Presidential Pondering...
Bonnie Hawley

With winter a memory and spring already here, the year is flying by! It has been an eventful season with lots of news and happenings. It was good to see everyone at the January Board Meeting. As always, there were a lot of great ideas generated. The minutes for our Board Meetings will be posted on our web site and I encourage each of you to take a look them. Your ideas and contributions are always appreciated. All of our Board meetings are scheduled to be held at the Henrico Mental Health Center.

As you know, Governor Mark Warner appointed Mr. James Rothrock as Commissioner of the Virginia Dept. of Rehabilitative Services. Jim has served very effectively as our Legislative Liaison for many years. At our January Board meeting, we offered him our congratulations on his appointment as well as accepted his resignation with regret as our legislative liaison. No need for worry, as our legislative agenda has been turned over the capable hands of David Williams. David is a long time rehabilitation professional and advocate. He has already made his positive presence known in the General Assembly. A warm welcome to David and we look forward to a productive year under his legislative guidance.

It was a pleasure to attend the VRCA Board Meeting on February 1st. At this meeting, VRCA welcomed the attendance of Dr. Chris Reid who is currently the President of NRCA. Dr. Reid and her staff at VCU were instrumental in coordinating a reception honoring Mr. Rothrock and for Dr. Roy Grizzard, former Commissioner for the Virginia Dept. for the Blind and Visually Impaired, who was recently appointed by President Bush as Assistant Secretary of Labor for the office of Disability Employment Policy, formerly known as the

VARSS/GLORIA O’NEAL

The names Virginia Association of Rehabilitation Support Staff and Gloria O’Neal are synonymous!

Recently, it was a joy for VARSS members to participate in the celebration of Gloria’s years of service to the disabled community of Virginia through her employment with the Department of Rehabilitative Services. Even as she was employed at DRS, the extension of work became a “love” she expressed ably through the Virginia Rehabilitation Association and especially through VARSS.

Her smile and sense of humor added to her management abilities have been a part of the “glue” that has held the association and the division together for more than 20 years. Apart from being president of VARSS twice and serving on every committee at one time or another, she also represented the division on the VRA board several times. There she worked and chaired multiple committees for VRA.

On another level Gloria represented VARSS at regional and national meetings of NARSS where she shared her leadership and expertise with these organizations.

VARSS appreciates her leadership and her wonderful friendship, as well as her “black Russians.”

Submitted by Bernice Chatham

The next VRA Board meeting is: April 26, 2002
Rothrock Legislative Update

I hope you are enjoying, in your locale, what is proving to be a gorgeous day here in Richmond. I wanted to take this opportunity to catch you up on a couple matters that will likely be of interest to you.

**State Budget:** It appears that Governor Warner and Secretary Woods were successful in working with the General Assembly in crafting a budget that meets the demands of our state’s fiscal crisis while offering a “safety net” for Virginians with disabilities. The final budget will likely have cuts in our State funding of 4% rather than the 6-8% as originally proposed. This will be a much more manageable, yet still challenging task. As we develop more details, I will keep you informed of the impacts of this funding cut.

**Legislation:** We were very successful this year in working on the passage of some bills that will benefit DRS. Delegate Sam Nixon of Chesterfield patroned a bill for us that will expand the use of the Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority to include loans to eligible persons for entrepreneurial ventures. Senator Toddy Puller, Northern Virginia, also patroned bills that will: 1) bring the responsibility for and the funding of the Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative to DRS; we have been collaborating with the Dept. of Health for the last few years, but this new arrangement will be an improvement for us and our consumers in this program, and 2) support our State’s participation in the Medicaid Buy In—which will make it easier for many of our clients to work without jeopardizing their benefits. We were also fortunate to work with Delegate Marian Van Ladingham, Alexandria, on a resolution that will increase the level of collaboration between the “disability” and “technology” agencies. Finally, there were other resolutions patroned by Del. Bob Bloxom of the Eastern Shore and Delegate Van Ladingham, which will make HOUSING the main issue for the upcoming year for the Disability Commission. It was a good year!!

**New Staff:** I have recently added Denise Goode to our staff. She will be working with me on Constituent Affairs and Housing Development—a new venture for our agency. She brings

**Rothrock Update (continued on page 7)**

VRA Legislative Update by Our New Legislative Advocate, David Williams

**Half Full – Half empty**

Senator Chichester, Chairman of the powerful Senate Finance Committee, got it right when he said the 2002-04 Biennium Budget agreement wasn’t likely to make anyone happy. And he was right. It was common knowledge going into this year’s session that the projected revenue shortfalls were going to require extensive budget cuts. The only question was where and how much. The budget ax was out and few were going to escape in tact.

So from a budget perspective, yes we took a hit, but the good news is, we avoided taking an even worse hit. Going into the final days of this year’s session, the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) was targeted for budget cuts of seven (7) and eight (8) percent for the next two years of the 2002-04 Biennium Budget. At the last minute, the Conference Committee which is composed of legislators from both the House and Senate to resolve differences between the two budget versions agreed to amendment 506 #24c that effectively reduced the cuts to four (4) percent a year. Also included was 506 #14c stipulating “that no reductions be applied to Long Term Employment Supports, Personal Assistance Services, Brain Injury Services, Centers for Independent Living, or any other services directly to disabled persons through the DRS.”

Now is that good? No, but it’s not all bad either. As DRS Commissioner Jim Rothrock stated, “it’s a lot more manageable than the previous proposed cuts.” Bottom line: while none of us like reduced budgets, we can take a certain measure of satisfaction knowing we helped lessen the pain.

**Legislative Scorecard**

VRA’s number one priority was passage of HB 9 which moves the Department for the Rights of Virginians with Disabilities (DRVD) from under the executive branch to independent agency status. The bill sailed through the House and was generally expected to do the same in the Senate until

**Williams Update (continued on page 7)**
ATTENTION VCU/MCV DEPT. OF REHABILITATION COUNSELING STUDENTS!!!!!!

Are you trying to find the perfect internship site or job opportunity after graduation? Want to know where the best one stop shop is for finding the answers to your questions about your future?

Attend the First Annual VCU/MCV Department of Rehabilitation Counseling Career Fair! This free and exciting event is being held at the Larrick Center on the MCV Campus on Friday, April 12 from 3 pm - 5 pm. Everyone is welcome to attend to network with area professionals about potential job and internship opportunities. Terrific refreshments will be provided. Mark this date on your calendar so you don’t miss out!

This event is being sponsored by the Virginia Rehabilitation Association and the Virginia Rehabilitation Counseling Association. Not a member? Visit the representatives at the career fair to learn about all of the benefits of participating in a professional organization and the low-priced membership rates you get as a student!

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to email Alison Higgs, alison@pinnacleeap.com, or Richard Kriner, rckriner@hsc.vcu.edu.

We can’t wait to see you there!

ATTENTION VCU/MCV DEPT. OF REHABILITATION COUNSELING STUDENTS!!!!!!

Student Liaisons News

The student liaisons (i.e. Alison Higgs VRCA & Richard Kriner VRA) are currently in the process of establishing a student chapter of the VRCA within the MCV Department of Rehabilitation Counseling for the fall 2002 semester. The addition of this chapter will bring opportunities for leadership, advocacy, fellowship, professional development and scholarship to current and potential student members and future professional members of VRA and VRCA. If you are a VRA or VRCA student member and interested in contributing to the development of this VRCA student chapter please contact VRA Student Liaison, Richard Kriner at email rckriner@hsc.vcu.edu.

Thanks for your support!!!

Student Liaisons in Action

The student liaisons are starting 2002 off with a bang! Working collaboratively with VRA and the VCU/MCV Department of Rehabilitation Counseling, we have been able to pursue ideas for increased student involvement through activities such as an upcoming career fair and increased effort to involve other Virginia students in the Rehabilitation field in professional organizations. VRCA was a proud sponsor of the VCU/MCV reception honoring Dr. Roy Grizzard and Jim Rothrock on March 8. The wonderful attendance proved to be a great opportunity to distribute NRA applications and raise awareness about the benefits of student membership! We look forward to beginning a new tradition this year by sponsoring, with VRA and VCU/MCV, a career fair where different agencies will be represented to talk to students about job and internship opportunities. We are still in the planning process of this exciting event, so if you (or someone you know) would like to represent their agency or help out in any way, please email me (Alison@pinnacleeap.com). Watch your email and future newsletters to attend and represent VRCA at this fun event!

Submitted by Alison Higgs VRCA

On Line Ethics Training

George Washington University is offering an online version of training in "Ethics in Rehabilitation Counseling." This training is open to all DRS staff and there is no cost involved in participation. The course runs for approximately 8 weeks and consists of both web-based research, reading, group discussions and case studies. Ten (10) CRC credits are available for anyone successfully completing the training program. The next session will begin in May, 2002. You may register for this training by contacting Susan Burns at 804-662-7613 or email her at BurnsSH@drs.state.va.us. For additional content information pertaining to this training, you may contact Maureen McGuire-Kuletz at GWU - mkuletz@gwu.edu.
Wanted: Sponsors for Collaborations 2002

Organizations, businesses, and individuals interested in sponsoring Virginia 2002 Collaborations conference, exhibiting, advertising, or sending bag inserts should contact Elena Boyer at E-mail: directorse@didlake.com to obtain a business development brochure.

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VRA Schedule 2001-2002

April
25 – VRCA Board Meeting
26 – VRA Board Meeting

May
Rehabilitation Counselors Week
3 – Collaborations Steering Committee Meeting
9 – VRCA Seminar in Honor of Rehab Counselors
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 Call for Applications

The Foundation was created by VRA members for VRA members and their families. The Foundation is self-supporting and grants are based on income from the endowment. Contributions to the endowment are tax deductible and donations of honor and memorial are acknowledged as requested. Grant amounts are not always large; as the endowment grows so does the grants.

Each year the Foundation Board accepts applications from qualified persons. Criteria includes:

1) No major course of study is required for a child or spouse. If applicant is a VRA member, preference will be given to requests related to the field of rehabilitation.

2) Applicant must 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.

3) Applicant may apply annually and must maintain a “C” average or better in undergraduate programs to be eligible for reapplication.

4) Applicant must complete the application form provided by the Foundation.

The application form can be found in this issue of NEWSNOTES on Page 6. Please complete and send it to: J. Benjamin Burnett, Jr., 133 Buffalo Road, Clarksville, VA 23927.

On March 8, the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling at MCV, VRA and VRCA, honored two of VCU’s most accomplished alumni: Jim Rothrock appointed to head up Virginia’s Department of Rehabilitative Services, and Roy Grizzard, appointed by President Bush as the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Disability Employment Policy within the Department of Labor. This event was highlighted by a wonderful presentation by guest speaker Dr. Frederick J. Frese. His candid presentation addressed the many barriers encountered by people with mental illness and was illustrated through his first hand accounts of living with Schizophrenia. This special evening was concluded with the presentation of awards to both of the honorary guest in recognition of their many accomplishment and services within the disability community. This was a nicely planned event in the spirit of collaboration, which was well received and appreciated by the honorees.

Thanks to all that came out and helped make this event such a success.

Submitted by Richard Kriner (For some pictures go to page 9)
VIRGINIA REHABILITATION ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION
GRANT AWARD APPLICATION FORM

Name: ____________________________________________________________

Last                                      First                                  Middle

Address: __________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

VRA Membership No.:          ______________________

Telephone No. ____________   Member ☐   Spouse ☐   Child ☐

Name & Address of College:                __________________________________________

__________________________________________

Program of Study:                        __________________________________________

Are you a full-time student working toward a degree?  If not, explain.

__________________________________________

College Year: Freshman ☐  Sophomore ☐  Junior ☐  Senior ☐  Graduate Program ☐

College Housing:    Resident Hall ☐  Fraternity/Sorority ☐  Campus ☐  Commuter ☐

Number of Family Members presently enrolled in college:    ______________________________

Are parents contributing toward your financial needs while attending college classes?

Yes ☐  No ☐

Are you eligible for college work-study and/or financial assistance?   _______________________

Have you applied?                                                                                                 _____________________________

Are you interested in off-campus employment?                                      _____________________________

Have you applied?                                                                                                     _____________________________

*Please write a statement about yourself, reasons for pursuing a college education; your long
range goals and why you believe you merit a grant.  (Attach additional pages as needed.)

(Complete and forward to:  J. Benjamin Burnett, Jr.,
133 Buffalo Road, Clarksville, VA  23927)
to us a solid background in both housing and health care. Denise will be out and about soon to learn how best to work with many of you to solve constituent problems and I know you will welcome her to our “rehab family”.

Passages: Just this week John Bergeron, a DRS employee for about three decades, died. We have all benefited from his expertise in HR and his knowledge and presence will be sorely missed. We also found that one of our DRS Board members—Myron Boggs—died in February. His leadership on our board will also be missed. I trust you will keep both of these men’s families in your thoughts and prayers.

Take care and I look forward to getting out soon to see you now that the General Assembly is over.

Have a great weekend.

Jim Rothrock

(This is Jim’s last article as our VRA Legislative Liaison, since he is taking over new responsibilities as the Commissioner for the VA. Dept. Of Rehabilitative Services. We wish him well in his newest endeavor!! Thank you for your dedication!)

concerns were raised by some folks in public and private schools that the current definition of abuse could be used by DRVD to litigate in areas pertaining to program planning. With the change, the bill was reported out of subcommittee and later by the full committee, and eventually passed by the Senate. Ms. Heidi Lawyer, Acting Director of DRVD, and VRA worked hard to ensure passage of this bill which represents a huge victory for people with disabilities and VRA. Governor Warner is expected to sign the bill without changes. Well done folks.

No question about it, VRA enjoyed a good year when you look at the final scorecard. And while HJ 64 that directed the Secretary of Health and Human Resources to develop a plan to implement the Olmstead Decision failed to pass in the House, it did get life as a budget amendment. Specifically item 329#18c requires the Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services to convene a task force to develop a plan for serving persons with disabilities that implements the recommendations of the Olmstead decision. The amendment further stipulates that the members of the task force shall represent the interests of consumers who may be impacted by the plan as well as a broad array of service providers at the state and local level. All agencies of the Commonwealth are required to provide assistance to the task force in its development of the plan, upon request. The final recommendations of the Task Force will go to the Governor, the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees, and the Chairman of the Joint Commission on Health Care by August 31, 2003.

Folks this is a big one that presents multiple opportunities for people with disabilities and VRA’s advocacy role. Recall in the Olmstead decision, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the unnecessary segregation of individuals with disabilities in institutions may constitute discrimination based on disability, and that states may be required to provide community-based services rather than institutional placements for these individuals. VRA will want to assume a

Williams Update (continued on page 9)
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 July 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 !!!

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The 3rd Annual VRA Golf Classic is scheduled for Friday, September 13, 2002 at The Hollows Golf Club. We need your participation!! Please call Howard Green (804)828-9548, or for more information email him at jhgreen@atlas.vcu.edu Thanks for your help.

Submitted by Howard Green

Presidential Pondering (continued from page 1)

President’s Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. VCU invited VRA and VRCA to assist in sponsoring this event and we accepted this invitation. It was an honor to attend this reception on March 8th and to see so many VRA members in attendance. Congratulations to both of these VCU alumni and their many accomplishments.

A wonderful reception was held for Gloria O’Neal who recently retired from DRS after many years of service. It was touching to see the many people who attended and to hear their stories of Gloria’s dedication to her profession. I know that Gloria was pleased to see so many of her friends from VARSS and VRA in attendance as well! A plaque recognizing Gloria’s many contributions was presented to her on behalf of VRA. Many thanks to those who were able to attend and be a part of this special day.

Past President, Mark Fletcher and I had the opportunity to attend the NRA Governmental Affairs Seminar held on March 10th through the 12th. On March 12th, Howard Green, President Elect joined us on Capitol Hill to help advocate for legislative agenda developed by NRA. Also joining us that day was Howard’s son, Jimmy, who was the recipient of the VRA Foundation Scholarship last year. Many thanks to Maureen McGuire-Kuletz for her assistance in developing the VRA legislative agenda and compiling the information needed by our legislators in making informed decisions on disability related topics.

In conjunction with the Governmental Affairs Seminar, VRA sponsored a very successful fund raising event at the “Hard Times Café” in Old Town Alexandria. The event was well attended by those attending the NRA seminar and local VRA members as well as representatives from other professional associations who came out in support of VRA that day. Very special thanks go out to Teri Bertsch, Ed Navis, Evan T. Jones, and Cherie Leporatti for making this event a success.

Planning is well underway for the 6th Annual Collaborations Conference. VRA is taking the lead role in coordinating the Conference this year. Please mark your calendars for August 4,5,6 this year. Look for more information on Collaborations in this and upcoming NewsNotes.

As you can tell, we are off to a great start this year. I want to extend special thanks to all of you who have gone above and beyond in the spirit of VRA. Best wishes to all of you for a beautiful spring and I look forward to seeing each of you at the April Board Meeting.

Bonnie Hawley, President
Virginia Rehabilitation Association
Williams Legislative Update (continued from page 7)

Another important area for us to consider this year is the Medicaid Buy-in opportunity for working Virginians with Disabilities. Identical resolutions (HJ 219 and SJ 128) passed the House and Senate requesting the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) in collaboration with DRS and DRVD to proceed with the development of a Medicaid Buy-in opportunity. In developing the opportunity, DMAS is directed to utilize the Medicaid Infrastructure grant to identify the steps needed to implement an effective Medicaid Buy-In Program for Virginia, with the goal of utilizing data to develop initial legislation and budgetary recommendations that will be necessary to implement the Buy-In. DMAS must report its written findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 2003 Session of the General Assembly. As with the Olmstead decision, VRA will want to get up front and assume a leadership role.

A time For Thanks

Now that the assembly has adjourned and the final tallies are in, we need to say “thank you” to the folks who made it happen this year. Specifically, the Delegates and Senators who patroned bills under our legislative agenda. As an organization, VRA does this on an ongoing basis, but it never hurts to have letters sent from individual members, particularly if the member is from the legislator’s home district. Please take a moment to note the legislator’s name in the VRA Legislative matrix above and write a brief note of appreciation. For your reference, two attached documents listing the mailing addresses of both our Senators and Delegates are provided. You may want to save them for future use. Remember all this information is provided at the Virginia General Assembly web site: http://legis.state.va.us/LIS/StateBudget.htm Congratulations on a successful year.

Submitted by David Williams

For more pictures of the James Rothrock/Dr. Grizzard Reception pictures at VCU go to http://www.rehab.vcu.edu/photoindex.html

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New Training Program: Deaf-Blindness and Aging Specialization

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) is pleased to announce its new affiliation with Helen Keller National Center (HKNC), to provide an innovative Rehabilitation Counseling master's degree with emphasis in working with older adults who are deaf-blind. Through the collaboration between HKNC and VCU's Departments of Rehabilitation Counseling and Gerontology, students in the program are cross-trained in the areas of rehabilitation counseling, aging studies, and deaf-blindness. This unique partnership is a result of HKNC's first inclusion of any university training program as a member of its Affiliate Network.

Through a grant from HKNC, VCU is able to provide funding support to a limited number of students in this program. Interested students or others seeking information about this program are encouraged to contact Chris Reid, Ph.D, the Project Director, at creid@mail2.vcu.edu, 804-827-0912 (telephone or TTY), or by "snail mail" at Virginia Commonwealth University, Department of Rehabilitation Counseling POB 980330, Richmond, VA 23298-0330

Submitted by Chris Reid Ph.D. CRC NCC CVS CCM, Associate Professor & Interim Chair, Rehabilitation Counseling Virginia Commonwealth University

Rehabilitation Counseling = http://views.vcu.edu/sahp/rehab/
Distance Learning = http://www.rehabcounseling.org
Rehab. Leadership Ph.D. = http://views.vcu.edu/sahp/phd/index.htm
Employment and Disability RRTC = http://www.worksupport.com
**Membership Committee News**

New 2002 membership brochures are out and ready for your use. Please make the commitment to recruit one new member this year. IF every current VRA member recruits one new member, we will double our membership, thereby increasing the strength of our voice and our rebates!!!!

If you want brochures, please contact me.

**Welcome to new members:**
- Judy Howlett, Richmond
- David Williams, Alexandria
- Joel Bowling, Fairfax

**And thanks to those who have renewed:**
- Paul Babcock, William Burnside, Gretchen Eckard
- Mildred Hall, Susan Hannifan, Stephanie Kolakowsky-Hayner
- Robert Krollman, John Phelps, Gwendolyn Stover
- Patricia Thompson, Sandy Gerhardt, Diane Hinch
- Frederick Lee, John Santoski, Joseph Ashley, Jayne Crawford
- and George Davis.

Submitted by Shirley Lyons

**Excerpt from Letter from Michelle Vaughan, Exec. Dir. NRA:**

"In an ongoing effort to provide our members with top quality products and services, the NRA has endorsed a NEW professional liability insurance program offered through Healthcare Providers Service Organization (HPSO). We reviewed many programs before endorsing this plan. We selected HPSO because of the many benefits, affordable rates, and HPSO's commitment to superior service. To learn more about their program, visit them at www.HPSO.com.

As always, we will continue to monitor all of our member benefits to insure that you have access to the best products and services in the industry. Your input related to our slate of member benefits is invited, encouraged and appreciated."

Submitted by Shirley Lyons

**New Professional Liability Insurance.**

**WE HAVE THE TICKETS AND A NEW WEBSITE, TOO**

The Ticket to Work program is under way, and there's a new website to help explain how the tickets work. The program offers people with disabilities the services they need to help them go to work. Best of all, the services are free! Right now, Social Security is in the process of sending tickets to 2.4 million people who get disability benefits. The 2.4 million tickets are being mailed out to people in the first 13 states during the next five months. By January 2004, tickets will be available in all 50 states, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

If you'd like to know more, get moving to the new website!

http://www.ssa.gov/work/Ticket/ticket_info.htm

Submitted by Mary Kaye Johnston

Have you ever wanted to find out if you can get benefits from Social Security or if you qualify for Medicare health insurance? Sometimes it's hard to know where to begin when you need help. But now there's a new online tool to get you started -- the Benefit Eligibility Screening Tool (BEST). You start by answering a few questions about your income, things you own, your age and marital status. Based on your answers, BEST lets you know right away what benefits you may be eligible for. BEST will help you figure out your options and where to go next. If you need the information, best get a move on!

http://www.ssa.gov/best/

Submitted by Mary Kaye Johnston

Encourage individuals with SSDI and retired individuals who have Medicare Part B to go in for **Glaucoma Screening to prevent blindness**. People who are covered by Medicare Part B (medical insurance) are eligible for glaucoma screenings once every 12 months. To learn more, call 1-800-MEDICARE, or visit the Medicare website. http://www.medicare.gov/
Virginia Supported Employment Providers Forum

The next Virginia Supported Employment Providers Forum is scheduled for April 19, 2002

**Meeting Site:** Richard S. Gillis, Jr. Ashland Branch Library-located in Ashland, Virginia

**Time:** 10:00-12:30

**Agenda:**
- Scott Fraley, Supported Employment Program Coordinator will present information on The Milestones and additional updates in new follow along services for supported employment.
- Other presenters will be Joanne Ellis, working with 1619B and Social Security Incentives, and Dan Johnson with Workforce One. The Ticket To Work will be discussed.
- There will also be updates on changes in The Supported Employment Guide.

We are planning a working lunch after the forum to discuss pass plans and other incentives for follow along services. Lunch will be at the Iron Horse, located at 100 S. Railroad Avenue.

**Please Contact Robin Metcalf** at The Choice Group for reservations by April 1, 2002, at 804-278-9151 or **Pat Norton** at 804-367-1545.

To request Accommodations for the forum contact Pat Norton at 804-367-1545 prior to April 1, 2002.

Collaborations Conference 2002

*August 4th, 5th, and 6th*

*In Richmond, Virginia*

ICNI Advisory Board Announces Recipients of Grant Awards

The Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative (CNI) Advisory Board has announced the inaugural recipients of grant awards through the Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative Trust Fund. The intent of the CNI Fund is to encourage researchers and service providers to themselves to find ways to better understand the mechanisms of brain and spinal cord injury and to develop model rehabilitative programs for survivors of these injuries.

Senator Emily Couric successfully sponsored legislation in the 1997 and 1998 General Assembly sessions to establish the CNI and its trust fund, which will provide grants to medical researchers and community-based rehabilitative services programs in Virginia. Funds will be divided equally between neurotrauma research (Option A) and the development or expansion of innovative community-based rehabilitative programs (Option B) for Virginians with traumatic brain or spinal cord injuries.

The CNI Fund is a special nonreverting fund in the state treasury consisting of funds collected through a reinstatement fee of $30 paid to restore an operator’s license for drivers convicted on specified dangerous driving offenses. Of this fee, $25 goes to CNI fund and $5 goes to the Department of Motor Vehicles; however, if the offense was DUI-related, the $5 goes to the Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Program commission. During its first funding cycle in November/December, the CNI Advisory Board awarded one to three years of funding.

For more information about the Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative, **contact Sandra Prince**, CNI Staff, by telephone at 804-662-7921 or by email at princesw@drs.state.va.us.