A professional opportunity: Writing for the AANA Journal

The *AANA Journal* Editorial Advisory Committee* would like to assist CRNAs in developing ideas based on their clinical experience into completed manuscripts for *Journal* publication. Consequently, we are presenting this editorial (1) to inform the reader and potential author about the types of articles sought by the Editorial Committee and (2) to better inform authors about how to construct manuscripts for the *AANA Journal*.

Material published in the *Journal* encompasses the following formats: review articles, educational articles, case reports, editorials and clinical research articles. In the past, topics published in the *AANA Journal* have included, for example, anesthesia techniques, pathophysiology, pharmacology, quality assurance and anesthesia malpractice. Examples of topics the Editorial Committee would like to see in the *Journal* include descriptions of new anesthetic techniques, pharmacological updates, current uses of new anesthesia equipment and descriptions of eventful clinical anesthesia episodes.

Types of articles

*An analysis of the current literature* provides an excellent update of controversial and dynamic topics in the practice of anesthesia. Examples of such articles might include the role of monitors upon anesthesia outcome, new anesthetic drugs, new anesthetic techniques and blood component therapy. A review article or educational article should provide new information to the practicing CRNA which would not typically be taught in a basic anesthesia program.

*Case reports* can be written in the form of either an in-depth case study or a report of a clinical episode. The in-depth case study consists of an extensive literature review as part of the introduction, a case summary, a discussion and references. Specifically, it may contain background information from other references concerning the patient diagnosis, the surgical procedure or the anesthetic technique. In addition, advantages and disadvantages of the specific anesthetic technique used should be included. An example of a case study would be a description of the anesthetic management of a patient receiving an opioid epidural anesthetic.

The second type of case report which the Committee is seeking is new to the *Journal*. It is a description of a clinical episode. This type of article would be published in a new section of the *Journal* called "Clinical Exchange." This type of paper is shorter in length but still contains an introduction, a description of the clinical episode, a discussion and references. Included in the discussion is a description from the author of lessons to be learned from this experience. This clinical episode differs from the case study in that it may not give as complete a description of the patient or clinical course and the review of the literature may not be as extensive. An uncommon clinical case, the use of a new drug, an

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*The AANA Journal* Editorial Advisory Committee is chaired by Chuck Biddle, CRNA, MS; in addition to Dr. McCarthy and Dr. Vail, a contributing member is Mary DePaolis-Lutzo, CRNA, PhD.
equipment mishap or a new anesthetic technique would be appropriate topics for the clinical episode report format.

Another type of manuscript is the research article. One type of research article is a retrospective study. This type of article could include a review of anesthetic records to answer questions, such as, "Is intravenous sedation used routinely with regional anesthesia? If so, what is the average amount and type of sedation administered?" Another example of a question which could be answered in a retrospective study is "What is the type and rate of complications experienced by patients receiving regional anesthesia at a particular hospital?" Such data, routinely recorded on the anesthetic record, could be obtained in any quality control review and would be useful to share in print with other clinicians.

Data may also be collected in a prospective study which may be preferable to a retrospective study in that more variables can be controlled to answer a specific question. For publishing, a prospective study must have a written protocol, informed consent from the patient being studied and approval by the institutional review board of the hospital in which the study is being performed. If a new drug or medical device is being used in the study, approval of the Food and Drug Administration must also be obtained.

The Editorial Advisory Committee encourages "Letters to the Editor" in the form of comments or additional information or personal experiences that relate to previously published articles. Ideas for guest editorials are also being sought by the Committee and could include topics of special interest, such as, the current malpractice crisis or the practice of nurse anesthesia throughout the world.

Other sources for articles
Many CRNAs have prepared excellent lectures for anesthesia meetings and seminars. It would benefit the speaker, the AANA Journal and CRNAs if speakers would take an additional step of developing manuscripts for publication based on their lectures. This information could then be shared with a much larger audience and help keep CRNAs informed and updated.

Similarly, many nurse anesthesia programs currently require students to do research projects. If these projects were prepared in the written format required by the AANA Journal, students would find it easier to submit their work for publication. However, even if a paper has been written in the more traditional thesis format, the student could rewrite either the section on the review of the literature as an educational article or the methods section as a research article. We suggest that nurse anesthesia program directors ask students to follow the AANA Journal manuscript format whenever possible to facilitate the submission of student papers.

How to write an article for submission to the AANA Journal
The format for submission of manuscripts is described in the AANA Journal under the "Information for Authors" section listed in the "Table of Contents." "Information for Authors" describes not only manuscript preparation but also the review process for manuscripts. It lists the categories for articles and also important details regarding the format for each type of manuscript including the title page, summary page, abstract page, text and references. This information is necessary for providing consistency in the Journal.

As a refereed publication, the AANA Journal has three Editorial Board reviewers evaluate each manuscript for appropriate content, accuracy of subject covered, clarity and logic. To ensure that the reviewers are not biased by the author or his or her institution, all author identification is removed from the manuscript, thus, a "blind review" takes place. The reviewers also determine if the paper conforms to the standards and format for publication for the AANA Journal. Suggestions for revisions to strengthen the manuscript may also be made to the author by the reviewers through the editorial staff of the Journal. It is not uncommon that authors are asked to make revisions before publication.

Summary
The Journal needs quality articles to keep its readers current in anesthesia practice. The Editorial Advisory Committee seeks articles which are focused on up-to-date information about your practice of anesthesia. We hope that the dialogue exchanged in this editorial will make it easier for AANA Journal readers to become writers of quality manuscripts for the Journal.

AUTHORS
Elizabeth J. McCarthy, CRNA, PhD, received her anesthesia education from Fairfax Hospital School of Anesthesia in Falls Church, Virginia, and doctorate degree from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences Physiology in Bethesda, Maryland. She was awarded a National Research Council Fellowship from the Navy Medical Research Institute in Bethesda. She serves as nurse anesthesia and pulmonary consultant, Center for Devices and Radiological Health, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in Silver Spring, Maryland.

James D. Vail, CRNA, DNSc, received his anesthesia education from the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC, and his doctorate degree from The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. He holds the U.S. Army Surgeon General's Certificate of Achievement for exemplary contributions to nursing administration, education, research and clinical practice. He serves as associate professor at George Mason University School of Nursing in Fairfax, Virginia.