



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

Circle of Influence: Are We Eating Our Young?

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Before I begin in earnest, I would like to explain the term "young." For the purposes of this message, I am not referring exclusively to the Gen Xers or the Nexters, although they are certainly included. Rather I am referring to the "novice," the individual who is "new" to a situation. New to the profession, new to the specialty and, perhaps, new to organizational involvement.

In early September, ASPAN hosted the annual Component Development Institute in St. Louis. The leadership focus of the meeting was designed to provide the tools needed to enhance growth and development within the leadership role and to ignite a passion to advance the perianesthesia specialty and one's personal influence to spread the word of the importance and significance of organizational involvement. Thirty-three components were proudly represented by leaders from the grassroots of our organization. To our delight, half of those present were "new" to their leadership position, and I firmly believe they left the meeting with "can-do" and "I-am-glad-I-did-it" attitudes.

This brings me to the "I-am-glad-I did-it" attitude. We all know that volunteers are critical if ASPAN is to continue the journey as the great organization it has grown to be. Many individuals present spoke of the difficulty in rallying members to take on the leadership roles necessary to move the organization into the future. We recognize that so many members have the talent and desire to become involved, but often find it intimidating to expand their circle of personal comfort and take on the challenge of organizational involvement. We are therefore charged with providing guidance and offering first hand experience of the benefits and personal gratification gained. Many also joked about offering to "help out" and finding themselves in the Vice President/President-Elect role. Talk about fast-tracking! All in all, at the end of the day, they all said they are glad they did it.

I have spoken of creating a ripple that evolves into a series of events that eventually affect an ocean. The analogy may not be scientifically correct, but the message is clear. We influence and mentor in everyday actions and have a truly stronger influence because of our commitment to ASPAN and our leadership roles within the component. We, in the leadership positions, must embrace and mentor those willing to take up the standard. We need to encourage the "young" to become involved and make a difference for their colleagues. We need to be willing to help them identify and get started in roles suited to their talents. This may vary greatly from member to member, but the level of involvement needs to be their decision and the growth and passion will come with experience. We need to nurture and enthuse our "young" colleagues; let them try a "new" way of approaching a situation or event. Maybe a "new" color on your newsletter masthead will cost more, but it may also increase readership. We are moving into the era of risk takers. We may need to begin to think about getting on the bus or risk missing the party. We must learn to delegate and trust that the "young" members will, with our help, step up to the plate and do what is right and prudent for the component.

Our "young" members deserve the affirmation that they are doing the right thing and can offer new ideas and insight on how the component can be re-energized and productive. They joined ASPAN to spread their professional wings and we have the responsibility to recognize this and give them the space and support necessary to achieve their goals. They have the potential to further expand ASPAN's Circle of Influence to their colleagues and be instrumental in revitalizing the interest and commitment to component health and ASPAN's future. Together, blending all levels of participation, we will be great!