Campaigning Season Begins

On November 6th we will elect our top three elected officials: Governor, Lt. Governor, and Attorney General, and all 100 members of our House of Delegates. This presents a wonderful opportunity for VRA members to garner some political capital that will help us in advancing our legislative agenda. Remember that the first and most important job of any politician is to get elected. They do this by connecting with people just like VRA members and getting these folks to support them and help them in their campaigns.

One effective way to support a candidate is by contributing to their campaign. But this is not the only way to have an impact. Every election is always looking for volunteers to put up yard signs, stuff envelopes, work in a phone bank, or whatever tasks need to be done. You can do this by getting to know the candidate, and in so doing, educate them about your programs and what VRA is all about.

I suggest you go to the internet to get to know the candidates and their positions. If you would like me to give you more details on a candidate’s legislative record please let me know, but remember that the most important thing to do is to get involved with the candidate of your choice and make a difference.

Thanks for all your help.

Jim Rothrock, VRA Governmental Affairs Staff
phone: (804)673-0119 or email: jarothrock@aol.com

Membership Committee Report

Membership recruitment should be a goal of each and every member. Our Organization only grows stronger with numbers!

There are many benefits to membership: savings on trainings both in the State and on a National level, access to liability insurance, membership in a Division that may be of interest to you, opportunity to network with peers, and a voice to assist those with disabilities on both the State and National political issues.

(Continued on page 2)

CATCH THE WAVE
In the New Millennium
Collaborations 2001 Update on Page 3!!!

The next VRA Board meeting is: July 27, 2001
Accommodating Psychiatric Disabilities and the ADA.

The following website contains good information and ideas of accommodations that you may find useful as you work with clients with psychiatric disabilities in obtaining employment.

Job Accommodation Network ideas for accommodating psychiatric disabilities.
http://www.jan.wvu.edu/media/Psychiatric.html

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s guidance on accommodating psychiatric disabilities.
http://www.eeoc.gov/docs/psych.html

Submitted by Mark L. Hawkins, CRC
DSB Program Manager
Department of Rehabilitative Services
(804)662-7369
(800)552-5019

CO-EDITORS FOR THE VRA NEWS NOTES WELCOME YOUR ARTICLES!!!

The co-editors, Norm Kropp and Steve Sommer, wish to thank all VRA Members for sending their articles and ideas for the newsletter. The next quarterly edition will be in October. The deadline for submitting material for this issue will be the 15th day of September. Those items sent by way of the US Postage Service, should be sent to Norm Kropp at DRS, 2930 W. Broad Street, 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. Enjoy seeing your articles on our professional website. Visit the site today to view past issues of the News Notes, Legislative Issues, and election updates of VRA officers, Division officers, and current board members. www.vra.org

Hope you enjoy the VRCA Newsletter arriving at the same time this month!! Twice the news for your $$$$!!

Membership Committee Report (Continued from page 1)

I challenge each current member to recruit one new member between now and the end of the year.

Here is the list of new members over the last two months, followed by a list of members who chose to renew their membership, keeping VRA strong! Thanks to all!

New members: Kristie Moyer, Rochelle, VA; Jane Rath, Fairfax, VA; Theresa Light, Woodville, VA. And new student members: Gretchen Echard, Falls Church, VA; Rebecca France, Gate City, VA; Susan Hannifan, Palmyra, VA.

Renewed Members: Dr. Joseph Ashley, George Davis, Susan Olson, Debbie Penrose, John Phelps, Gwendolyn Stover, Marianne Talbot, Vigdor Bernstein, Ronald Burnop, AnnMarie Cash, Donna Gassie, Norm Kropp, Cheryl McDonnell, Maureen McGuire-Kuletz, Helen Bolden Robertson, Dorothy White Shepherd, Karen Stevens, Martha Stokes, Richard Kriner (student), Samantha Loving (student) and Dianne Taylor Mann (student).

Submitted by Shirley Lyons, Membership Chair

www.vra.org
VRA Advocates for Accessible Voting

For the past year, VRA members have been advocating for increased access in our states election process. During the 2001 Session of the General Assembly, VRA supported a bill which would make more easy for a Virginian with a disability to vote, especially if they encountered access problems with equipment or at their actual precinct. A bill which will make it far easier for a Virginian with a disability to receive absentee ballots. Senator Mary Margaret Whipple, Delegate Vic Thomas, and the Secretary of the State Board of Elections--Cameron Quinn--were most supportive in this effort.

During this session a study of our voting process was also passed. This study was spurred by the voting debacle we all saw in Florida last Fall. One section of the bill requires a review of the actual equipment we use to vote.

The VRA Legislative Committee, Co Chaired by Howard Green and Benjy Burnette, has directed me to represent VRA in this study. I testified at a recent meeting of the Study Commission. I will follow up my comments with problems that Virginians with disabilities have encountered in the voting process, and also make recommendations for the most accessible voting equipment. If you have any insight or suggestions, please contact me.

Jim Rothrock, VRA Governmental Affairs Staff
phone: (804)673-0119; email: jarothrock@aol.com

Collaborations Conference 2001
September 23-26, 2001
Ramada Plaza Resort Oceanfront Hotel
Virginia Beach

The excitement is building we are getting closer to our annual Collaborations Conference which this year is being held in the beautiful Ramada Oceanfront Resort. Registration information is included in this issue, so make your reservations now! There are reduced rates for Early Bird Registration before August 23rd. We have an exciting agenda. Current hot topics such as WIA, One-Stops, Milestones, and Ticket to Work. There will also be updates on Social Security, Transition, and the MR Waiver.

VRA is requesting nominations for several awards to be presented this year. Please give your colleagues the recognition they deserve. Naomi Aitken chairs the Awards Committee. If you have questions, don't hesitate to contact her. Please forward your nominations to Naomi by July 30th.

If you have questions about Collaborations, please contact your Steering Committee Representatives:
Bonnie Hawley (703) 335-5550 ext. 108 or
Maureen McGuire-Kuletz (202) 973-1558

Submitted by Bonnie Hawley, Steering Committee Representative
See you at the beach in September!
AWARDS & NOMINATIONS
Submitted by 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 vaACCSES) at the ceremony and reception on Monday, September 24th. We want to recognize and highlight VRA’s outstanding recipients for all seven distinguished awards. A detailed description of the awards were in the January 2001 issue at www.vra.org, and the nomination form is on the next page. Please be thinking about who you know deserves to receive recognition for their commitment to the field of rehabilitation. Nominations will be accepted through the deadline which is July 30, 2001. Now is the time to ACT! Let’s show our appreciation for the Best of 2001. If you would like additional information or assistance contact Naomi Aitken (804) 295-0990, aitken.ssr@prodigy.net

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AWARDS NOMINATION FORM

Award______________________________________________________________
Nominee____________________________________________________________
Nominee’s Address____________________________________________________

SUPPORT FOR NOMINEE:

(1) On a separate page, please submit a statement detailing why the nominee is deserving of the award. Please provide historical information that supports the nomination. The nominee’s resume or curriculum vita may also be included.

(2) Please include supporting documents from others knowledgeable of the nominee’s outstanding accomplishments.

Nominator Name______________________________________________________
Nominator’s Address____________________________________________________
Telephone Number H________________________________W________________
e-mail:_______________________________________________________________
Signature______________________________________________________________
Date:_______________________________________________________________

Nominations and supporting documents must be received by Naomi Aitken, 227 Flagstone Terrace, Charlottesville, VA 22902 or aitken.ssr@prodigy.net Home(804)295-0990, Work(804)296-5621, Fax (804)296-2712, aitkennm@drs.state.va.us

Deadline for nominations is July 30, 2001.
Are you interested in becoming more involved in the leadership of VRA by serving as an Officer or on the Board? Do you know of someone whom that would offer good leadership? NOW is your opportunity to identify future leaders of your professional organization! The following positions are open for nominations for the year 2002 election:

President Elect (3 year term)
Secretary (1 year term)
1 Board Member representing VRA Region I
1 Board Member representing VRA Region II
1 Board Member representing VRA IV

Duties and Responsibilities information is available by contacting any Officer or Board member. Please submit your nominations, written or verbal, to Maureen McGuire-Kuletz c/o GW/RRCEP, 2011 I Street, NW, Suite 301, Washington, D.C., (202)973-1558) or email: mkuletz@gwu.edu by July 15, 2001.

Submitted by Maureen McGuire-Kuletz

Independent Living News

Two staff members of Virginia Centers for Independent Living have received special recognition. Maureen Hollowell from the Independence Center in Norfolk received an Advocacy Award from the National Council of Independent Living for her leadership in providing a Medicaid consumer training project. Funding for this project was awarded to the Statewide Independent Living Council by the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities. The Department acted as the funding agent to facilitate the grant for the Council.

Arva Priola, of the Disability Resource Center in Fredericksburg, will be receiving a national award for Advocacy from SHHH (Self Help for Hard of Hearing People), the first award of its kind ever presented by this organization. Ms. Priola also received a Commendation from the Virginia Senate citing her work as an advocate with the deaf and hard of hearing community.

APSE National Conference

The Association for Persons in Supported Employment National Conference has never been so close. The conference will be held in Washington DC on July 22-25th, 2001. To find our more information come visit our website at www.apse.org/dccconference.html

Don't miss this great opportunity to hear what the Country is doing in Supported employment!

In addition, if you know employers who want more information on hiring people with disabilities there is a mini conference for employers and HR professionals on Monday July 23rd. This is the site for this opportunity www.apse.org/BPD2001.html

APSE Conference July 22-25th, 2001

Chris Pellegrino, APSE
Director of Chapter and Member Services
(804) 278-9187
(804) 278-9377 fax
chris@apse.org
www.apse.org

Get Out the Golf Clubs

VRA 2nd Annual Golf Classic will be held Friday, September 14th, 2001 at the Hollows Golf Club. Tee off time is 9:00 am. Lunch will be provided as well as plenty of prizes. The cost is $60.00.

Call Howard Green to sign up by calling him at (804)828-9548 or (804)379-1286. E-mail is jgreen18@aol.com.

Get a foursome and play! It will help support our organization.
The Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) is sponsoring a Life Skills Trainer Program in Richmond on October 10-12, 2001 for service providers interested in becoming vendors of Life Skills Services for DRS customers with brain injuries. There is NO REGISTRATION FEE to attend the Life Skills Trainer Program.

Topics include an overview of brain injury; overview of life skills training; behavioral and pharmacological issues; and case study activities. The training will emphasize the skills and knowledge necessary for developing and implementing an individualized Life Skills Plan for individuals with acquired brain injuries.

Life Skills Trainers (sometimes called Life Skills Coaches) provide intensive, one-to-one assistance to people with brain injury (and other disabilities) in home and community settings of choice. Life Skills Trainers typically focus on assessment and intervention strategies designed to increase an individual's ability to live more effectively and more independently despite underlying cognitive impairments.

Individuals who participate in the training and who are interested in receiving a DRS-issued "Certificate of Completion" may elect to complete a 30-hour program. The program includes the two-and-a-half day training held at DRS Central Office in Richmond; a written evaluation designed to assess the individual's assimilation and application of information on life skills training; and a 6-8 hour field work assignment under the supervision of an assigned mentor. Individuals who complete these requirements successfully, and who are recommended by their mentor, will receive a "Certificate of Completion."

For further information, or to receive the Life Skills Trainer Program registration materials, contact Sandy Prince at (804) 662-7021 or Patti Goodall at 662-7615.

**Beach Chairs** will soon be available to Virginia Beach and Hampton area residents and future tourists. A class of high school students and their instructor designed and constructed these chairs (six so far with more planned in the future). This only took some tires, pvc pipe, and time. It will open up areas that were un-accessible in the past.

If you have un-accessible areas in your area this may be a great project to suggest to your area schools, boy scouts, etc.

Bob Barnaby (Chair)
Virginia Beach Mayors Committee for Persons with Disabilities
Virginia - South Hampton Roads Disability Board
Easter Seals of Virginia
(757) 497-069

**Submitted by Mark Hawkins**
It's summertime! Time for vacations, trips to the beach or simply enjoying what the season brings...

For those who are golfers, now is the time to hit the links in preparation for VRA’s 2nd Annual Golf Classic at The Hollows, on September 14th. Howard Green and his Committee are working hard to identify teams and sponsors.

Speaking of the beach, preparations for the 2001 Collaborations Training Conference are in full swing. It will be held September 23rd through the 25th at the Ramada Inn, Virginia Beach. This is an excellent opportunity for members to network and receive quality training! Registration information is included in this issue of NewsNotes.

Also of interest, there were a number of VRA members who recently passed the CRC exam that was given in April. Congratulations!

Shirley Lyons, Membership Chairperson, is mailing Certificates for Membership to those who have recently joined VRA or who have renewed their membership. By joining or maintaining your membership, VRA will continue to be a strong voice in Virginia, have an influence in State legislative issues and increase affordable educational workshops and training.

I hope that you have a great summer and I look forward to seeing you at future trainings and, of course, at Collaborations in Virginia Beach.

Again, if you have questions or suggestions please do not hesitate to contact me at (703) 313-4408. I can also be reached via e-mail: mfletc1@aol.com.
Richard Kriner completed an undergraduate degree in therapeutic recreation and subsequently enrolled in the master's degree program in rehabilitation counseling at VCU/MCV. He was first introduced to VRA by Dr. E. Davis Martin in his Introduction to Rehabilitation class. Subsequently, Dr. Margaret Glenn encouraged him to join VRA. Both faculty members stressed the importance of involvement in a professional organization for the purposes of growth, advocacy, and networking. Richard learned that VRA would provide him with further knowledge and experience and give him an opportunity to take an active part in improving rehabilitation services in Virginia. Richard has joined the VRA Board as a student member and, in addition to making many contacts with professionals in the field, he has discovered opportunities to complete his practicum. In the future he plans to provide vocational counseling services to persons with long term mental illness, become an LPC, and eventually pursue a doctorate and work in private practice, administration, or higher education. He says, I see VRA as a valuable chance for me to learn from people who have a lot of knowledge and experience in this field. All of this can only help me become a better Rehabilitation Counselor.

Submitted by Norm Kropp, Co-editor