



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

Reach Out & Cherish Today

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"Yesterday is but a dream; Tomorrow, a vision of hope; Look to today, for it is life." – (Anonymous)

Nearly one year ago our nation was devastated by the tragic events of September 11th. Sandy Barnes and I were attending the American Nurses Association's summit, Call to the Nursing Profession, in Reston, Virginia, just outside of Washington D.C. The meeting began on September 8th and we were scheduled to return home on September 11th. Fortunately for us, due to a schedule change in the program, we were able to re-arrange our return flights to the evening of September 10th.

I was leaving from Washington Dulles Airport, and for unknown reasons my flight to Philadelphia was delayed several times and finally departure time was set for 11 p.m. Once aboard the plane, a fully booked flight, I remember being aware of unusual confusion in the cockpit of the plane. From my seat in the small plane I could easily see and hear the discussions between the pilot and the flight attendant. The pilot disembarked and re-boarded the plane several times and I overheard him saying, "I will not leave until this paperwork is correct." I remember experiencing a feeling of sinking fear or panic, so much so, that I almost left the plane. My responsibilities for ASPAN at that time required frequent travel making this feeling of panic very unusual for me. I had never felt that way before neither in preparation for flight nor while I was flying. I remember thinking to myself, "I should just get off this plane and take the train." Leaving the plane to take the Amtrak train would require a two-hour cab ride from Washington Dulles Airport to the nearest Amtrak train station. When I saw the pilot re-board and close the cockpit door I knew that preparations were finalized for the flight to take off. At this point, I said a little prayer.

I remained on the plane but I was still curious and somewhat concerned about the pre-flight fuss. Was the plane intact? Was there some mechanical problem with the pre-flight engine check? Was the delay related to some weather report? I already knew the weather was predicted to be clear between Washington DC and Philadelphia, so it was unlikely because of the weather report. In spite of this delay, the actual flight was uneventful. After a 90-minute plane ride and a taxi ride home, I finally reached home happy, but exhausted.

The next day I remember turning on my computer in the morning and as soon as I logged on to America Online my eyes caught a very small picture of a burning building. I did not recognize the building immediately. The caption read, "plane hits building" and, in my morning fatigue, I did not believe it. It couldn't be real. If it were, it must have been an accident, a tragic accident. I immediately turned on the television and learned, as did the rest of the world, what we now refer to as the tragic events of September 11th. So much has been written about these events I need not remind you here. I am sure many of you remember exactly where you were when you heard the news. I would dare to say that many of us might even mark other events in terms of before and after September 11th. I feel deeply and still pray for those of you touched so deeply by the tragic events of September 11th.

One of our own ASPAN members, a perianesthesia nurse, was impacted by the tragedy on that horrific day in NYC. Her apartment building was adjacent to ground zero. At the time of the explosions, she performed the most courageous and selfless acts by assisting others to evacuate from a building. Without a second thought she helped triage at the site of the collapse and did not think of herself until she was sure her nursing expertise and her compassion were no longer required. Now, without a home, she made

arrangements to stay with family until she could sort out the personal impact of this event. As with many others in New York City, she was not allowed to return to her apartment.

As we approach the anniversary of September 11th and each of us recalls exactly what we were doing, give thought to those whose personal losses have dramatically changed their lives forever. Consider this perianesthesia nurse who reached out and made a difference in many peoples' lives that day. Reach out to your family and friends and remind them how you cherish and value their being a part of your life. Reach out to ASPAN colleagues. ASPAN has given each of us an extension of family and friends. Cherish today and make plans to acknowledge the positive outcomes of your year. Time will help us to heal.