



NewsNotes

A Quarterly Publication of the Virginia Rehabilitation Association
2002 First Quarter, January-March No. 5

Past Presidential Pondering... Mark Fletcher

This will be my last Presidential Pondering message as my term as President has come to a close, and the Gavel has officially been passed to Bonnie Hawley, VRA's President for 2002.

I would be remiss if I didn't take the opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of the VRA Board and the support of the Membership in making 2001 an enjoyable and successful year for VRA.

Membership in VRA continued strong, with 190 members which was a 12 % increase in members for 2001. This increase also reflects a higher percentage in student members. This has been accomplished with collaboration with the divisions, VRCA, VRAA and VRSS in sending out recruitment and renewal mailings, presentations to graduate students at VCU and George Washington University, and recognition of members with Certificates upon renewal or initial membership.

Reaching out to students of rehabilitation graduate degree programs was a major focus of VRA this past year and this will continue to be a major objective in 2002

Training was sponsored throughout the Commonwealth in 2001, with the training on Ethics, in conjunction with VRCA. This benefit continues to be well received by our membership.

The Annual Collaboration Training Conference in Virginia Beach in September was attended by 40% of the VRA membership.

In the Legislative arena VRA was very active in 2001 on both the national and state levels. VRA

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New President's Message... Bonnie Hawley

I hope that each of you has had a Happy Holiday Season.

It was wonderful seeing so many friends at the recent VRA retreat. Special thanks to Shirley Lyons for arranging our accommodations at the beautiful Hidden Creek Recreation Center. Thanks also to all of you who *brought* treats and Christmas goodies. We also had the pleasure to welcome the three newly elected Board Members, Dale (Dee Dee) Batten, Phil Black, and Sharon Barton. Dee Dee is a Human Services Manager for DRS in Richmond, Phil is the Executive Director for Community Support Systems in Virginia Beach, and Sharon is employed by RSVP in Richmond. Also elected to the position of President Elect was Howard Green, Business Liaison for VCU RRTC. Re-elected to her second term as Secretary was Teri Bertsch. Congratulations to all on their election and I look forward to working with each in the upcoming year.

At our retreat, there were great ideas and stimulating conversation that will help shape this upcoming year's agenda for VRA. Membership is of particular concern, and even though we enjoyed a 12% increase, we can not rest on those laurels. Reaching out to professionals in the private sector and expanding the types of certification offered by our training programs were two of the ways by which membership can be increased. When a new staff person joins your office or company, please extend a welcome to VRA membership. We will be getting information about VRA trainings in the near future. Remember to invite all professionals with whom you come in contact to these exciting trainings. They

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The next VRA Board meeting is: January 25, 2002



Past Presidential Pondering...Mark Fletcher *(continued from page 1)*

members attended a legislative day on January 15th in Richmond and the National Rehabilitation Association Governmental Affairs Seminar in March. A delegation of VRA members met with Representatives and Senators on the Hill to advocate for legislation for rehabilitation related issues.

2001 was certainly an exciting and outstanding year for VRA and I know in 2002 there is no doubt that VRA will continue to thrive and be recognized as a strong advocate and leader in the field of rehabilitation.

Again, thank you for your support of VRA and I sincerely wish each and every member success and good will in 2002!

Sincerely,
Mark C. Fletcher, Past VRA President

New President's Message...Bonnie Hawley *(continued from page 1)*

are great opportunities for Networking, sharing information, and showing the value of membership in VRA. Student membership has increased and this is a trend that we hope to continue. Alison Higgs and Richard Kriner have served this past year as our Student Representatives to the Board, and they will continue to do so in the upcoming year. We welcome their contributions to our Board and the continued collaboration between VRA and the University Graduate programs across the Commonwealth.

I would also like to encourage all members to attend Board meetings as they are not only for Board Members. Hearing from the membership and including your ideas to our agenda is what a membership organization is all about. Please feel free to email or call me with any ideas that you may have regarding VRA, and ways that we can be responsive to your professional needs.

I want to take a moment to thank all of those who have volunteered to serve as an Officer, Board Member, Committee Chair, or on a Committee. All of your efforts on behalf of VRA are appreciated and valued. I look forward to seeing you at the Board Meeting on January 25th. A schedule of upcoming meetings and events is published in this NewsNotes, so mark your calendars now for the upcoming year! Again, please do not hesitate to contact me with any suggestions. I look forward to working with each of you in the year to come.

Bonnie Hawley, VRA President



Mark Receives Thank You



Bonnie Receives Gavel



Bonnie Hawley, new president, and Howard Green, president elect, are inducted into office along with the new board members by Bernice Chattin.



Thanks to Benjy Burnett and Awards Chair-Naomi Aitken



Treasurer, Eleanor Williams gives her financial report.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

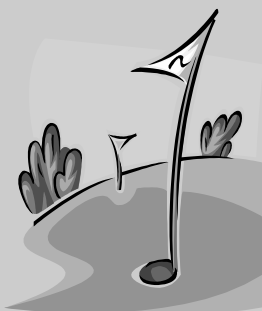
We are closing in on 200 members. Keep recruiting and talking up the benefits of VRA!!! Don't forget to renew your own membership!!! Welcome to these new members: Mary Jarrett Gilbert, Richmond; Pat North, Mechanicsville; Emily Worrall, Charlottesville; Cherie Leporatti, Fairfax; Arica Fishback, Ruckersville; Arthur Devita, Midlothian; and Linda Carey, Mechanicsville.

Here is the list of those who have renewed their membership in the last two months: Judy Collins, Roderick Curry, Tiffani Boykin, Ellen Braswell, Gail Broughton, Robert Lester, Peter Melberg, Kathleen Sampeck, Elisabeth Brown, Dr. Helen Bessent Byrd, Lisa Garner, Annette Pope, Deborah Puckett, Susan Riggs, John Luckey, Shirley Lyons, George Martin, Jr., Norma Maxson, Suzanne Simpson, and Antoinette Smith.

Submitted by Shirley Lyons

Mark Your Calendar For GOLF:

The 3rd Annual VRA Golf Classic is scheduled for Friday, September 13, 2002 at The Hollows Golf Club. We need your help to get sponsors and gifts. Please contact your local community golf course to solicit a prize such as free green fees or some golf equipment. This should be done between January and March before they commit to other tournaments.



Please call Howard Green (804)828-9548, or email him at [jhgreen@atlas.vcu.edu](mailto:jhggreen@atlas.vcu.edu) for more information or if you have questions! Thanks for your help.

Submitted by Howard Green

VRA Develops Legislative Agenda

On December 7th, the VRA Board met to develop its legislative agenda for the upcoming session. Although the budget shortfall, which may approach \$2 billion, will dominate the debate, VRA has an aggressive agenda that supports its mission to improve the lives of Virginians with disabilities.

- VRA will support legislation which will:
- Reform Medicaid to emphasize consumer driven and community based services, including the swift implementation of the Medicaid Buy In.
- Move administrative responsibility for the Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative from the Dept. of Health to DRS.
- Expand insurance coverage to include hearing aids and similar hearing devices.
- Sustain the level of funding for services to consumers if budget cuts are required.
- Expand housing and transportation services to Virginians with disabilities.
- Make the Dept. for Rights of Virginians with Disabilities an independent agency.
- Amend the Assistive Technology Loan Fund to allow loans to organizations in addition to individuals.

- Improve retirement benefits for state employees.
- Expand voter access in both the voting site and in methods to vote.
- Support the LTESS program.
- This agenda will likely change as the session evolves, but these items will be at the core of the platform. Remember you can track legislation and voice your opinion by using the following information:

To track legislation, committee meetings, and voting records go to this website:
<http://leg1.state.va.us/lis.htm>

You can also express your opinion by calling this hotline which is staffed during the session from 7 am until 7 pm: (800)889-0229 and leave a message about your recommendations.

Another great way to communicate is via fax:
House fax (804)786-6310 and
Senate fax (804)698-7651

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VRA Develops Legislative Agenda

(continued from page 3)

As your representative, I will provide weekly updates to those on the VRA Listserve so that you can be aware of what is happening in Richmond. Let me know of any special issues you may have that we may consider for the VRA Agenda and if you have any questions, just contact me. I look forward to another successful year in working with you.

Jim Rothrock, VRA Governmental Relations Staff
(804)673-0119
jarothrow@aol.com

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VRA Schedule 2001-2002

January

25 – **VRA Board Meeting** which will be held at Henrico Area MH/MR Services, 10299 Woodman Rd, Glen Allen, Room C.

February

1 – VRCA Board Meeting
8- Collaborations Steering Committee Meeting

March

1 – Collaborations Steering Committee Meeting
15 – Deadline for April issue of NewsNotes
10-12 – Governmental Affairs Seminar , Hilton Alexandria, Old Town

April

2- Collaborations Steering Committee, Hotel site visit
25 – VRCA Board Meeting
26 – **VRA Board Meeting**

May

Rehabilitation Counselors Week
3 – Collaborations Steering Committee Meeting
10 – VRCA Board Meeting

June

14 – Collaborations Steering Committee
15 – Deadline for July issue of NewsNotes
28 – Deadline for Nominations for next year's officers and Board Members

July

8 – VRA Ballot to Membership
12 – Collaborations Steering Committee
18 – VRCA Board Meeting
19 - **VRA Board Meeting**

August

4-6 - Collaborations Conference
5- **VRA Annual Business Meeting @ noon**
6- VRCA Annual Business Meeting @ noon

September

13- VRA 3rd Annual Golf Tournament
15 - Deadline for October issue of NewsNotes

October

10 – VRCA Board Meeting
18 – **VRA Board Meeting**
24-27 – Indianapolis – NRA National Training Conference

December

5 – VRCA Board Meeting
Annual report due to NRA
6 - **VRA Annual Retreat**
15 – Deadline for January 2003 NewsNotes

VRA FOUNDATION, INC.

What a way to end the year! The income from endowment interest and donations from the membership has exceeded \$1,000. In addition, the VRA board meeting in October voted to award the Foundation five percent (5%) of VRA's income from the Collaborations Conference. It is well to note that in view of circumstances of in our nation, members of VRA have chosen to donate to the Foundation in lieu of holiday gifts. Surely, they are doubly blessed for caring so much.

The number of applications for grants were not high this year, however, the Foundation is proud to have presented an award to James Howard Green, Jr., who attends the University of Virginia. Members may watch for the application in the Spring/Summer edition of NewsNotes, or download it from the VRA Web Site.

Honor Roll of Foundation Donors, 2001

Mary Kaye Johnston, Howard Green, Bernice Chattin, the Virginia Rehabilitation Support Staff, Bill Burnside, Benjy Burnett, Jim and Naomi Aiken, Tom and Marion Meyer, and Eleanor Williams.

All VRA members are urged to join the Honor Roll of Foundation Donors for 2002.

Submitted by Benjy Burnett

VRA PINS ANNOUNCEMENT

The new and improved **VRA pins**, shaped like the Commonwealth of Virginia, are now available to anyone who wants one. The cost will be \$5.00. These pins have a metallic red background with bold V.R.A. in blue.

Contact Shirley Lyons, Mark Fletcher, or Bonnie Hawley if interested. Or mail your check made out to VRA to Shirley Lyons, 16012 Gary Avenue, Chester, VA 23831, and she will send it out to you.

Submitted by Shirley Lyons



Tech Connections Direct

- * Emerging Technology: Enhanced 911 Cell Phones
- * In the Workplace: Dealing with Back Disorders

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY: Enhanced 911 Cell Phones

Last year, Tech Connections' information specialists received an inquiry from an individual with a seizure disorder. He needed to find a way to call for help when he felt a seizure coming on. However, that he might not be able to give his location if he was away from his home or office. He will soon be able to rely on improvements to cell phone technology. Currently, wireless callers can be tracked only to the nearest cell phone tower, but the FCC and wireless companies are working on improved location technology. Companies can provide E-911 (Enhanced 911) services by either adding location technology to their networks or to the handsets that consumers carry. One of the first of these handset options is now available with a new GPS-enabled mobile phone available through Sprint PCS Group. Global positioning system (GPS) satellites will be able to locate callers who use this phone to within 50 meters. Sprint's new phone also features a wireless Internet connection with browser, e-mail and phone book. It costs \$150. Although these phones are now being sold, consumers should not expect to use the location service until the networks upgrades needed to pass the location information to emergency dispatchers are completed. The original goal, set by the FCC for initial E-911 technology to be in place was October 1st of this year, but all of the wireless companies (i.e., AT&T, Sprint, Verizon, etc.) applied for extensions. The availability of technology and the costs involved were cited as reasons for the delay. Sprint expects to have its networks ready by next summer, and plans to sell only GPS-enabled phones by December 2002.

IN THE WORKPLACE: Dealing with Back Disorders

Back disorders represent a significant portion of the caseloads of rehabilitation professionals in both public and private rehabilitation. The amount of lost time, productivity and pain to society in 1990 was estimated to be between \$50 billion and \$100 billion per year. A significant share of this, approximately \$11 billion, was borne by the Workers' Compensation system. In addition to having a direct impact on employers, back disorders present a significant impediment to employment for a substantial portion of the over 6.5 million persons estimated to have chronic or recurring back problems. (Disability Statistics Center, 1996) More-

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EDUCATION LOOKING AHEAD TO A BRIGHT NEW YEAR

I want to thank everyone who attended VRA and VRCA sponsored trainings in 2001. The Education committee works hard all year to provide relatively inexpensive, yet informative trainings to our members. We would like to encourage more members to participate in our trainings for many reasons : 1. to obtain increased knowledge in your field 2. it's affordable 3. to network with other rehabilitation professionals and 4. to maintain CRC requirements.

The coming year will bring another opportunity to attend at least one training in your locale. The education committee has made commitment to sponsor four trainings statewide, one in each region of the state. We look again for your ideas for topics and low cost trainings sites. We are presently working on our schedule for 2002 and will provide our first training before the end of the first quarter. That training will be posted on the VRA website soon.

A big thank you to the Education committee for your work this past year: Russ Ward, Margaret Gillespie, Jean Steveson, and Annette Pope.

Please let me know of your ideas for topics and/or speakers. In addition, if you are interested in being on the Education committee, you can reach me at mdelgard@aol.com. I am especially interested in finding a replacement for the NOVA area as Russ will be busy as President for VRCA.



Wishing everyone a healthy, happy and peaceful New Year!

**Submitted by Marie Del Gardo,
Education Chair**

Tech Connections *(continued from page 6)*

over, as many as 30% of American workers are employed in jobs that require them to routinely perform activities that may increase risk of developing low back disorders. (NIOSH, 2001)

As with most accommodations, someone with a "back disorder" can usually benefit from a range of options; very simple, low-cost adaptations to extensive modifications to work settings. To make accommodations, rehabilitation professionals and employers need two essential sets of information: findings from a comprehensive job analysis, and a complete evaluation of the individual, including a functional capacity assessment. A comprehensive job analysis will break jobs down into work performed, essential functions, physical demands, working conditions and other basic elements which can make the accommodation process more objective and easier to comprehend. A complete evaluation of the individual is needed, because the standard general medical report alone usually does not give sufficient detail on restrictions nor insights into what could be done to minimize or safely alleviate the problem. In dealing with back disorders, here are several options that should be part of the accommodation process:

BODY MECHANICS/LIFTING TECHNIQUES - An important part of an overall accommodation strategy should include instruction in safe practices for lifting and seating/positioning. Often, occupational therapists can provide this service.

LIFTING AIDS - A wide variety of commercially available lifting aids can be found in industrial supply catalogs such as McMaster-Carr or Global. For example, lift tables can help to raise items to the height of existing work surfaces, thus, eliminating unnecessary lifting. These standard industrial products can be a cost-effective means to modify work environments for workers with back problems.

MATS - Cushioned mats, located in key work areas, can often increase tolerance for standing and reduce strain on back muscles.

POSITIONING AIDS - Rotating tables, "lazy-suzans" and slanted work surfaces can help to position items.

SAFETY DEVICES - Belts and other safety devices designed to limit lifting and promote better body mechanics are seen in many work settings. Although the direct benefit of these aids has not been proven, using them may remind workers about lifting and positioning precautions.

SEATING - Adjustable seating, including stools and combination sit-stand stools, are important considerations. Chairs with armrests, and swivel bases can relieve some problems. Custom cushions and rising-

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Statements from the NRA Convention

Bonnie Hawley and Mark Fletcher attended the NRA Convention in Biloxi, Mississippi, and brought back statements that were developed at the meeting. These included *The VISION of NRA*: To be the premier national and international organization of professional of diverse backgrounds and disciplines working collaboratively and independently with a unified commitment to the productivity and wellness of ALL people with disabilities and other related barriers.

The NRA GOALS are to: Increase membership; Increase participation of members via education, training, and leadership development; Improve the image of NRA; Legislative Advocacy; Develop fund raising activities; Increase the professionalism of NRA; Provide guidance to Regions, Chapters, and Divisions; and Complete the restructuring of NRA.

A statement was developed stating that *NRA Members WILL*: Aspire to eliminate attitudinal barriers including stereotyping and discrimination toward people with disabilities; Foster cultural diversity and treat all people with dignity and respect; Act with integrity in their relationships with colleagues, other organizations, agencies, institutions, referral sources, and other professionals; Support individual and public efforts to advance services and quality of life for persons with disabilities through legislation, personal commitment, and improved organizational policies and procedures; Behave in a legal and ethical manner with truthfulness; Bring credit to the professions in the fields of rehabilitation by their public demeanor and maintain the honor of their profession.

Standards of NRA Member Conduct include: Members of the NRA will not engage in any act of a dishonest or fraudulent nature in the conduct of their profession. Members shall only engage in activities that do not conflict with any fiduciary, ethical, or legal obligation of the NRA. Members shall comply with all laws. Members shall effectively disclose all conflicts of interest, not misrepresent themselves, their duties, or credentials. Members will use E-mail appropriately.

Tech Connections *(continued from page 7)*

assist devices can address some specific functional needs. **TRANSPORTING ITEMS-** Wheeled carts can significantly reduce the physical demands of carrying items within the workplace. Powered carts can further reduce physical demands. Even when the work environment includes stairs, specialized stair-climbing hand trucks are available.

WORKSTATIONS - Modifications to workstations can involve simple height adjustments or rearrangement of equipment, tools, and materials to create a more efficient work layout that reduces lifting and reaching. Adjustable workstations may be considered to accommodate workers of different size. Work surfaces that are at the same height can enable workers to position and transfer items without lifting. Rollers and conveyor belts can further reduce back strain.

OTHER AIDS: Many other aids are available. For example, casters and specialized rollers can be placed under heavy equipment to reduce the pushing/pulling forces needed to move these items. Tool balancers can suspend portable hand tools so that the worker needs only to position them while working.

Observation of how work tasks are typically performed, with careful attention to how workers lift items and their need to turn and twist, can help identify potential problem areas. Often, changes can be suggested in the layout of the work areas and installation of lifting aids that will benefit all workers, not only those experiencing back disorders. Developing universal workstations that comfortably "fit" more workers will help to create workspaces that are both safer and more productive.

For more information: Tech Connections
Contact our information specialists for further information about the aids and devices referenced above.
Call (800)877-7335 or email techconnections@crt.gatech.edu.

The National Institute of Occupational Safety (NIOSH)
Good resource for more information on the prevalence and incidence of back disorders.

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/ergopage.html#erf>

The RERC on Ergonomics at the University of Michigan
<http://umrerc.engin.umich.edu>.

VRA 50/50 Raffle The final outcome of the Raffle sponsored by Ways and Means had some nice prizes. The winner was not present, however, Ed Navis was very surprised when he was presented with a cash prize of \$71.00. Mark Fletcher was the winner of a beautiful basket of goodies. Steve Sommer was the winner of a \$20.00 gift certificate at Borders. Gene Steveson received a \$50 Spa Package. Thank you to all those who provided the gifts, and to Jim Rothrock for drawing the names.

Co-Editors, Norm and Steve thank all the VRA members who have been submitting their articles to the NewsNotes. We will need all your calendars, workshops, legislative insights, calls for nominations, and professional insights for the April 2002 issue. Those items sent by way of the US Postage Service, should be sent to Norm Kropp at DRS, 2930 W. Broad Street, Suite 15, Richmond, Va. 23230. *Please send your articles by way of email to both **Norm and Steve** at KroppNV@drs.state.va.us and SommerSA@drs.state.va.us. We would also like to encourage you to sell some ads to the NewsNotes, by referring your favorite rehabilitation-related business to us. Your Officers and Board have been very supportive! Thanks again for your support and ideas. It is great to have VRCA helping us to get the word out. Please check out www.vra.org !!!*

Run An Ad in the VRA NEWSNOTES

1/4 PAGE
\$ 15 / issue : \$ 50 / year
1/2 PAGE
\$ 24 / issue : \$ 90 / year
Full Page
\$ 50 / issue : \$ 175 / year

The WWRC PEACE Committee

(Professionals Embracing America's Courage Effectively) sponsored a special Luminary Memorial Ceremony in conjunction with the annual Garden of Hope Tree Lighting Ceremony on Thursday, November 29, 2001. The Peace Committee plans to purchase a plaque to be placed in the Garden of Hope to commemorate the events of 9/11/01. We must keep the "American Spirit" alive so that we shall never forget why our troops are fighting. Center Director, Judith K. Ashley, addressed those in attendance and offered best wishes on behalf of the Agency and the Center. Students, staff and local musicians from the community volunteered their time and talents to support the event.



Collaborations Conference 2002



Sheraton Richmond West Hotel
6624 West Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia
August 4, 5, & 6, 2002

Mark THESE DATES on your calendar now!

Dear Colleagues and Virginia Communities:

The Collaborations Conference 2002 Planning Committee is pleased to announce that the site and dates have been set for next year's conference. We look forward to seeing you at Sheraton Richmond West Hotel in Richmond, VA on August 4, 5, & 6, 2002. Don't miss out on an exciting conference experience with sessions on the latest in employment, funding opportunities, disability issues, technology, advocacy, and other topics on information and best practices!

Contact: Mark Fletcher, Conference Committee Chair, Phone: 703-313-4408,

E-mail: fletchmc@drs.state.va.us

Or Howard Green, 804-828-9548 E-mail: jhgreen@atlas.vcu.edu with suggestions or questions or to add your name to the conference mailing list (for non-members). We encourage members to volunteer for committees and conference activities.

The Hosts of the Collaborations Conference 2002:

Virginia Rehabilitation Association (VRA)

Virginia Association for Persons in Supported Employment (VA-APSE)

Virginia Association of Community Rehabilitation Providers (vaACCSES)

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STORIES WANTED!

Dear Colleagues:

VA-APSE plans again to publish their success story edition. This is a time to share SE successes with legislators, colleagues, and others. SE providers have used this edition along with their program brochure in marketing their program to prospective employers and as a tool in educating individuals and families on supported employment opportunities. Fundamental in this marketing use is the need for the SE provider to have a success story in this edition. Please let your supported employment colleagues, employers, employees, parents know that this is their annual opportunity to shout the praises of individuals who have been successful on their jobs and in their lives. The success stories can be from 100 to 500 words.

Supported employees or family members can share, through writing or interview, the supported employee's job success and tell about how employment has given them successes in other areas of their lives. Improvements or more enjoyment in their lives because of their jobs such as more economic independence, more choices in living arrangements, friendships, taking on more responsibility, vacation and travel opportunities, ownership of homes or cars, and other new highlights in their lives can be a part of their story.

Rehabilitation Counselors and Supported Employment providers can let others know of the successes achieved by an individual receiving their services, the coordination with other service providers that enhanced this success, issues overcome during the steps to success, and the job satisfaction achieved by the individual.

Employers can let others know of the importance of supported employees as a resource, the quality of their work, the positive feedback from coworkers and customers, the positive addition of having an employment specialist from a supported employment provider assist in training, and the growth of the individual's skills during their span of employment

We are particularly interested in supported employees using LTESS funds for follow-along and would like to have this identified in the story, however, we are interested in all success stories.

We would like a pictures taken on the job, especially with employers, to go with the story or another recent photograph of the individual if one is available.

Stories can be E-mailed to fvkoehler@aol.com by 1/10/02. All stories E-mailed must be followed by the mailed signed release for publication and or picture in the success story January edition of VA-APSE's Alliance and must contain the signature, name, address, and phone number of the author and SE individual or Employer named and/or photographed (and guardian/witness if required due to age or illegibility of signature). Photographs cannot be returned, however, a copy of the edition will be mailed to the names and addresses sent with releases. Photographs should be mailed. Stories (E-mailed or on disk preferred), photographs, and releases mailed should be postmarked by 1/1/02 and sent to:

Success Story c/o Frances Koehler 529 Ridgeley Lane Richmond, VA 23229-7235

VA-APSE reserves the right to choose for publication from among stories and photographs submitted, to edit stories for content or length, and to reduce, enlarge, crop, or caption photographs.

Meet Your New Board Members



Phil Black—New VRA Board Member (Far Right in Above Picture)

Phil Black has been working with persons with disabilities since 1972. His experience includes rehabilitation counseling in the private sector, employment service organizations, and residential services. He completed a masters degree in rehabilitation counseling and advanced studies in counseling at Virginia Commonwealth University. He is currently the executive director at Commonwealth Support Systems, an employment service organization in Virginia Beach.

Sharon Barton—New VRA Board Member (middle person in the picture to the left)

Sharon Barton graduated from the Medical College of Virginia at Virginia Commonwealth University with a Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling in December 1995. Since then, she has worked in various capacities for RSVP, Inc., a private, for-profit, Rehabilitation Company headquartered in Richmond, Virginia. For the past three years, Sharon has served as the Supported Employment Supervisor for RSVP, Inc.'s Supported Employment program. Through these experience she has been able to meet many VRA members across the state. Sharon has been a member of VRA for six years, and is looking forward to becoming a more active participant as a Board Member. Sharon has already volunteered her services to the Membership committee, as she is both interested in working toward recruiting new VRA members, as well as encouraging participation from current members. She plans to become involved in VRA's legislative activities. Sharon is looking forward to the next three years of service.

Dale Batten—New VRA Board Member (Far Left in the Above Picture)

Dale is the Human Services Manager for the Rehabilitation and Evaluation Center of the Rehabilitative Services. In this capacity, she directs vocational evaluators, vocational rehabilitation counselors, a job developer, and other staff. In addition, Dale is responsible for a specialty program of services for people who are deaf and hearing impaired. She is a leader in a state-wide initiative committed to research and development of rehabilitative technologies that enable those previously unemployable to enter the world of work. She is past President of VVEWAA and presently serves as the Central Region Representative. Dale received her B.S. and M.S. degrees from Virginia Commonwealth University. She has worked in the field of Rehabilitation for over 20 years. As a Board Member for VRA, Dale will continue to be an advocate for persons with disabilities. One of her initial focus will be to increase VRA membership among employees presently working at he Department of Rehabilitative Services.



Collaborations Conference 2002
August 4th, 5th, and 6th
In Richmond, Virginia

It is our pleasure to invite you to join us in taking advantage of a tax deduction that will benefit our membership. **The VRA Foundation Board**