



From the Editor

Where has this year gone?

We want to say a special thank you to all who attended the congress in July both from the trade and delegates, your participation helped to make it the success that it was. Despite the hard work and long hours that the committee put in over the preceding months we also had a lot of fun.

Some 340 people from across S.A. attended over the 2 days which was a wonderful vote of confidence from you all. Your comments were all duly noted and we plan to make next year bigger and better. (Date to be announced soon.)

I challenge you all to start working on your presentations so that we can make it a Nurse to Nurse congress next year. You are all doing amazing work out there lets hear what you have to say, whither it be as a formal presentation or in poster form.

Ruth and I had a wonderful trip to India as she will tell you.

For me the main highlight of the 6 days was not necessary the programme content but the networking and sharing of ideas that I found so special. Through our interaction we were able to

learn from each others experiences and we were encouraged by just how much we could contribute to the discussions and decision making.

I am sure that you all know the story of the little boy who walked along the seaside throwing the star fishes back into the water that had washed up on the beach. When he was told he was wasting his time as they would just be washed up onto the beach again and that he could not make a difference he turned and said, as he threw yet another star fish back into the water, "I made a difference to that one!"

Take courage and realize that you are all making a difference.

In closing I would like to leave you with this thought:

"Do the Job you Love, and Love the Job you do!" and you will always be rewarded.

Sir Winston. Churchill said, "You can make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give"

Ann Leslie



President's Ponderings

Well, it's that time again-our quarterly newsletter. I trust it finds you all well and motivated in your respective units. It's hard to believe it has been 3 months since the national conference. I hope you all (if you were lucky enough to attend!) enjoyed it and learnt something new or were re-inspired. The NNASA board were hoping to be able to relax a little but the pace keeps up with preparation for the regional meeting on the 17th October, attendance at the 6th International Neonatal Nurses Conference in Delhi, India; preparations to attend the National neonatal nurses conference in Washington DC in December and The Partnership for Child, Infant and maternal health regional meeting in Malawi in November amongst all our usual work responsibilities!!!

We are in the process of getting the SMS software finalised so that we can contact you more reliably and our website is up and running but still needs some fine tuning. We are hoping to have a blog page that can act as an easy way of communicating and would like to see in the future units nominating nurses they feel have contributed in a special way to neonatal nursing for a Nurse of the quarter/year? award.

We are still waiting for the establishment of more regional groups which will hopefully start in the near future. KZN is a big place so if you would be interested in starting a branch in your area e.g. Richards Bay, Ladysmith etc let us know.

I and Sr. Ann Leslie were so excited at the opportunity we had to represent South Africa and NNASA at the 6th International Neonatal Nurses Conference in Sept in Delhi. Kenya was the only other African country represented.

The conference was structured a little differently to other international conferences in that it started with a pre conference day hosted by COINN (this will become a feature of future conferences) which was followed by two days of workshops and CME sessions before the main conference started.

The COINN day was a valuable and challenging experience as leading neonatal nurses from around the world (including Pakistan, India, Nepal, Russia, Kenya and 1st world countries) got together to discuss what role COINN should play in assisting nurses/countries to meet millennium development goal 4. Ann ensured they kept the focus at grassroots level and we both enjoyed the stimulating discussions and sharing of common problems and concerns.

The workshops were helpful as you were in smaller groups enabling one to one interaction with the presenter. Individual problem areas and questions could therefore be easily addressed.

The main conference was a little disappointing for the international delegates as it principally addressed the needs of the Indian delegates who are all generalist and have little knowledge or

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If you would like to become an **active** participant please talk to one of us.

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Future Congresses

7th International Neonatal Nurses Conference in Durban in 2010!



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experience of neonates. However our presence, input and enthusiasm I hope will prove a turning point for Indian nursing in general and neonatal nursing in particular. Following encouragement from Sr. Leslie and myself they launched the Indian Neonatal Nurses Association and over 360 nurses signed up.

A highlight as always was the networking and friendships forged with other likeminded nurses. It was an excellent experience and gave us the opportunity to see strengths and weaknesses as NNASA now prepares to host the 7th International Neonatal Nurses Conference in Durban in 2010!

Yes we are proud, excited, intimidated, challenged and motivated by being awarded the next conference. There was a little hesitation in having another 3rd world country host the conference and concern

expressed over safety but Ann and I convinced them with our enthusiasm and passion for hosting it in South Africa. So spread the word and if you know anyone outside South Africa get the message to them. We are aiming for over 2000 delegates and would love a big response from Africa as well as internationally.

If you are attending the regional meeting I hope you enjoy it and remember to collect your CD from the national conference. We will also be sending them out with reps or posting them so please let us know if you haven't received one by the end of the year.

Please email us at to ensure we have you on our data base.

Ruth Davidge



NNASA vice-president invited to attend VON Congress

Joyce Zwane who is a member of VON (Vermont Oxford Network) has been selected to go to their congress in Washington DC at the end of this year. So yet another committee member is spreading her wings to far-a-way places. Hopefully she will come back with exciting data that will help us with our way ahead. This will also be an opportunity to spread the word about the 7th International neonatal Congress here in Durban in 2010. Looking back at what we have accomplished since we formed NNASA in February this year, we are certainly setting a blistering pace. When we all look forward in the same direction with a common interest there is no goal that we can't achieve.

A little bit about VON.

Their mission: The network has a database that contains information about the care and outcome of high risk newborns.

They are a non profit voluntary collaboration of healthcare professionals that was started in 1987.

The purpose is to improve the quality and safety of medical care for the neonate and their families.

The network has over 600 NICU'S worldwide and can supply data on all vlbw infants below 1.5kgs.

Report Back from the 6th International Neonatal Congress, Delhi

This was a very busy 5 days, with some 930 delegates of which only 120 were from overseas.

As there was so much going on each day we had to plan carefully to maximize our exposure. There were many new and interesting concepts to consider and we were always very excited when we were able to add substance to the discussion from our area of expertise.

Although they did not have a theme for their congress there was great emphasis on developmental care and pain management.

It was very encouraging to see how many nurses were involved in research projects, and how willing they were to share their knowledge. I sincerely hope that we can inspire you all to share your area of expertise with us at our 2008 Congress.

They love their acronyms. The projects that were highlighted were:

- ★ the S.T.A.B.L.E Programme,
- ★ the A.C.O.R.N Project,
- ★ Toby Project,
- ★ the B.L.I.S.S. Programme, to name but a few. These we will share with you at future meetings.

I was encouraged by the fact that there was a delegate there who was older than me! A delightful lady by the name of Barbara whose claim to fame was that she wrote the first nurse's dictionary. She is now the editor of the "Infant" Journal that has a world wide circulation and is worth while subscribing too. She is to do a write up about NNASA in the

December addition and highlighting the fact that we are to be hosting the 7th International Neonatal Congress right here in Durban in 2010, after the football.

As soon as dates are finalized which we should be able to do by the end of this month we will post it on the web site. (www.nnasa.co.za)

Before we left for India we had a meeting with the Consul General of India in Durban who gave us a letter of introduction to a Dr Vatsa who organized for us to see around one of their units whilst we were there. There lies another story! It is suffice to say that they are doing incredible work in the most challenging conditions, and that our nursing crisis is miniscule compared to theirs!

The Council for International Neonatal Nurses Congress.

The COINN Day (The Council of International Neonatal Nurses , which we are now affiliated to) which preceded the main congress was particularly exciting .

It was indeed an honor to have been invited to be part of this special day. There were about 50 delegates from around the world.

Through this organization, who has a voice at government and WHO level, we now have a say in making worldwide changes through uniform best operating practice guidelines for our nurses and special babies.

This was certainly an opportunity of a life time and I was proud to be one of the two South African delegates.

Ann Leslie



DID YOU KNOW?

- ★ Every year in Sub-Saharan Africa 1.16 million babies die in the first month of life and another million are stillborn!
- ★ Each year 30 million women become pregnant, and 18 million give birth at home without skilled care.
- ★ **Each day**.....700 women die of pregnancy related causes 3,100 newborns die and another 2,400 are stillborn..... 9,600 children die after their first month of life and before their first birthday.
- ★ The three main causes of death are, Infection, Prematurity, and Asphyxia. Malaria and HIV are sited as the two main causes.

These staggering statistics have caused world leaders to put an action plan in place and have challenged all organizations to work towards the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to reduce mortality of children under 5 years by two thirds by 2015.

Quite an undertaking as so many places in Africa and around the world are either in the hands of war, famine or are fighting poverty and disease.

It is a known fact that a counties wealth can only be measured by the health and welfare of its mothers and babies !

With this in mind, The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child health has been formed and have produced an excellent study with suggested plans of action to meet the set goals.

" Opportunities for Africa's Newborn," can be accessed by visiting www.pmnch.org or dlord@dc.savechildren.org.

