

Cultural Network Newsletter

A publication of the **National Association of Multicultural
Rehabilitation Concerns**

Election Issue

October/November, 2003

From the Desk of the President

Tyra R. Hawkins, President

Greetings and Happy Thanksgiving!

As I reflect over the things in my life that I am grateful for during this holiday season: the love of a higher power greater than man, my health, family, friends, and your faith in my ability to serve as your President. I am pleased to announce that the votes have been tallied and it is official we are headed for the



“Windy City” (Chicago) for our 12th NAMRC annual training conference. The theme for next year’s conference will be **“Multiculturalism in the Forefront: Leadership, Innovation, and**

Change.” Graciously serving as our conference co-chairs will be Dr. Carl Flowers and Dr. L. Robert McConnell.

Enclosed is your official ballot for the 2004 NAMRC officers and we are fortunate to have an excellent slate of highly qualified candidates who are eager and willing to serve in leadership roles of NAMRC. Therefore, in keeping with your commitment to NAMRC I encourage you to take the time today to **VOTE** and mail in your ballot.

Please join me in congratulating the following people: Dr. Carl Flowers for being

elected to serve as Board Member At Large of NRA for 2004 and NAMRC’s own Dr. Bobbie Akins received the President Award during the Annual NRA Conference in Nashville, TN. Special thanks is also extended out to Bobbie, from the members of NAMRC for all of the love, appreciation, and, loyal support that she has provided NAMRC throughout the years.

In closing, this year is my final year of my term of service as Board Member At Large of NRA, and once again I would like to thank you each of you for all the support you have shown me.

As always please feel free to contact me with your concerns and suggestions at: work (256) 231-1025 or thawkins@rehab.state.al.us and home (256) 358-4097 or tjr111855@aol.com . It is my goal to be accessible to the members of NAMRC at all times.

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NAMRC Board Representative Report

The NRA Board met October 1 in Nashville, TN, in conjunction with the National Conference, held October 1-5 at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, TN. In news from the Board meeting and Conference:

Attendance was up over last year's number. Executive Director Michelle Vaughan reported that more than 400 persons were in attendance and the number of exhibitors was also up, as compared to last year.

Results from the National Election were announced: Pat Murphy (OH) was elected as President-elect and Carl Flowers (yours truly) was elected to the Board Member at Large seat. The voting percentage of NRA members, for the NRA elections, remains dismal at less than 10% of total membership participating in the election process. Those elected and division appointed representatives leaving the Board were recognized for their work on the board: NAMRC President

Tyra Hawkins, the outgoing Member-at-Large, Carol Denney, NARS Division Representative, and Bill Chrisner, NAIL Division Representative

The Board approved the proposed dues increase for NAMRC members, which had been approved earlier by the NAMRC Board.

The Board received another report from the NRA ONE Committee. Following lengthy discussion, the Board remanded the Cost of Services for Divisions issue back to the Committee one final time.

As a FYI, NAMRC's divisional membership remains above 400. Additionally, it appears that only one division, VEWA, has completed the process of transferring funds to the NRA as part of the Restructuring Program.

Carl Flowers
NAMRC Representative to the NRA Board

Hear Ye! Hear Ye

July 21-25
NAMRC 12th Annual Conference
Hyatt Regency Hotel
Chicago, IL
(312) 565-1235

Join friends and colleagues in the Windy City,
in the heart of downtown Chicago

Watch for information on the
Call for Proposals and Registration in upcoming newsletters

A Message from NRA President Dr. L. Robert McConnell

Dear friends in rehabilitation

Dr. Carl Flowers, our newsletter editor and past division president, asked if I might share my views on whether or not the NAMRC division should or should not remain a part of the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA). I very much appreciate the opportunity to do so. Before responding to the question, let me provide a personal historical perspective to provide a context for my answer.

Some of you may be familiar with my NRA history; I have been a member since 1976, served on the board in Michigan for two different terms, served on the national board for over six years, was the Director of the NRA Mary Switzer Seminars from 1997-2002, and of course am currently the NRA 2003, national president. My involvement with NAMRC is also significant to me, I was founder and first president of the first NAMRC state chapter in 1983, served as the NAMRC Great Lakes Regional Representative from 1984-1986, represented NAMRC on the NRA board from 1996-1998, served on the NAMRC Board of Directors for over 10 years, and Co-chaired the National conference in Michigan in 2000. Thus, while I have a long history and deep commitment to *both* organizations, my response to the question will not be *wish-washy*.

I CAN SAY WITHOUT RESERVATION, IT IS MY FIRM BELIEF THAT IT IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF NAMRC, NRA AND THE LARGER REHABILITATION COMMUNITY THAT NAMRC REMAINS A PART OF NRA.

My rationale for this position stems largely from my historical belief in the need for a NAMRC in the first place, and my impetus for the founding of the first NAMRC

chapter in 1983. It was and is the need to insure a greater presence of multicultural issues, persons, and practices within NRA and the larger rehabilitation community. That presence is necessary not only to showcase the talent and provide expanded growth opportunities for minority professionals, but more importantly to effect programs, policies and practices, which impact non-white persons with disabilities. That agenda can be met more effectively if NAMRC remains a part of NRA.

There are other important reasons from my perspective having to do with linkages, networks, relationships and Association benefits. Before commenting on these however, let me clarify my position on whether or not NAMRC can exist independent of NRA. I believe just as emphatically, that there is no question that NAMRC can exist-and exist very well without NRA. I also believe NRA benefits significantly from the presence of the NAMRC division. NAMRC has the talent, experience and commitment to run effective conferences, to manage its affairs, to maintain financial stability, and to create value for its members. The ability to effectively operate apart from NRA is not the question. The question is can NAMRC fulfill it's mission most effectively independently, or does a separatist, independent strategy limit our ability to impact on the larger rehabilitation agenda, and limit our growth from the dialogue and interaction and information which comes from networking in the larger and more diverse rehabilitation community?



A disaffiliation also means effectively cutting us off from the NRA Governmental Affairs and annual Training Conferences, the state NRA chapters; the state and regional NRA conferences and all of the relationships and networks and information opportunities that those linkages entail. It means losing contact with a larger, more experienced advocacy voice, and access to the extensive linkages and associations and organizations that NRA has a voice, and access to the extensive linkages and associations and organizations that NRA has established over the 80 years of its existence. And probably less important to most of you, it means elimination of the Journal of Rehabilitation, decreased access to the Associations health, liability and other benefit packages and information services provided.

I am certainly familiar with the frustrations associated with the NRA restructuring process. Initially, NAMRC and other divisions had to battle the issue of the “500 member” requirement to maintain its board seat. Through NAMRC leadership, and the support of other divisions and the board at large that policy was reversed. Currently the

Division is addressing the issue regarding access to and control of the Division’s funds. This is an important issue also and I am optimistic that a win-win solution can be found that will meet both parties’ needs. I believe it is in the interest of all concerned to find such a solution.

I am confident we can and must get past these issues for the good of rehabilitation, so that we can continue to build a strong and dynamic NAMRC, which is part of a strong and diverse NRA.

In closing, as president of NRA I have had the pleasure of traveling all across the country; from Hot Springs, Arkansas to Jackpot Junction, Minnesota, from New Orleans to San Francisco from Virginia to Hawaii; visited state, regional and national conferences, and have been struck not only by the richness of our diversity, but the commonality of values, commitment and energy within the larger NRA family. It has been a resounding source of energy for me. It is important to keep the family together.

Sincerely,

L. Robert McConnell NAMRC Board Member & NRA President



**National
Association of
Multicultural
Rehabilitation
Concerns**

2004-2005 NAMRC BOARD

Bio-sketches and Candidate Statements

Sherry Billings, M.Ed.

Sherry A. Billings, M. Ed. has served as the Program Manager for the District of Columbia Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology and Health Risk Assessment, Division of Injury and Violence since December 1999. Prior to this position, she served as the Community Outreach Coordinator for the Division of Disability Surveillance and Intervention and Project Coordinator for the Traumatic Brain Injury Program. The Division of Injury and Violence is comprised of the following programs: Traumatic Brain Injury Post Demonstration; Violence Against Women; Rape Prevention and Education; DC-Baltimore Center to Improve Youth Health Disparities (Pilot Study), and an Injury Registry. The mission of the Division of Injury and Violence is to identify and monitor the incidence, prevalence and severity (mortality and morbidity) of injury and implement preventive measures to reduce the physical, social, and other impacts of injuries that lead to long term disabilities in the District of Columbia.

Ms. Billings has been active with NAMRC since 1999. She has presented at NAMRC conferences, facilitated workshops, and most recently served as co-chair for the 11th Annual Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. Through ongoing activities she continues to maintain NAMRC's integrity, by addressing issues of diverse populations relative to their rehabilitation concerns. If elected to the Board she will continue to support NAMRC's mission and strive to solicit multidisciplinary professionals to become advocates of multicultural rehabilitation concerns.

Belen Burkhalter, M. A.

Professional Experiences

Programs Manager with the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in Oklahoma for 6 years
United States Veterans Administration in the Philippines for 8 years

Education: Bachelors Degree in Psychology; Masters Degree in Guidance and Counseling. Currently, I am pursuing a doctorate in Occupational Education Studies at Oklahoma State University

NRA/NAMRC Involvement

NRA Member since 1989; served as President of the Oklahoma Rehabilitation Association in 2001, Immediate Past President of the National Association for Rehabilitation Leadership (formerly NRAA). Involvement with NAMRC at the committee level: Election Committee this past year and Planning Committee for 2001 Conference Hot Springs

If elected, I would like to work with the NAMRC Board in promoting leadership development among our student members. We need to prepare our students to provide leadership not only in our division but also in other rehabilitation organizations. There are a huge number of rehabilitation leaders who would be retiring in the immediate future. I would like to see current leaders in our association provide mentoring to our student members.

NAMRC as an association has leaders and members that are in a position to promote development of student leaders from diverse racial, ethnic, social class, and cultural groups. I have a passion for advocating for the rehabilitation needs of

multicultural persons with disabilities. They currently and futuristically constitute the customer base of rehabilitation services based on demographic trends. I offer my experience and commitment to make a difference if given the opportunity to serve.

Dr. Chandra Donnell, CRC

Dr. Chandra Donnell is an assistant professor in the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology and Research and Coordinator of the Rehabilitation Counseling Program at The University of Memphis. She received her Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Counselor Education from Michigan State University in 2001. A Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC), Dr. Donnell has provided service in the field through transition services, job placement and development, and as a disability specialist for college students with disabilities. She is currently a joint site reviewer for CORE and CACREP. Regionally, Dr. Donnell also serves on the Board of Directors for the Volunteer State Rehabilitation Association, the state branch of the National Rehabilitation Association.

She has presented well over a dozen papers at several national conferences, including, the National Council on Rehabilitation Education and the National Association for Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns conferences. Dr. Donnell has also conducted research and published in the areas of multicultural aspects of rehabilitation, employment supports and access issues for persons with severe mental illness, as well as recovery and empowerment issues facing persons of color with severe mental illness.

Dr. Donnell is vested in the mission and culture of the National Association for Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns.

After serving as Program Co-chair for the 2003 NAMRC conference, she will continue her service as the Publicity Committee Chair for the 2004 Annual Conference. Service on the Board of Directors would further enhance Dr. Donnell's ability to continue to promote the concerns of and issues facing multicultural rehabilitation clients and professionals.

Ralph 'Skip' Keil

Born /raised in Roseville Michigan; Served in the States Marine Corps for over 25 years, Married to the woman of my dreams Judy French (now Keil) since 1984; three daughters, two of which have spent time in the military themselves and two granddaughters. Retired in 1997 in Reagan, TN, where we currently reside. I am a disabled veteran, and received my undergraduate degree from Freed-Hardeman University. I am currently a student at the University of Memphis, working on a Masters Degree in Vocational Rehabilitative Counseling. Will graduate in December 2004 and intend to start work on a doctoral degree shortly after graduation. Following graduation, I hope to go to work for the Department of Veterans Affairs. I have a dream that some day the Veterans of America will be treated fairly and quickly and I intend to do everything in my power to streamline the system to assist Veterans in an expedient but proficient manner.

I have only been a member of NAMRC for a short time, but I feel like part of the family already. I can see NAMRC becoming a very large organization and want to do everything that I can to help get it there. I want to work with NAMRC to get it to a point where one of the concerns for our conference is finding a place large enough to hold us all.
Together we can do anything!

**Linda Sanchez-Reed, MSE, NCC,
BSW, PLC**

I currently am a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in the State of Wisconsin, with a Master's in Counseling and a Bachelor's in Social Work, and pursuing a doctorate in Voc-Rehab. I have worked with persons with disabilities for over thirteen years, plus have life-long experience working with diverse cultures. I am an active member of NRA and WRA (Wisconsin Chapter) for the past 3 years, as treasurer and Vice-President for our Multicultural Division. I attended the Legislative Conference in Washington DC in Alexandria VA (2002), the NRA Conference in Indiana (2002), and was thrilled to represent Wisconsin at the 2003 NAMRC conference in New Orleans. I have enjoyed networking with the National Federation of the Blind and the Deaf Community in Wisconsin. While completing my bachelor degree, I had the privilege of assisting UW Oshkosh for 3 years with implementing multicultural programs in the local community. This was accomplished by developing, implementing and providing educational opportunities for building awareness of diverse cultures, to K-12 level students and their families.

If elected, my priorities would be to: serve as a team player; advocate for continual enhancement of quality of life and employment opportunities to persons of diversity, with disabilities; promote networking with other organizations with common goals; and commit to increasing membership. Spending time with leadership in both NRA and NAMRC has inspired me to get more involved in accomplishing the over-all goals of this dynamic organization.

Dr. William Talley, CRC

I was honored to be nominated to serve as a member of the Board of Directors for NAMRC. So let me begin by thanking those who chose to nominate me. Below are my personal thoughts and some information that will serve as a way of introducing myself. My involvement with NAMRC has covered two decades. In that time I have enjoyed presenting at the annual conferences, serving on a variety of active committees, and co-chairing the conference program committee. In 2001 and 2002, I served as editor of the Cultural Network News. This year, I am serving as half of a two-member committee to draft a set of by-laws for a new Chapter of NAMRC for the State of Maryland.

My education includes a Doctorate in Rehabilitation (Rh.D.) from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIUC), a Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, both from South Carolina State College. My rehabilitation work experience began when I accepted a position as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for the South Carolina Department of Vocational Rehabilitation in 1978. Since that time I have accumulated 25 years of experience in a number of rehabilitation related occupations including the past 14 years that I have worked as a Rehabilitation Educator.

If elected I pledge to use my ability and experience in rehabilitation to continue to help our members and our organization to realize the Mission to which NAMRC is dedicated.

Editors Note: Bios for Alo Dutta or Dr. Irvine Epps were not submitted in time for inclusion in the newsletter. All available bios and candidate photos will be available on the NAMRC Website at NAMRC.org

The National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns (NAMRC) publishes this newsletter.
Editor: Sean Reyes, MA.

Submissions to the Cultural Network Newsletter should be in MS Word (preferred) or Word Perfect. Submissions may be mailed (on disk) or sent to the Newsletter Editor, via email, to Sreyes@siu.edu. Photos should be submitted as JPEG files. Contact information should be included with your submissions. The deadline for submissions for the **January 2004 issue is December 15, 2003**. Other submission date deadlines are:

April 11 for the May 2004 issue

May 15 for the July 2004 issue

September 12 for the October 2004 issue

February 20 for the March 2004 issue

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