



# NewsNotes

A Quarterly Publication of the Virginia Rehabilitation Association  
2001 Second Quarter, April—June

## New President Energizes Members To Meet The Challenge

**The Virginia Rehabilitation Association** has many reasons to be a proud organization. One reason is the **2001 President, Mark Fletcher**. Through the years VRA has met many challenges. Under his leadership, membership did it again!

The Association has enjoyed the ebb and flow of numbers in membership; prosperity as well as lean financial situations; and joy in great leadership shared with regional and national programs. However, even in 1989, when the Association was enjoying good leadership and financial stability, prospective members were asking, "What can VRA do for me"?

In response to that question, the leadership determined that VRA could add an additional perk and offer educational support. A Grants Committee was appointed to create a VRA Foundation. It was a brave venture, especially since the National Rehabilitation Association had attempted to create a foundation, and was unsuccessful. In 1992, VRA funds and contributions made it possible to incorporate with an initial \$10,000. Since then additional funds have been added to the endowment annually.

In 1999, the Foundation received a major gift from the Miss Wheelchair Virginia Pageant, before it closed down. Also, a challenge grant was offered and met, by the end of annual Meeting. In 2000, another challenge was presented. Even though response was good, funds were not raised to meet the challenge. After the annual meeting, Mark Fletcher, President for 2001, called on fellow members to revisit this opportunity. Loyal VRA members responded, and the challenge was met.

Additional challenges are welcomed, because the VRA membership always comes through with leadership and support. Thanks, Mark!

The Board of Trustees of the Foundation is mandated to conduct a low-key annual fund drive, and invites all VRA members to participate in the Foundation. It is self-supporting and awards are based on income from the endowment. Tax-free contributions are added to the endowment. Donations of honor and memorial gifts are acknowledged as requested.

*(For more VRA Foundation News go to page 3 Be Good To Yourself )*

***(Submitted by Bernice Chattin)***

## Save This Date!! Rehabilitation Counselors Day

The Virginia Rehabilitation Counseling Association would like to invite you to celebrate the rehabilitation profession on Friday May 11th, from 12:30 - 4:30 p.m..

This event will be held at the VA Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond. An invitation is being extended to all rehabilitation professionals .

(Details will be coming out in the near future.)

## Membership News

The current Virginia Rehabilitation Association membership stands at 180 members as of February 28, 2001. This includes 16 student members. **"New:** Veronica Pannell, Student-Member; Tommizene Rice of Woodbridge; Roderick Curry of Chesapeake; Stephanie A. Kolakowsky of Farmville

*(Continued on page 2)*

**The next VRA Board meeting is: April 27, 2001**



## Membership News *(continued from page 1)*

**Renewals:** Martha Bernard, William Burnside, Sandra Cook, Kelly Desclos, Robert Krollman, Donna May, Robin Metcalf, Dr. Chris Reid, Charles Wingold.

Our objectives this year are to maintain the members we have, increase the numbers of new members and increase the number of student members we have.

Within the next few months, members should be receiving a new Membership Certificate suitable for framing. We hope everyone hangs this proudly in his or her office. And encourage co-workers to get one by joining VRA!

**Call Shirley Lyons** if you need membership brochures. Or contact your divisional membership chairperson.

## Meet Alison Higgs

VRA welcomes and reaches out to student members. When students join VRA they have an opportunity to learn and grow and develop professionally. VRA also profits from their enthusiasm and fresh insights.

Alison Higgs joined the National Rehabilitation Association and VRA while a graduate student in Rehabilitation Counseling at Virginia Commonwealth University/ Medical College of Virginia. She graduated with her Master's Degree and acquired her Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification in May, 2000. She is currently the Program Director for Pinnacle Employee Assistance Program and her career goal is to become a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). She says that, I am pleased to be a part of VRA because it helps me to develop needed resources in the area for myself and to help my client's access the services they need. VRA offers aid in achieving the needed CEU's for my CRC continuation as well. Besides that, the people, I have met in VRA, are very-friendly and hard working. Welcome aboard, Alison!!!

# www.vra.org

## New Co-Editors For The VRA NEWS NOTES

The new co-editors, Norm Kropp and Steve Sommer, wish to thank all VRA Members for sending in their articles and ideas for this newsletter. During the year 2001, the next quarterly issues are planned for mailing during the *first week of July and October*. Keep those articles coming!

*The deadline for submitting material for each issue will be the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month prior to the mailing.* Those items coming by way of the US Postage Service, should be sent to Norm Kropp at DRS, 2930 W. Broad Street, Suite 15, Richmond, Va. 23230. Or 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 invite you to visit: **www.vra.org**



## NRA'S 20th Annual Governmental Affairs Seminar

NRA's 20th Annual Governmental Affairs Seminar was held in Alexandria, Virginia March 11-13. Mark Fletcher and Bonnie Hawley attended the training and were joined on Capitol Hill for legislative visits from Benjy Burnett and Maureen McGuire-Kuletz. Legislative Statements were dropped off at the office of every congressional and senate representative. In addition, meetings were held with legis-

Governmental Affairs Seminar *(Continued on page 9)*



## General Assembly Ends--No Budget

The General Assembly session adjourned with very little accomplished. In my opinion, this has been one of the least productive sessions in many years, with failure to pass the budget being the centerpiece. The Senate and House of Delegates were unable to agree on a spending plan.

VRA members were successful in supporting legislation to benefit Virginians with disabilities. The VRA agenda contained several non-budget items. SB 1217 and HB 1579 make it easier for a person with a disability to vote using an absentee ballot when precinct voting may be inaccessible. VRA supported legislation, that was also passed, changes the designation of some entities that shall be represented on the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities. The bill deletes a designation of a representative of a higher education training facility, a real estate interest, and two at-large members. Added are representatives of a high-technology interest, a banking executive, and four persons with developmental disabilities or parents/guardians of such persons.



Governor Gilmore also proposed a plan to downsize our state's institutions in the MHMRAS system. The plan was well crafted and thoughtful, but was not adequately sold on the local level before the session began. In the future, we hope to have this plan revisited with plenty of discussion with local

*(Continued on page 5)*



### Training Opportunity

The George Washington University Regional Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program (RCCEP) offers an online option to earning 10 CRC credits on Ethics. Training will be at no cost to VRA members. For further information please **contact Maureen McGuire-Kuletz**, Assistant Professor, E-mail [mkuletz@gwu.edu](mailto:mkuletz@gwu.edu).

### Collaborations Conference 2001 with the theme: Catch the Wave in the New Millennium

The VRA Conference program chairs, VRA President-Elect Bonnie Hawley and VRA Past-President Maureen McGuire-Kuletz are preparing for our 2001 Collaborations Conference. Mark the date now!!  
September 23-26, 2001  
Ramada Plaza Resort Oceanfront Hotel, Virginia Beach, VA.

### Be Good To Yourself !!

If you have considered updating your professional excellence, the **VRA Foundation** can help. The mission of the Foundation is to provide excellence through **educational assistance to members of VRA (in good standing), a child, or the spouse of a member**. Awards available annually are based on income from the endowment.

Applications are accepted May to July and the award/awards are announced in August or early September for the current academic year.

**Criteria:** No major course of study is required for a child or spouse. If the applicant is a VRA member, the request must be for studies related to the field of rehabilitation. Applicant must

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## 2001 VRCA Officers and Board Members

**Robin Metcalf** President  
**Russ Ward** President-Elect  
**Alice Berman** Secretary  
**Darlene Ackerman** Treasurer  
**Jane Bennett** Board Member  
**Kelly Desclos** Board Member  
**Kristi Lockhart** Board Member  
**Cheryl McDonnell** Board Member  
**Eammon McEvelly** Board Member  
**Pamela Willard** Board Member

## Assistive Technology Perspectives Seminar Series!!

The Virginia Assistive Technology System is sponsoring a series of Introductory AT Workshops. The goal of the seminars is to provide, at an affordable cost, a comprehensive overview of the assistive technology topic at hand, with an emphasis on audience information sharing.

VATS Central Regional Site, in collaboration with the University of Virginia's Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, is coordinating this initiative. Topics of seminars held have included Seating and Mobility and Adaptive Transportation. Future seminars will include Worksite/Home Modifications to be held April 27, 2001 in Charlottesville, and

*(Continued on page 6)*

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## General Assembly Ends--No Budget *(Continued from page 3)*

officials, to allay the fears of lost jobs in their localities.

Legislation was passed to make it easier for a person with a disability to renew a request for a Handicapped Parking plate or decal. Other bills were passed to make it easier to train assistance animals; increase consumer participation on local Human Rights Councils and the Board of Nursing Home Administrators; continue the study of autism; clarify the role of the Inspector General at DMHMRSAS; acknowledge the state's regret for its role in the Eugenics Movement; and extend the exemption for state sales tax to many human services organizations.

Bills that failed to pass include: a requirement for insurance coverage of hearing aids; to remove the requirement for motorcycle riders to wear helmets; to expand the Virginia Transit Liability Pool to include certain private non profit organizations; to require public hearings before a group home could be built in a community; and a study of the effectiveness of DRVD.

Although there was not much progress, it was a busy session. The next month will clarify where we are on the budget. I will keep you posted, and call on you to act, as soon as it is clear, on which strategies are to be used.

Also, in the spring we will see how redistricting will affect members of the Legislature. It is likely that many VRA friendly legislators, both Republican and Democrat, may have new districts due to population shifts.

Thanks to all of you who shared your opinions with your representatives and promoted the VRA agenda.

***Stay tuned !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!***

***Jim Rothrock, VRA Governmental Affairs Staff***

## Statewide Independent Living Council

Over the next several months, the **Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)** and the two state rehabilitation agencies will be developing a **federally mandated three-year State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL)**. The SPIL is designed to encourage a statewide, multi-agency, and consumer effort for the planning of independent living and advocacy efforts throughout the Commonwealth. For more information, **contact Theresa Preda** at (804) 662-7078 or **Jim Rothrock** at (804) 673-0119.

The SILC has awarded second-year funding of the project **Making Community Living a Reality** to the Independence Center, Inc. The project was initially designed to provide training on how to more easily access the Medicaid system to consumers, advocates, and family members. The second year of the project will provide a **train-the-trainer model** for localities in Virginia. **For access to this important model, please call Maureen Hollowell** at (757) 461-8007.



## Be Good To Yourself *(Continued from page 3)*

show evidence of acceptance by an institution of higher learning approved by the Association of Colleges and Schools. Preference will be given to applicants attending Virginia schools.

Applicant must apply annually and maintain a "C" average or better to be eligible for reapplication.

Applicants must complete an application form that can be obtained from a VRA NewsNotes Editor or a VRA Board member.

**Applications are due by July 1.**

Mail applications to: Virginia Rehabilitation Association Foundation, Inc.

C/o **J. Benjamin Burnett, Jr.**  
 Department of Rehabilitative Services  
 1627 Seymour Drive  
 South Boston, Virginia 24592

## The APSE 12th Annual Conference APSE 2001 Conference July 22-25th 2001

Put it on your calendars! Come to the site and download the Conference Brochure before you get it in the mail! There is great information and discounts. <<http://www.apse.org/dconference.html>>

## Awards & Nominations

Naomi M. Aitken, VRA Awards Chairperson

The Nominations and Awards Committee is seeking nominations for awards to be presented at the 2001 Collaborations Conference. Again this year, the Awards Ceremony will include all three associations (VRA, VaAPSE, and vaACCES) at the ceremony and reception on Monday, September 24<sup>th</sup>. We want to recognize and highlight VRA's outstanding recipients for all seven distinguished awards. Nominations will be accepted throughout the year. Now is the time to ACT! Let's show our appreciation for the Best of 2001. *The deadline for accepting nominations is July 30, 2001.* If you would like additional information, **contact Naomi Aitken** (804) 295-0990/aitken.ssr@prodigy.net or go to [www.vra.org](http://www.vra.org) for the forms and descriptions of the awards. The descriptions are also in the January 2001 issue.

## 26th IRI Book Available On-Line

The 26th Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI) Report on "Using The Internet As A Resource to the Work of the State VR Counselor" has been published. It includes the latest ideas in technology and e-communication currently being used to serve people with disabilities. The document is meant to be a source of innovative ideas for rehabilitation personnel, a user's guide, and a tool for use in training staff. The document was developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education and edited by The George Washington University RRCEP. It is available on-line at the following web site: <http://www.rcep6.org/IRI.htm>

## AT Seminar Series *(Continued from page 4)*

Adaptive Recreation/Leisure/Sports to be held in conjunction with the Eastern Assistive Solutions with Technology East Conference, June 14-16, 2001, at George Mason University.

The target audience includes persons with disabilities, direct care-providers (families, friends, nursing assistants, personal care assistants, etc.), persons who provide community services (advocates, rehabilitation counselors, CIL, CSB, and DSB staff members, home-health providers, camp counselors, etc.) and rehabilitation and Allied Health professionals.

The Seminar fee is \$75.00, with a limited number of partial scholarships available to non-professional users of assistive technology. **Contact Joyce Sharp**, VATS Central Regional Site coordinator, to Register. For additional information telephone (804) 924-0041 or email [vats@virginia.edu](mailto:vats@virginia.edu).



*I n t h e N e w M i l l e n n i u m*



## Presidential Pondering In 2001

The year 2001 is moving along quickly for the VRA. We are already in the midst of Spring, with Summer fast approaching!

The long awaited, American Medical Review video produced by the National Rehabilitation Association, is now available. VRA provided assistance in making this film last December. Please note that several of our VRA members are featured in this documentary. The Association is in the process of producing extra copies for use, by the Chapters, in their marketing and membership recruitment activities. This video is scheduled to be broadcast through public service televisions around the country, within the next several weeks.

Recently, VRA members have been busy contacting their elected representatives on the State and Federal levels, to advocate for legislative issues that may affect the field of rehabilitation. Both Jim Rothrock, our legislative liaison, and the VRA Governmental Affairs Committee, will continue to update us on the results of VRA's lobbying efforts.

We have seen an increased interest and participation in the Educational Workshops which are being sponsored by VRA and the Divisions. The cost is not prohibitive, and it is an excellent opportunity to obtain those much desired CRC maintenance hours! Also, as a result of these informative workshops, we have been able to attract and recruit new members.

Please pay careful attention to the information in this issue of the NewsNotes, referencing both the 2001 Collaborations Training Conference's "Call for Papers" and request for "Volunteers". The Committee has been hard at work, planning this conference. The dates and location for the 2002 conference is currently being explored.

We continue to network, promote professional growth, and welcome new members to the VRA!

Again, please do not hesitate to contact me at (703) 313-4408, if you have questions or suggestions.

We do value your input! You can also reach me via e-mail: [mfletc1@aol.com](mailto:mfletc1@aol.com).

***Submitted by Mark Fletcher, President of the VRA***



## Swimming Upstream: Kim & Scott's Story

On Christmas Eve, just five weeks shy of his 27<sup>th</sup> birthday, Scott Conley, a former world ranked swimmer, had a brain aneurysm. Kim, his fiancée, with whom he had just bought a house five days earlier, was told he had a 90% chance of dying. That was two years ago.

Scott had three brain surgeries in the course of seven days. He was in a coma for five months without speaking or eating, battled meningitis, peritonitis, two bouts with pneu-

**SCOTT'S STORY** (Continued on page 13)

### FIRST ANNUAL BRAIN INJURY SERVICES CO-ED SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT



WHEN: MAY 19, 2001

WHERE: WAKEFIELD PARK

WHY: FUND-RAISER TO PROMOTE  
COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION ON BRAIN  
INJURIES

CONTRIBUTIONS BENEFIT  
BRAIN INJURY SERVICES, A 501 (C)(3) ORGANIZATION  
SERVING INDIVIDUALS IN THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA AREA  
WHO HAVE SURVIVED A BRAIN INJURY.  
MORE DETAILED INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE SOON.  
DIRECT QUESTIONS TO KAREN LUFFRED  
AT (703) 352-1656.

## VRA Schedule/Rehabilitation Events for 2001

**Remember: April 27th is the next  
VRA Board Meeting, & April 28th  
is the CRC Exam in Richmond!!**

### May

11-VRCA celebrates rehabilitation professionals at the Va. Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond

### June

15-Deadline for VRA News Notes articles

### July

**27-VRA Board Meeting-Richmond**  
(Henrico MH)

### September

14-Second Annual VRA Golf Classic at the Hollows

15-Deadline for VRA News Notes articles

23-26-Collaborations Conference, Virginia Beach, Ramada Inn

24 or 25-VRA Annual Membership Breakfast meeting

### October

**26-VRA Board Meeting-Richmond**  
(Henrico MH)

31-Nov. 4-NRA Annual Training Meeting-Biloxi, MS., Beau Rivage Resort

### December

**7-VRA Board Retreat**

15-Deadline for VRA News Notes Articles

## The Fourth Annual Brain Injury Services Case Management Conference



Brain Injury Services will be presenting a two-day seminar for professionals working in brain injury care on Thursday, June 7<sup>th</sup> and Friday, June 8<sup>th</sup> at The Williamsburg Hospitality House in Williamsburg, Virginia. . The purpose of the two day conference is to help case managers and other professionals identify the most effective case management interventions for individuals with brain injuries and to develop knowledge of resources for professionals to use in facilitating services in their communities.

This year's two-day conference promises to be a meaningful, educational and professional experience. Please save the date to attend the conference. We look forward to you joining us!

If you have questions or would like to exhibit or sponsor this year's conference please **call Karen Luffred** at (703) 352-1656.



## VHST s Consumer Provider Training Program

Midway through the first semester of training with its first class of students (all of whom are adults living with serious mental illnesses), VHST s Consumer Provider Training Program appears to be successfully demonstrating, that with appropriate structure and supports, people whose personal, educational, and vocational lives have been interrupted by a significant psychiatric disability, can get back on track, and move forward in a positive way.

The Virginia Human Services Training Center (VHST) was established in March 2000, with start-up funding from DMHMRSAS. Based on a program developed and conducted in Denver since 1986, by the Regional Assessment and Training Center, VHST is sited at the Region Ten Community Services Board in Charlottesville, and serves the entire state of Virginia. VHST will serve as a training center for consumer providers, as well as, a clearinghouse for information about consumer provider training and role transition issues, for both mental health professionals and consumers.

By developing a working partnership with DMHMRSAS, local CSB/BHAs, the Department of Rehabilitative Services, and Piedmont Virginia Community College, VHST is offering a 21 credit hour career studies certificate program in human services. Designed to prepare mental health consumers for direct services positions in community services boards and other human services agency settings, the 15 week academic portion of the training occurs in Charlottesville, and is followed by 12 week paid internship at the student s home Community Services Board or Behavioral Health Authority.

Sixteen students from twelve different CSB/BHAs across Virginia were accepted into the first training program and began taking classes last January. At mid-term, all sixteen students continue their active participation in the program. Their academic performance is outstanding, and perhaps more importantly, their personal recovery and psychiatric stability continue to be solid. Upon their graduation in August, the students will be hired by their home CSB/BHAs in part-time positions; serving as case management aides, residential program assistants, PACT program aides, and in other direct service positions. They will bring to their new positions solid academic and practical training, as well as, the strengths and knowledge gained from their life experiences as mental health services consumers.

If you know a mental health consumer who wants to work in the field of mental health, contact your CSB/BHA s Director of Community Support Services, Director of Mental Health Services, PACT, Clubhouse, or Vocational Program Team Leaders/Directors, and urge them to begin planning the best ways that consumer providers could be incorporated into their programs. Recruiting for the second Consumer Provider class will begin in early summer, with next year s training program beginning in January 2002. All student slots are sponsored , with written commitments for jobs and paid internships, obtained from Community Services Boards and Behavioral Health Authorities prior to recruiting students from any locality. Students accepted for admission, work with their DRS counselors to obtain financial support for pursuing their training and moving into employment. For further information about this new training program, **contact Cynthia Harrison, Director of VHST, (804) 970-2148.**

### Governmental Affairs Seminar *(Continued from page 2)*

lative aides from the offices of Senator Warner, Congressman Sisisky, and Congressman Davis. The group was fortunate to meet privately with Congressman Goode who expressed support of the VRA Legislative Agenda. The following is the VRA Legislative National Issues developed from the NRA Position Papers.

1. The National Rehabilitation Association strongly opposes any amendments or changes to the current American With Disabilities Act. In 1990 the National Rehabilitation Association assumed an active role in advocacy efforts toward the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). After a decade on the books, there still remains a high unemployment for persons with disabilities. Weakening the current Act would be a step backward for our country and would send a

*(Continued on page 12)*



## VATS Southwest Regional Site Is Now Located at Virginia Tech

The Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) is pleased to announce that the Southwest Virginia Regional Site is now located in Blacksburg at Virginia Tech. This VATS regional site will expand upon the work done previously to develop a community-based consortium that helps to shape the development of the regional delivery system.

Sheridan Parker is the new Southwest Coordinator. She has a decade of experience serving individuals with disabilities. She has been a Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) Counselor, a Department of Rehabilitative Services Rehabilitation Counselor, and has worked with students with disabilities at Virginia Tech's Dean of Students Office.

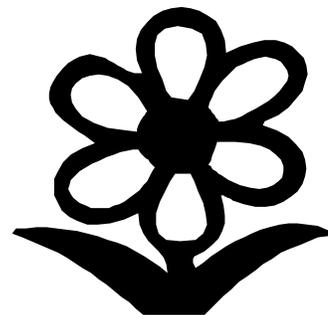
During her time as a DRS Counselor, Sheridan served the counties of Montgomery, Giles, Floyd, and Pulaski, as well as the city of Radford. She received the Rookie of the Year award in 1992. Sheridan is pleased to be working with DRS again, and will cover the entire southwest region and will be based in the Assistive Technology Lab at Virginia Tech. **Sheridan Parker** can be contacted at the SW Regional VATS Site:  
 Sheridan Parker,  
 Coordinator, VATS SW Regional Site,  
 c/o Special Services Lab, VA TECH  
 P. O. Box 9001, Blacksburg, VA 24062-9001  
 (540) 231-4270, swvats@vt.edu

## The John Jane Center

As of January 1, 2001, the The John Jane Center became a private, not for profit 501 (3c) charitable organization with Dr. George Zitnay as president. The John Jane Center serves persons with brain injury in Central Virginia. The Center's programs include a Day Program, BRIDGE program, Transitional Living, Clubhouse, Spasticity, and Vocational. For more information about The John Jane Center, please visit our website at [www.jjbic.org](http://www.jjbic.org) or call 804-984-5218.

## Greetings and Happy Spring from VARSS!

I d like to take this opportunity to update the VRA membership on what s happening with our division. Our first meeting of the year was held at WWRC on February 1, 2001. A major topic for discussion was the decrease in the current



membership and the increase in dues. We now have a total of nine dedicated members. The uncertainty of the NRA re-organization has led to the postponement of some of our more formal activities and committee assignments. But please note that we are still alive and kicking! Plans are underway for a celebration during Support Staff Week (April 23-27) and a training opportunity sometime in the summer or fall for support staff throughout the Commonwealth. Our next meeting will be held at WWRC May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00 a.m. All interested are welcome to attend. Remember the more knowledge we gain about each division, the better messengers we become. **Submitted by Karen R. Stevens, VARSS President**

### 2001 EDUCATION COMMITTEE Watch Out! This committee is good stuff!

VRA is proud to introduce an enthusiastic and dedicated Education Committee for 2001. The committee members include Margaret Gillespie, serving the Southwest Region; Jean Steveson, serving the Tidewater Region; Russ Ward and Jane Bennett, serving the Nova Region; and Marie Del Gardo, the Central Region. It takes a lot of time and coordination to present a quality training program, so I am thankful that we have such a strong committee. I would like to invite all VRA members to get involved in all aspects of training, not only to earn your CRC credits, but also to network with other rehabilitation professionals.

We already have a training schedule planned for the year! Our topics include The Internet and Rehabilitation in the Southwest; Ethics in the Tidewater and Central Regions; and Vocational

*(Continued on page 11)*



## TELEPHONE ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH SPEECH DISABILITIES

If you have a speech disability and live in one of the 38 states or the District of Columbia that offer this service, you can now use a new, free telephone service 24 hours a day. This service, called Speech to Speech (STS), provides communication assistants (CAS) for people with difficulty being understood by the public on the telephone.

The FCC ruled that STS must be available nationwide in March 2001. STS will be provided through the TTY relay in each state. Unlike TTY, STS enables people with speech disabilities to communicate by voice through a CA as many people with speech disabilities have difficulty typing. People with speech disabilities can dial toll free to reach a patient, trained CA who is familiar with many speech patterns and has excellent language recognition skills. This CA makes telephone calls for them, and repeats their words exactly in a 3-way calling environment. Every month users make about 6,000 calls nationally.

STS is the only way for many people to telephone others not accustomed to their speech. Many STS users have Parkinson's disease, cerebral palsy, ALS, multiple sclerosis, or muscular dystrophy. STS also helps some speech synthesizer users.

Bob Segalman, Ph.D. has cerebral palsy, and developed the concept of STS. Now it makes telephone use much easier for him. To try out STS, report problems, or get more information: Call (800) 854-7784 and ask for Dr. Bob Segalman direct (916) 263-8689, or e-mail him at: [bsegalma@dor.ca.gov](mailto:bsegalma@dor.ca.gov) You may also visit the STS website: <http://www.stsnews.com/> or contact Katherine Keller at [stslistserv@stsnews.com](mailto:stslistserv@stsnews.com) to place you on the STS list serve.

Bob is gathering support letters to insure that STS and STS Outreach are implemented in all 50 states. If you're willing to sign such a letter, please e-mail him. For a list of U. S. Speech-to-Speech access numbers go to: <http://www.stsnews.com/Pages/STSDial-UpTelnumbers.html>

For further information contact: **Ed Turner, Training Associate, Virginia Commonwealth University, Rehabilitation Research and Training Center On Workplace Supports**, P.O. Box 842011, Richmond, VA 23284-2011, (804) 828-8567, or go to [www.worksupport.com](http://www.worksupport.com)

### Education Committee

*(Continued from page 10)*

Testing in the Nova Region.

Our first training of the year was presented in collaboration with VRCA on February 28<sup>th</sup> in the Central Region. Gratefully the speaker, Dr. Reid, of the VCU faculty, was an entertaining and informative speaker, who kept our attention the entire day.

The VRA Education Committee is here to serve you, our members, so we are seeking your input for future training needs in your region. You can contact your regional representative or email Marie Del Gardo at [delgarm@drs.state.va.us](mailto:delgarm@drs.state.va.us) or call at (804) 662-7160. We look forward to hearing from you, soon!

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

### Institute on Rehabilitation Issues:

You are invited to view the report from the 26th IRI 2000, **"Using the Internet as a Resource to the Work of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor"** at <http://www.gwu.edu/~rrcep/iri.html>

We welcome your comments and suggestions. To request a hard copy of the 26th IRI document please e-mail **Greg Mandrake Alan** at [gmalan@gwu.edu](mailto:gmalan@gwu.edu).





## Employment Networks

For the past year, the Marketing Department has worked toward the development of a functional, growing web of Employment Networks throughout the state. Modeled from Central Region's successful Metro Richmond Employment Network, these Networks have provided a valuable arena for workforce development professionals including Vocational Rehabilitation and Job Placement counselors to hear first-hand the latest job leads and recruitment needs from some of the areas top employers. More importantly, the Employment Networks have provided the agency with a demonstrated, working catalyst for bringing qualified and talented individuals with disabilities on the same playing field with other non-disabled job applicants. For VR, it has brought about more working partnerships statewide with top businesses and workforce organizations.

To date, there are 16 running Employment Networks throughout the state, with additional local Networks in the making. They are typically led and facilitated by one of DRS Regional Marketing Specialists and are supported by a steering committee comprised of DRS representatives and other individuals from similar workforce development groups and organizations. The following is a listing of the current local Employment Networks in each region:

### Central

Metro Richmond Employment Network - Ethel Walker (804) 662-7153  
 Danville Area Employment Network - Nancy Worley-Martin (804) 791-5257

### Tidewater

Hampton Roads Employment Network (Southside) - Brent Barkway (757) 396-6728  
 Hampton Roads Employment Network (Peninsula) - Cortney Miron (757) 865-3117

### Northern Virginia

Northern Virginia Employment Network - Lisa Marcucci (703) 313-4409  
 Charlottesville Regional Employment Network - Mike Somers (540) 434-5981  
 Prince William County Employment Network - Teri Bertsch (703) 313-4407  
 Greater Fredericksburg Employment Network - Ann Mathieu (540) 899-4161  
 Shenandoah County Employment Resource Group - Vickie Emmert (540) 459-6226  
 Luray/Page County Employers Network - LaPearl Smith (540) 535-1808  
 Rockingham/Augusta Employers Network - Don Stonesifer (540) 434-5981  
 Winchester/Frederick/Clarke Employment Network - Judy Alkire (540) 722-3453

### Southwest

Roanoke Workforce Network - Dan Semones (540) 776-2740  
 Region 2000 Area Network for Employment - Renee Wilson (804) 947-6721  
 Martinsville Area Disabilities Employment Network - Marsha Cook (540) 632-7161  
 New River Valley Employment Network - Dan Semones (540) 776-2740

## Governmental Affairs Seminar *(Continued from page 9)*

negative message to Americans with disabilities who have the right to contribute fully to American Society.

2. The National Rehabilitation Association strongly recommends that the Administration and the Congress substantially increase the budget for Funding of public Vocational Rehabilitation programs that will meet these needs as we enter the 21st Century. The public Vocational Rehabilitation Program has seen a significant increase in demands placed upon the program due to new and expanded educational and "return-to-work" programs such as IDEA, WIA, TANF, Welfare to Work, and Assistive Technology advances. The Public VR Program has received no new dollars beyond the cost of living (COLA) increases for the last eight years. Additionally, with the calculation of the current formula used to disperse the COLA dollars, some states have actually received fewer dollars in some years than appropriated to them previously. Language in Section 110 appropriation

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**Scott s Story** *(Continued from page 8)*

monia and had muscle spasms so badly in his lower extremities that he had to undergo tendon release surgery because of permanent damage. Kim left a lucrative job in software sales for six months to be at his side every day at National Rehab in D.C.

When Scott finally returned to the new house he and Kim had bought a year earlier, he was not moving and was having problems with seizures. It was suggested that they consider a nursing facility; Kim refused. Kim returned to work part-time, paying for an aide to be with Scott while she was at work. Scott was collecting disability, but the payments barely covered supplies, travel costs to therapy, and medical and therapy bills. Scott was getting stronger but still a long way from caring for himself. Kim was his sole care provider and she could not return to work full time because of the high cost of paying for full-time personal aides. The couple s savings had dwindled and the reality of Scott going to a nursing home was looming.

Enter the DRS Personal Assistance Services Program for People with Brain Injuries (PAS/BI). This program provided for personal care and has given Scott newfound independence and freedom. Kim is now Scott s fiancée again, not just his full-time caregiver. Kim can also look for full-time employment without worrying about the drain on her salary of paying for home health aides out of pocket.

The doctors said that Scott would never talk, eat, or do anything for himself again. Well, he is talking, eating, interacting meaningfully with family and friends, taking part in decisions about his future, standing, and taking steps toward walking by himself again. He still has problems with attention, memory, judgment, seizures and balance, but is receiving therapy. Scott s goal is to return to the workforce within the next several years. Oh yeah, and the doctors are pretty impressed too! (This article was written by Kim Shorter, with the assistance of DRS staff.)

*Personal Assistance Services for Individuals with Brain Injury (PAS/BI) is a state-funded, Department of Rehabilitative Services administered program that offers non-medical services designed to assist a consumer with significant functional limitations resulting from a brain injury and who require assistance with activities of daily living. If you would like additional information about PAS/BI, contact **Teresa C. Wingold** at 1(800) 552-5019 or [wingoltc@drs.state.va.us](mailto:wingoltc@drs.state.va.us)*

**Governmental Affairs Seminar**

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should clarify that each state is to receive at least the COLA (CPI) AND be held harmless for the formula calculation. Additionally, a 5% increase above the COLA is imperative if the Public VR Program is to keep up with increasing demand for its services in today's workforce.

3. Voting must be fully accessible for individuals with disabilities Legislation is now being considered by the 107th Congress to modernize the voting system across the United States. However, the needs of persons with disabilities are not addressed in the current plans. We urge that any legislation to modernize the nation's voting system MUST include: Fully accessible polling places, voting methods and technology which is fully accessible to persons who are visually impaired as well as persons with other disabilities.
4. The National Rehabilitation Association strongly urges Congress to quickly pass a meaningful Patient's Bill of Rights Act that would include: A health care system with greater consumer participation, responsibility, and control. Accurate and accessible information regarding healthcare options. Open medical consultations allowing medical personnel to discuss all medical/treatment options with repercussions; Elimination of preauthorization for actual emergency services; Health Insurance plan that includes access to specialty services; Non-discrimination in coverage and service delivery; and a fair and efficient external complaint, appeal, and review process.



**WORLD WIDE WEB RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL WORKERS**

To our colleagues in social work and allied fields:  
 A substantially upgraded version of the World Wide Web Resources for Social Workers site is now online at the same address:  
<http://www.nyu.edu/socialwork/wwwrsw/>  
 This site has been developed over the past seven years with the goal of becoming a virtual library that assists social service workers and allied professionals in obtaining the WWW based information they need. WWWRSW contains over 50,000 links. While we provide many links to government agencies and professional organizations, our primary focus continues to be the provision of direct links to full text, professionally relevant documents. In addition to continuing coverage of the 'gray' literature (e.g., government documents such as the 492 page "10th Special Report to the U.S. Congress on Alcohol and Health") we have continued to add links to full text articles from professional journals. Journals that we now provide such links to include: Alcohol Research and Health; Australasian Journal of Disaster and Trauma Studies; British Medical Journal; Canadian Medical Association Journal; Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science; Cytyscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research; Current Research in Social Psychology; Early Childhood Research & Practice; Electronic Journal of Sociology; Forum: Qualitative Social Research; Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis; Journal of Rural Community Psychology; Monthly Labor Review Online; Sociological Research Online; The Future of Children; The On-Line Journal of Ethics and The Qualitative Report. We have continued restructuring of the site to improve ease of use. A new interface and search engine are being created and will be introduced in the near future. The number of top-level categories has been reduced from eight to six. Other new navigation features have been added throughout. This site is updated daily. You can make WWWRSW your home page very easily. For instance: In Microsoft Internet Explorer [5.5] click on Tools, then click on Internet Options. Under the General tab the first option is Home Page. Simply paste the WWWRSW address into the white space and click

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**VIRGINIA RECEIVES \$1 MILLION FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY LOAN FUND**

Richmond - Governor Jim Gilmore announced on 2/26/01 that Virginia had received a grant award totaling \$1,000,000 from the U.S. Department of Education, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR).

The Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority (ATLFA) "This is to be a time for all Virginians, and it's important that we leave no one behind during this period of economic prosperity in the Commonwealth," said Governor Gilmore. "This money will provide additional funding for low interest loans and loan guarantees to Virginians with disabilities for equipment and technology that increase independence, quality of life, and employment opportunities."

The Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS), a program under the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS), conducted the initial national research that led to the establishment of Virginia's own Assistive technology loan fund program. This program has been recognized nationally for this and other initiatives to make assistive technology information, devices, and services more accessible to Virginians of all ages.

"Before the Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority, it was very difficult for most middle and low-income Virginians to access affordable credit financing for assistive technology," said Secretary of Health and Human Resources Claude A. Allen. "Now, assistive technology loans enable many Virginians to purchase communication devices, home and vehicle modifications, wheelchairs, hearing aids, modified computers, low vision aids, and more."

ATLFA and VATS competed nationally for this award, one of only six grants awarded by NIDRR. ATLFA's lending partner in this initiative is SunTrust Bank, which will make loans to consumers for special equipment and modifications. The federal grant

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## WEB RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

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on OK. In Netscape Communicator [4.7] click on Edit, then click on Preferences. On the right hand side of the dialog box in the middle there will be a space where you can paste the WWRSW address. Then click OK.

There is no charge for this service. New York University's Ehrenkranz School of Social Work and the Division of Social Work and Behavioral Science, Mount Sinai School of Medicine jointly sponsor WWRSW. Please feel free to link to WWRSW on your site and send any suggestions for new sites that should be added (especially non-US sites).

Warm regards, Gary & the WWRSW Team  
**Submitted by Gary Holden, D.S.W.**  
*Associate Professor, Ehrenkranz School of Social Work, Room 407, New York University, 1 Washington Square North, New York, NY., US 10003, phone (212) 998-5940*



**The Collaborations Committee** has been hard at work these past months coming together with a Conference we hope you will enjoy. This will be our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual event and we are striving to make it bigger and better with each year. Several interesting Keynote Speakers have been suggested and final confirmations are pending. The Call for Papers has gone out and we encourage our VRA members to take time to share their considerable knowledge with their peers. Included in this issue is a form, **Call for Papers** for your use, in the event you have not already received one.

We are also looking for volunteers to help with monitoring sessions, the registration table, preparing conference bags, as well as

## \$1 MILLION FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

(Continued from page 14)

will be used to guarantee SunTrust loans and reduce the interest rate. It will give the Commonwealth a solid financial base for continued loans to Virginians with disabilities.

"SunTrust is pleased to be able to continue our lending relationship with ATLFA," said Scott Hansen, SunTrust Vice President, Consumer Lending. "Our organization has long been a strong supporter of programs that enable Virginia's disabled population to succeed and prosper in today's social and economic environment."

For additional information about the Assistive Technology Fund Loan Authority, or for a loan application, call Mike Scione, Executive Director of the Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority, at (804) 662-9000. Persons interested in additional information about the Virginia Assistive Technology System may contact Ken Knorr, Director, at (804) 662-9990.

To subscribe or unsubscribe from the "Governor's Update" go to: Governor's  
 <<http://www.thedigitaldominion.com/gilmoreUpdate/update.cfm>> Update

You can also visit Governor Jim Gilmore's online office at: Governor's Homepage  
 <<http://www.thedigitaldominion.com/>> Homepage

other assignments. Included in this NewsNotes is a **Volunteer Information Sheet**. If you are interested in helping out with any of the volunteer opportunities, please complete the form and send to Naomi Aitken.

If you have any questions about this years Collaborations Conference, your VRA representatives to the Steering Committee are Maureen McGuire-Kuletz and Bonnie Hawley. Please contact them with your ideas or questions.

Remember to mark the date September 23-25, at the Virginia Beach Ramada Plaza Resort Oceanfront. Conference registration information will be arriving soon. **Don't delay! Remember, the Early Bird gets the reduced Conference rate! See you at the Beach!**

Virginia Rehabilitation Association  
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