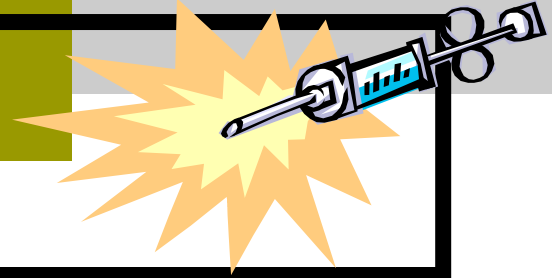


# The Monthly Shot

Injecting Sac State's Nursing Program with Information

Edited by Debi Tolbert



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The Nursing profession offers a diverse range of careers to its members. To reflect this, each issue of *The Monthly Shot* will be featuring an article on a different aspect of nursing. Haven't seen a career that interests you yet? Email the editor with an article on the nursing career of *your choice!*

## What is CNSA? by Vance Purcell

Jason Marcom was a hard working nursing student at CSUS who got good grades and knew what he was doing. He realized, however, that in today's economy, getting a job was going to be tough. Some of the more experienced nurses are not retiring, and budgeting has made hiring many employees difficult, so openings at the bottom are few and far between. Between the CSUS program and the local ADN and private institution nursing degree programs, Jason knew that he'd be competing with upwards of 200 new graduates for the limited new grad jobs in the area soon. Jason knew he needed an edge!

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California Nursing Students' Association is a sister organization (well, more like a daughter organization) to the National Student Nurses' Association,

and also works with the California Chapter of the American Nurses Association. CNSA provides a myriad of resources to the nurses of tomorrow, and in the Sacramento region, the CSUS Chapter is here to support all of the current and future nursing students

CNSA Meetings!

CNSA serves a variety of purposes. CNSA is a member organization, with each branch participating in fundraising to provide opportunities for the members. As a member organization, any member in good standing can run for and hold office, either

**“CNSA provides a myriad of resources to the nurses of tomorrow”**

in the greater Sacramento area. Whether you are thinking about nursing school, working on prerequisites or enrolled in a Bachelors or Associates Degree Program, you are eligible to be a member of CNSA, and welcome at our

within their chapter, at the state level, or at the national level with NSNA. Funds raised are then used to support member goals, such as holding career fairs, community outreach programs, and helping members afford to attend

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Career Central: Life Beyond BSN by Andrea McCoy

One thing often on the mind of a nursing student is what to do once you get licensed. It can be a daunting choice, given the seemingly limitless options for nurses these days. And there are even more op-

tions available if you decide to continue on with your education. With a master's degree, or specialty certification, a nurse can choose a career that can provide greater autonomy and a generous salary.

Here are a couple of advanced practice options to check out.

If you enjoyed your clinical time in obstetrics, or think you will, you might consider becoming a Certified

*(Continued on page 5)*

## A Nursing Student's Experience with Cancer, final in series by Debi Tolbert

It took me a while to figure out how to deal with my post-surgery chemo treatments. The protocol was for me to have four cycles of chemo. This meant that for one week out of the month, I had to go to the hospital everyday for five days to get my chemotherapy infused. The first couple of cycles of chemo were especially rough.

When I went in for infusion, I was given Decadron to help with the nausea associated with chemotherapy. Some of the side effects of Decadron are insomnia, restlessness, and euphoria. There are more, but those are the ones that primary affected me. After a treatment, I would have so much energy that I just wanted to run around and do things so that is what I did for the first two cycles. That was a mistake and I paid for it later with an increased length of recovery periods from the chemo.

By my third cycle of chemo I was beginning to understand "how to do chemo." I learned my lessons though and for the last two cycles of chemo I made sure that I had plenty of DVDs and other quiet activities to keep me resting on the couch. I found that I couldn't really read because it was so hard for me to focus that long. Some chemos have temporary effects on a patient's short term memory, which is sometimes called "chemo brain." I had a ready-made excuse for my forgetfulness.

I would feel fine for the first three days of chemo, and then I would have about six or seven days of feeling terrible. I was weak, fatigued, nauseous, and most food was completely unappealing to me. I had mouth sores

(mucositis) that extended down my throat and made it difficult to eat or drink almost anything. I lived on applesauce and mashed potatoes for those six days. Finally, about eight days later I would begin to feel better again, but my energy levels were still down. While going through the treatments, it was important for me to figure out what time of day I felt the best and use that time to get anything important done.

I finally finished the last of my chemotherapy on January 9, 2009 and thought all that was left was recovering and getting back into shape to finish out my final semester of the nursing program. I took it easy for a week and a half through the chemo and recovery period following the infusions. Everything seemed fine and I went for a weekend at the coast with my mother to celebrate the end of that phase of my life. My energy was coming back slowly and I was looking forward to finishing school.

The Wednesday before the Spring 2009 semester began, I started having right flank pain. I thought it was just another kidney infection or stone, although I was having trouble taking a deep breath because it hurt so much. Foolishly I put off going to the hospital because I knew if I went in they were going to keep me and I had orientations for the hospital that I would be precepting at on Thursday and Friday. After my orientation let out on Friday, I immediately called the advice nurse with my symptoms. By then I was also having pain that radiated to my right shoulder. I was advised to go immediately to the emergency room and to inform them that I had SOB and chest pain.

As expected, I was admitted to the hospital, but not with kidney stones. I had a pulmonary embolism! It all began to make sense. I was breathing 40 times per minute while sitting in triage. I couldn't take a deep breath because of the intense, stabbing pain. As it turned out, I had also developed some pneumonia in the base of my right lung. Fortunately the doctors knew the cause of the PE (common side effect from chemo) and as a result I only had to stay in the hospital two days this time. Let me tell you, the doctors looked at me like I was crazy when I told them I had to get out because the Spring semester was starting on Monday, the next day.

I returned home and quickly weaned myself off of the morphine. I knew I couldn't go back to school, drive, and concentrate while I was on that. I'm still getting my blood tested weekly to get and keep my INR within therapeutic range and I will have to continue taking Coumadin for the next six months to prevent me from getting another DVT or PE. I'm finally getting my energy levels back, and my forgetfulness from the chemo is starting to diminish. It has been a long journey, but thankfully there are no signs of cancer anymore.



## Nursing on the Internet by Barbara White

<http://allnurses.com/index.php>

AllNurses.com is an online nursing community for Nurses of all levels. On the website you will find discussions by nurses, interesting articles, job opportunities, educational opportunities, and challenges various nurses have had, as well as, a whole section for nursing students. It is worth checking out to see if some of the questions you may have about nursing are being addressed. Currently, they are having a



Transcultural Nursing Experiences Article Contest which includes \$730 in prizes. Check it out!

<http://www.labtestsonline.org/>

Lab Tests Online is a great public resource on clinical lab testing. It can serve as a up-to-date reference tool. Not only does it describe various lab tests and give reference ranges, but it also explains what the values mean and gives you detailed information. There are links to news

articles on various medical tests. The site explains why a specific test may be done. Lab Tests Online is a great resource for finding the uncommon lab tests, as well as, the more common tests.

Keep in mind when doing online research that your information is only as good as your source! For example, Wikipedia is not a site you should be going to for reliable information.

**“Keep in mind when doing online research that your information is only as good as your source!”**

## What is CNSA? (continued from page 1)

conventions across the country. CNSA has an annual convention wherein attendees can attend workshops on topics ranging from interviewing to resume writing to preparing for the NCLEX, as well as meeting potential employers. Scholarships are given at the local, state and national levels, and members are able to participate in programs designed to help nursing students succeed, both in the clinical nursing environment, as well as in leadership positions. Other programs run by CNSA include the Flo's Cookie Jar program, which can provide loans or grants to nursing students in need, and has helped multiple CSUS Chapter mem-

bers in the past during times of financial hardship or loss. The community outreach programs give nursing students an opportunity to give back, either by providing free services to community members (while getting to practice clinical skills) such as blood pressure and vaccination drives and reaching out to school age children to talk about the possibility of nursing in

**“As a member organization, any member in good standing can run for and hold office, either within their chapter, at the state level, or at the national level with NSNA.”**

their future. Other opportunities include being able to help mold the nursing program of tomorrow, and being a voice for the profession of



nursing, fighting for nurses' rights and healthcare initiatives.

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Jason realized that one of the best ways to get noticed by potential employers is to get active with CNSA. He was already a member; he had joined when he first got into nursing school. Jason decided to run for office, and was eventually elected as the CSUS Chapter Vice President. The opportunities his activity with the association gave him, as well as the leadership and clinical skills he acquired, led Jason to be one of the first new graduates hired in 2009 in the Sacramento area!

## Cultural Considerations: Sikh by Cheryl Gutierrez

The focus of this article is to give nursing students a better understanding of caring for a patient who is Sikh. Sikhism is a religion, and many of its followers are from the Punjab region of India where the predominant language is Punjabi. When caring for a Sikh patient, there are a few cultural considerations that you should be aware of in order to give your patient the highest level of care.

“When caring for a Sikh patient, there are a few cultural considerations that you should be aware of in order to give your patient the highest level of care.”

A person who is baptized in the Sikh religion will usually have five distinguishing symbols representing their faith. These include: **Kesh** – long, uncut hair; **Kangha** – a comb for groom-

ing; **Karra** – a steel bracelet worn on their right wrist; **Kirpan** – a small sword (check with hospital policy regarding its safekeeping); and **Kachehra** – an undergarment. The patient will desire to continue wearing these

adornments during their hospitalization, and they should only be removed if necessary for a medical procedure. Make sure to explain this need when educating the patient about the actual

procedure. It is especially important to understand that Sikhs do not shave or cut their hair, so you will need to explain that this may be necessary as prep for a procedure. The patient, whether male or female, will probably wear a head covering at all times and this should not be touched unless required.

A final consideration should be given towards the patient's desire for modesty. A female patient will be most comfortable being attended to by a female nurse and the same holds true for a male patient in their preference for a male nurse. By taking time to meet the cultural needs of your patient, you will help to build a healthy client/nurse relationship that will allow your patient the best opportunity for comfort and wellness.

## NSNA National Convention 2009 by Deena Stapleton

Just around the corner... The NSNA National Convention 2009

When: April 15-19<sup>th</sup>

Where: Nashville, Tennessee at the gorgeous Gaylord Opryland Resort

Theme: Making it Big: Nursing Students Stepping Up and Stepping Out

What to expect...

Over 20 focus groups related to topics about: landing that first job, different types of nursing- such as nephrology, oncology, pharmacology made easy, malpractice information, nursing complex patients, and many more

House of Delegates and Resolution discussion

First night Country Jamboree Party

The chance to converse with over 3,500 other nursing students from across the country

Comprehensive NCLEX Review (extra \$20, but totally worth it)

Inspirational and knowledgeable speakers

Exhibit hall with employers and contacts for future job opportunities

And, don't forget any extra sight-seeing or night life opportunities... the convention center is, of course, within the Fun of NASHVILLE!

So you must be thinking... how do I attend?

Well, head on over to <http://www.nsna.org/meetings/convention.asp> for registration information, and to get more details on everything convention

Convention Tickets: \$90- and that's for all 5 days!

You'll also need to book a flight and hotel... so get a group of your nursing friends together and make reservations ASAP

And remember, CNSA members are eligible for partial reimbursement through our club and Sac State



## Nursing in the News: Nursing (Job) Shortage by Stephanie Criddle

When many of us began our journey to be a nurse there was one thing we kept hearing over and over again: "Oh, nursing! That's a great field; you will never have to worry about job security!" or "Wow, nursing! That's terrific. You will probably have a job before you've even graduated!"

Now that many of us are well on our way to becoming RN, BSN's, the truth is clear – there is *not* an abundance of nursing jobs in Sacramento like there once was. In fact, according to CBS 13, "With five nursing schools in the Sacramento region, 350 students will graduate [this Spring]. But, only 130 jobs will be available to new graduates in hospitals." <sup>1</sup> The Bay Area is even worse. According to the *San Francisco Business Times*, some hospitals received almost 1,000 applicants to fill less than 20 new-grad

positions last December.<sup>2</sup>

You can blame the abundance of nursing schools in this region or the bad economy forcing many old-timers out of retirement but regardless we might have to be creative to get a job upon graduation. CBS 13 recommends, "... [n]ew grads may need to consider working at nursing homes to start, rather than the emergency room at a hospital."<sup>1</sup> In addition, to be flexible with what unit they start on, another job-seeking strategy some students are finding is to be flexible with *location*, such as going to Central or Southern California or even out-of-state.

One thing is clear, the job market is very different than it was four years ago. When we were told, "Nursing is about being flexible," many of us did

not expect that to apply to finding a job after graduating. It's a tough world out there!

Sources:

<sup>1</sup> "Nursing Jobs Becoming Scarce in Sacramento", Laura Cole, *CBS 13 Local News*, Feb 12, 2009, <http://cbs13.com/local/Nursing.Jobs.Becoming.2.934391.html>

<sup>2</sup> "Once Short of Nurses, Bay Area Now Nurses a Glut", Albert C. Paciorini & Chris Rauber, *San Francisco Business Times*, Feb 20, 2009, <http://sanfrancisco.bizjournals.com/sanfrancisco/stories/2009/02/23/story7.html>



## Career Central: Life Beyond BSN (Continued from page 1)

**Nurse Midwife.** A nurse midwife provides primary care to low-risk, uncomplicated childbearing women prenatally, during delivery and in the postpartum period. In some cases, nurse midwives also provide primary care to non-pregnant women in women's health clinics. Pregnant women who wish to have a more natural, holistic and intervention-free experience will often choose a nurse midwife to provide their care. Typically entry into a Certified Nurse Midwife program requires a bachelor's degree, a current nursing license, a minimum GPA of 3.0, and one or two years experience. Some states require a master's degree to practice, so you should check out the state where you hope to practice and apply to an ap-

propriate program. Average annual salary in the U.S. for a Certified Nurse Midwife is \$82,000.

Another popular advanced practice career choice is Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist. The nurse anesthetist works with patients to provide anesthesia services, same as an anesthesiologist. The nurse anesthetist usually works under the supervision of, or in collaboration with, an anesthesiologist, but still enjoys a great deal of autonomy and independence. The nurse anesthetist takes care of his/her patient's anesthesia needs before, during and after their surgical procedure. There is extensive training involved in becoming certified as a nurse anesthetist. All 50 states require a master's degree to practice, so all

nurse anesthetist programs are graduate programs. Entry requirements include a BSN, a current nursing license, and, generally, one year of "acute care" nursing experience (may vary by program). Programs tend to be very competitive, so it's in the applicant's best interest to have higher than average grades. And check this out: A CRNA can expect to make on average in the U.S. \$143,000!

This is a very small sample of what's out there for a registered nurse who wishes to advance his or her career. If you'd like more information on various nursing career options and programs check out [www.nurse.com](http://www.nurse.com) and [www.allnursingschools.com](http://www.allnursingschools.com). Best of luck with whatever career path you choose to pursue.

**CNSA—Sacramento State**

Sacramento State Division of Nursing  
6000 J Street  
Sacramento, CA 95819  
<http://www.hhs.csus.edu/nrs>

Phone: 916-278-6525  
Fax: 916-278-6311  
Email: [csus.cnsa.monthlyshot@gmail.com](mailto:csus.cnsa.monthlyshot@gmail.com)

The Monthly Shot is OUR newsletter... contribute articles or email the editor with the events and announcements you'd like published in the next monthly issue.

We're Online

<http://csuscnsa.synthasite.com/>



Cartoon by: Maureen Osuna

# March 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6 CNSA meeting 16:30 SAD grant due	7
8 Daylight Saving time begins	9	10	11	12	13 Career Faire 12-5	14
15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20 TMS articles due Spring begins	21
22	23	24	25	26	27 Nursing Internship Orientation	28
29	30 Spring Break begins	31 Cesar Chavez birthday				