant Professor, Nurse Anesthesia Program, at UAB from 1993 through 2002. Prior to this, she served as Clinical Instructor and Staff Anesthetist at a number of major teaching hospitals. In addition, Dr. Culpepper served as Volunteer Anesthetist at the Jimmy Morgan Zoo in Birmingham!

Dr. Culpepper has published a half-dozen scholarly articles in nurse anesthesia and has been a contributing author, writing two chapters in the Handbook of Pediatric Anesthesia.

Dr. Culpepper's service to the AANA is ongoing. She is currently on the Board of Directors of the AANA Foundation and is a Consultant to the AANA Practice Committee. She served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Foundation from 2003 - 2005 and was Vice Chairman from 2000-2003. She served on numerous other committees including the AANA Journal Faculty.

Dr. Culpepper's service to ALANA is equally impressive. Her service started as a member of the Board of Directors from 1986 - 1990. She served as President-elect in 1995 and served as President in 1996. She served as Program Director of the Spring Meeting from 1992 - 2000. She is a member of the Alabama Board of Nursing Nominating Committee.

On behalf of the 1000 members of the ALANA and the Board of Directors, thank you Resa for your dedicated service to our profession and our beloved association. Congratulations Resa!



Dear Fellow CRNAs and ALANA members:

I do not know exactly how to say thank you for presenting me with the ALANA Distinguished Service Award. I was certainly surprised by the designation. I have been an active part of the ALANA for 25 years and during those years I have participated in many very rewarding professional activities but most of all, I have developed great relationships with my Alabama CRNA colleagues.

From my beginning service at the committee level to my several years on the Board of Directors, and ultimately to have the opportunity serve as your president in 1995-96, it has been a memorable experience.

I am humbled by this honor and I thank each one of you for the impact you make on the nurse anesthesia profession in the state of Alabama.

Resa Culpepper



From the Office of the Executive Director

Joe Knight, CRNA, JD

I can't believe how 2005 has flown by. I hope each of you has had a healthy and prosperous year.

A quick look back reveals the Alabama Association has had a good year under the able stewardship of President Jim Henderson. Jim's zeal and determination has earned him high marks amongst his peers. Brent Ledford has taken over the reigns for this coming year and he brings with him a strong board of directors as well as his recent experience as ALANA president. If you see either of these guys, give them a pat on the back for a job well-done.

One of the things that we accomplished over the past year was the creation of a legislative day whereby CRNAs spend a day in Montgomery learning about and participating in the legislative process. In addition, we hosted a legislative reception for the law-makers that was a pleasing success. We plan to capitalize on our success and make this an annual event, possibly including the nurse anesthesia students from UAB and Samford.

We met with the representatives of the Alabama State Society of Anesthesiologists (ASSA) on a couple of occasions through the Thought Bridge process. We got off to a good start, however, our respective national associations have encountered some friction and this has slowed our progress somewhat.

No major legislation was introduced in the 2005 legislature session that would have any detrimental effect on the practice of CRNAs.

One issue did arise in the regulatory arena when the Alabama Department of Public Health (the entity that oversees hospital and surgical center activities) introduced a rule change whereby AAs can practice in ambulatory care centers. This was more of a house-keeping issue that did not get done when AAs were first allowed to practice in Alabama in 1994.

At the time of this writing, Mike Harper, CRNA, JD has been nominated to the Alabama Board of Nursing. Hopefully, Governor Bob Riley will appoint Mike to the position that has been held by Elaine Klein, CRNA for the past seven years.

Finally, I have changed my office address. I am a founding partner in the firm of Bohanan & Knight, PC. My partner, Ralph Bohanan, is also a former CRNA and is supportive of my continued affiliation with the ALANA.

My new address and the address for the ALANA is:

Joe Knight
One Perimeter Park South
Suite 318 North
Birmingham, AL 35243

The new phone number is (205) 977-2200.

On behalf of your officers and board members, we wish each of you a safe and happy holiday season.

Joe Knight

National Nurse Anesthetists Week

January 22 - 28, 2006

Samford University Nurse Anesthesia

In the June 2005 edition of the ALANA NewsBulletin, we mentioned that our first class of nurse anesthesia students was six months from graduation. Well, now the time has come and the excitement is palpable around the Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing. On December 17, 2005 our first class will officially have completed their 28-month curriculum and will make their anticipated walk across the stage of the Wright Center to receive their Master of Science in Nursing Degree. This is a huge accomplishment for each of them. They have worked very hard and we are proud of each one of them. On behalf of the Department of Nurse Anesthesia, thank you for all you have done to support our program during its formative years. If it were not for each of you, the preceptors that teach our students, we would not be graduating our first class.

One of the founding principles of this educational program was to provide for our students an opportunity to be educated in rural practice settings of Alabama; to allow them to observe and participate educationally in that unique practice environment. We are proud to say that we succeeded in that mission. We have several graduates who will be entering into the rural practice setting. No matter where our students have chosen to practice, we are confident that they will be excellent additions to our CRNA community.

Senior Student Presentation Day

On Saturday, November 5, 2005, each of the senior students presented their senior projects to an audience of community CRNAs and their fellow classmates. It was a big success. We had 12 students who did oral presentations and 5 students presented posters. The quality of each of the presentations was just another example of their hard work in their pursuit of their career goals.

Funderburg Lectureship

The second annual Funderburg Lecture was

held Thursday, November 17, 2005 at the Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing. As you know, this annual lecture is in honor of Dr. Lonnie Funderburg, a loyal friend, supporter and educator of CRNAs in the Birmingham area for many years. Although retired, Dr. Funderburg remains interested and involved in the education of CRNAs.

This year, Dr. Joe Burkhard, CRNA; Clinical Director, Naval School of Health Sciences in San Diego, CA was the speaker. Dr. Burkhard shared with us a research based presentation on the pros and cons of consciousness monitoring. It was a very enlightening evening. Those of us who attended learned a great deal. If you were unable to attend this year, please make a note that this is an annual event and try to join us next year. Check the Department of Nurse Anesthesia website for the dates of next years lecture and other upcoming events that support the Funderburg Lectureship.

Student Interviews for Class of 2008

During this month, we will be conducting our first round of interviews for our Class of 2008. It is hard to believe! We have an excellent group of applicants and look forward to meeting each of them.

As we enter into this holiday season, the Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing is gearing up for Thanksgiving, Graduation, and Christmas all in a very short time frame. We are very grateful for our professional opportunities and we are proud to be a part of a great educational system like Samford University and the Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing. We also feel very blessed to live in a country that allows us all the freedom to celebrate all of these occasions without restriction. On behalf of the Department of Nurse Anesthesia; Mike, Terri, Resa, Nina M. and all of our students, we would like to wish each of you, our colleagues and preceptors, a blessed Christmas and the best that 2006 has to offer.



From the Office of the Federal Political Director

John Morris, CRNA

Senate Committee Passes Appropriations Bill With Education Funding

On Thursday (July 14th), Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee voted 27-0 to approve the Labor-HHS-Education fiscal year 2006 appropriations bill. For CRNAs specifically it means that Title VIII advanced practice nursing education funding levels for the Senate will be \$58.160 million, compared with \$57.6 million as adopted by the House.

The next step is for the full Senate to consider this health-funding package, which totals over \$140 billion in discretionary spending. Once the Senate adopts the measure, members of the House and Senate will meet in conference committee to hammer out a consensus version that both chambers can adopt and submit to the President for his signature. That process is likely to take place this fall, with fiscal year 2006 beginning October 1st.

The \$58.16 million funding figure for advanced education nursing in the Senate bill is a victory for CRNAs, since the Administration's 2006 budget had proposed cutting that account substantially. Instead, the Senate figure is similar to what was provided for APN education in 2005. From this amount, CRNA schools apply for funding totaling about \$3 million or so annually, for strengthening CRNA schools and nurse anesthesia traineeships.

President Bush Asks Congress for Additional VA Funding

On Thursday (July 14th), President Bush asked Congress for \$1.98 billion for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare programs for fiscal year 2006 to address an expected budget deficit. In a letter to House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL), Bush wrote, "My administration is committed to ensuring that our nation's veterans continue to receive timely and high-quality healthcare," adding, "I am requesting these resources to cover the expected increased costs in FY 2006 that VA will experience in its medical care budget". The VA health system is the largest single employer of CRNAs in the U.S.

FDA Probes Pain Patch Deaths

The FDA is investigating reports of deaths and overdoses involving powerful narcotic pain patches including one made by Johnson & Johnson. The alert is important to CRNAs, because "CRNAs certainly may utilize this method of administration of narcotics, primarily for post-op pain control," according to AANA Director of Practice Sandra Tunajek CRNA ND.

The prescription patches, (transdermal fentanyl/Duragesic), are stuck on skin to deliver the medication. A generic form is sold by a unit of Johnson & Johnson, which last week updated the drug's label to discuss proper use of the product. The FDA said it was probing deaths, a spokeswoman wouldn't say how many, linked to the patches. "The agency has been examining the circumstances of product use to determine if the reported adverse events may be related to inappropriate use of the patch or factors related to the quality of the product," the FDA said in a statement July 15.

House Sub-Committee Passes Patient Safety Bill

On Thursday (July 15th), the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health approved by voice vote a bill (HR 3205) that would establish a database

for healthcare providers to voluntarily report medical errors to state, local and private patient safety monitoring groups. At the request of AANA, and with the involvement of CRNAs at the AANA Midyear Assembly last April, the legislation specifically includes CRNAs as practitioners involved in this patient safety reporting system.

Under the bill, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) would maintain the database, analyze reports, and identify regional and national trends in medical errors. Of importance to CRNAs, information about medical errors reported to the database could not serve as evidence in medical malpractice lawsuits. In addition, the bill would authorize \$25 million in grants for fiscal years 2006 and 2007 to help upgrade technology that helps reduce medical errors. The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee approved similar legislation (S 544) in March. **Please note that the full Senate passed this legislation on July the 21st and it expected to quickly pass in the House.**

House Subcommittee Addresses Physician Medicare Cuts

On Thursday (July 21st), House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee members at a hearing “vowed” not to allow Medicare payments to physicians to be reduced by 4.3% in January, but it is uncertain how they will accomplish the reversal. CRNAs reimbursement is dependent upon the physician fee schedule, and any cut will directly affect nurse anesthetists. Under the current funding formula, known as the sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula, Medicare payments to physicians are scheduled to be reduced by about 5% annually over the next seven years beginning in January 2006. Some lawmakers have proposed addressing the problem by altering the existing formula to include a pay-for-performance (P4P) component, in which doctors would receive financial incentives for improving quality. At the hearing, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Mark McClellan said the current physician-payment system is not sustainable and expressed support for a so-called P4P system. However, health subcommittee Chairwoman Nancy Johnson (R-CT) said that combining a P4P system with the SGR funding formula would not “protect doctors against major payment cuts.” Johnson has proposed repealing the SGR formula and instead increasing Medicare physician payments each year based on changes in the Medicare Economic Index, which tracks changes in the costs of physician care.

Medicare Proposes Medicare Cuts of 4.3% For 2006

Anesthesia reimbursements will be cut 4.3 percent beginning January 1, 2006, unless Congress acts to

stop the cuts. The CMS proposed rule also contains other provisions important to CRNAs, and will be open for public comments until Sept. 30, 2005. “These proposed cuts will impact every CRNA providing anesthesia services to Medicare beneficiaries,” said Frank Purcell, AANA’s Senior Director Federal Government Affairs. “The AANA is continuing to work on Capitol Hill and at CMS to protect the practice of nurse anesthesia, and the patients for whom America’s CRNAs provide care. It will be important for CRNAs to be informed, and to be prepared to take action to advocate for the profession.”

Following two years in which the Part B anesthesia conversion factor rose 1.5 percent each year, thanks to the landmark Medicare Modernization Act that AANA supported and Congress adopted in 2003, anesthesia reimbursements and the rest of the physician fee schedule are once again subject to cuts driven by the Medicare “sustainable growth rate” (SGR) formula. In fact, the reimbursement cut scheduled for 2006 is just the first year of several years’ worth of cuts of 5 to 7 percent annually. Policymakers and healthcare providers alike regard the proposed cuts as unsustainable.

With a 4.3 percent cut to the 2005 mean CMS anesthesia conversion factor of \$17.76, the 2006 Medicare anesthesia CF is estimated to be reduced to about \$17.00. Anesthesia time plus base units, multiplied by the anesthesia CF, yields a Medicare payment for an anesthesia service.

The AANA continues to be active at CMS and on Capitol Hill to push for reversing these harmful cuts, which impact CRNAs, anesthesiologists, physicians and other providers reimbursed under Medicare Part B the same way. Among the actions AANA has taken:

- Joined healthcare providers in writing CMS to reverse the SGR-driven Medicare payment cuts using administrative means. This effort was partly successful, since CMS’ Part B cut for 2006 was actually expected to be more severe than the 4.3 percent cut that is proposed.
- Helping to develop and then extend support to legislation and other efforts in Congress to reverse the Part B cuts, and to secure CRNAs a place at the table in policymaking as it relates to “pay for performance” measures that link reimbursement to quality or efficiency outcomes (HR 3617, Johnson, R-CT; S 1356, Grassley, R-IA, and Baucus, D-MT).

In the meantime, CRNAs must consider the impact that these Part B cuts would have on their practice, and stay tuned for action alerts to join the AANA in advising CMS and Congress accordingly.



From the UAB Student Representative

Yevette Marsden, SRNA

Another year has flown by and once again we see the UAB senior class of nurse anesthesia students graduating on November 18, 2005. This is also a very special year with Samford graduating its first class of nurse anesthesia students in December. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all of those who will be graduating.

At the ALANA Fall Meeting in October I had the opportunity to see just how enthusiastic our state's nurse anesthesia students are. On the first evening of the meeting when the students in attendance were asked to stand, I was so proud to see a quarter of the room stand up. I am convinced that we have some strong leaders in our student population that

will continue the hard work already being done to benefit our profession and those we serve. That is why I will be working hard over the next several months to enlist as much student participation as possible in the 2006 ALANA Spring Meeting and 2006 AANA Annual Meeting. This is a banner year for the AANA and the ALANA, as both organizations celebrate their 75th anniversary.

I look forward to representing the students of UAB and working with Samford's student representative, Tara Ray, on the ALANA Board over the next year.

Have a safe and wonderful holiday season,
T. Yevette Marsden

ALA-CRNA the voice of the profession in Montgomery PAC

When nurse anesthetists go to Montgomery to advocate for the profession of nurse anesthesia, shall we whisper with a small and timid voice, or shall we speak loud and clear with a strong voice? Our ability to be heard in Montgomery depends directly on your contributions. The 2006 election cycle is upon us, so it has never been more important for you to join the ALA-CRNA PAC.

It has never been easier to give back to the profession that has given you so much. You can download the enrollment form from the front page of the ALA-CRNA.ORG website or you can call Jim Henderson at home in the evenings toll free at 877-213-9591. Looking forward to your call!

Alabama Association of Nurse Anesthetists

Minutes of Regular Board Meeting

April 29, 2005

Call to Order:

President Jim Henderson called the meeting to order at 12:40.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Jim Henderson, Brent Ledford, David Neal, Joe Williams, David Osborne, Tracy Hall, Tom Mallory, Shannon Scaturro, Michele Snow, Ken Langley, Joe Knight, Chris Campanotta, and Debbie Hayes

Members absent:

Leigh Stevens

Approval of Minutes:

Copies of the minutes from the January 22, 2005 Board of Directors Meeting were previously e-mailed to all members. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Shannon Scaturro and seconded by Ken Langley, and the motion was passed unanimously.

President's Update:

President Jim Henderson updated the Board on aspects of the recent Mid-Year Assembly Meeting of the AANA that was attended by members of the Board. Jim also announced that he, along with Joe Knight, Brent Ledford and David Neal would be meeting in Birmingham with the officers of the ASSA and a mediator from ThoughtBridge on May 6th and 7th. The officers of both organizations will be introduced to the ThoughtBridge process at this time. Jim addressed the Board with regard to his desired results for this meeting.

Executive Director's Report:

Joe Knight provided the BOD with a report of his activities as well as the activities at the office of the ALANA. An update on recent legislative elections and activities was given. Joe expressed his appreciation to those who made the trip to Washington, D.C. for Mid Year Assembly.

Chemical Dependency Committee:

Tom Mallory updated the BOD that there would be a proposed amendment to the bylaws with regard to changing the name of the Committee to the Wellness Committee. This would reflect a broader change nation wide with issues important to this committee.

Finance Committee:

Joe Williams provided the BOD on the current financial status of the ALANA. An update on the research into various investment options was given to the Board.

PAC:

Joe Knight provided the BOD with an update on the activities and opportunities for fund raising at this time.

GRC:

Tracy Hall gave a report to the BOD on the February Legislative Reception in Montgomery. It was considered to have been very successful. Tracy called for ideas for improving the reception in the future.

Blue Cross/Blue Shield:

Shannon Scaturro updated the BOD on the January meeting with the Alabama Hospital Association Executive Committee. Future discussion with them is anticipated.

Program Committee:

Tom Mallory updated the Board and discussion was held with future changes regarding the disbursement of CE credits at ALANA sponsored meetings.

Nominating Committee:

Jason Wilson presented the Ballot for the 2005 election for the ALANA BOD. The ballot is as follows:

President Elect:

Jim Henderson, Unopposed

Vice President / Secretary:

David Neal and Tom Mallory

BOD North:

Jeff Brown and Leigh Stevens

BOD Central:

Laura Wright and Jason Wilson

BOD South:

Cliff Joyner and Steve McCollum

Nominating Committee Chairman:

Robert Armstrong and Patsy Randall

After discussion, a motion to accept the ballot was made by Joe Williams and seconded by Ken Langley. The motion to accept the ballot passed unanimously.

Bylaws Committee:

Shannon Scaturro, Chairman of the Bylaws Committee, presented the BOD with a number of proposed changes to the ALANA Bylaws. After discussion, the Board accepted all of the proposed changes, but would consider revising the section on Election of the Members of the Board of Directors, if members present at the ALANA Annual Spring Business Meeting expressed an interest in doing so. Jim Henderson commended Shannon for his efforts with the amendments.

Adjournment:

A motion was made to adjourn by Ken Langley and seconded by David Osborne. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 14:48.

ALANA Spring Meeting Sandestin Hilton

APRIL 28 - 30, 2006

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