Good Connections: Neuroanesthesiology, SNACC, and JNA

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“Neuroanesthesiology was formally recognized by the ASA as a subspecialty in 1976 while James E. Cottrell served as Chair of the ASA Subspecialty Committee. By the end of 1976, organizational aspects had stabilized and we could boast more than 160 members from institutions in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.”1

Was there a conspiracy to develop neuroanesthesiology as a subspecialty? You bet! Were there co-conspirators? Many…including names like Michenfelder, Albin, Marshall, Matjasko, Shapiro, and Harp. Did it work? So far!

In fact, things went so well with the evolution of neuroanesthesiology that ex-SNACC-President Cottrell figured the small-but-dedicated subspecialty was strong enough to support and be supported by its own scientific journal. The usual suspects were rounded up in early 1988, and JNA 1:1 hit the news stands in March of ‘89. Two years later, JNA proposed domestic partnership to SNACC. Then-SNACC-President-and-JNA-Editorial-Board-Member David Smith put it to the SNACC Membership. There were risks involved. Did SNACC really want to hitch its wagon to a new journal that might or might not make it? The rabble could not be roused to err on the side of caution…the vote was strong in favor of commitment.

From 1992 on, JNA has published the SNACC abstracts (at publisher’s cost) and the journal’s cover has read: “The Journal of the Society of Neurosurgical Anesthesia and Critical Care.” Another conspiracy? Even a cursory inspection of overlap between the Editorial Board of JNA and the Officers of SNACC leaves no doubt. Has it worked? You bet! In 1993, JNA got “indexed” in Index Medicus (PubMed), making it a “real” journal.

Were there bumps along the way? It has been 20 years…there has been a bump or two. One came in late ‘94 when the President of SNACC’s management company stole ALL of SNACC’s money and faked his own death! Those were dark days, but Immediate-Past-President Lanier, Then-President Warner and Future-President Gelb made a new management company an offer they could not refuse…something like, “Take care of SNACC on credit until we build up a kitty…or else…or else we’ll hold our breath!!!” Cottrell and Hartung used the same threat to force Lippincott to foot the bill for publishing the 1995 SNACC Abstracts (with a little help from JNA’s operating budget), and all was well.

Now SNACC membership is holding strong, the SNACC kitty is fat, and the future looks bright. JNA’s Impact Factor is 1.92, putting it solidly in the top half of 22 journals grouped under Anesthesiology. Per month in 2007, JNA averaged 14,700 page views from 8600 visits to www.jnsa.com and 6400 page views in 5100 Ovid sessions (all of which would have sounded like gibberish 20 years ago).
As put by coconspirator, ex-SNACC-President and JNA-Board-Member-for-the-past-20-years David Warner in a recently intercepted e-mail, “The relationship between SNACC and JNA has been nothing but good for both.” The ever-evolving group of coconspirators will be doing their best to keep it that way...in perpetuity.

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REFERENCE