

Iowa Rehabilitation Association 2009 4th Quarter Newsletter

Notes from the President

It was a very QUICK year. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve as your President. We have a very active and committed membership with great hopes and ideas for the future of our organization.

Thanks to Jonathan Ice, President-Elect, and his program/local arrangements committee for organizing a training conference that certainly worked to Keep Your Boat Afloat! Members of the committee were Orville Townsend, Doug Keast, Denise Hubert, Frank Potter, Mike Williams, Jeffrey Morgan, and Gary Johnson.

The officers and board were willing to look at new ideas and we included a Disability Advocacy Panel to the conference programming that not only brought us good information but also provided a sharing experience for these presenters.

A first-year board member, Frank Potter, also brought another new initiative approved by the board. It is an Endowment Fund for IRA. There is more information available elsewhere in this newsletter about this fund and how you can contribute now or in the future.

Wendy Parent, Great Plains Regional Representative to the NRA Board, was able to glean some ideas from lowans for an upcoming regional training conference. She was able to attend the conference and has included an article in this newsletter about her experience.

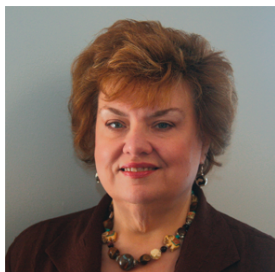
Beverlee Stafford, NRA Executive Director, joined us at the training conference as well. She is relatively new to NRA but not to lowans working in disability areas! It was great to have an opportunity to visit with her once again and catch up on changes in the field of rehabilitation in the national arena.

New membership categories are available from NRA and you should look at these in the membership article by Victoria Kollman. A membership would make great gift. Think of this for Administrative Professionals Day (Formerly Secretary's Day) or Boss's Day! Plan ahead!

I am looking forward to my upcoming year as Past President with my primary responsibility being nominating a slate of officers. You can contact me with your desire to serve or wait to hear from me later in 2010!

Harlietta

Helland



NRA Executive Director Visits Iowa Rehabilitation Association Conference

I was pleased to join the IRA in its 2009 Annual Meeting in Cedar Rapids on October 15th. This was my first visit to Iowa – even though I grew up in Chicago! Roger Carter and Ellen Sokolowski were my local guides. My thanks to both of them!

I am trying to make the rounds of various state and regional meeting to introduce myself as your new NRA Executive Director. I also want to tell as many members as possible that changes and improvements are happening at the national office. Some of the updates that we are in the process of implementing are:

- Implementing a new, more efficient membership software;
- Implementing a new, more user-friendly website;

- Using a new editor for *Contemporary Rehab*;
- New Staff on board -- Kim Joy (my Executive Assistant) and Nancy McMurray (new Membership Director);
- Implementing new membership benefits – discounted professional liability and other insurance; health advocacy services; continuing education opportunities; and
- Exploring web-based elections for chapters and Divisions.

In addition to these updates, I had the opportunity to share my five priorities for my tenure as your Executive Director. I have already discussed these in a couple of articles in *Contemporary Rehab*, but I feel that it is always good to reinforce the things I need to work on –

- Grow membership, as well as the field of vocational rehabilitation;
- Increase partnerships with other disability-related organizations;
- Take the lead in the next reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act;
- Increase opportunities for training and lifelong learning;
- Continue NRA’s strong advocacy role at the national, regional and state levels.

I want to extend my thanks to both Jonathan Ice and Harlietta Helland for inviting me and for their strong leadership of the Iowa chapter of NRA!
Beverlee Stafford, Executive Director

What a wonderful conference! *From Wendy Parent, Great Plains Region NRA*

Iowa Rehabilitation Association knows how to do it right - great sessions, great people, and great fun. I appreciate the opportunity to be a part of the conference and get to know the folks in Iowa better. I am pleased to announce that the 50/50 split raised 206 dollars and with the generous donation of **John Tenpas**, our winner, the entire amount will be used to benefit the Great Plains Region. Our goals this year are to increase and maintain membership and we will build on the activities of national to accomplish this. We are also planning a regional conference or training event to be held in 2010. More to come on that. Please share your interests and suggestions about what you would like for a regional event. We will also be working out a mechanism for interregional communication and look forward to your ongoing input and participation. Please do not hesitate to contact me anytime to share your thoughts and ideas at (785) 864-1062 (work), (785) 764-2472 (cell), and wparent@ku.edu . I am excited about working together over the next few years.



I.R.A. CONFERENCE SUMMARY – by Jonathan Ice

The 2009 IRA training conference now is history. It was held in Cedar Rapids at the Clarion Hotel and conference Center in mid-October. The outside weather was rather dismal, so it provided no distraction from the many activities available to conference-goers. Our theme was:

"Keeping the Boat Afloat: Rising above the Flood of Adversity."



We kicked off with a keynote presentation by Earl Hipp, with an entertaining, but insightful session on resilience during stressful times. Most of that afternoon and the following day were devoted to break-out sessions on a wide range of subjects related to the rehabilitation process and our participation in it.

At Thursday noon we were addressed by Beverlee Stafford, new executive director of our national organization, describing her background and how she sees herself fitting into NRA, and also informing us on some of the national issues facing the rehab community. On Friday morning we got to hear from and express our concerns to Kraig Paulsen and Rob Hogg, representative and senator respectively in the Iowa legislature. Our last session was a presentation by Hazel Pegues, director of Diversity Focus in Cedar Rapids, on a recent study on diversity issues in the Cedar Rapids-Iowa City Corridor.



At the Thursday luncheon three deserving Iowans received awards. **Jeffrey Morgan, of IVRS in Iowa City, was named Counselor of the Year**, and **Roger Carter** added to his many accolades by accepting the **Gerry Byers Award** for his many years of service to people with disabilities in Iowa and for his positive promotion of IRA.



We elected officers, and I will become president come January. Harlietta Helland, who so ably served as president in the past year and officiated at many functions of this conference, will be past president.

While we come to IRA with the higher purposes of honing our skills as rehab professionals, and cultivating our ties with our colleagues, the glue that holds us together is the social relationships and camaraderie that happen during our social times and at break times. Wednesday night we tried our hands at karaoke, with some rather amazing "girl groups" getting behind the mike.



The following night we socialized while some members of our group performed music -- I sang some humorous songs from several sources, but the stars of the show were Jeffrey Morgan with his fine mix of folk and rock, ably backed up on bass guitar by John Lee-Eagan. **On Friday morning the Hokey-Pokey Award was won by Victoria Kollmann. Presented in the purplest (meaning...excessively elaborate or full of imagery) of prose by Doug Keast, we found out about Victoria's amazing acts of compassion extended to the thirsty cigar-smokers in our midst.**

Please save the date for the upcoming IRA board meeting. It will be held on Friday, 15 January 2010, at 10:00, in the director's conference room at the Iowa Department for the Blind, 524 4th Street, Des Moines. My preferred date was 22 January and preferred location was AARP, but AARP wasn't available on either date, nor was IVRS. I expect to be out of state on 29 January, so that wasn't an option to me. At the meeting we will plan dates for subsequent board meetings in 2010. If you have any agenda items for me, please have them to me no later than a week prior to the meeting. I look forward to seeing you all in January. Jonathan Ice Soon-to-be-President

The 2009 Iowa Rehabilitation Association Award winners recognized at the annual training conference include: By Marcia



Sherri Clark from NISHNA Productions in Red Oak, who was awarded the Bill Donahue Award by the Job Placement Division; **Roger Carter**, from Atlantic, who is a rehabilitation counselor for Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, was awarded the Gerry Byers Award by the Association; **Jeffrey Morgan**, from Iowa City, also a counselor for IVRS, was awarded the Counselor of the Year Award by the Counseling division of IRA; and **Fran Sillau** was awarded the Achievement Award by IRA, and nominated by Ellen Sokolowski.

Election Results

Each year at our annual training conference, we hold an election of officers for the coming year. Here is the result of this year's election:

President-Elect: Matt Bruinekool

Vice President: Gary Johnson

Treasurer: Rosie Thierer

Board Members – Two year term: Jay Brewer, Keri Osterhaus, and Mike Williams;

Board Member – One year term: Jeffery Morgan. Congratulations to all.

IRA Endowment

At the board meeting in July it was decided to start an endowment fund for our organization. Frank Potter originated the idea, thinking that this would be a good way to honor friends or colleagues who have been important to the organization and who we would like to remember in some way. At this time a saving account has been established and it contains a little over \$200.00. Frank has suggested that this fund be used for membership. At the annual meeting when I announced this I asked others to provide ideas for the use of this fund. So if you have an idea send me an e-mail- rosiet@hughes.net. The committee established to discuss this fund and put some ideas together as to its possible uses will be meeting after the January board meeting. The members consist of Frank Potter; Ellen Sokolowski, Jay Brewer and Rosie Thierer. More information will follow as we work through this establishment process and grow this fund.

RCEA donates to Options

A silent auction of items donated by IRA members and other attendees of our training conferences took place once again this year in Cedar Rapids. The Iowa Chapter of the Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Association was in charge of this year's auction and determined that the proceeds would be donated to Options of Linn County following the devastation of their office in the Flood of 08. The following is a letter the group received:

"I would like to thank you for your donation of \$312.00 from the silent auction at your training conference held in Cedar Rapids, IA. The devastating Flood of 08 had filled our facility with 7 feet of water and muck destroying everything. This donation will go towards replacing material used for consumer programming. We are grateful for your donation as we continue to rebuild and serve people with disabilities. Our consumers and staff greatly appreciated your donation. Thank you once again for your thoughtfulness and support of Options.

Sincerely,

Jim Nagel, Director Options of Linn County



More pictures:

