



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

Perianesthesia Nursing Connections

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ASPAN President 2000-2001

One year ago I began my ASPAN Presidency with a promise and a passion to lead our organization into the new millennium. The connections between our Board of Directors, our members, our colleagues, and our patients were foremost on my mind. As my Presidency has progressed, I have continued with an unwavering commitment to these connections. If anything, my commitment to ASPAN and our mission is stronger today than ever before. This is my final formal written communication as President to you, the members of ASPAN. I would like to use this opportunity to say thank you to the many individuals I have had the privilege of working with this past year.

The major strength of any organization is realized in its members. This organization thrives due to the consistent and generous contributions of its many members. As you know, the clinical demands on all of us have increased dramatically over the past few years. Increased workload, dwindling resources, staffing issues, ICU overflow, and the nursing shortage have diminished some of the pleasures of patient care and reduced the energy necessary for other activities. Despite these obstacles, volunteer activities in ASPAN remain our lifeline. Without member commitment, ASPAN would not exist. While I can't mention by name each of you who have contributed and continue to contribute time and effort to our Society, I would like to sincerely thank all of our volunteer leaders. You have been remarkable.

My very special, heartfelt thanks goes to Susan Shelander, RN, CPAN, ASPAN Vice President/President-Elect, from Houston, Texas, for her levelheaded, forward-thinking vision and her great sense of humor. I have supported and believed in participatory decision making and obtaining input from those who would be affected by any decisions made. This year has truly been a "team effort," much more than a "my show." I know that ASPAN will benefit greatly over the next year with Susan at the helm.

The ASPAN Board of Directors had been asked to do more than ever before and they have responded beautifully. Each Board member, responsible for a segment of our organization, has enabled the many activities in which we are engaged to continue to move forward between Board meetings. The Board has taken advantage of e-mail and teleconferencing to keep up-to-date and to provide input for organizational decisions in a timely manner.

The ASPAN committees, under the direction of the committee chairs, carry out the bulk of the work for ASPAN. These volunteers have put in countless hours to meet the needs of our members and promote the growth and development of the nurses practicing in our specialty. Our National Conference, "Making the Connection: Through Teaching, Touch, and Technology," promises to be dynamic and inspirational. The annual meeting has been organized and coordinated by a hard working committee, chaired by Libby Murphy-Zielinski, with the assistance of Audra Rival, ASPAN Meeting Manager. An outstanding program has been put together and I hope many of you can attend.

The excellent financial health of our organization is due to the generous support of our corporate sponsors. Through the personal efforts by individual Board members, the Foundation Trustees, and our exhibit/development manager, Greg Ciminera, we have secured funding to get us near our budgeted target. What this translates into is additional benefits for our members and the chance for us to pursue our goal of advancing the practice of perianesthesia nursing.

All of our committees have been very active this year and these activities have been chronicled nicely in *Breathline* to keep members abreast of our numerous projects and accomplishments. I would like to thank all the Committee Chairs and members, the Specialty Practice Group Coordinators, and our Editors who have all made such tremendous contributions to the Society this year. I cannot mention everyone in this article, but I am very grateful for your hard work and dedication. I would also like to recognize the work of all our liaisons to other professional organizations, including, but not limited to, ASA, FASA, AORN, and NSNA. I believe a major accomplishment for ASPAN this year has been our activities, projects, and networking with other professional organizations to promote safe staffing standards, patient safety, and positive patient outcomes.

Our entire National Office staff has worked tirelessly this year to move us into self-management and to strengthen member benefits. I appreciate the loyalty and support of Jane Certo, Diane Bradley, Carol Hyman, Lou Gonczy, Jean Hess, Jennifer Brennan, Audra Rival, and Greg Ciminera. Their attention to detail and desire for ASPAN to be the premier organization for perianesthesia nurses is to be commended. No "thank you" would be complete without mentioning our Chief Executive Officer, Kevin Dill. His tireless efforts, encouragement, organizational skills, professional demeanor, and personal friendliness have guided me throughout this very exciting year. ASPAN is lucky to have such a skilled and gifted individual looking after our interests. Thank you Kevin!

The 21st century is presenting all nursing organizations with unprecedented challenges and opportunities. I believe the major challenge for the future of perianesthesia nursing is the decline of nursing as a profession. Fewer young men and women are entering nursing as a career. The average age of the RN is 45-47 years old and we are losing nurses to retirement and other professions. This year I was fortunate to visit "The Nightingale's Song" at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Many of the images in this spectacular exhibit depicted nurses as brave, heroic, and compassionate. There was abundant visual evidence of the care, nurturing, and support nurses have always given to society. I was very moved by the display of dedication and commitment of nurses. I believe that we, as healthcare professionals, must use our abilities to attract and effectively engage young people into nursing. ASPAN is actively participating in efforts to portray nursing positively and promote nursing as a career.

These are challenging times for nursing, but we are positioned to make a difference. As I said earlier in this message, an important aspect of ASPAN's future rests on our members' willingness to volunteer to serve in the various leadership positions in the Society. In order to grow in this new century, ASPAN needs volunteers. This need begins on the District and Regional levels. The opportunity to share your knowledge, skills, and experience with your colleagues will enhance your work in perianesthesia nursing. You will gain friendships for a lifetime and you will make a difference in our profession and our specialty. So, please, make the connection, and get involved in your professional organization!

Serving as the ASPAN President has meant that I have had the privilege of representing perianesthesia nurses at numerous meetings and activities all over the country. During my travels to component meetings and other national organizational meetings I have met many of you and have been so impressed with your passion for perianesthesia nursing. Thank you for your support this past year and for the honor of serving as your President. I will always reflect proudly on my ASPAN connections and I look forward to a bright future for ASPAN.