

Blink

a brief from the ASORN Board of Directors

My ASORN

It is early morning and the sky outside my window is turning shades of light pink, golden yellow and yes even robin egg blue. I sit at the computer contemplating why I have chosen to take an active part in my professional organization for an extended period of time. We all know cognitively why we join professional organizations. These benefits include but are not limited to the opportunity to expand personal and career development, professional certification through NCBORN, networking opportunities, the service and support from the national organization, discounts on products and services including our publications, attendance at our national meeting and the opportunity to develop leadership skills. In addition there are also the opportunities to become involved in a local chapter, join a national committee and even dare to become an officer on the national Board of Directors. One of my favorite quotations below summarizes my feeling about becoming a part of my national nursing organization. It reiterates the fact that nurses have an obligation to become a part of their greater health community by joining and taking an active role in ASORN. It should be a mantra that we all embrace.

"I slept and dreamt that life was all joy. I awoke and saw that life was but service. I served and understood that service was joy."

~ Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

I had been attending the national ASORN meeting for many years when some of my colleagues including Karen Fogelman, Vicky Navarro and Gloria Neault asked me to become more involved with ASORN on a national level. They inquired as to my special interests and I indicated that I would serve on the planning committee for the National Annual Meeting. This became a thoroughly enjoyable experience. I recall many hours of sitting around a table contemplating the interests and desires of our membership in order to design a meeting which would meet the criteria of our highly intelligent body of specialized nurses. We spent hours eating lots of candy, agreeing to disagree on many course topics and enjoying many belly laughs before the day was done.

I really enjoyed obtaining speakers and can recall one particular occasion when I actually had to chase a speaker down for weeks to obtain his confirmation. I was hiking in the mountains outside of Lenox, Massachusetts when I heard my cell phone ring. I had been attempting to confirm this very distinguished physician speaker for days prior to my vacation but had been only been able to reach his secretary. I picked up the phone and heard his voice only to lose my cell service. I hiked back down to reach a farm store only to reach his secretary who said that her doctor had left for the day. Finally 3 days later after many dropped phone calls I reached the doctor who not only confirmed to lecture but in the end gave an outstanding discussion. Perhaps it was the victory of the chase or just being involved with a group of

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talented and motivated nurses but I agreed to serve 2 terms on this committee.

“Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, and call it a family. Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one.”

~ Jane Howard (1935-1996)

I, like many of you, did not really appreciate ASORN until I made the effort to become more involved. I am not a particularly good writer but in the early days of performing Laser Vision Correction I realized that as nurses we have an obligation to train the non-nursing Ophthalmic staff in the proper methods of instrument and equipment sterilization, disinfection and in the handling of materials and devices within the laser refractive surgical setting. Out of a sense of passion and urgency to ensure the safety and well being of the refractive surgical patients' outcomes the “Recommended Practices for Laser Refractive Surgery” was born. This was, and continues to be, the only written publication of its kind for a surgery that is performed the vast majority of the time in a totally non-regulated/certified facility. The goal in writing this manual was to educate the non-surgical personnel in the practice of aseptic technique. The writing of this manual, although challenging, gave me the opportunity to work with the Refractive Surgery Work Group under the auspices of ASORN. This group, organized and directed by Vicky Navarro, the Director of Nursing at the Wilmer Eye Institute of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, completed the manual in 2003. This was my first opportunity to work with a gifted group of talented writers and ophthalmic nurses. They soon became my clan!

“There are two ways of reflecting the light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.”

~ Edith Wharton

This manual served as a springboard for my entrance into the world of public speaking. I am surely not the exception to the rule by saying that I was petrified to speak to large audiences. Saying this, I did have a true passion for the subject matter and I believe that this is what motivated me to begin lecturing on the subject of Aseptic Technique in the Refractive Laser Room. I gave many lectures at JCAHPO, ASCRS and ASORN over a period of several years. My lectures were published in the ophthalmic journals of *Eyeworld*, and *Ophthalmology Times*. I continue to be involved in the update of the manual and I hope that it will become more available to the entire ophthalmic community in an online version in the near future. In many ways I made an attempt to be the mirror which delivered the important contents of the “Recommended Practices for Laser Refractive Surgery.”

Soon after writing the Manual I was approached by the *American Journal of Nursing* to review and evaluate a manuscript on Refractive Surgery. I found this process to be an interesting and exciting addition to an already busy volunteer agenda. I knew that I would have to curtail some of my volunteer nursing activity but when Sarah Smith asked me to write an article in *Insight* on the subject of Refractive Surgery I agreed. I was always interested in allaying the anxiety level in the refractive surgery patient and decided to write on this topic. This article, also one of the very few articles published on this theme drew an amazing response among a group of very fearful patients. Although this article was published many years ago I continue to receive email from patients who are considering refractive corneal surgery. As a result AMO asked me to be a part of a project which examined this topic at great length. I was admitted to a much larger and amazingly interesting community which welcomed me simply because I wrote this article in *Insight*.

“Action springs not from thought, but from the readiness for responsibility.”

~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Four years ago I agreed to join the ASORN Board of Directors. I have volunteered for two terms and I must admit that some of the committee involvement has been a challenge. I continue to search for volunteers for the Publications Committee as the review of our books and articles is an ongoing process which truly needs the attention of ASORN volunteers interested in this subject. I believe that serving as a liaison to the local chapters has brought the Board activity and the local chapter functions closer together and in better communication. One of the Board members has been communicating to the local chapter presidents on an every-other-month basis. We are also producing *Blink* online to maintain closer contact with our membership. I also volunteered to assist with the Corporate Resource Committee. The relationship and camaraderie formed with the ophthalmic corporations has been both interesting and fun. I have truly learned a great deal by volunteering with this sector of the ophthalmic industry.

“The potential of the average person is like a huge ocean unsailed, a new continent unexplored, a world of possibilities waiting to be released and channeled toward some great good.”

~ Brian Tracy

I have written this story about the years I have served ASORN to hopefully ignite a spark in your own mind to commit your heart and soul to serve your Ophthalmic nursing organization. As nurses we are so programmed to give back and in a year when non-profit organizations need volunteers more than ever I ask you to think of some area of interest where you might be able to serve. This does not have to be a huge commitment of time. Join the newly-organized Membership Committee to welcome our new members. Serve as a part of the greater health community by becoming involved with the National Council of State Boards of Nursing to support health care reform. It would be wonderful if one of our members might consider becoming an ASORN liaison to this organization. (www.ncsbn.org). Being an activist in our organization can lead to participation in activities that can affect public policy. We have the skill and the knowledge to influence policy by communicating our ideas and values to the public.

There is no better way to grow on both a personal and professional level than by joining and becoming an active participant in ASORN. In a recent survey it was noted that only 33% of our members have volunteered to serve ASORN. This is truly a time to achieve new heights by giving some of your talent and interest to your ophthalmic nursing organization. You have accepted the vision to restore your patients' sight. It is now the time to promote the vision of ASORN. When one of our Board members calls you to renew your ASORN membership, think of the world of possibilities that you can give back to ASORN. I promise you it will serve to enhance your professional life in a way you would never expect!

My Best to You Always,

Jane Katzen, RN, BSN
ASORN Director

Communicate with Jane: Jkatzn@aol.com

Please do not reply to this email. To reply, send an email to ASORN at asorn@aao.org