

# What's Happening at the Guedel? A Refocus!

*By Selma Harrison Calmes, M.D., Chair of the Arthur E. Guedel  
Memorial Anesthesia Center*

All organizations have to change over time if they want to survive. The Guedel Center is now making changes that we hope will bring the Guedel into the electronic age of libraries and also allow it to increase interest in the history of anesthesia in California. This article reviews what's happening.

At the February 2006 Guedel Board meeting, discussion eventually came to consensus about where we should focus. First, we decided that our primary focus should be the CSA. We should serve as the organization's archival site. An organization of this size and political status should have its records archived so they are easily retrievable and are saved for posterity. (After all, the Guedel has early records such as copies of *CSA Bulletins* and meeting programs, and even minutes of some meetings.)

Second, the Guedel should continue with our communication to CSA members about the history of anesthesia in California. Communication could include writing articles for the *CSA Bulletin* (Board member Merlin Larson of UCSF agreed to take this on), writing a brief history of the organization for the CSA Web Site, and making a more organized effort to exhibit at the Annual Meeting.

Third, we should provide exhibits and speakers on anesthesia history for the state's residency programs. Board exams soon will have questions on the history of anesthesia, and these speakers and exhibits could also generate interest in the history of anesthesia at all levels of a department.

Fourth, we should document the history of anesthesia in California. Most of the focus in anesthesia history is on the East Coast! As is so often the case, California is forgotten when it comes to national contributions. We did play an important role nationally, especially politically, and that needs to be recognized.

We have already started to collect early publications by California anesthesiologists.

The final goal would be to preserve the name and accomplishments of noted California anesthesiologist Dr. Arthur Guedel of Los Angeles. Dr. Guedel was the most notable anesthesiologist in California from 1929 (when he moved here from Indiana) until his death in 1956. The Arthur E. Guedel Memorial Anesthesia Center was dedicated to his memory in 1963. He faced the many



*Drs. Bob Buechel, Selma Calmes and Clyde Jones at the CSA Annual Meeting*

problems that emerged as modern, professional anesthesia developed. We already have much of his correspondence with the early leaders of anesthesia, such as Dr. Ralph Waters at the University of Wisconsin. (Go to [www.csahq.org/pdf/bulletin/issue\\_11/Guedel054.pdf](http://www.csahq.org/pdf/bulletin/issue_11/Guedel054.pdf) to see Dr. Merlin Larson's article on Dr. Guedel.) We've already made contact with Dr. Guedel's remaining family—three grandchildren who live in Oregon. They are very interested in maintaining the memory of their grandfather and they may be able to add additional information about his life.

In addition, we have a new librarian, Anne Shew, who came to the Guedel when California Pacific Medical Center (host institution) bought another hospital in the city. Mrs. Shew is extremely knowledgeable about the modern electronic library. We also welcome a new treasurer, Dr. Laura Slaughter of Nipomo. The Guedel now has a new reading room recently refurbished in period style (1912, date of the building). It is fully equipped electronically for presentations and conferences.

So, a new time is coming to the Guedel! We still need your support and your thoughts, and we welcome volunteers in any area. Please contact any Board member or me at [shcmd@ucla.edu](mailto:shcmd@ucla.edu).

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*Arthur E. Guedel Memorial Anesthesia Center,  
2395 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, CA 94115  
(415) 923-3240; <http://www.cpmc.org/professionals/hslibrary/collections/guedel>*