

Iowa Rehabilitation Association
2010--1st Quarter Newsletter

Brag and Steal

Friday, July 23rd

ISU Alumni Center in Ames.

Save this date to attend! Topics, presenters, and registration form will be in the next IRA Newsletter.

Notes from the President

In this, my first column written as new president of IRA, I welcome you all to this new year. I expect 2010 to be a good year because there are so many interesting events coming up in the rehab world:

- Our own Ellen Sokolowski will be taking a leadership role at the Governmental Affairs Seminar in Washington, DC., coming up in mid-March.
- Our Job Placement Division (JPD) will hold its annual Brag and Steal event at a date to be determined, probably in June.
- NRA national training conference will be held in New Orleans on October 14-17, and
- The IRA state training conference will be held the following week, October 20-22, at the Ramada Tropics Resort (5000 N Merle Hay Rd) in Urbandale. President-elect Matt Bruinekool already has swung into action on this, and is organizing a committee for what is shaping up to be one of our best conferences ever.

There are all kinds of other reasons to get active in our organization. The above events give wonderful opportunities to gain those all-important CEU's that we need to maintain our certifications. They also provide chances to mingle with our fellow rehab professionals and meet new contacts, as well as gaining knowledge to enhance our effectiveness.

It also is important to keep up on political developments that affect our rehab community. Ellen S. has done an excellent job on the local level of keeping us informed (thank you, Ellen), but NRA's Patricia Leahy tracks issues on the national level, and is very effective at disseminating information on them via NRA's Washington Wire. If you aren't already subscribed, the service is available to NRA members by e-mail. Please sign up.

Another benefit of IRA/NRA membership is the publications. On the national level we have the *Journal of Rehabilitation* for those inclined toward scholarly research, and *Contemporary Rehab* keeps us filled in on happenings of the national organization and its divisions. I have been particularly pleased to see the trend over the past year toward more substantive articles in *Contemporary Rehab*. And then, of course, there is this newsletter to keep you informed on happenings in our state. Our web sites (www.nationalrehab.org for national; www.ira-iowa.org for state) are another source of up-to-date information on happenings.

I've never thought of myself as Mr. Charisma, but there are other people in this organization that you might just like to be around for the friendship and camaraderie. While we have a serious purpose, we have our fun, too. Come join us for that, also.

I hope this little piece encourages you to get more involved in our organization, and please invite your colleagues to join. We need you and (even though some may not know it) you need us. Welcome aboard!

Jonathan Ice

Upcoming I.R.A. Board Meetings

The IRA board has chosen the following dates and locations for the next three state board meetings.

All members are invited to attend if they so desire. The dates and locations are:

-- April 16, 10:00 a.m., AARP state offices, 600 E Court St, Suite C, Des Moines

-- July 23, 10:00 a.m., Ramada Tropics Resort, 5000 N Merle Hay Rd, Urbandale

-- October 20, 10:00 a.m., Ramada Tropics Resort, 5000 N Merle Hay Rd, Urbandale

Proposed Bylaw Change

By Roger Carter

At the Annual Meeting of the Board last fall, Treasurer Rosie Thierer presented a bill from the company that holds our bond on her position. At first, the Board decided that we did not need to have the Treasurer bonded, but the Bylaws state he/she must be and the cost of the bond be paid by IRA.

The actual Bylaw (Article IX, Fiscal Policies, Paragraph 2) reads **“The Board shall require the treasurer be bonded and the cost of the bond shall be paid by IRA.”**

The current cost is about \$100/year or \$300 for 3 years. The Board feels that, while the Bylaw is worthy in principle, the financial status of IRA does not really justify the need. In other words, were we an association that had a large amount of funds it would be worth insuring against the possible misuse of these funds. But since we are basically a small association and there has never ever been an instance of misuse by a Treasurer for purchasing a personal RV, boat or luxury car, we question the need and the expense.

In turn, the Board would like to remove this clause from the Bylaws, but to do so require majority approval of the membership attending and voting at the Annual Meeting.

In keeping w/ the Bylaws, any proposed change must be published in advance prior to the Annual Meeting. This article will appear again in all upcoming newsletters prior to the Annual Meeting.



THINK AWARDS, AWARDS, AWARDS!!

It is definitely not TOO early to be considering who you know: client, co-worker, friend, or a professional you have worked with, who you believe is deserving of recognition. To refresh you to the awards given: The Achievement Award is given to a client who has overcome barriers and is independent. Last year this award was given to Fran Sillau, nominated by Ellen Sokolowski a counselor at Iowa Western Community College.

The Bill Donahue Award is given to a professional who has assisted persons with disabilities to become successfully employed, and has educated and supported employers. The 2009 recipient was Sherri Clark, employed at NISHNA Productions in Red Oak.

The Counselor of the Year Award in 2009 was presented to Jeffrey Morgan, a VR counselor in the Iowa City office. Jeffrey was recognized for his commitment and community involvement, and in assisting people with disabilities to attain their goals and to become employed. This award requires the recipient to be a member of the counseling division (NRCEA).

The Gerry Byers Award is given for outstanding service to persons with disabilities and the association. Gerry was a tireless and longtime member of NRA/IRA who was a full-time placement person in Council Bluffs, and was tireless in his efforts in recruiting members for the association. He took the bus to national and regional conferences. He would often win a free membership and give it to a new person. Roger Carter, a VR counselor from Atlantic, was the recipient in 2009 and exemplifies the qualities of commitment and service.

The Chuck Wood Memorial Award is given to recognize personal achievement of independence, self-reliance, and self-sufficiency in the community. In the past this was given by the Independent Living division, which was dissolved, but carried on by IRA. There was no award given in 2009, but hopefully will be given next year.

Now you know. So get your thinking caps on and sharpen your pencils and submit a nomination packet for one of the above awards. The packets submitted by September 10, 2010. The packets should go to the following IRA Board members:

Bill Donahue Award - John Lee-Egan, President of Iowa JPD

Counselor of the Year - Victoria Kollmann, President of IRCEA

Gerry Byers Award - Gary Johnson, vice President of IRA

Achievement Award and Chuck Wood Award - Marcia Gracey (4512 SW 16th St, DM 50315)

Help IRA to have the best Award program in 2010. Specific requirements can be found on the IRA website: www.ira-iowa.org

--Marcia Gracey

Iowa Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Association

Still no word on approval from the RCEA board regarding our status as an official State Chapter. You remember that I submitted the Constitution and Bylaws, list of officers, and the names of the other IRCEA members to RCEA. More will follow.

Of course, we want to be "official" with RCEA, but this will also provide an opportunity for training grants to bring in speakers and help us offer CEUs to those who need to maintain their CCRC and other certifications.

I am renewing my CCRC in this March and nearly all of my credits have come from attending National Rehabilitation Association training programs, including the ones we offer here in Iowa. The speakers are great, the price is right, and the other participants are YOU! Let's get the word out, and let others in on our wonderful programs.

2010 IRCEA board: President - Victoria Kollmann

Vice President - Lisa Chellew

Treasurer - Jackie Wipperman

Secretary - Suzanne Paulson

Past President – John Lee-Egan

Board Member - Ray Olejniczak

Board Member - Marcia Gracey

Legislative – Ellen Sokolowski



The remaining IRCEA members are Matt Bruinekool, Roger Carter, Jennifer Houck, William Houck, Thomas Wagner, Nancy Martel, Richard Metz, Jeffrey Morgan, Mary Ott, Frank Potter, and Lois Staff.

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

Spring is coming – it has to!!

Victoria Kollmann

Legislative

In Iowa.....

Insurance Coverage for Autism... Families with autism showed up at the Capitol to show their support for two bills introduced last year SF 1 and HF !. These bills require insurance plans to pay up to \$36,000 annually for the diagnosis and treatment of children with autism (and no limit on the number of visits).

A national expert attending the meeting discussed the experience of the 15 states that currently have autism insurance mandates. Based on an independent analysis of those 11 states, insurance premiums increased by less than 1%. Based on this finding, the report estimated that lowans would pay about \$1 more per month if these bills were to pass.

Considering that one in every 71 boys is diagnosed with autism, advocates say that that this is a good deal for families and the state. "You have to be impoverished to get help," on parent testified before the Senate subcommittee reviewing SF 1. They indicated that they had been through bankruptcy twice, but when it comes to the health and safety of your child, you will do anything.

If the Iowa Legislature passes this legislation, Iowa will join Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Texas in mandating health coverage for autism diagnosis and treatment.

Unfortunately, the bill's chances do not look very promising at this time, despite the advocacy of the Senate sponsor, Sen. Daryl Beall, who is a grandparent of a child with autism. If you care about this issue, contact your legislators and the subcommittee working on these bills: Senator Tom Rielly of Oskaloosa, Sen. Bill Heckroth of Waverly, Sen. David Hartsuch of Bettendorf, Rep. Beth Wessel-Kroeschell of Ames, Rep. Bruce Hunter of Des Moines and Rep. Greg Forristall of Macedonia.

One reason given by those who oppose this mandate is that it does not apply to all insurance plans, only those that are regulated by the state (since federal law does not allow the state to regulate self insured plans. This would limit the reach of this legislation to only 25% of the state's health plans. One advocate used the following analogy. If you were on a dock with only two life jackets and there was a boat of ten persons sinking, do you keep the life jackets with you because you know that there are not enough to go around or do you throw them out in the hope a saving a couple of people?

Mental Health Parity

The mental health parity bill (HF 234) continues to sit on the House Calendar, but is not an issue to be concerned with right now. Rep. Beth Wessel-Kroeschell, the legislator who will lead the debate in the House, has been hosting a series of input meetings with insurance companies and the business community to see if any reasonable changes could be made to address concerns without gutting the bill. If you want state regulate insurance plans to be required to pay for the costs of any mental illness or substance abuse disorder, contact your State Representative now.

Those who are on the fence regarding this legislation: Rep. Brian Quirk of New Hampton, Rep. Doris Kelley of Waterloo/Cedar Falls, Rep. Delores Mertz of Algona, Rep. Mike Reasoner of Creston, Rep. McKinley Bailey of Story City, Rep. Larry Marek of Riverside and Rep. Geri Huser of Altoona.

Insurance companies say this increase in coverage would force insurance premiums to go up by 5-10%. Advocates indicate that these numbers are inflated, and point to other state experiences, information from the Congressional Budget Office, and independent actuarial studies that show full mental and substance use coverage increases premiums by less than 1%. In addition, studies have show that 90% of any premium increase are due to biologically based mental illnesses which Iowa Law already mandates Adding all mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders would have nearly no effect on premiums (that is a potential increase of up to .1%)

Brain Injury Prevention

One piece of legislation being proposed this year to prevent brain injuries and keep kids safe. SF 2055 requires older youth (ages 11-17) to wear seat belts in both the front and back seats. Right now seat belts are required in the front seat for that age group. According to the Iowa Brain Injury Association, this age group sustains the most injuries and death because of motor vehicle accidents (84% of the 1,823 unbelted youth injured in motor vehicle accidents from 2004-2007 were in the 11-17 year old groups and the 71 unbelted fatalities during the same time period were back seat passengers.

The Senate Transportation Committee approved this bill unanimously. If it is important to you, contact your legislator(while this bill is in the Senate, it is heard that the House does not have enough votes to pass it, so contact your Representative as well.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Iowa Department of Human Rights has proposed a bill HF 2150 and SF 2202 that cleans up the Iowa Code so that it conforms with the current ADA language. The bill eliminates old references to "Persons with physical disabilities" and replaces it with the more inclusive "persons with disabilities." The bill clarifies that service animals do not need to be trained by a recognized training facility s there are none in Iowa. Curb cuts are now required on all new or repaired intersection curbs. The subcommittees met on this bill this week, the Senate unanimously passed the bill (HF 2150) out of committee and the House plans on taking action in the near future.

Rep. Lisa Heddens of Ames and Sen. Joe Bolckcom will be the floor managers of this bill. You can send your communication of thanks to them directly as well as to your legislators.

Audiology Insurance Coverage

Rep. Janet Petersen of Des Moines did a quick bit of maneuvering when she failed to get the required number of votes in the House Commerce Committee to pass a bill that would require insurance plans to pay for audiological evaluations and hearing aids for children. She had the bill reintroduced in the House Human Resources Committee HSB 682 and received the necessary support to move the bill out of the subcommittee to a full committee vote in the future.

In Washington..

Health care reform remains an issue that both Republicans and Democrats are interested in. Members of the House and Senate leadership have met with President Obama to discuss reconciling differences between the House and Senate health care reform bills. Reportedly, rather than convening a formal conference committee, the House and Senate negotiators will incorporate their agreements resolving the differences between the bills into the Senate bill. The House will then vote on that bill, followed by a Senate vote. The process will address the need to hold onto all 60 Senators who initially voted for the bill and prevent a filibuster. To respond to concern that their issues would not be addressed under this process, House Speaker Pelosi held a teleconference with the Democratic Caucus to discuss several of their priority provisions.

It is estimated that there are approximately 50 differences between the House and Senate bills.

What may have an impact on this as well is that a Republican won the seat that had been held by Senator Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts. With the 60 Democrats in the Senate, this allowed the Democrats to hold a super-majority, and was essentially filibuster proof. With Scott Brown, Republican winning the election, this shifts that balance and does have an impact on this legislation..



Meet Jeffrey Morgan, one of the new IRA Board members. Jeffrey joins us to fulfill the remainder of Kathy Winter's 2009-2010 term.

Jeffrey is the lead counselor of the IVRS office in Iowa City, and his current caseload consists of U of I students. He has also provided services in the Washington area. He told me that during his early years with IVRS, he was challenged when two support staff and his mentor moved on, and his agency experienced the moratorium and the IVRS waiting list. Surviving those events, Jeffrey celebrated his 13th IVRS anniversary in November 2009.

Prior to his employment at IVRS, Jeffrey worked at the Goodwill in Iowa City for nine years, and before that, he was employed by REA (Rural Employment Alternatives) in service coordination.

Jeffrey began his studies at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion. Later, he completed his education at the University of Iowa with his Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling. Jeffrey is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.

He and his wife Cheli have been married nine years. They have two sons, ages 25 and 21, both sharing Jeffrey's passion for and talent in music. In July 2009, the Morgans added to the family: a chocolate lab named Jimmy. Jimmy is a rescue dog from South Amana. Jeffrey says Jimmy is a gentle giant who definitely has a "labitude."

Jeffrey began his membership with the National Rehabilitation Association as a student while attending the University of Iowa. Jeffrey told me that Bonnie Love encouraged him to get involved in the organization.

He has a recollection of the IRA Training Conference that was held in Coralville. Dennis Braer was the President Elect that year. John Lee-Egan heard that Jeffrey played guitar, and wanted him to play background music at the IRA Awards luncheon.

That performance didn't take place, but you may have witnessed Jeffrey, Jonathan Ice, and John Lee-Egan entertaining us with their musical talent at this past IRA Training Conference. Although it was thirteen years in the making, it was IRA's good fortune to witness Jeffrey's excellent musical talent. Jeffrey told me that music was his "glorious plan B." He said that he has been lucky to play with some very talented people.

Some of us purchased Jeffrey's CDs. He contributed the proceeds to IRA fund raising. He promises to make two more CDs, and I know we will enjoy them.

You may remember this past year at the Annual IRA Awards Luncheon when Jeffrey was honored as he received the Counselor of the Year Award presented by IRCEA. Congratulations to you, Jeffrey!!

IRA Membership Report Current NRA Iowa Chapter Statistics:

IRA Total 85 - 60 Professional
 6 Student
 19 Full Life

National Rehabilitation Association of Job Placement And Development.....	25
Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Association	18
National Association for Independent Living.....	1
Vocational Evaluation and Work Adjustment Association.....	4
National Association of Service Providers-In Private Rehabilitation.....	5
National Association for Rehabilitation Leadership.....	2
Association of Rehabilitation Technicians and Specialists ARTS (formerly known as National Association of Rehabilitation Support Staff).....	1
National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns	1
National Association of Disability Benefits Specialists.....	2

Just before the IRA Fall Training Conference, I distributed the first electronic link to the IRA newsletter. Of our 85 members, 44 received electronic links to the newsletter on the IRA website. Since then, I have been able to visit with more of our IRA members and the link was sent to 60 for this newsletter.

Here is a listing of all current National Rehabilitation Association membership levels:

Level 1: Member

Available to professional or non-professional; access to all member benefits; is eligible for all benefits of membership in the Association including voting privileges, copies of Contemporary Rehab and the Journal of Rehabilitation, Division Membership, may hold elected office at any level of the Association, and is represented in the NRA Delegate Assembly. **\$132 per year**

Level 2: Affiliate

Available to non-credentialed support/technical staff or retirees (professional or non-professional); is eligible for voting privileges, copies of Contemporary Rehab, Division Membership, may hold office at the local, state or regional level, and is represented in the NRA Delegate Assembly. **\$96 per year**

Level 3: New Professional

Available to recent graduates who were Student members of NRA the previous year; available for one single year period; is eligible for all the benefits of Level 1 membership. **\$96 dollars per year**

Level 4: Student

Available to full time students with student schedule verification; is eligible for all the benefits of Level 1 membership. **\$42 per year**

Level 5: Organization

Available to facility director/CEO and 4 designated employees; CEO and 4 designees are eligible for all the benefits of Level 1 membership. **\$650 dollars per year**

Life and Individual Members receive/enjoy full voting privileges, representation in the Delegate Assembly, copies of Contemporary Rehab and the Journal of Rehabilitation, and may hold office at any level in the Association.

Please contact me if you need the new NRA registration form.

The Membership Committee is looking for a few great people to join Marcia Gracey, Tim Gracey and me to maintain and build the membership of the Iowa Chapter of the National Rehabilitation Association. We'd love to have anyone wanting to be a part of this committee.

Please contact me at victoria.kollmann@blind.state.ia.us or 319-230-8737 when you have questions, ideas or comments for our committee.

Victoria Kollmann, IRA Membership Chair



by Tim Gracey about Tim Gracey

I started my first job in 1972 with Goodwill Industries of Des Moines as a counselor working with person with chronic mental illness who were located in a residential facility after the Polk County Home was closed. My first boss (Richard Morris) was one of the first Presidents of the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association and felt strongly about professional organizations. He took the entire staff to the Iowa Rehab Assn conference in Waterloo, and I was hooked. I got to hear nationally known people, and meet a couple hundred rehab professionals from around the state.

Those associations have helped me personally by making numerous friends, and professionally by exposing me to what my colleagues thought. When I started with the public VR program in 1976 I made the commitment to attend some regional conferences where three to four hundred people would attend. I attended some national conferences where a thousand would attend. It was great to meet colleagues who took the

time to develop training programs to meet the needs of every level of rehab personnel, from management to support staff to supervisors to counselors (and the old days disability examiners and evaluators). Opportunities to develop leadership skills as well as professional skills were most welcome.

I encourage all in the rehab and related fields to benefit from getting to know their colleagues in the private and public sector, discuss cutting edge practices, stretch and challenge your abilities. I know there is a significant financial investment in membership dues and training costs, but the investment pays off tremendously. You can feel isolated in any work environment if you don't expand your horizons. I guarantee you will feel better about what you do, how you do it, pride in your profession, and appreciation of the friendships you will develop.

I retired a couple of years ago, but greatly appreciate the experiences, friendships, and opportunities for growth. What you get from this association is somewhat addictive. Just take note of retired past presidents that come back for some events.

I will still be seeing you once in a while.