Editorial

The 1981 AANA Annual Meeting—Commemorating the past, anticipating the future

The 48th Annual Meeting and Professional Sessions of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, scheduled for August 29 to September 3, 1981 in Phoenix, Arizona, celebrates a most significant milestone in nurse anesthesia history—the 50th anniversary of the AANA’s birth as a professional health care organization. During the Phoenix meeting, an estimated 3,000 nurse anesthetists will gather for a festive celebration of this heritage.

Since 1931, when it was founded to foster the art and science of anesthesia and to promote the education of nurse anesthetists, the AANA has nurtured such a valuable heritage of quality anesthesia care. This includes developing mechanisms for the certification and recertification of individual practitioners, setting rigorous guidelines for the accreditation of nurse anesthesia programs and schools, and establishing standards for anesthesia practice.

They will also join in the continuing process of planning the future course of their profession. It is not enough to look back at the accomplishments of the past, although we do so, and with pride. Nurse anesthetists must ask, “What is next?” One way that the Association is attempting to answer this question is by anticipating the future influences on the demand for anesthesia care through, for example, the AANA Manpower Study.

The participation of individual nurse anesthetists in the decision-making process is another way to anticipate the future, for it ensures the continued growth of the profession. At the Annual Meeting, participants are involved in this process on many different levels. They decide and vote on possible amendments to the bylaws and proposed resolutions. On an informal level, they have an opportunity to interact with each other on a one-to-one basis, exchanging opinions and discussing points of view.

Nurse anesthesia educators, meeting at the Assembly of School Faculty, are part of a continual process of evaluating their educational offerings, and adapting them to the needs of the future practitioner. During two hearings, the Council on Certification hearing concerning the Qualifying Examination, and the Council on Accreditation hearing on the new Accreditation Policies and Procedures manual, these individuals have an opportunity to provide their input, and to voice any concerns they may have. In this way, they are able to influence the direction that nurse anesthesia education takes in the future.

Nurse anesthesia students in attendance are able to witness the decision-making processes that will shape their careers in the years to come. They are also able to participate directly by electing one of their peers to represent their views to the AANA Education Committee.

State association leaders from throughout the country are also afforded an opportunity to meet with each other to address problems of mutual concern and to discuss the application of potential solutions.

Nurse anesthetists attend the Annual Meeting for yet another reason, to contribute to their individual professional growth. The educational offerings this year range from clinical sessions on pharmacology, neuroanesthesia and management of uncommon diseases to workshops on hypnology, basic life support (CPR), management, and research design.

With their families, professional business associates and health care colleagues, nurse anesthetists will eat under the stars at an outdoor cookout, laugh during an evening of comedy, dine at a formal banquet, and attend numerous luncheons and reunions. They will be able to marvel at the changes that have occurred over the years with some of the AANA’s founding members and many past presidents.

Thus, although this meeting is a time for celebration, it is also a time for participation and anticipation. As nurse anesthetists celebrate the achievements that have been brought about during the first 50 years, we cannot help but to look forward to “what is next” for the upcoming 50 years.
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