

# Iowa Rehabilitation Association 2010----4th Quarter Newsletter

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

The 2010 training conference of the Iowa Rehabilitation Association now is history. As usual, it included all that professional good stuff -- (mostly) stimulating breakout sessions the opportunity to hobnob with rehab colleagues, and of course scintillating business meetings, led by yours truly. We elected the following people to the following positions in IRA: Gary Johnson as president-elect, Jeffrey Morgan as vice president, Mary Ott as secretary, and Jamie Corwin, Jessica Schneider, and Lois Staff as board members at large.

President-elect Matt Bruinekool had enlisted the help of several Drake University grad students in rehab counseling to help him and other IRA veterans at putting together this year's conference. The energy and enthusiasm of these young(er) people was refreshing. Five in particular stood out in their participation: Tony Shafer, Lindsay Walker, Keri Osterhaus, Valerie Osterberg, and Jessica Schneider. Jessie seemed to be everywhere before and during the conference, and she even earned part of the coveted Hokey-pokey Trophy. Her inspired bingo calling (misreadings, such as "B-I" were fondly recalled) won her part, and co-winner Michelle Krefft's inspired table dancing completed the award.

RSA Commissioner Lynnae Rutledge presented that organization's new agenda to us, and some agency administrators had the chance to see her in more small-group discussions.

At our awards banquet we got to celebrate several deserving people. Counselor of the Year went to John Lee-Egan. The Gerry Beyers Award (for distinguished service to this organization) was awarded to Victoria Kollmann. The Bill Donoghue Award for excellence in job placement went to Mary Ott. The Achievement Award, which is for a rehab client who has reached distinction, was given to Emilie Hillman (see next paragraph). In addition to these annual awards, Roger Carter presented Sherri Clark of Atlantic with the Margaret Fairbairn Award, a national award for job placement.

We opened the conference with a presentation by Emilie Hillman and her colleagues from Em and Jerrie's Coffee Shop in Independence. Em endeared herself to us by her friendly enthusiasm and broad smile, as the owner and embodiment of the spirit of Em and Jerrie's.

Friday morning we got to hear Dan Keplinger and his wife Dena. She acted as his interpreter (he has a form of CP that has greatly affected his speech and muscular control). Dan has become famous in his native Baltimore and nationwide for his paintings (done with a paint brush attached to his forehead) and advocacy for people with disabilities in several acclaimed films. His sense of

humor and quirky personality drew us into a presentation that otherwise might have been slow and frustrating for the more impatient among us. Dan took a certain glee in getting to speak to an organization with a notorious moniker like "IRA." He appreciated it that we were part of a larger concern called "NRA"!

Everyone who attended concurrent sessions would have his or her own favorite ones. Curiously, among my favorites were the two on the new CRC ethics code revisions, led by UI professor, Dr. Jodi Saunders. I have attended far too many ethics presentations that were presented as no more than a dreadful requirement that we all had to suffer through, thereby belittling their importance and impact. Fortunately, that is not Ms. Saunders' approach. Her positive and enthusiastic take on the subject presented ethics as an essential, living, breathing subject of real relevance to our professional lives.

The week before the IRA conference I attended the national conference of the National Rehab Association in New Orleans. In addition to holding it in a fascinating city -- Karla and I got there a few days early to explore without conference distractions -- I had the opportunity to meet other rehab practitioners from all over the country and compare how we approach the same problems from different perspectives, and we can learn from each other. At the Great Plains Region meeting I got to compare notes with people from Minnesota and Missouri, and conspire with them to renew activity in those states in the region that have little or no NRA activity.

The most memorable sessions I attended were on using emotional intelligence to enhance rehab outcomes, another one on spirituality and counseling, and probably the most interesting, one on how we portray rehab outcomes. Michael Fiore of the Sierra Group (I'm not sure who they are, but he came from a business background) compared annual reports from rehab agencies in 5 states. At first glance, their results looked very good, but then he examined them with the lens of a businessman, and they came out wanting, as their figures didn't add up and more questions were unanswered than answered. He praised Utah, which had hired an economist to prepare its annual report, and this helped the agency fare unexpectedly well in the fiscal bloodletting this year, as the worth of their work was clear in the numbers. One thing he said we could do that might improve our marketing would be to have a new longitudinal study on outcomes for rehab clients closed in Status 26, a year or more after case closure.

It was an occasion for local celebration -- and also good for the organization at large -- that our own Ellen Sokolowski was elected to an at-large board position on the national level. She will be an eloquent advocate for rehab, and her knowledge of the legislative process and how it affects us and we can affect it will benefit the entire NRA.

Jonathan Ice, President

## Conference Musings

As someone who just rejoined and attended the Iowa Rehabilitation Association Conference, I am glad I did because otherwise I would have missed out on:

- \* connecting with colleagues from VR, IDB, DHR, Drake University's Rehab. program, and community providers

- \* the *unofficial* IRA Smoke Out,

- \* recharging my professional batteries by hearing stories of people who doing some darn good work

- \* the musical duo of Egan & Morgan (Loggins and Messina have nothing on you guys)

- \* the actions that led to and awarding of the official Hokey Pokey Award

- \* going somewhat reluctantly to the Speeding Networking session with Drake Rehab students (and then enjoying myself)

- \* seeing many of my great VR/IDB forefathers who have now retired from the field but continue to show their support and passion for Vocational Rehabilitation

- \* Jackie Wipperman's husband and band playing some awesome Celtic Music

- \*\*\* This spot is held for the people who wished to be anonymous for some really crazy stuff they did\*\*\* (I can be bribed to disclose this info.)

Several of my seasoned colleagues tell many an interesting story of the happenings at state staffings' which allowed IVRS staff to get together, blow off some steam, and have a few laughs with others from across the state. With financial limitations, these days are gone but if any of the above sounded interesting and fun you may want to attend a future IRA training and maybe even join. I am certainly glad I did.

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### **Job Placement Division – Save the Date!**

I wanted to get notice out early to save the date!

We will have Brag N Steal 2011 at the Mason City NIACC campus (North Iowa Area Community College) on Friday, June 24, 2011 so save the date.

Mary Ott, MS CRC

## IRA Membership Report

**Current NRA Iowa Chapter Statistics** (based on December 17, 2010 roster):

IRA Total 97 -        57 Professionals  
                           13 Students  
                           6 New Professionals  
                           2 Affiliates  
                           19 Lifetimes

National Rehabilitation Association of Job Placement and Development	26
Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Association	21
National Association for Independent Living	0
Vocational Evaluation and Work Adjustment Association	5
National Association of Service Providers In Private Rehabilitation	6
National Association for Rehabilitation Leadership	2
Association of Rehabilitation Technicians and Specialists – ARTS (National Association of Rehabilitation Support Staff)	0
National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns	0
National Association of Disability Benefits Specialists	2

**Please welcome our new members for 2010:**

Ellen Bunkers	Lisa Worden	Laura Gibson
Anthony Shafer	Jason DeBoom	Leanne Weaver
Todd Ohnesorge	Toni Rabel	Melissa Stevens
Jessica Schneider	Andrew Frohardt	Barbara McLemore
Diane Hernandez	Debra Anderson	Kent Jayne
Sheila Stoeckel	Michelle Krefft*	Page Fineran
Jolene Schulz*	Tai Blas*	Matthew Newton

\*waiting for NRA membership number to be assigned

**Professionals**

Mary Augustus	Kathleen Benson Larson	Ann Birnbaum
Mike Blevins	Deborah Boettcher	Amy Botkin
Matt Bruinekool	Roger Carter	Lisa Chellew
Rebecca Cox	Brenda Criswell	Donna Daniel
Jason DeBoom	Amy Desenberg-Wines	Julie Dixon
Brenda Doppenberg	J. Sam Erwin	Timothy Gracey
Lorraine Hackett	Harlietta Helland	William Houck
Denise Hubert	Jonathan Ice	Marian Jacobs
Kent Jayne	Gary Johnson	Sandra Johnson
Curt Jones	Victoria Kollmann	Vienna Kouangvongthien

Sharman Lowenberg	Thomas Magner	Roger Marquardt
Nancy Martel	Michael McAleer	Diane McGuire
Richard Metz	Carma Mitchell	David Mitchell
Jeffrey Morgan	Matthew Newton	Raymond Olejniczak
Mary Ott	Suzanne Paulson	Frank Potter
Ellen Sokolowski	Lois Staff	Sheila Stoeckel
Julie Svec	John Ten-Pas	Rosemary Thierer
Leanne Weaver	Michael Williams	Katherine Winter
Jackie Wipperman	Stephen Wooderson	Stephen Yochum
<b>Students</b>		
Debra Anderson	Ellen Bunkers	Page Fineran
Andrew Frohardt	Laura Gibson	Diane Hernandez
Barbara McLemore	Toni Rabel	Jami Schwickerath
Anthony Shafer	Melissa Stevens	Lindsay Walker
Lisa Worden		
<b>New Professionals</b>		
Jamie Corwin	Kemal Delilovic	Todd Ohnesorge
Valerie Osterberg	Keri Osterhaus	Jessica Schneider
<b>Affiliates</b>		
Marcia Gracey	John Lee-Egan	
<b>Lifetimes</b>		
Howard Allison	Mario Barillas	William Basinger
Mayta Bird	Vincent Boozell	Jay Brewer
Deborah Hanson	Dale Higgins	Thomas Kirsch
David Mills	Jim Obranovic	Donald Perkins
Kenneth Prideaux	Diane Roupe	Erwin Stoelk
Orville Townsend	Raymond VanCura	Evelyn Villines
Harlan Watson		

**Don't forget that there are several options to pay your membership:**

- Check or money order
- The Installment Plan of 3 equal consecutive monthly payments by credit card
- Automatic bank draft (12 payments per year)

***Regarding this newsletter, 78 electronic links and 20 print copies were distributed.***

Please contact me at [victoria.kollmann@blind.state.ia.us](mailto:victoria.kollmann@blind.state.ia.us) or 319-230-8737 when you have questions, ideas or comments for IRA Membership or for the IRA website. Check it out at <http://www.iraiaowa.org/>.

Victoria Kollmann  
IRA Membership Chair

## Legislative Report

Deficit Commission.....The National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform has held its final meeting and voted on proposals for resolving the nation's fiscal problems. The Commission's Chairpersons Erskine Bowles and former Senator Alan Simpson were unable to obtain 14 of the 18 members necessary to support the proposals necessary to issue formal recommendations. The final vote in support of the report was 11 to 7. The Commission however released *The Moment of Truth: The Report of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform* on December 1 which has already begun some substantial discussion in Congress and the White House. While there are not official recommendations from the Commission, you can expect to see various proposals surfacing over the next few months and weeks and throughout the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress as Congress and the White House struggle to deal with deficit issues. The proposal contains a number of profound reductions in entitlement, discretionary, and defense spending.

Many of the Commission proposals would have a devastating impact on persons with disabilities or programs designed to support them. Below are some examples:

### Social Security:

- The plan would increase the normal retirement age to 69.5 years and the early retirement age to 64 years over time. This is effectively a cut in benefits and would create pressure on the disability program for those that cannot work longer. The plan proposes a "hardship exemption," with little detail. This would affect disproportionately individuals with health problems as well as those that receive Disabled Adult Children (DAC)
- The plan proposes a change in the benefit formula that gradually reduces the benefits will receive in retirement, except those in the very lowest income bracket.
- The plan would reduce the annual cost of living adjustment(COLA) amounts, effectively reducing benefits over time-by about 6 percent for a person receiving benefits for 20 years. A benefits " bump up" is included for persons receiving benefits for 20 years, but it does not make up for the amounts lost in the reduced COLAs.
- The plan includes a minimum benefit equal to 125 percent of the poverty line for 30 year workers, which would benefit some low income workers.
- The plan would very gradually(over 35 years) bring 90 percent of the earnings into the FICA range (as it was in 1983). Only about 84 percent of the earnings fall under that range now. Closing the gap would mean nearly eliminating Social Security's projected shortfall.

### CLASS Act

- The proposal calls for reform or repeal of the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) Act, which is the newly enacted voluntary premium –based long term insurance program to assist

individuals to meet their needs without becoming impoverished for Medicaid eligibility. The CLASS program is required by law to be solvent over a 75 year period and is under development by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

#### Medicare, Medicaid and other Health Care programs

The Commission recommends many changes to Medicare, Medicaid and other health care programs to reduce costs. They include accelerating or expanding many of the cost savings in the Affordable Care Act. Below are some of the examples of changes that will likely impact individuals:

- Increase the cost sharing for Medicare beneficiaries by creating a single annual deductible of \$550 for both hospital care and medical care and a uniform 20% co-insurance on health spending above the deductible. By 2015, it is estimated that this will save \$10 billion in Medicare spending.
- Prohibit Medigap plans from covering the first \$500 in health care spending and limit coverage to 50% for the next \$5,000 in Medicare cost-sharing. The Commission's plan would save an additional 4 billion b 2015.
- Reform the physician payment system and fully pay for all of the costs. Congress has been stopping large cuts to physicians and other health care providers that were implemented to save money in the Medicare program. If the cuts were allow to take effect, it would mean a 23% cut in payments to providers beginning in 2012. It is very expensive to fix the problem as the commission estimates that freezing payments from 2012 to 2020 would cost \$267 billion.
- Place dual eligible (people who receive both Medicaid and Medicare) in the Medicaid managed care. This would save \$1 billion by 2015.
- Reduce funding for Medicaid administrative costs. This would save \$260 million by 2015.
- Place a global cap on all health care spending, which could include Medicaid block grants.
- Reduce the benefit for employer-provided health insurance.

#### Election Results

Republicans gained control of the House of Representatives. They also gained control of the Senate, narrowing the Democratic margin to 53 to 47 and reducing their chances of obtaining the 60 votes needed to stop a filibuster. Republicans have signaled a hard-line stance after their election victories, promising Congressional investigations, a concerted effort to repeal health care reforms and reduced federal spending.

Rep. John Boehner, (R-OH) will take over the Speaker of House position recently held by Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA). It is said that Rep. Boehner will need to balance the priorities of the ideologically motivated Tea Party Republicans with the governing responsibilities.

Rep. Pelosi will shift from Speaker of the House to Minority Leader. Rep. Steny Hoyer(D. MD) will become Minority Whip, Rep. James Clyburn (D- SC), will assume a new post in order to remain the third ranking Democrat and Rep. John Larson (D-CT) will retain his role as Chairman of the Democratic caucus.

There are not any changes in the Republican or Senate Leadership.

#### Medicaid-States Considering Opting Out

Republicans in the Texas state legislature have floated a proposal to opt out of the federal-state Medicaid program citing their belief that they could provide more cost effective and efficient care by giving up federal funds entirely or by getting federal waivers to provide health care reform on their own terms. The federal government currently covers 60 percent of the Texas \$45 billion biennial Medicaid budget. About a dozen states, including Alabama, Mississippi, Washington and Wyoming apparently are also considering redesigning their Medicaid programs. Some are considering eliminating federal financing to give states maximum control while others are considering seeking federal waivers to allow states to change part of their Medicaid programs. Some conservatives are claiming that if states dropped Medicaid, many low income persons would instead receive federal subsidies to buy private insurance coverage through state health insurance exchanges created through the Affordable Care Act. States would then become totally responsible for Medicaid beneficiaries who require long term care. Health care experts are trying to determine how serious the states are about these plans and whether the plans are even possible.

#### FY 2011 Appropriations

Both Houses of Congress passed legislation that extended the FY 2011 Continuing Resolution until December 18<sup>th</sup>.

Ellen Sokolowski, Legislative Chair

### **IOWA REHABILITATION COUNSELORS AND EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION**

During the IRA Training Conference, the annual IRCEA meeting was held. IRCEA members attending were Victoria Kollmann, Jeffrey Morgan, Lisa Chellew, Roger Carter, Ellen Sokolowski, Mary Ott, Lois Staff, Matt Bruinekool, and Jackie Wipperman.

Treasurer Jackie Wipperman reported that September 30, 2010 balance was \$541.24. During our meeting, it was agreed by the membership to retain all profits from the Silent Auction to the division this year. The funds need to be built up in order to support a national speaker for next annual conference.

Current Iowa chapter RCEA members are Matt Bruinekool, Roger Carter, Lisa Chellew, Diane Hernandez (student), Jennifer Houck, William Houck, Victoria Kollmann, John Lee-Egan, Thomas Magner, Nancy Martel, Richard Metz, Jeffrey Morgan, Raymond Olejniczak, Mary Ott, Susan Paulson, Frank Potter, Toni Rabel (student), Ellen Sokolowski, and Leanne Weaver. We hope to recruit more students into our division.

There appears to be some discrepancies with the Membership reports coming from NRA so if you believe you are a member of this division and your name is not listed, please contact me.

You'll recall that in order to become an official affiliate of RCEA, new Constitution and Bylaws were developed and the Board titles and responsibilities were amended. The 2009 board members retained the positions through 2010 and a slate of candidates for the 2011 board was voted upon and passed by the membership during our meeting:

#### EXECUTIVE BOARD 2011

President, Lisa Chellew

Vice President, Matt Bruinekool

Secretary, Mary Ott

Treasurer, Jackie Wippermann

Past President, Victoria Kollmann

Board Member, Ray Olenizjak (2<sup>nd</sup> term)

Board Member, Jeffrey Morgan (1<sup>st</sup> term)

Legislative Liaison, Ellen Sokolowski

Bylaws, Roger Carter

Since our meeting on October 20, 2010, Treasurer Jackie Wipperman reported that \$503.00 from the Silent Auction was deposited to the IRCEA account and she paid the invoice from Custom Awards & Embroidery for the Counselor of the Year plaque. Current total for checking account: \$975.87.

Please contact me, Victoria Kollmann, at 319.230.8737 or [victoria.kollmann@blind.state.ia.us](mailto:victoria.kollmann@blind.state.ia.us) if you have any questions or comments. We'd love to have you join our division.

#### **2010 IRA Board Member Contact List**

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**Vice President:** Gary Johnson, [gary-johnson@uiowa.edu](mailto:gary-johnson@uiowa.edu)

**President-Elect:** Matt Bruinekool, [matt.bruinekool@drake.edu](mailto:matt.bruinekool@drake.edu)

**Secretary:** Mary Augustus, [mary.augustus@iowa.gov](mailto:mary.augustus@iowa.gov)

**Treasurer:** Rosie Thierer, [rosiet@hughes.net](mailto:rosiet@hughes.net)

**Past President:** Harlietta Helland, [harlietta@marshallnet.com](mailto:harlietta@marshallnet.com)

#### **2009-2010 Board Members**

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Mary Ott, [mary.ott@iowa.gov](mailto:mary.ott@iowa.gov)

#### **2010-2011 Board Members**

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Jay Brewer, [grimesia@aol.com](mailto:grimesia@aol.com)

#### **Committee Chairs**

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Awards Chair: Marcia Gracey, [m.gracey@mchsi.com](mailto:m.gracey@mchsi.com)

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