

Passion

Charles Rait, BSN, MEd, PNC

Editor's Note: As we enter the 40th year of Neonatal Network, it is my great pleasure to present this guest editorial written by Charles Rait, the founder of Neonatal Network.

— Deb Fraser, Editor, Neonatal Network

WHERE DO OUR PASSIONS COME FROM? I have always been amazed by people who knew what they wanted to do with their lives when they were children. “I want to be a fireman,” “I want to be a nurse when I grow up,” or “I want to be Superman!” In conversations with some of these people, they can't explain how they knew, they just *knew*.

Unfortunately, I had no insight nor premonition as to what I should become. After entering the teaching profession, I knew that teaching *wasn't* for me, and I saved many students the experience of having a teacher without passion for the profession. Then I spent some years without knowing where I could find something that suited me. Fortunately, nursing school became an option and I graduated from Adelphi University in 1975. In my final year as a student, I was able to spend time in a Level III NICU. After I graduated and began work, neonatal nursing became my passion.

At that time, neonatal care was still in its infancy. In my desire to learn, I read every book available about care of the premature infant. In 1975, that goal was easily achievable because there were only five books written specifically on that topic. So, I began to go to any conference that would be even remotely helpful to my education. I went to Nurses' Association of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (NAACOG) (now AWHONN) conferences, critical care (adult) conferences, and neonatal intensive care conferences. I also had subscriptions to *JOGNN*, *Pediatrics*, *Journal of Pediatrics*, a journal for critical care nurses, and American Nurses Association's (ANA) journal. From each conference and publication, I gleaned

what I could that was applicable to neonatal nursing. Sometimes that was only one article. Not only was this time consuming, but it was expensive.

It became apparent to me that neonatal nurses needed a publication that would be just for them. After long hours spent in the library of the University of California, San Francisco, identifying and writing names of hospitals in the United States with neonatal units onto yellow legal pads, we (my wife, Suzanne, and I) decided to publish a newsletter, gave it a name, and sent out 44,000 flyers to all the Level II and III neonatal units we could find, announcing *Neonatal Network: The Newsletter for Neonatal Nurses*. Our future lay in the balance as we looked in the mailbox each day for subscriptions. We received 500 subscriptions—from nurses eager for education—to a newsletter that did not yet exist! (Thank you to every one of you!) From our contacts in and around San Francisco and through our local neonatal nurses' association, we rounded up willing experts to write for the first issue. *Neonatal Network: The Newsletter for Neonatal Nurses* was born in October 1981.

That first issue was 16 pages, and the second, third, fourth, and fifth issues were all 20 pages long. We charged \$10/year for six issues. However, we quickly realized that we could not afford to publish such extensive newsletters at that price. So, the first issue of *Neonatal Network: The Journal of Neonatal Nursing* was published in August 1982. *Neonatal Network* was the first journal and, for many years the only journal to specialize in articles for the bedside NICU nurse. This clinical focus was then and is now, its



Chuck and Suzanne Rait, co-founders of *Neonatal Network*.

intended one. In the editorial in that first issue, I wrote a paragraph that strikes me as still relevant today:

We are dedicated to bringing you the best information available on neonatal care. We intend to deal with any aspect of care that affects you, the practicing nurse. But to be successful, we need your help. We need histories of difficult cases and innovative nursing solutions. We need to know what your unit does well so we can pass the information on to your colleagues. We need to know what you need, what you want, what is useful, and what isn't. We need to have you write to us and for us. Together we can make this decade a more exciting and rewarding one in neonatal care, for us and for our patients.

Sound prescient? Well, you all did join us, and *Neonatal Network* has now reached its 40th anniversary year! Although we sold the journal to Springer Publishing in 2010 to utilize the benefits of a larger publisher, *Neonatal Network* continues as the journal of the Academy of Neonatal Nursing, its mission unchanged. Also unchanged is that we do still need your help, we want you to write *to us* and *for us*. These past 40 years have been, for Suzanne and me, ones filled with wonderful, intelligent, caring people we would not have worked with, or even known, had *Neonatal Network* remained an idea and not become the robust journal that it is. We are grateful to all of our authors, column editors, reviewers, and volunteers through the years, and to Ellen Tappero, the editor-in-chief following me, and especially to Deb Fraser, our current editor-in-chief. The African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child," resonates here.

We thank our readers throughout the years (and have been told that there are some of those original newsletters still out there). Every neonatal nurse makes a difference in the lives of her or his patients every day. We hope when these children are grown, *Neonatal Network* will be celebrating its 80th!

With Thanks!

As we start a new volume of *Neonatal Network*, we want to take this opportunity to offer our thanks to those dedicated neonatal professionals who support the journal including our Associate Editors, Gail McCain, and Amy Jnah, and our editorial board:

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Thanks for all that you do to make this journal possible!

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