

# National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns Cultural Network Newsletter

## Winter Issue

December 2004, Volume 10

### From the Desk of the President

*Tyra R. Hawkins*

Greetings and Merry Christmas NAMRC Members:

It is hard to believe that 2005 is just around the corner and that my term as President is about to



end. As I pass the gavel to Dr. Paul Leung I know that NAMRC's future is secure and that the leadership that Paul will provide will insure NAMRC's continued success.

I would like to highlight some of our accomplishments during the past two years:

- NAMRC's Strategic Plans for the Future
- The revision and NRA approval of NAMRC's bylaws
- A debt free and financially solvent association
- The formation of NAMRC First Organization Partnership with the Consortia of Administrators of Native American Rehabilitation
- The formation and continuation of active committees in the areas of membership, economic development, nomination and awards, public relations and marketing, finance, governance, partnership and coalition building, student outreach, scholarship, professional development, legislative, advocacy and education

- We have increased NAMRC's membership and leadership participation on the state and nation level at NRA conferences
- The addition and revitalization of State NAMRC Chapters
- We awarded our First Governmental Affairs Scholarship in 2003
- We awarded our First Student of the Year Award in 2003
- We awarded our First NAMRC Student Scholarship in 2004
- Maintained and updated NAMRC website
- Published quarterly newsletters
- Submitted quarterly information to the *Contemporary Rehab* in an effort to spotlight NAMRC accomplishments and visibility within NRA
- NAMRC leadership have successfully been elected to the NRA Board of Directors

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Please join me in applauding yourself and the NAMRC Board of Directors for your commitment to NAMRC's mission and goals. It is through your continued dedication and the renewing of your membership that NAMRC will continue to grow and thrive in the future.

I am not going to say *good-bye* because I will continue to work with the NAMRC Board of Directors and members but in a different capacity (Past President and Chair of the Board of Directors. **I would like to wish you and your family a Very Safe, Blessed, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!**

Sincerely,

Tyra Rice Hawkins

Why Don't All NRA Members Have the Same Opportunities?

Currently I am the 2004 President of the Northeast Rehabilitation Association (NERA). My goal is and has been that all NRA members can have equal opportunities to participate within the organization. In October of 2003 I attended the national NRA conference in Nashville, Tennessee. As the president-elect of the Northeast region of the NRA I attended the Town Meeting where the Council of Chapter Presidents meets. The Council of Chapter Presidents includes president-elects, presidents, and past president of chapters and regions of the NRA.

At that Town Meeting I raised the issue that Delegate Assembly and the Council of Chapter Presidents have always held their meetings on Saturdays, and that this prevents members that are religiously observant from participating in these activities during their meetings. This affects members who are Jewish or Seven Day Adventists that are religiously observant on Saturday. The issue was not addressed during the Council of Chapter Presidents meeting.

Since October of 2003 I have been doing advocacy within the NRA to try to get the policies changed. I have brought the issue up with the Bylaws and Constitution Committee, and had the NRA board discuss and review the issue. It was reported to me that the NRA attorney feels

that the language in the Constitution is ambiguous in Article IV-Membership and needs to be interpreted by the NRA board. The Constitution states that the NRA is not supposed to discriminate in "organizational units". I thought that the Delegates Assembly and the Council of Chapter Presidents were covered under that statement. According to the NRA's attorney, the Bylaws and Constitution Committee, and the NRA board view things differently.

Regarding the Council of Chapter Presidents every two years there is a voting during the Town Meeting on the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson of the Council. Since 2004 was going to be an election year not changing the day of the meeting meant the NRA was excluding members from running for office, voting, and preventing members from participating in the meeting.

It was very disheartening that the NRA would not change its policies and continued its discriminatory practices. As the 2004 Northeast regional president I found out that I was a Constitutional Delegate. According to the NRA Constitutional Delegates cannot vote by proxy. What that means is if someone is religiously observant, and or disabled and cannot attend the Delegate Assembly he/she loses their vote during the Delegate Assembly. I realized that I could not attend the Delegates Assembly, or the Council of Chapter Presidents meeting after the advocacy I had been doing.

I started doing the advocacy to change things for other members, and what had changed were my own beliefs. I stood up for the members who stayed silent in fear of bringing attention to themselves, and or possibly damaging the careers. It was against my beliefs to attend on Saturday. I was interested in running for Vice Chair of the Council of Chapter Presidents. This is a lost opportunity for me. The next time the Council of Chapter Presidents has elections I will no longer be eligible to run.

I am not alone in this loss of opportunities. Many members that have lost opportunities because of the NRA's policies. In many chapters delegates are sponsored to the national conferences. The lost opportunities by not being sponsored to a national conferences are: less networking, less development of new skills, and it can effectively mean less job opportunities.

My hope in raising these issues of activities that members cannot participate on

Saturday is not just a question of scheduling or of civil rights. It is also that the NRA is not valuing the place religion has in regard to the rehabilitation process. For some individuals that have a disability, or develop one as an adult it is their faith that helps sustain them and gives the motivation to transcend their disability. For someone in recovery from alcoholism, and or drug use that follows AA's Twelve Steps, part of the process is the belief in a higher power. The connection between spirituality and disability has been well documented in rehabilitation literature including NRA journals. The Journal of Rehabilitation (Volume 67, Number 1 – 2001), title was Special Issue Spirituality and Disability was devoted to this special subject.

There are chapters and divisions that care about this issue. In 2004 my local chapter the (Metropolitan NY), and the Executive Board of the NRCA the largest division unanimously voted to ask the NRA to change the day when the Council of Chapter Presidents and the Delegate Assembly meets. I would encourage other chapters, regions, and divisional boards to take the subject under advisement. My hope is that as an organization we learn to work together to empower our members, and value the diversity of all of them. I can be contacted at POlive404@aol.com or (718) 624-2955 if anyone would like to discuss the subject further.

Patricia Olive, M.S.Ed., C.R.C., 2004 President  
Northeast Rehabilitation Association

NAMRC 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
Crowne Plaza Hotel  
San Antonio, Texas  
July 20-24  
Make you're Reservations  
TODAY!  
1-210-354-2800

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
MULTICULTURAL REHABILITATION  
CONCERNS  
SCHOLARSHIP AWARD INFORMATION\*

**Purpose:** To support and encourage minority student members of NAMRC who are pursuing careers in rehabilitation and related fields

**Amount of award:** Annually, two awards will be given: an undergraduate recipient award of \$1,500 and a graduate recipient award of \$2,000.

**Process:** Applications and addition information are available on the NAMRC website at [www.namrc.org](http://www.namrc.org). Applications will be accepted (post marked) **by June 15th, 2005.**

### 2005 Awards Committee

Terry Stevenson  
Committee Chair

The Committee for this years awards is getting started. New committee members are always welcome and should contact me at: [twstevenson@ars.state.ar.us](mailto:twstevenson@ars.state.ar.us).

We will be publishing the current awards and eligibility criteria in the next newsletter. None of the awards have changed and the criteria for the awards should remain the same as last years.

All members need to start looking now at their fellow members for possible candidates for awards.

I am looking forward to serving you as the committee chair and will see you all at this years conference.

Thank You  
Terry Stevenson



**NAMRC Officer and Board Contact Information  
(2005-2006) Effective January 1**

*Paul Leung, President  
Email address: pleung@unt.edu*

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*Website Editor  
Scott Forbes, Rh.D. - wsforbes@siu.edu*

educator or someone you know who works in the field of rehabilitation counseling?

Educators, have you ever wanted to just "let loose" or see your colleagues in a different light? Are you willing to be rated by your students? Are you really committed to your professional associations and the need to promote the participation of your students in these professional organizations?

If you answered "yes" to at least one of the previous questions, do we have an opportunity for you? The National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns (NAMRC) is hosting its annual conference in San Antonio, Texas, July 20 – 24. In an attempt to increase student involvement, we want to encourage you to nominate your professors, counselors, or others who work in the field of rehabilitation to showcase their "talents" at the conference. We plan to have a "battle of talents" to increase participation in and awareness of NAMRC. Educators, you will still be delivering a valuable lesson, while the students will still be learning. Get involved. Complete the attached form and return it to the Student Outreach Committee at [mclaugh@emporia.edu](mailto:mclaugh@emporia.edu). Please understand that participation is up to the nominee; however, we will try our best to convince them that it is worth their time and effort. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Dr. Shonda McLaughlin, Emporia State University  
Mrs. Stacye Wilson-Alfred, Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services  
Ms. Karla Coburn, Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services  
Mr. Cyril Chuku, Langston University  
Mr. Herbert Morris, U.S. Veteran & Student-Langston University  
Ms. Christine Chambers, Emporia State University

**Hello Fellow Educators and Students:**

Students, have you ever wondered how your professors (current or former) act outside of the classroom? Would you like to know if he or she has some type of instrumental, vocal, theatrical, comedic or poetic talent? Would you like an opportunity to switch roles and rate your professor's performance for a change? Would you like to perform with an

**National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns  
Student Outreach Committee  
Talent Show Nomination Form  
Due: March 14, 2005**



Nominator's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First

School Attending \_\_\_\_\_

Degree Seeking (please circle):      Master's                  Doctorate                  Bachelor's

Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Area Code      Phone Number

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street                                  State                                  Zip Code

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason(s) for Nomination:

What talent(s) would you like for your nominee to showcase?

Are you a NRA or NAMRC Member? (Please circle): Yes or No. If "no," would you like membership information? \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

### Nominee Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Title (e.g., Dr., Ms., Mr.)

Place of Employment \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: : \_\_\_\_\_  
Street State Zip Code

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please email/ US mail completed form to Dr. Shonda McLaughlin at [mclaugh@emporia.edu](mailto:mclaugh@emporia.edu).

**Emporia State University  
1200 Commercial St., Box 4036  
Emporia, KS 66801  
Phone: 6203415721**



**See you in July!**

**Thank you,**

- Student Outreach Committee Members:
- Dr. Shonda McLaughlin, Emporia State University
  - Mrs. Stacye Wilson-Alfred, Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services
  - Ms. Karla Coburn, Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services
  - Mr. Cyril Chuku, Langston University
  - Mr. Herbert Morris, U.S. Veteran & Student at Langston University
  - Ms. Christine Chambers, Emporia State University

To all NAMRC Members:

If you are not receiving the NAMRC

Newsletter via email,

Please forward your current email address

to

Silvio Sean Reyes at [sreyes@siu.edu](mailto:sreyes@siu.edu) or

Ralph “Skip” Keil at [Skipk@aeneas.net](mailto:Skipk@aeneas.net).

The National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns (NAMRC) publishes this newsletter. Editors: Silvio S. Reyes, MA, and Ralph "Skip" Keil. 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](mailto:sreyes@siu.edu) or [skipk@aeneas.net](mailto:skipk@aeneas.net). Photos should be submitted as JPEG files. Contact information should be included with your submissions. The deadline for submissions for the May 2004 issue is April 11, 2004. Other submission date deadlines are: May 15 for the July 2004 issue, September 12 for the October 2004 issue

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