

Aggressive Outreach: Using the Lessons of Business at the AANA Archives

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Introduction

In 1931, the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) was established as the professional association of nurse anesthetists in the United States. In 1989, the publication of the history of America's nurse anesthetists by the AANA generated member interest in the history of nurse anesthesia. This ultimately led to the creation of the AANA Archives in the fall of 1994 for the purpose of making its records available for research to members, students, staff and approved researchers. As a small new unit within AANA's large headquarters, charged with serving a mostly member clientele who often knew little about the archives holdings, one of the archivist's major responsibilities quickly became aggressively promoting the archives based on user interests and needs.

The following case study on archival outreach can be used as a primer for association archivists on how to situate the archives in a high profile position within an association. The case study argues archivists must anticipate, plan and participate in all publicity campaigns that promote either the archives or the history of the association. To accomplish this goal, an archivist can cost-effectively use the association's preexisting network of meetings, publications, audio-video productions and mass mailings to disseminate information. High profile endeavors, such as anniversaries and oral history projects, will go a long way toward justifying the archives existence by defining its image to leadership. Archivists can also use subtle

methods of outreach such as staff meetings to promote confidence in the archives. The AANA's methods of outreach, such as marketing strategies, are borrowed from both archival outreach and business archives literature.

History of Nurse Anesthesia

Nurses were the first professional group to provide anesthesia services in the United States. Established in the late 1880s as the first clinical nursing specialty, nurse anesthesia developed in response to the growing need of surgeons for trained anesthetists. Although the identity of the first nurse anesthetist is not known, the earliest on record was Sister Mary Bernard, a Catholic nun from Wichita, Kansas in 1887. The most famous nurse anesthetist of the nineteenth century, Alice Magaw, worked at St. Mary's Hospital (1889), in Rochester, Minnesota, which later became part of the Mayo Clinic. Magaw earned international respect and the sobriquet "the mother of anesthesia" for her mastery of open drop inhalation anesthesia.

Many important advances have been made by nurse anesthetists. They participated in the development of the equipment for utilizing certain anesthesia techniques; they pioneered in anesthesia for specialty surgery, particularly related to heart and lung surgery; and they established the first formal education training programs in anesthesia (1909).

Additionally, nurse anesthetists served as the principal anesthesia provider in combat areas in every

war the United States has been engaged in since World War I. In World War II, there were 17 nurse anesthetists to every physician anesthetist and, in Vietnam War, the ratio was approximately 3:1. Nurse anesthetists were sent with the fighting forces during the invasion of Panama and Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.¹

Creation of the AANA

The AANA, originally named National Association of Nurse Anesthetists, was founded in 1931 making it the oldest specialty nursing organization in the United States. The AANA represents Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA's) and nurse anesthesia students nationwide. The AANA implemented a certification process for nurse anesthetists in 1945, and developed an accreditation program for nurse anesthesia education in 1952. The credentialing processes are broadly recognized by appropriate public and private agencies. The AANA was a leader in forming multidisciplinary councils with public representation in order to fulfill the profession's autonomous credentialing functions. The AANA, as a professional association, promulgates education and practice standards, position statements and guidelines for the nurse anesthesia profession.²

AANA Membership Today

The AANA has approximately 27,000 members. According to the 1991 AANA membership survey, CRNA's administer more than 65% of the 26 million anesthetics given to patients each year in the United States. As the sole anesthesia

providers in 85% of rural hospitals CRNA's afford these medical facilities obstetrical, surgical, and trauma stabilization capabilities. In the administration of anesthesia, CRNA's perform the same functions as anesthesiologists. CRNA's provide anesthetics to patients in collaboration with surgeons, anesthesiologists, dentists, podiatrists or other qualified physicians.³

Creation of the AANA Archives

The publication of Marianne Bankert's *Watchful Care: A History of America's Nurse Anesthetists* by the AANA in 1989 generated interest in the history of nurse anesthesia that ultimately led to the creation of the AANA Archives. *Watchful Care* expanded on the first historical treatment of nurse anesthetists' contributions by Virginia S. Thatcher in her *History of Anesthesia with Emphasis on the Nurse Specialist* published in 1953. Prior to *History of Anesthesia*, nursing's contribution to anesthesia history had been overlooked or denigrated by other historians. Thomas E Keys, in *The History of Surgical Anesthesia*, considered the premier history of surgical anesthesia, fails to mention the contributions of nurse anesthetists.⁴ Even today, historical publications, usually by anesthesiologists, prefer to not mention working relationships between nurse anesthetists and medical doctors.⁵ *Watchful Care* contributed significantly to the public's understanding about nurse anesthetists by arguing that nurses have overcome economic and gender-based obstacles to retain the right to administer anesthesia. The book also educated many nurse anesthetists to their own heritage, and thereby generated among them a renewed interest in their profession and association's history.

An exhibit entitled "Marking CRNA

Footsteps in History," created for the 1990 AANA Spring Assembly of States, displayed important documents, photographs and memorabilia dating back to the founding of the AANA. The exhibit drew attention to the fact the AANA possessed a large and valuable historical collection. The material had been stored in both an attic and a basement which suffered from periodic floods. Although the records were under the auspices of the AANA Library, they were not easily accessible since they were not inventoried. A history focus session was held to assess the level of interest in history and educate members to its importance at the 1992 AANA Annual Meeting. A proposal for a formal archival program was considered by the AANA Board of Directors, and funds were appropriated to hire a staff archivist in 1993. Key staff members visited the well-established Oncology Nurses Society Archives in Pittsburgh on a fact-finding mission in April 1994. At AANA, a full-time archivist was hired to begin the overall program in October 1994.⁶

Collections

The AANA Archives Mission Statement charges the Archives with the "responsibility of making available for research official AANA records of sufficient historical, legal, and administrative value to warrant permanent preservation. Official AANA records include documentation in any form produced or received by any employee or member of AANA while engaged in official AANA business." The AANA Archives consists of record groups representing AANA's committees, offices and subsidiary organizations. The records are used by AANA members, students, staff and approved researchers. AANA staff uses the Archives to document past decisions or to

research the history of their department or committees under the auspices of their department. Nurse anesthesia students use the Archives for the completion of theses or dissertations. The AANA Archives Access Policy relates the fact that, as in most private institutions, the AANA's collection is available for research to membership, leadership, nurse anesthesia students and office staff. The Access Policy permits other researchers to use the AANA's collections with the approval of the executive director. Approved researchers commonly request reproduction photographs and permission to publish them in nursing and medical journals.

The AANA records document such topics as: the role of early members, such as Agatha C. Hodgins, in founding the association; the struggle to establish the legality of nurse anesthetists (1934); and the inclusion of African-Americans (1944) and male nurse anesthetists (1947) into membership. In addition to pursuing aggressive records management and oral history programs to capture administrative documentation and the viewpoint of the leaders, respectively, the archives collects the papers of individuals and records of organizations engaged in work which is reflective of the mission of the AANA. The Archives provides a broader context for the history of nurse anesthesia by serving as the official repository for the International Association of Nurse Anesthetists which was founded in Lucerne, Switzerland, in June 1985 and through a rare collection of anesthesia text books (1860-1959).⁷

Outreach "Within" the Association: Identifying and Marketing Potential Users

Based on its mission statement, the AANA Archives outreach program broadly targets the association's members, nurse anesthesia students, leadership, office staff and approved researchers. In 1978, Elsie Freeman argued that archives serve the different needs of researchers and the goal of any archives outreach program should be to identify the needs of its users and to match the service to their needs.⁸ A user study has not been conducted by the AANA Archivist because the user base within the nurse anesthesia community is well-defined and use by outside researchers is not promoted. Philip F. Mooney suggests in his article, "Modest Proposals: Marketing Ideas for the Expansionist Archives," that archivists use marketing techniques such as "targeting" to increase potential user groups. Mooney states, "Viewing their collections in the same light that marketing executives view their commercial products may be helpful exercise for information professionals who have little experience in advertising or promoting their collections."⁹ All archival user groups have different appetites and tastes when it comes to research. Even more important, a broad range of offerings is needed since every audience is different.

The diversity of research needs among AANA researchers articulates this point. AANA membership, which includes both CRNA's and students from nurse anesthesia schools, is interested in both scholarly research and general history pertaining to nurse anesthesia. AANA leadership, prefers to be involved high profile historical events such as oral history projects, commemorations, and dedications. The archivist

targets what people should be interviewed or which past events warrant a commemoration or dedication. The archivist even writes speeches for leadership for such occasions. The office staff is concerned with the management of active and inactive records produced by their respective departments.

Cost-effective Outreach: Using Preexisting Frameworks

Through the use of broad marketing techniques such as publications, and the use of the preexisting association information distribution framework, the archivist is able to get the archives message to potential users. A good outreach program will enhance the archives image to membership, leadership, and potential researchers. In many situations, archivists must convince their public and employers that archives are vital to the mission of the association or company.¹⁰ Associations, such as the AANA, already have in place a preexisting framework for efficient, cost-effective distribution of information about its holdings. The archivist can "piggy back" on the framework of anniversaries, meetings, mass mailings, publications, audio-video productions, and interaction with staff and members.

Anniversaries. Associations have a large number of councils, committees, and educational or social events that warrant an appropriate celebration. Timothy L. Ericson wrote in his article "Anniversaries: A Framework for Planning Public Programs" that archivists need to anticipate, plan, and deliver the appropriate information to make these events a reality.¹¹ To effectively anticipate, plan, and participate in possible events the archivist must stay in touch with the appropriate departments involved in the event.

In an association, these are commonly the education, public relations, or programs and meeting services departments.

Ericson's first law of outreach states: "Human beings are unable to resist celebrating any anniversary divisible by twenty-five."¹² I would be as bold to suggest a corollary to Ericson's first law: people like to celebrate any anniversary divisible by ten. Because anniversaries are high profile events, planning should include a presentation by the appropriate association leadership, and, even more importantly for your cause, by the archivist. The archivist's involvement will demonstrate to the association's membership the value of archival records and provide the archives an identity within the institution. Within the last year the AANA has celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Programs, the twentieth year the AANA has held an independent Annual Meeting, and the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Assembly of School Faculty. The Archivist was also involved in a plaque being placed at the University Hospitals of Cleveland, Lakeside to commemorate the founding of the Association in 1931. All of these events were commemorated with the presentation of brochures and a ceremony attended by AANA membership and leadership.

Since the events were high in profile, they were covered by the Association's news bulletin and, in some cases, the national wire services. By delivering the appropriate information and participating in the event, the archivist will maintain a high profile and show to association membership and leadership that the archives is more than "dusty shelves."¹³

Meetings. Most associations hold a wide variety of meetings which allow members to both network and participate in educational sessions. Besides providing a good forum for a celebration or commemoration, the archivist can use this time to provide a session to members on history topics pertinent to their tastes or needs. Since 1994, the AANA Archivist has held history focus sessions at the Annual Meeting. Although the history focus sessions do not merit any continuing education credits, they have the best attendance of the possible focus sessions offered to membership. Topics addressed cover practical, not theoretical, applications of archives and history. Topics thus far discussed include: historical research, creation of archives for state nurse anesthesia associations, and oral history on the state level. The creation of a state nurse anesthesia association archives in California, Michigan, and New York have been a direct result of member participation in the history focus sessions. By offering focus sessions, members feel that they are part of an ongoing archives program just as a volunteer may feel at a historical society. This again dispels the public's preconceived notion that archives are for just collecting.

Meetings held by the association are the perfect place to use a portable archives exhibit, since most members of an association do not visit its headquarters. An exhibit would document the history of the association while at the same informing the viewer the archives possess a valuable and accessible collection. As Mooney states, "Exhibitions offer extraordinary potential for outreach in a society attuned to receiving messages in short visual bursts. Many archivists do not fully exploit either the opportunities inherent in their collections or the habits of

television viewers."¹⁴ Companies that create exhibits for conventions should be able to help an archivist with his or her needs. It is important that the exhibit fits in the standard size of most convention exhibit space (10 ft. x 10 ft.). A 10-panel exhibit containing text, photographic prints, header, and a shipping case can cost anywhere from \$4,000 to \$12,000. Archivists with larger budgets might want to think about specialty items such as literature pockets, and halogen lights. Since the exhibit is portable, it can be loaned for other related associations meetings, such as state associations. It is important that the manufacturer makes the layout of the exhibit basic since the archivist will not be the only one setting up the exhibit.

Mass Mailings. Associations have many mass mailings to membership to keep them informed of upcoming events such as meetings or educational sessions. This is a perfect time to enclose any brochures or literature that you may have to promote the archives. Outreach activities include "written reports, brochures, or repository guides."¹⁵ Most importantly, "piggy backing" a mass mailing is economical because your department is not paying for it. Mooney describes archival brochures as "the most common publication form, and arguably the most important, is the institutional brochure or flyer that every archivist should produce and distribute both to its internal and external constituents. The beauty of this form is that the brochure is a flexible and economical medium, allowing the creator to employ varying design techniques to convey a sense of the institution."¹⁶ If your brochure is letter size, well designed, and captures the essence of your collections it should create a new clientele that would have never used your archives. It is important to enclose

your brochures or flyers with an appropriate mailing. For example, AANA mailing to events such as the Annual Meeting and educational sessions would better target potential archives users than a lobbying meeting in Washington, DC since lobbying meetings generally attract AANA leadership who do not use the collections for research. Again, you must know your clientele to successfully market your product to their needs.

Publications. Associations provide informational and scholarly publications to their members. The publications are in the form of news bulletins and journals which provide archivists with an excellent avenue for publicizing their collections. Start a column in your journal that solicits articles from members on historical topics pertinent to their profession. Most editors of professional journals are more than happy to accommodate your needs due to a shortage of submitted articles. The archivist can use the column to promote the association's collections by printing articles on individuals or topics documented within the collection. Be sure to use photographs and graphics to enhance the article to the reader; photographs say a thousand words. Readers want articles, such as biographies, that are not too theoretical or technical.

News bulletins provide a forum for thanking members for donations and promoting new accessions. This enlightens members to the fact that archives are not stagnant and any historical records or mementos they possess are truly unique. Archivists also should work with the news bulletin editor and the public relations department for coverage of any ceremony and event in which the archives has participated. This includes articles with the association's news bulletins and the distribution of press releases. In September

1995, the national wire services ran a story of the AANA Archives recognition of the fiftieth anniversary celebration of nurse anesthetists' participation in World War II. This was only accomplished through the efforts of the archivist and the public relations department. New bulletins also print annual reports which list the accomplishments or activities of each department within the association. The archivist should be included in this report citing projects finished, planned, or in progress; collections donated; and number of reference requests handled per year or month.

Audio-Video Productions. Oral history interviews have increasingly become important primary research sources used by AANA membership. According to Marion E. Matters, "The oral history interview has developed as a distinct intellectual form, sharing some characteristics of deliberately created works, such as monographs, and some characteristics of unselfconscious accumulations, such as archival records."¹⁷ AANA leadership is interested in high profile archival projects such as video production of oral history interviews. The AANA's oral history experience has deferred from the trend started in the 1970s of interviewing individuals "from the bottom up."¹⁸ Leadership, such as past presidents and board members would like to secure the legacy of their administrations. Therefore, they maybe willing to finance expensive projects such as video production or oral history interviews. Interviews are best done at large association events, such as the annual meeting because most people attend the larger meetings and there usually is a video production team at the site. This will keep costs down since the archivist will not have to pay cost such as airfare, lodging,

and the shipping of equipment. Due to cost, the archivist needs to be careful who is targeted for interviews. At the AANA, past presidents from 1960 to 1989 have been interviewed in three groups at the Association's Annual Meeting since 1994. Only the outgoing presidents will be taped, once all of the past presidents have been interviewed.

One individual who many have not been politically active in the AANA, but is important to the profession's history, is picked by the Executive Director for an interview at the Annual Meeting. Leadership is very enthusiastic to be involved in this endeavor. Unexpected benefits from the project included future accessions of past presidents records simply through their interaction with the archivist.

Interaction with Staff and Members. Archival outreach can be a subtle as the interaction with a fellow employee. Staff meetings can be an effective educational tool for an archivist to promote the use and benefits of the association's archives to department heads and support staff. The archivist can help both department heads and support staff with questions concerning the association's records schedules and the archives policies and procedures. AANA staff routinely is concerned with how quickly the archivist can access their department's records or whether they should destroy or keep documents within their area. Discussing the archives procedures and policies, such as a retention schedule, face-to-face demonstrates the archives physical control of records in its possession.

An archives committee, made up of members, or a liaison, selected by leadership, can be a tool for the archivist to use in explaining the

objectives of the archives to membership. In the case of the AANA Archives, the archivist works with a liaison who solicits possible volunteers, donations and articles from members and participates in oral history programs. Some members feel more comfortable being solicited by another member about donating a collection. More importantly, since the liaison is a member, he or she is able to lobby AANA leadership for support, usually financial, for special projects such as oral history interviews or the purchase of collections. When a liaison solicits leadership for funding they may be more inclined to fund the project since the liaison is speaking for membership.

Conclusion

With the proliferation of organizational records and growth of specialty professions, archives within associations and non-profit organizations are going to become more common.¹⁹ In this highly competitive work environment, archivists must be both innovative and aggressive when promoting their collections. Archivists must know their clientele and match the archives services to their needs. Techniques such as publications, and the use of the preexisting business information distribution framework, an archivist will be able to get the archives message to potential users while at the same time convincing their employers that archives are vital to the mission of the association or company. Anniversaries, meetings, mass mailings, publications, audio-video productions, and interaction with staff and members are all efficient and cost-effective for distributing information on the archives and its holdings. By applying the proven techniques described in both archival outreach and business archives literature, the association archivist can successfully give the archives a

high profile position within the organization that promotes use by a varied clientele of members, leaders, and historical researchers.

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