

NRAA Newsletter

National Rehabilitation Administration Association

Fall 2001

President's Message

Christopher Smith



An Association by any other name, is still...

One of the ongoing activities of Board members during our monthly teleconference meetings this year has been the brainstorming of ways for the Association to represent the true nature of it's member's profession. This has included discussions of why individuals have, and will in the future, choose to become members.) This discussion has moved into many approaches, some actively being pursued.

Northeast Regional Representative, Joe Lechowicz, conducted a survey of students in rehabilitation administration degree programs to gather input from our potential successors. Actually, I think that we need to acknowledge that these students really will be our successors and that we have a responsibility to prepare them for their roles. (More about their responses to Joe's questions regarding the value of a professional association in Joe's report for a future Newsletter)

Past-President Glen Peterson and Great Plains Regional Representative Dale Sattler have focused our attention on ways to organize the Board and streamline it's operation. A different Board structure, perhaps with representatives chosen by members for their specific service expertise/interest, rather than geographic location, may better serve the needs of members. We need member input. Bring your ideas to Biloxi. Email them to Glen and Dale.

Evan Jones, Mid-Atlantic Regional Representative has led our discussion on the use of technology to improve the value of Association membership. The web, email, voice and video conferencing capabilities, all need to be explored as mechanisms that keep members in contact with each other and provide them with access to resources for improving their professional and personal lives. We are working to put you more in touch; you need to help us be telling us how to get in touch.

Lately, however, our discussions have centered on a fundamental shift in how we represent the Association and its members to both NRA and potential members.

Are the ranks of our current members filled only by "administrators," whose jobs are primarily the management of people, programs, and budgets? Is our role in the New NRA, therefore, only to serve the affiliation needs of managers in the rehabilitation field? Are there other roles that administrators and others play in rehabilitation entities? Are there other roles that our Association should move to fulfill in the new NRA?

Nancy Huber from the University of Arizona, notes that "administration is generally thought of as a leadership role... and,

although managing and leading are not synonymous, most administrators... function as both leader and manager." She goes on to say that "administrative leaders focus on the horizon *and on the future.*" *Their role "... is to bring about positive change"* (emphasis added.)

Bill Burnside, NRAA Representative to the NRA Board, and Evan Jones have polled members of the Virginia Rehabilitation Association regarding the role they see NRAA playing in the new NRA. They boil it down to serving as the division for LEADERS, many of whom are administrators.

NRA President-Elect John Lui agrees with the Virginia delegation. NRA is seeking to bring about positive change. Positive change will require members that are leaders, as well as managers. By attracting and providing member benefits to leaders, our Association will also be serving the needs of administrators/managers.

One step in the move to focus the role that the Association will play in the New NRA is, possibly, a change in name. This will be a major topic of discussion in Biloxi. But if you cannot attend the conference, the Board still seeks your input.

Should we change our name to the National Rehabilitation Leadership Association? If we are an association of administrators focused on the future, I, for one think that we should.

Huber, N. (Fall 1997). "Effective Administrators Are Managers and Leaders." *Adult Learning*, 9 No. 1, pp 10-11.

Student Writing Competition to be Held in 2002



NRAA and the Journal of Rehabilitation Administration (JRA) are joining in announcing a first annual writing competition for NRAA-member students in academic programs of rehabilitation administration or rehabilitation leadership. Details and the competition topic will be announced in the December, 2001 edition of the NRAA Newsletter and will be posted on the NRAA Web-site. A \$500.00 scholarship toward the student's educational expenses will be awarded to the winning entry. Entries will be evaluated by volunteer JRA Consulting Editors. The winning entry will be announced at the NRAA Annual Membership Meeting during the NRA Annual Training Conference in 2002 and will be published in JRA. Thanks to JRA Editor Daniel Wong and Associate Editor Debra Harley for their support and participation in this competition.



Comments on NRA Restructuring From The Executive Director

Michelle Vaughan

Members of NRA have been discussing restructuring the association since, what seems to be, the beginning of time. Confusion over things such as who belongs to what association; from where are operating dues derived; and, the roles of national, state, regional and divisional NRA entities have left many over the years to ponder "how can we do this better, faster, cheaper and more efficiently?"

When I joined the association in 1993, the NRA board was discussing how best to position ourselves for excellence in an ever increasingly competitive and challenging environment. For example:

1. The federal legislature was looking for ways to eliminate State VR programs.
2. Conflict between national NRA and its divisions was escalating due to the overall misunderstanding of each entity's roles and responsibilities, and,
3. External pressures from staff and members of an influential related organization were paralyzing many of our state chapters.
4. NRA's operating budget was 75% dependent on membership dues; however, all but one of the membership categories was offered at a financial loss to the association, resulting in an overall loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. (These losses had previously been irrelevant due to the tremendous financial and human resource support given by State VR programs.)
5. State budgets were continuously being slashed. Therefore, States were no longer fully underwriting association memberships and conference activities.

A 1996 comprehensive survey of the association leadership reflected no consensus on our purpose or direction as a national organization; we had become a victim of our own structure and doomed to failure if we kept the status quo. It was clear that action was necessary and time was of the essence.

The intent of the restructuring was to insure the stability and success of the association for years to come. The objectives required to meet that intent were 1) develop a governance struc-

ture that allows us to speak with unanimity while celebrating our diversity; and, 2) protect the foundation of the association by constructing a plan that is financially feasible and responsible. After several years of analysis, evaluation and continuous solicitation of member input, association values were articulated, a mission statement was developed, and a plan to reorganize the association to meet 21st century needs was outlined. Members of the 1999 NRA Delegate Assembly offered changes to the plan and then approved the plan as amended in the summer of 2000.

Linda Winslow, Chair of NRAOne (the transition team charged with developing the implementation plan for this restructure) is working with 3 representatives from each Division in addition to the core team appointed by the President to ascertain the critical needs of all constituencies. Topics such as financial management, core services, IRS requirements, and membership recruitment are being discussed via electronic chat room. Decisions made by the team will be published in the Contemporary Rehab magazine and on the NRA website. Suggestions and questions are welcome by all NRA members. This team will work over the next 2 1/2 years to assure a smooth and prosperous transition.

Since the passage of restructuring, many have asked, "what has really changed with this restructuring?" The answer is that very little has changed, yet the end result of those small changes is expected to bring tremendous opportunity for success to the association. As a Division member, here is a summary of what is most important to know about the plan:

a) Divisions will no longer be separately incorporated entities. It was always intended that Divisions would be a sub section of NRA membership focusing on specific relevant professional concerns. However, when Divisions were first formed, it was thought necessary to protect national from possible financial liabilities and therefore required each Division to separately incorporate. The end product was a structure of nine "corporations" within one large "corporation." Given that structure,

1. there was very little communication between Divisions and national:

2. decisions were made on both sides in a vacuum;
3. many Divisions did not have the financial or human resources to offer critical services to their members;
4. Divisions (understandably) began to work for the best interest and survival of the Division (at times not in the best interest of the national organization); and,
5. the strength of our unified voice was lost amongst the noise of conflicting agendas.

Bringing the Divisions administratively under the national incorporation will foster coordination of effort and voice, provide access to numerous financial and administrative supports that did not formerly exist, and offer the ability for Divisions to focus their time and effort on the greatest need of providing state of the art training and advocacy for professionals in rehab thereby creating a market niche for themselves and the association as a whole

b) Any monies now held by the Divisions (ie, endowment funds, scholarship funds, operating funds, etc.) will remain the property of the Division. It is true that within the new structure, operating revenues (as well as allocated expenses for Division core services) will be coordinated through the national office. However, any monies currently held by the Divisions will remain the property of the Division, and any additional monies raised by Divisions will be placed in restricted accounts for use only by that Division. It will be very similar to a company with departmental revenue and expense accounts.

c) Divisions will now have access to core member services offered by the NRA national office. NRAOne will recommend what those core services will be. It was outlined in the restructuring plan that each Division would be given copy space within Contemporary Rehab and the Journal to allow them greater exposure to all NRA members (this has already begun with the inclusion of NRA/VEWAA and NASSPR newsletters in the July/August issue). NRA will also take on the responsibility of individual Division newsletter publication and financial management and reporting. A joint Journal of Rehabilitation is under consideration. It was thought that a comprehensive holistic Journal would prove most valuable to a practi-

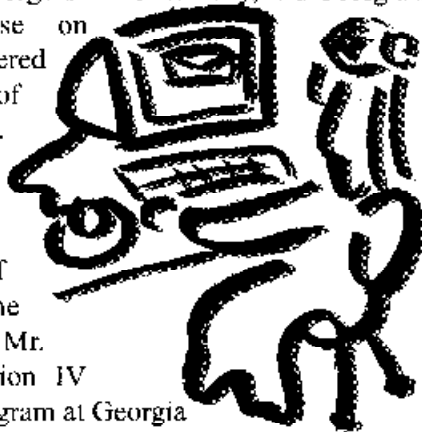


Fall Greetings!

from National Rehabilitation Administration Association

Web-based Course on Rehabilitation Leadership

NRAA is fortunate and very pleased to have the opportunity to partner with the University of North Texas, San Diego State University, and Georgia State University in a Web-based course on Rehabilitation Leadership that will be offered in spring, 2002. The outstanding team of instructors for this course will be Dr. Fredric Schroeder, former RSA Commissioner and currently Research Professor at San Diego State University; Dr. Vinnie Scalia, Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences at the University of Northern Colorado; and Mr. James Stephens, Director of the Region IV Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program at Georgia State University.



NRAA members can enroll in the leadership course for 3 graduate-level academic credits through the University of North Texas or can enroll for non-credit through NRAA and receive a \$50.00 rebate on the non-credit registration fee. The tuition amount for academic credit and the non-credit registration fee will be announced in December. Additional information and a non-credit registration form will be printed in the December, 2001 NRAA Newsletter and will also be available at NRAA's Web-site at <http://www.rehabadmin.org>.

tioner in the field, not to mention offer great exposure for all Divisions to all NRA members (again, a great recruitment tool) However, if a Division membership would rather maintain an independent Journal, that is their decision to make. Additional items such as methods of financial management, publication of newsletters, training coordination and allocated website space (just to name a few) are being discussed by NRAOne.

d) **By consolidating these operations, per member costs are expected to decline thereby allowing for lower member dues for each of the Divisions.** Many have complained over the years of the expense related to joining both NRA and its Divisions. Through the consolidation, we are able to take advantage of the economies of scale (lowering administrative costs for all involved) and offer "more for less." This should prove as a valuable recruitment tool for all of our Divisions.

e) **Divisions with a membership of 500 or greater will have a designated seat on the NRA Board. All other Divisions will be represented through a Division President Advisory Council with direct access to the NRA Board.** NRA currently has 9000 members nationwide; less than half belong to Divisions. At a minimum requirement of 500 members, a Division needs only 5% of the national NRA population to be eligible for a designated seat on the board. The NRA Board of Directors is optimistic that the new structure will allow for greater Division recruitment potential.

f) **State Division Chapters remain virtually unchanged.** State Division operation should not change with this restructuring. Other than the fact that they will now operate under the NRA incorporation versus the Division incorporation, State Divisions Chapters will not experience a change in the way they do business. Any concerns pertaining to any specifics regarding State Division Chapters should be forwarded for consideration to Linda Winslow and the team of NRAOne.

The bottom line is NRA and its Divisions are now positioned to thrive. However, the work is not done. We still need your input and your active participation. We as an association have so much to offer the rehab community and its stakeholders. Your insight may mean the difference between excellence and mediocrity. Please don't hesitate to contact Linda Winslow, the national office or your Division leadership to offer suggestions or ask questions. We look forward to hearing from you.

Statement from Dr. L. Robert McConnell, Candidate for NRA President-elect

Dear NRAA Colleagues,

I am writing this open letter to make a special appeal to you for your support in my efforts to become president-elect of the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA) for the year 2002. I have outlined below in bulleted form my experiences and qualifications in the areas of Leadership, Education, and NRA Involvement drawn from my 25-year affiliation with NRA and my nearly 35 year professional career in rehabilitation and human services; the majority of which was spent in supervision and administration. I continue to serve as an adjunct faculty member in graduate rehabilitation counseling at two major state universities and teach courses in a masters program in administration at a third.

Most recently, my association involvement has included service as a member of the state chapter board, as a six-year member of the NRA board, and for the last four years, as director of the Mary Switzer Memorial Seminars. I was also pleased to have been recognized by the Michigan chapter in 1998 for the Distinguished Career Service Award. I believe in our mission and value the knowledge and friendships developed from my associations and experiences in NRA and rehabilitation over the years.

The bigger question remains, what is my commitment for the future of our national association? If I were to identify my primary goals for the Association they would be three in number, 1) reenergize and rebuild our membership, 2) improve the lines of communication (in all directions) throughout all sectors and levels of our association, and 3) bring all parts of our association back together as a more unified voice in rehabilitation. My approach is to listen well, to involve as many and as diverse of the talents of our association in the affairs of our association as possible, and to work towards compromise and consensus. If elected, I will simply give it my best.

If you concur that I possess the attributes necessary to lead our Association, I seek your support for me and the other candidates of your choice. Please let me hear from you with comments, questions or suggestions on issues, needs and directions for our association at 517) 322-2066 or [HYPERLINK "mailto:lrobertmcccon@voyager.net"](mailto:lrobertmcccon@voyager.net) lrobertmcccon@voyager.net . Thank you in advance for your consideration of my candidacy.

Sincerely,

Bob McConnell

L. Robert McConnell, DP

INVOLVEMENT

- NRA member since 1976
- Member NRA Board last 6 years
- Involvement in rehabilitation since 1973
- Member NRA & NAMRC divisions
- Member Michigan Rehabilitation Association (MRA) board
- Former member Great Lakes Regional NRA board
- Member Best Center for Independent Living board and
- Governor appointee to Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council
- Adjunct faculty member in rehabilitation counseling 1990-present
- Member NRA Membership Committee 2000 and Long Term Planning Committee (2001)

LEADERSHIP

- Past member NRA executive committee
- current member Michigan Rehabilitation Association (MRA) executive committee
- Rehabilitation Administrator in Michigan VR (30 years)
- Past MRA conference chair
- NAMRC national conference chair 2000
- Founder, first president, Michigan NAMRC chapter 1983
- Director, Mary Switzer Memorial Seminars, 1997-present
- Former Mary E. Switzer Scholar
- NRA Leadership conference speaker 1998
- Recipient MRA Distinguished Career Service Award 1998

EDUCATION:

Doctorate: Public Administration
Masters: Guidance and Counseling
Certified Rehabilitation Counselor
Licensed Professional Counselor

Editors' note: Bob McConnell is an NRAA member of long standing. The editors are pleased to accommodate Dr. McConnell's request to speak directly to NRAA members regarding his candidacy for NRA President-elect and hope that any NRAA members running for NRA and/or divisional office will use the NRAA Newsletter to make statements to the young members of NRAA.

2001 Election Ballot and Awards Nomination Form
Ballot for NRAA Officers and Regional Representatives to the Board

PRESIDENT-ELECT (one year term prior to assuming presidency)

Evan Jones (Virginia)

Write In: _____

SECRETARY (two year term)

Ray Feroz (Pennsylvania)

Write In: _____

REPRESENTATIVE TO THE NRA BOARD (three year term)

Bill Burnside (Virginia)

Write In: _____

NORTHEAST REGIONAL REP TO THE NRAA BOARD (two year term)

(Vote only if you reside in CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PR, RI, VT)

Joe Lechowicz

Write In: _____

SOUTHEAST REGIONAL REP TO THE NRAA BOARD (two year term)

(Vote only if you reside in AL, GA, KY, FL, MS, NC, SC, TN)

Pam Mobley

Write In: _____

GREAT PLAINS REGIONAL REP TO THE NRAA BOARD (two year term)

(Vote only if you reside in CO, IA, KS, MN, MO, MT, ND, NE, SD, UT, WY)

Dale Sattler

Write In: _____

PACIFIC REGIONAL REP TO THE NRAA BOARD (two year term)

(Vote only if you reside in AK, AZ, CA, HI, ID, NV, OR, WA)

Barbara Barrett

Write In: _____

Nominations for Annual NRAA Awards

Mary E. Switzer Award for Rehabilitation Leadership - The highest award granted by NRAA. Recognizes and honors outstanding rehabilitation leadership of a national scope.

Nominee: _____ Nominated by: _____

Guy F. Hubbard Award for Excellence in Rehabilitation Management - Recognizes a rehabilitation management practitioner who has demonstrated excellence in rehabilitation supervision or administration.

Nominee: _____ Nominated by: _____

Presidential Citation for Distinguished Rehabilitation Service - Recognizes exceptional rehabilitation service in administration, supervision, program planning and evaluation, research, teaching, and legislation.

Nominee: _____ Nominated by: _____

Directions: Mail Ballot and Nomination Form by folding and attaching stamp or by fax to Glen Peterson at (507) 389-2821. Ballots and nominations must received by October 29, 2001. Please vote only once and please vote only for Regional Representatives to the NRAA Board from the region in which you reside.


Glen Peterson
MN Rehabilitation Association
110 Hazel Street
Mankato, MN 56001

Place
Stamp
Here

Return To :
Glen Peterson
MN Rehabilitation Association
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Mankato, MN 56001

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56258

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National Rehabilitation Administration Association

The NRAA Newsletter is an official publication of the National Rehabilitation Association (NRAA), a Professional Division of the National Rehabilitation Association.

It is widely accepted that the practices and skills of administration, management, and supervision of the rehabilitation process are critically related to that process. NRAA has been organized to develop, improve, and strengthen rehabilitation organizations. It exists to promote the highest administrative and supervisory ethical practices.

The NRAA Newsletter is published 3 times a year: Spring, Summer & Fall. Deadline for submission for the December Issue is November 23rd, 2001.

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