

## Dear Colleagues, By Joe D'Amico, President, PANA

As president this ends a two-year term that was filled with many challenges. I want to start by saying that it has been a blessing and honor for me to have the opportunity to work with you. Together we have faced many distractions and challenges that might have prevented and altered our growth and development. To name a few, there were challenges from the insurance industry threatening to stop reimbursement and various state nursing and medical specialties requesting the use of propofol for sedation procedures. It has been a pleasure for me to have worked with and enjoy a unified board, all of us sharing the same common goals. We have come a long way together in this short time and have accomplished a great deal. Drawing upon the talents and leadership of our student representatives, both past (Andrew Aspen, 2008), and present (Lauren Penn), we have worked together and placed into action for the first time in our state a Student Organization that is managed under their own (student) governmental structure. We have witnessed incredible leadership in our students. Ashley Feden from York College of Pennsylvania / WellSpan Health, Nurse Anesthetist Program, will sit on this year's AANA Public Relations (PR) committee. Marie A. DeFrancesco-Loukas, MSN, CRNP, CRNA from Villanova University/Crozer-Chester Medical Center School of Nurse Anesthesia submitted and won the 2008 AANA PR award, "Best Promotional Effort for National Nurse Anesthetists Week" in concert with Student Activities and PR Committees for their Keystone Kindness project. These individuals and many more will be great leaders of our association. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge CRNAs such as Mike Kinslow who has been elected to this year's AANA's Nominating Committee, Mike Conti, the AANA's Resolutions Committee, and Mike Neft who will sit on AANA's Practice Committee. Again, another example of Pennsylvania leadership at a national level. Congratulations to all of you! You have honored PANA.

Under the leadership of Bettina Dixon who chairs your Public Relations committee, and to our student representatives, we credit the development of a successful unified state program that is recog-

nized and one that reaches out to our communities. The PANAP-CAP (**Pennsylvania Nurse Anesthesia Professionals Caring About Pennsylvanians**) unites our school programs through the school SRNA student liaisons that schedule community volunteer events across the state at soup kitchens and pantries, giving back to those in need. Thank you Bettina and all students for the honor you bestow on PANA as countless people reap the benefits of your hard work.

We have seen growth in attendance at our state conferences due to the tireless efforts of Diana Davidson and her committee. We had more than 550 attendees last year in Hershey and for the first time enjoyed the success of our college bowl that engaged the students and PANA membership.

PANA's web based forum page came on-line 24/7 by the middle of the first quarter of last year. This forum gives you direct access to members of your board and association to address questions and concerns.

We are growing as ONE and, looking at our organization through the president's eyes, I am so proud to be a part of it. I want to thank Margie Darbut and her committee members, especially Giullia Dozzi, for their diligence in keeping our finances secure and growing positively through these difficult economic times. I can continue to speak of each and every board member and to many CRNA members not part of the board to address their many accomplishments. This especially includes our CRNA business owned companies that have helped to protect our association through our difficult times, but that would take a very long time and you would be hard pressed to stay awake to finish reading this.

Before I do put an end to this report, I would like to share with you an issue we recently addressed. Some of our student programs have been faced with great difficulty fulfilling the



## Legislator Spotlight— Rep. Michael P. McGeehan



**Rep. Michael P. McGeehan (D-Philadelphia)** is a lifelong resident of Northeast Philadelphia, graduating from Father Judge High School in 1979. He earned his bachelor's degree in political science at St. Joseph's University in 1985.

McGeehan is a seasoned legislator currently serving in his 9th term in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives.

He is chairman of the Professional Licensure Committee and serves on the Game and Fisheries Committee.

McGeehan has championed improving the water quality of his beloved Delaware River and increasing urban-based tourism within the Philadelphia region. McGeehan's other legislative priorities center on promoting healthy lifestyles, protecting constituents from identity theft, redeveloping blighted urban areas and compensating the wrongfully incarcerated.

## CRNA Recognition Corner

- ◆ Brent Dunworth, CRNA, MSN, Chief Nurse Anesthetist, University of Pittsburgh Physicians and Chief Nurse Anesthetist, UPMC Shadyside was profiled in the Ridgeway Record, discussing his career in nurse anesthesia. <http://www.ridgewayrecord.com/content/view/full/192590/85/>
- ◆ Bernie Gillian (Geisinger Medical Center), Jonna Hockenbrough-Patrick (Geisinger Medical Center), Rebecca Stouidt (Geisinger Medical Center), and Michael Neft (University of Pittsburgh) all received the DNP degree from Chatham University.

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Deadlines for submission of articles and advertising are the first business day of the following months: December, March, June and September.

## TIDINGS

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PANA Publications Michael Neft, MSN, CRNA

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## Angie Mellott Armbrust, Winter Group

### Session Update

As the summer months progressed the budget stalemate continued in Harrisburg. Both the House and Senate spent the summer and early fall attempting to work out a compromise on the state budget. What seemed like a handshake agreement on a \$27.95 billion spending plan turned out to be a non-starter when rank and file members were given the details.

The Governor turned up the heat in early October – fully 94 days past the budget deadline – and called the House and Senate into continuous session until the budget was hammered out.

The unprecedented delay threw the legislature into a tailspin that affected all other legislative initiatives. There was little or no progress made on pending legislation relating to health care, insurance reform, or HB1866, our scope of practice bill.

All of these were placed on hold as every committee in the legislature awaited the financial blueprint for the state. Hearings that had been planned for the summer gave way to long days of jousting over taxes. In August, the Governor signed a “bridge budget” that provided partial funding for state workers and some vital functions of government.

By October, even these funds were insufficient to stave off real shortfalls in non-profits, day care centers, health care facilities, education, and other services that teetered on shutting down. After incessant pummeling from constituents, legislators did roll up their sleeves and struggled to piece together a plan that cut spending by \$400 million from the previous year, contained no new broad-

based taxes, and kept a focus on education and jobs as priorities.

The problem of course, is that substantial political damage may have been done in the process.

In late 2009, poll after poll showed that voters held both the Governor and the legislature in low esteem. Numbers comparable to the period following the pay raise debacle began to surface. This may be a real problem for the 203 members of the House and the 25 members of the Senate who face reelection in 2010.

### HB 1866

While the marathon budget session knocked the scope of practice legislation off track, there is some good news to report. Because of a concerted effort on the part of CRNAs throughout Pennsylvania, the bill was introduced with a record number of cosponsors. More importantly, the outreach in district offices, at golf outings, and at fundraisers seemed to be having a positive effect.

The Winter Group reports that legislators are more aware of our issues and more supportive of offering the professional consideration of practice protection than ever before. The House Professional Licensure Committee has been cooperative in the drafting of the new version of the bill and we are holding our own against an onslaught of misinformation that continues to flow from opponents.

It is our hope that the bill receives a hearing soon and that the matter is finally placed before the Committee for a vote. For those who believe in providing quality anesthesia services to pa-

tients in all areas of the state, and for those who believe that CRNAs should be permitted to function to the full scope of their practice, this legislation is long overdue.

### New Senator Elected

In July, Senator Rob Wonderling (R—Montgomery), Chairman of the Transportation Committee, announced that he was resigning. A special election was held in September to fill the vacancy and the winner was Representative Bob Mensch (R-Montgomery). Bob has served in the House since 2007. He was a member of the [House Local Government](#), [House Consumer Affairs](#), [House Insurance](#) and House Republican Policy committees. Bob brings to the Senate a reputation for hard work and a moderate outlook on most issues. We look forward to working closely with Senator Mensch as he takes up his new challenges.

### HB 1049 – Coverage of Anesthesia Services

Representative Stan Saylor has introduced legislation that would require insurance companies to cover general anesthesia for certain children and special needs patients when needed to provide dental care in a dentist office or hospital. The bill applies to children under age seven (7) along with patients who have special needs and for whom it has been deemed that dental care cannot be deferred. Currently, 29 other states provide some type of coverage for general anesthesia for certain persons.

At a hearing before the House Insurance Committee on October 6, 2009 the bill was reported out by a vote of 16-10. The Pennsylvania Dental Association and its lobbyists are pulling out all the stops to assure that this critical need is met in dental settings.

**HB 1866 was introduced with a record number of cosponsors**

## By Lauren Penn, BSN, SRNA, PANA Student Representative

Over the last year, my goal was to create a unified voice for students that would allow us to have greater presence within our state association. I believe that we have come a long way and it has been a pleasure working with all of the students throughout Pennsylvania. I would like to give special recognition to the student liaisons who took the time out of their busy schedules to help make this year a success. I would also like to thank all of the students for their hard work and dedication over the past year. Without your efforts, the PANA Student Board's "Stockings for Kids", CRNA week, and the College Bowl would not have been as great of an achievement as they were.

As my term as student representative comes to an end, I would also like to express my most sincere gratitude to all of the PANA board members for taking the time to mentor me over the past year. I have had some experiences and have learned a great deal by watching your dedication. With all of the time and effort that these individuals put into our state association, I have realized the true importance of nurse anesthetist's involvement in his or her professional organization. This was not only a rewarding opportunity, but it has kindled a life-long commitment to my own professional organization.

### 2009 PANA Fall Symposium

This year's fall meeting was held on October 9th-11th at the Gettysburg Hotel which is located in the heart of historic downtown Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. During this meeting, the PANA Student Board held their 2nd Annual Student reception on Saturday, October 10th at 3pm. I hope you took the opportunity to meet your new 2009-2010 PANA Student Representative and hear the agenda for the upcoming year. The student board provided a great chance to not only meet the individual representing you and the student body, but provide you with the opportunity to get to know students from other programs.

### 2009 PANA Student Scholarship Winners

It was be my honor to present this year's PANA Student Scholarships at the Fall Symposium in Gettysburg, PA. Three individuals were selected to receive the scholarship based on each of their individual involvement and exceptional accomplishments in the nurse anesthesia profession. The 2009 PANA Scholarship Awardees are:

- ◆ Julia Leissner- Allegheny Valley Hospital/La Roche College School of Nurse Anesthesia
- ◆ Brandy Little- York College of Pennsylvania/Wellspan Heath Nurse Anesthesia Program
- ◆ Rheana Watts- Crozer Chester Medical Center/Villanova University Nurse Anesthesia Program

### New Student Member of the AANA's Public Relations Committee

During the 2009 AANA Annual Meeting in San Diego, a student

from Pennsylvania was selected as the newest member of the Public Relations (PR) committee to our national organization. This student is *Ashley Fedam*, a senior from York College of Pennsylvania/Wellspan Health Nurse Anesthesia Program. Ashley has always been very passionate about her involvement in the state association and has now decided to take on the challenge of representing us at a national level. As a student member of the AANA's PR Committee, Ashley will be key component in developing the National Nurse Anesthetists Week theme, planning and implementing the Student Mentoring Program, First-Timers Orientation, and Student Focus Session. Her responsibilities will also include being an active representative for the PR Booth in Exhibit Hall during next year's Annual Meeting. On behalf of the PANA Board, I would like to congratulate Ms. Fedam on her outstanding accomplishment and wish her the best of luck with her new endeavor.

### 2009-2010 PANA Student Board

The Student Board is currently looking for students who are interested in being a representative for their programs in the state association. The student liaison's responsibilities include a one year term of maintaining communication with the PANA Student Representative, assisting with the organization of student activities for their nurse anesthesia program, and attend a bi-annual meeting which will be held during the PANA Symposiums.

### PANA Looking for Student Committee Members

This year the PANA Board is interested in having two students as active members on the Activities Committee and the Public Relations Committee. For more details or interested in being a part of either of these committees, please contact *aarm-brust@wintergroup.com*.

## IN MEMORIAM

On September 22, 2009 Betty Soisson passed away at the age of 78. Betty was a CRNA who spent many years at Allegheny General Hospital. She gave her heart and soul to providing excellent anesthesia care to her patients. She will be fondly missed by her peers who will remember her utmost dedication.

## Colleagues...continued from page one

clinical requirements necessary for taking their boards. Partly due to the 17 percent growth rate of outpatient surgery centers (ASFs/AFCs) that Pennsylvania has enjoyed for the past three years, a great majority of procedures normally done in an inpatient setting are now performed in the outpatient centers. Once made aware of this problem, the board quickly moved to rectify it, enlisting the help of our lobbyists Peg Moyer and Mark Single. A meeting was set with Stacy Mitchell, Deputy Secretary for Quality Assurance, Department of Health to address this issue. After 6 weeks of meetings and multiple emails, Deputy Secretary Mitchell has sent a letter of exemption to outpatient surgery centers, which now allows our students in the outpatient surgical sites to obtain their clinical requirements. This was accomplished during the summer, when our state did not have a budget passed and all state department's priorities were directed toward the budget.

We currently are facing a scope of practice bill, HB 1866. HB 1866 is necessary if CRNAs as a specialty of nursing in Pennsylvania will be able to advance to meet the demands placed on us by the rest of our nation. We are all aware that CRNAs are an advanced form of nursing practice, but CRNAs in Pennsylvania are not recognized as such. We work under one license (RN) and as such that license is subject to any and all disciplinary actions. We currently do not have an APN certification. With the APN status, thus having two licenses, one the RN and the

second APN, when working as a CRNA it is only that license (APN) that is disciplined, protecting you as the sole provider of income to still be able to work as an RN. Our border states as well as most of the country have already moved to that level of recognition, APN. For CRNAs to acquire this recognition in Pennsylvania we need a law that defines our scope of practice; PA Code 21:17, a regulation, is not enough. Without this law, we as an association cannot move forward and will be grid locked in our state as providers. New Jersey has recently ruled that unless you have obtained an APN status by June 16, 2009 you will not be allowed to work in that state as a CRNA. HB 1866 is a start to secure the ability for you as a CRNA to continue to practice and be recognized.

Your elected board of directors for 2010 is filled with talented individuals who will continue to protect, educate and inform you; the three ideals we have held to this past year. Continue to support your elected members and at all times communicate your needs to them. It is only through your voice that your board of directors is sure of the direction PANA must take.

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you. It has been an incredible experience for me.

God Bless,  
**Joe**

### A PITTSBURGH TRADITION!!!

Mark your calendars for the Annual Pittsburgh Symposium for Nurse Anesthetists to be held on Saturday, February 20, 2010. The Symposium will be held at Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. As in the past, this all-day seminar will be approved by the AANA with an expected 10-11 CE credits.

The registration form will be available on-line at [www.pana.org](http://www.pana.org) in January, 2010. For more information, contact Mary Jo Lynch at 412-641-4228 or [mlynch@magee.edu](mailto:mlynch@magee.edu).



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