

Dear Diary,

When Linda asked me to write this article, I thought “ am I the oldest nurse in the organization?” or am I suppose to know all of the old goldies of our great organization since 1977. We were called GARRN back then, Georgia Association of Recovery Room Nurses. When I started thinking, I realized that she is right and I probably have knowledge of some our outstanding members. I’ve worked in RR since 1980 where I started with Martha Cantrell, Sandy Shupe and Maxine Bruce. These three ladies (wonderful nurses and people) helped guide me as I was beginning my journey to who knows where. They encouraged participation, helped babysit as we took turns holding offices at district and state level. This is where I learned that monitors could travel up and down a RR to monitor patients when there were not monitors at every station(oh my gosh). There were no two monitors the same because our special room at that time got hand-me-downs from anesthesia and critical care. This is also where we started learning that we also were critical care, we mattered in a patient’s journey through the anesthesia experience to return to safety.

We finally advanced to a pulse ox that we carried among the patients. Eventually we got a monitor for the Swan-Ganz catheters—we were cool. We eventually had a RR built for us and everything was upgraded—we were ready with our new equipment. By this time we had become Post Anesthesia Recovery Room, GARRN, and a multitude of other names but the old ones still called our special space “RR”. Georgia was one of the original colonies in 1977 and ASPAN was founded in 1980. One of great leaders, Linda Bolton, was instrumental in getting us started as a education provider and involved with ASPAN. We have never looked back on our job to educate nurses and the public about what is now called the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU).

One of my best memories has to do with Martha Cantrell who has been retired for some time. We did the typical BMT, etc. with babies—they would come into the room, Martha would hold them in her arms, we would chart quickly and away they would go to their parents. Grass did not grow under the feet of that nurse with the baby. What a simple and safe world at the time. Standards, protocols, and other laws were being developed to keep us and the patients from harm.

We have always had representation in ASPAN to share our thoughts, ideas and concerns. Debbie Johnson is another name that might not be recognized from the past. She was a President of ASPAN in the mid 1990’s and assisted with getting Georgia as the arena for a national conference. For those of us who participated in district and state work-shops, the national conference planning was not for the weak or weary. We thank Debbie even today for bringing us to that point of recognition for a great job done in Atlanta, Georgia. Georgia rose to the occasion and we were proud of all the hard work.

A bit of real history, RR began in the 1940’s in response to WW II, the report from the Anesthesia Study Commission that indicated that 50% of post op deaths were attributable to anesthesia events that could have been prevented, critical care emergence, NURSING SHORTAGE (where have we heard that before), advancing technology and more knowledge.

Over all these years and since the beginning of ASPAN we have taken on the job of education for our nurses and the public. The more the public knows, the safer they become.

We have many colleagues in Central Georgia that have their past with us Pat Jackson, Sonja Allgood. Central Georgia gave us many state officers over the years with talent to lead us forward. West Georgia and Southwest Georgia with Judy Stallings, Brenda Russell (&Allen), carrying magnets, bracelets to be sold at National Conference and did I forget to mention the T-shirts and cookbooks---did I mention they were great cookbooks and we could probably still find one if you need one. Augusta gave us Sue Andrews who I think has held every office at least twice and maybe working on some for a third time---if anyone is interested, I'm sure she would take your name. We have had conferences in Savannah, Macon, Callaway Gardens, Atlanta, Augusta, the beach and the mountains of North Georgia. No part of the state has been left unturned from the best of nurses. Savannah has never been the same since we danced on Uncle Sam's Riverboat top to the Pointer sister's and JUMP.

There are no better educators anywhere than the ones we have in Georgia. I would invite you to remain part of this organization and have your colleagues join you. Become CPAN or CAPA certified, run for district office, state office and find a place at the national level. Ask Valerie Hooper or Jackie Ross, who have been published and have held national positions, about the rewards of being involved. Yes, you too can do it.

Georgia is so lucky and blessed to have some of the best---those who guided us from the beginning in 1977 to the present and still guide us. The oldies thank you and bless you. For those names who have not been mentioned specifically, its not that you don't matter but the oldies have set in. I just remember that we grew as flowers in a garden as we matured.