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The 2010 AORN Congress was my 18th and my 12th time to serve as a delegate. Denver was special for me because I have been asking AORN in my evaluations for more than a decade to please have Congress in Headquarters' city. I stayed at a wonderful hotel although it was quite a trek from the convention center which meant taking the shuttle each day but unfortunately the shuttles only ran in the morning and evening and not during the day so if one wanted to get back to one's hotel during the day one was just plain out of luck.

The 3 highlights for me personally, were the trip to AORN Headquarters, one of the educational sessions on facial transplantation and the announcement of the winner of the *Gerry G. Peers* award. The trip to Headquarters was on the Thursday and we had a great coach driver who gave us a running commentary of all the historic sites we passed on the way back from Parker including tips on places to see and things to do. The headquarters' tour at AORN was self directed with places numbered and corresponding numbers listed in the brochure we were given on arrival. The views from the 4th floor were quite spectacular to the snow capped Rocky Mountains in the distance.



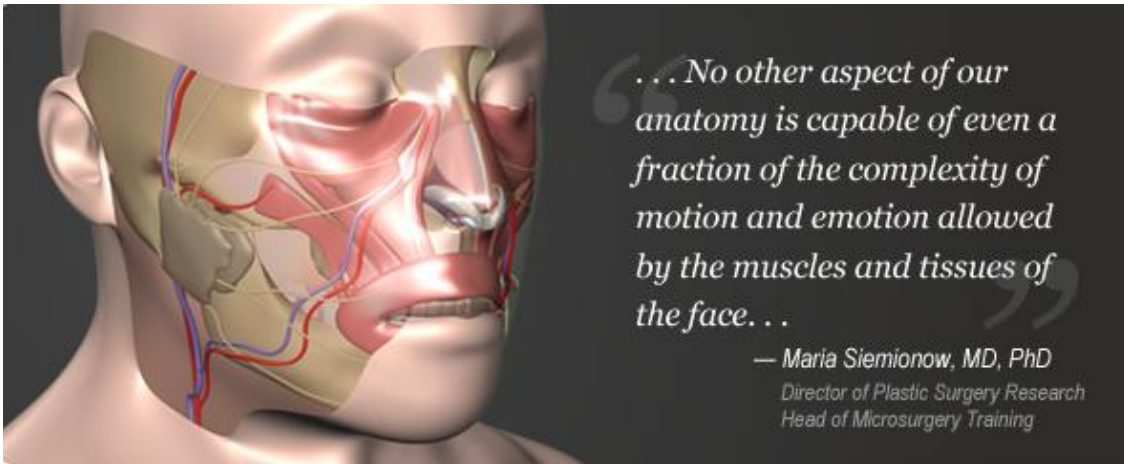
It was such a thrill to see Cynthia Spry get the *Gerry G. Peers* award although she wasn't even in the auditorium when the award winner was announced and was quite speechless when she finally arrived to receive her award. Cynthia so deserved the award and it was such a thrill to have an eChapter member honored in this way. I recall using a text many years ago when I became an OR nurse, that Cynthia wrote.



The session on facial transplantation was utterly fascinating. The woman who was the recipient was in her early 40's and the victim of a gunshot injury to her face by her husband who then killed himself. She was very beautiful prior to the injury and the assault left her with horrific injuries which 21 surgeries later did not allow her good quality of life. She had lost her sinuses and one eye as well as most of the middle 1/3 of her face. She could not eat and had grotesque features without a nose. Her face was held together with more than 100 plates and screws all of which had to be removed prior to the transplant. Because of her injuries and disfigurement she had become a recluse not venturing out of her home except for medical visits and she had taken to wearing a veil because she could not stand being stared at.

The transplant included the sinuses, nose, maxilla and mandible, facial nerve preservation and also included the parotids and submandibular glands and teeth. After 6 months she is gaining function along the facial nerve pathways and is able to smile. Although she still has a long recuperative period ahead her facial features are normal again.

The surgery took 22 hours and involved 2 teams with 8 surgeons. See web site for more information http://www.clevelandclinic.org/lp/face_transplant/default.htm and the surgery fact sheet is available here http://www.clevelandclinic.org/lp/face_transplant/docs/surg-fact-sheet.pdf



Being in Denver gave me the opportunity to catch up with some of the international nurses in the International Hospitality suite including a couple of Aussies and on Thursday evening I had the pleasure of going out to dinner with a friend I had not seen in 12 years. Lorraine and I worked together at a small hospital in Texas as travelers and she now lives and works in Denver. We have kept in touch all these years even though Lorraine is a Midwife and my focus has been surgery.



Friday, Denver turned on its snowy winter wonderland charm with more than 12 inches falling between midnight Thursday and 8am on Friday. Had we been in Dallas (home) we would have been looking at staying at least another day because everything grinds to a halt when a few snowflakes fall, but Denver does not even bat an eye when a foot or more snow falls overnight and business carries on as usual - including flights. Our flight was only delayed by 1 hour which all-in-all was not too bad. The most harrowing part was the trip to the airport by Super Shuttle with our driver sitting on 70 for most of the trip... yikes!!! The roads were terrible and there was ice and slush everywhere but he didn't miss a beat. I had visions of us upside down in the middle of the highway as the snow was coming down so hard that visibility was about 200 yards. But he got us there in one piece with just our nerves a little frayed from the sheer terror or was it a thrill ride? Southwest are such a great airline to fly with and so pleasant even with the delays due to having to be de-iced. I was amazed to see that the runways in Denver are heated so take off and landing was no big deal even though the visibility was very low and it was almost whiteout conditions.



So how about it? Are you going to Congress next year? Will you consider serving eChapter as a Delegate? It's going to be in Philadelphia and there's lots of great shopping in Philly, not to mention the awesome food!