



NewsNotes

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE VIRGINIA REHABILITATION ASSOCIATION
2000 FIRST QUARTER, JANUARY - MARCH

PRESIDENTIAL PONDERING

Maureen McGuire-Kuletz

As we are now into the new millennium and looking forward to the future, it is also important to remember our past. The Virginia Rehabilitation Association has been and remains an active group of active professionals and supporters interesting in quality services to persons with disabilities in our state. We have a loyal and dedicated membership who have never been afraid to "roll up our sleeves" and take on difficult tasks. As your new President, I am proud to be part of that effort.

The National Rehabilitation Association is in the process of addressing needed restructuring. It is unclear as to how the new organization will look. The meeting to discuss the restructuring at National Rehabilitation Association in Minneapolis, Minnesota in November offered a variety of suggestions as to how this restructuring could be accomplished. An in-depth look at the proposed restructuring is available elsewhere in this newsletter and from your VRA Board Members. In addition, NRA will be mailing out information in the near future for your review. Please let you elected Board Members know your feelings regarding the proposed changes.

As we look to the coming year, please mark your calendars for the following activities:

- Legislative Day in Richmond: Monday, January 17, 2000. Please contact Benji Burnett (804-374-2483) for more information.
- National Rehabilitation Association Government Affairs: February 14-15, 2000, Washington, D.C. Contact Maureen McGuire-Kuletz (202-973-1558) for more information.
- Atlantic City Bus Trip: Spring 2000. Contact Ed Navis for more details (804-
- Collaborations 2000: August 6 to 9, 2000, Alexandria, Virginia. Information will be available in future NewsNotes.
- First Annual VRA Golf Tournament: Fall 2000. Please contact Howard Green (804-828-9548) for more information.
- Regional Training Programs throughout the state on a quarterly basis. Please check NewsNotes and web site for details.

We are always looking for volunteers and others interested in getting more involved in our association. If you feel you would like to take a more active role, please e-mail me at mkuletz@gwu.edu for more information.

I look forward to a terrific year!

VRA to Impact Virginia General Assembly

Jim Rothrock, Legislative Advocate

The Virginia Rehabilitation Association plans again to be at the forefront for disability advocacy at this year's General Assembly. The Board and Legislative Committee led by Benji Burnett and Howard Green have developed an agenda to include legislation and budget items which will: add \$3.9m for "2000 Jobs by 2000" for persons who are severely disabled - LTESS increased funding for community based services persons with Mental Retardation and Mental Illness who currently are on waiting lists; increase the Medicaid reimbursement rate for "supported employment" support the HJR 225

(Continued on page 2, VRA & General Assembly)

DIVISION UPDATE: MEMBERSHIP [Marshall Smith]

Please welcome the following new members to the Virginia Rehabilitation Association family

Denise Busic, Alexandria Va.
Lori Morris-Hughes, Chesapeake Va.
Carol Stewart, Arlington Va.
Debbie Douglas, Manassas Va.

**The next VRA Board meeting is:
FRIDAY, February 4th at 9:30 a.m. in Richmond.**

Presidential Pondering page 1

VARSS page 6

Annual Awards page 4

Membership page 6

LEGISLATIVE page 6

1999 Committee Chairs page 5



(VRA & General Assembly, continued from page 1)

recommendation on the "Medicaid Carve-out support the Governor's recommendation to create a "Developmental Disabilities" Medicaid Waiver; increase housing options for persons with disabilities; increase funding for accessible, responsive, public transportation. There will likely be additional items that VRA will support and I will post alerts to VRA leaders to be sure they are in the loop.

You can track the progress of bills you are interested in and schedule of important dates through 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 : 1.800.889.0229 and leave a message about your recommendations. Another great way to communicate is via fax: House fax 804.786.6310 and Senate fax 804.698.765. Let your legislator know what you think. Also, do not hesitate to contact me and let me know what you think or what I may be able to do for you. Telephone number: 804.673.0119; Fax number: 804.282.7118; Email: Jarothrock@aol.com.

Collaborations Conference 2000: Making It Happen In the New Millennium

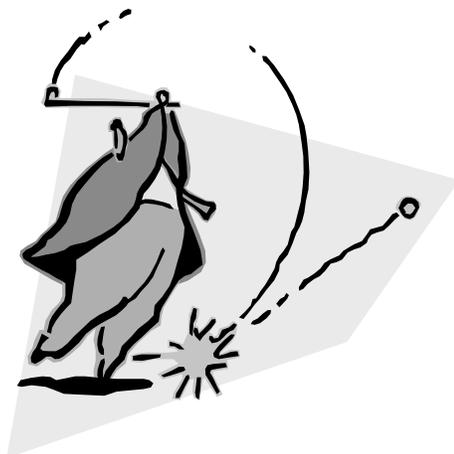
August 7-8, 2000 in Alexandria, VA

The conference planning committee is seeking presenters for the upcoming conference. Please call Carol Johnson at 703.461.6164 or email cjohnson@FOY.org for additional information.

PULL OUR YOUR CLUBS!

Howard Green

VRA will host its first annual golf tournament in the Fall of 2000. The date has not been set but it looks like an early October tee time for all of you who are interested in Golf. The site will be somewhere in the Richmond area and at this time either the Hollows or Highland Springs. In order to make this a successful event we will need a LOT of help. We will need plenty of players so we need you to market this to your friends. In addition we will need help in the following area: (1) workers during the day of the event, (2) calling & talking to businesses to get them to sponsor a hole, (3) secure prizes for winners and drawings, (4) sponsor a team, & (5) playing on the day of the event.



If you would like to get involved with this event please e-mail Howard Green at jgreen18@aol.com or Benjy Burnett at Burnetts@meckcom.net

Look for more information in January and February. We need to know we have your support to make this a success. Before we get too far along in the planning we need to hear from you!

2000 VRA OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

PRESIDENT:

MAUREEN MCGUIRE-KULETZ

PRESIDENT-ELECT:

MARK FLETCHER

PAST PRESIDENT:

MARY KAYE JOHNSTON

TREASURER:

ELEANOR WILLIAMS

SECRETARY:

BONNIE HAWLEY

VRCA PRESIDENT:

SHERMAN GIFFORD

VARSS PRESIDENT:

JAYNE CRAWFORD

VEWA PRESIDENT:

KEN MARGESON

VRAA PRESIDENT:

TOM BLOSSER

BOARD MEMBERS:

**BENJY BURNETT
SHARON BENDER
KAREN BROWN
MARIE DEL GARDO
TRACY HILL HARRINGTON
DAN SEMONES
DEBBIE PENROSE
JAYNE CRAWFORD
LYNN KUSHNER**

NEWSNOTES:

CARL NOWAKOWSKI

DIVISION UPDATE: LEGISLATIVE [Maureen McGuire-Kuletz]

The 1st Session of the 106th Congress adjourned on November 19, 1999. The 106th Congress will convene at noon on January 24, 2000. WIIA (Social Security Return-to-Work): The Conference Report on H.R. 1180 was approved the final day of the Congress and is expected to be signed by the President in mid-December. (Probably by the time you read this newsletter.) The compromise legislation allows individuals receiving disability benefits through Title II to maintain Medicare coverage without the payment of Part A premiums for an additional four and a half years beyond current law. The legislation provides a "ticket to work" to allow individuals with disabilities to choose their provider - either in the public or private sector. The Social Security Administration is authorized to conduct demonstration projects with graduated payment reduction as an individual's earnings increase. Work Opportunities Tax Credit (WOTC): An "extenders amendment" was added on to the final WIIA (Social Security Return-to-Work) (H.R. 1180) which extended the WOTC program until December 31, 2001. The program is retroactive to the June 30, 1999 expiration date - a two year extension.

Legislation to watch for in 2000: MiCASSA Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) developed a bipartisan bill in the last session of Congress. On November 17, 1999, S. 1935, the Medicaid Community Attendant Services and Supports Act (MiCASSA), was referred to the Senate Committee on Finance for consideration. If enacted, the bill would allow individuals with disabilities to choose community based care with attendant services and supports rather than care in a nursing facility.

Developmental Disabilities Act Reauthorization S.1809 passed the U.S. Senate on November 8, 1999 by unanimous consent but Congress ran out of time before it could be acted on by the House of Representatives. It should be taken up again in the next session of Congress.

NOTE: The 1998 Rehab Act Amendments have yet to be regulated by the U.S. Department of Education, The U.S. Department of Labor is in the final stages of regulating the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the Social Security Administration will begin to regulate Social Security Return-to-Work legislation.

Register today for the 19th annual NRA Governmental Affairs Seminar and SAVE \$50!

**February 13-15, 2000
Crystal Gateway Marriott,
Crystal City (Arlington), Virginia**

Register on or before January 28, 2000
and pay just \$185! Just go to
<https://www.securesite.net/ss385/events/register-govt.shtml>

Once again, the National Rehabilitation Association is offering in-depth training in advocacy at the federal and state levels with a focus on disability and vocational rehabilitation issues.

Our working schedule includes sessions with the Rehabilitation Services Administration and Social Security Administration, covering NRA legislative concerns, advocacy on the Internet, advocacy partners, state advocacy, and of course advocacy at the federal level. We'll also enjoy plenty of time for our yearly visits to Congressional offices.

Check out the working schedule for the event at
<https://www.securesite.net/ss385/events/register-govt.shtml>

Planning, mentoring and networking time will be plentiful during the NRA President's reception, a Governmental Affairs Luncheon and a Capitol Hill continental breakfast. The Seminar is an exciting time to meet new people, learn more about access to your government, learn about policy making, learn about issues and concerns, and voice your concerns to government officials. Continuing education credit will be available for CRC, CDMS, CCM, CVE, CWA, NCC and CEU.

Early Bird registration (postmarked on or before January 18, 2000) is just \$185 -- after the 18th, the price is \$235 to attend.

Register today at
<https://www.securesite.net/ss385/events/register-govt.shtml>

Plus, you can save even more with our "Sweetheart of a Deal"! Bring a first-timer to the seminar and take a 10% discount off your registration (first-time attendees registration must be received with your paid registration). Only one 10% discount applies.

The cut off date for the special reduced room rate for the National Rehabilitation Association's Governmental Affairs Seminar at the Crystal Gateway Marriott is January 21, 2000.

Government advocacy is a vital element to vocational rehabilitation programs -- we urge all members and interested individuals to join us this worthwhile seminar!

Remember, go to
<https://www.securesite.net/ss385/events/register-govt.shtml>

Virginia Rehabilitation Association
PO Box K-166
Richmond, Virginia 23288

PRESIDENT:	Mary Kaye Johnston
PRESIDENT-ELECT:	Maureen Mcguire-Kuletz
PAST PRESIDENT:	Shirley Lyons
TREASURER:	Eleanor Williams
SECRETARY:	Linda Wheatley
BOARD MEMBERS:	Benjy Burnett Sharon Bender Tracy Hill Harrington Mark Fletcher Dan Semones Debbie Penrose Jayne Crawford Charles Wingold Lynn Kushner
VRCA PRESIDENT:	Mark Hawkins
VARSS PRESIDENT:	Gloria O'Neal
VEWA PRESIDENT:	Matt Luther
VRAA PRESIDENT:	Mike Wong
NewsNotes EDITOR:	Carl Nowakowski

Newsletter articles should be submitted to the editor @

VRA NewsNotes
c/o DISN LLC
PO Box 28453
Richmond, Virginia 23228

804-266-2700
804-266-2111 Fax

NewsNotes@bydisn.com

