

## My Personal Perspective on the 2008 ORNAA Conference

I was looking forward to attending the 26<sup>th</sup> ORNAA Conference in Red Deer as it was sponsored by my region, SCORNA. I anticipated that my colleagues would do a wonderful job, and I was not disappointed. I was the exhibitor chair for a provincial conference in BC in the previous decade and I know how much work is involved in the planning and implementation of these conferences. I was very surprised and pleased to hear my name being called to receive one of the writing awards being given out. The monetary award is very much appreciated, but it's also wonderful to receive an award that was chosen by your peers and hear your name being called out in front of your peers. Thank you very much for the recognition.

Hearing Barb Bancroft again was a wonderful way to open the conference. I've heard her a few times over the years and she's always entertaining. As I was admonished years ago for having too much fun at work (Shouldn't you be able to enjoy what you do?), I can relate to her sense of humour and her desire to sometimes rattle the cage a bit. Maybe it does sometimes seem like we're all just gerbils in a cage, running endlessly on our little wheel. But if you change direction and run the other way, it gives you a whole different perspective on things!

As someone who has lost 5 family members to lung cancer (all smokers), with 2 of them having pneumonectomies, I was very interested in what Dr. Grondin would present regarding Minimally Invasive Thoracic Surgery. I have 4 in-laws who were all smokers, so I suspect that my personal involvement with lung cancer will be ongoing. Research is underway to develop robotic techniques for thoracic procedures. Coincidentally, at the same time in another room, Dr. Sutherland's topic also included robotics in neurosurgery. Personally, I can think of a few surgeons who I would gladly replace with robots! If they aren't actually programmed with manners, at least they wouldn't be programmed to be obnoxious. Bonus!

I also felt a personal connection with the closing keynote speakers from the Patient Family Safety Council. When you have a family member in the hospital, being a nurse is usually a bonus. People will generally give you more information and go that little extra distance because you're a colleague. Even then, it can be difficult getting an answer or getting someone to actually LISTEN to your concerns and suggestions. If you're too adamant, you'll be labelled as a problem, pushy nurse and the lines of communication will shut down around you. Talk about a slippery slope!

To me, conferences are not only about learning new procedures, checking out the latest gadgets and instrumentation, networking, and some much needed down time. What I find the most rewarding is what makes me think, what makes me laugh, and cry, and what makes me question my own practice and perception.

Thank you,  
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