

Neuro-Optometric Rehabilitation Association, International

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In This Issue

- ◆ President's Message
- ◆ NORA Noteworthy
 - ◆ NORA 2006 Conference
 - ◆ Brain Injury and Workers' Comp.
 - ◆ Curriculum Program
 - ◆ Administrative Report
 - ◆ New PO Box
 - ◆ Toll Free number transferred
 - ◆ Networking
 - ◆ Website
 - ◆ New AOA Liaison
- ◆ Members on the Move
- ◆ Other Meetings
- ◆ Neuro-Optometric Pearl

President's Message



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Rehabilitation of Visual Disorders (Zihl, J), Vision, Perception and Cognition (Zoltan), Neuro-Optometric Rehabilitation (Padula) and Neuroanatomy Simplified (Moore). Each text comes from a different discipline. Vision in any form is not the exclusive domain of any one profession. Instead, many disciplines exist because of the uniqueness of their knowledge and expertise to compliment the treatment of the patient. In the first text, Zihl stated "rehabilitation is a process whereby people, who have been injured, work together with health service staff and others to achieve their optimum level of physical, psychological, social and vocational well-being" (McLellan, 1991).

NORA had been founded on the

mission of facilitating communication and understanding of paradigms of care within each discipline, to facilitate the utilization/integration of each discipline's unique skills, to educate professionals including optometrists, educators, rehabilitation and allied health professionals, to develop inter-professional networks that include Neuro-Optometric and Vision Rehabilitation approaches, etc., and most importantly to serve physically disabled persons and provide them with optimum visual rehabilitation.

During my two years as President, I had to examine, then act upon, many issues that impacted the organizational structure of NORA. This had been a frequent problem, especially when boards transitioned.

Centralizing operations was no simple task, and required much time and diligence. However, we continue to make progress. For example, when you send in your annual dues, conference registration, etc., you'll see that it goes to the following new address:

NORA, Inc.
P.O. Box 14934
Irvine, CA 92623-4934

Our toll-free number (866-222-3887) is now managed by Bob Williams who directs calls to the appropriate contact people.

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

NORA Noteworthy

NORA Noteworthy gives you a quick look at current news within the organization.

15th Annual NORA Multidisciplinary Conference.

The 15th Annual Multidisciplinary Conference will be held at the Omni Tucson National Golf Resort and Spa in Tucson Arizona March 23-26 2006. March is high season for Tucson so be sure to make your reservation soon. For more information visit our website at nora.cc.

Neuro-Optometry makes headway into Workers' Compensation Guidelines. Dr. Tom Politzer led optometry's presence in the Colorado Workers' Compensation committee with the assistance of Dr. Lynn Hellerstein. Due to their efforts, traumatic brain injury is now an important part of the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment medical treatment guidelines. Although these guidelines are for Colorado, they will be available for all to read and utilize across the country in a variety of settings.

NORA Curriculum Program.

If you have questions about the curriculum program, please contact Chris Nelms at www.a.c.nelms@usa.net. Registration forms to start the curriculum process and Level I examinations are available by contacting the NORA toll free number at (866) 2CBETTR.

Administrative Report. Enclosed are the 2004 year-end Financial Report and 2005 operating budget tentatively approved by the board of directors at their mid-year board

meeting in October. Note that NORA had an operating loss during 2004 due primarily to two factors. Legal expenses related to applying for and achieving non-profit status as a 501(C)3 organization are substantial. Receiving this designation by the Internal Revenue Service is very important in the long range planning for NORA. The organization is now exempt from federal income taxes and may receive tax-deductible donations from individuals, corporations and foundations.

The 2004 Annual Conference held in Boston was not as successful as prior and subsequent conferences. The 2005 Annual Conference was one of the best attended meetings NORA has ever held. Additional efforts are being made to improve attendance at the 2006 Conference to be held in Tucson, AZ. The 2005 budget projects a surplus of income over expenses. With non-profit status NORA will have no tax consequences related to this surplus.

The 2005 year-end report and proposed 2006 operating budget will be presented to NORA members at the general membership meeting during the 2006 Annual Conference. All members at the conference should plan to attend this meeting scheduled for 5:00 pm, Saturday afternoon, March 25 at the OMNI Resort in Tucson.

P.O. BOX Established. Thanks to the efforts of Bob Williams, NORA now has a new centralized address. All correspondence should go to our new P.O. Box at NORA, P.O. Box 14934, Irvine, CA 92623-4934.

Toll Free Number Transferred. The NORA toll-free phone number has recently been transferred to the office of Bob Williams. Although the number has not

changed, phone calls will now be able to be handled in a more timely and personal manner.

Need Networking Information?

NORA continues to provide brochures and information packets to assist members in networking with other members of the rehabilitation community. Brochures and packets are available in limited quantities at no charge to members. Materials can be obtained by calling NORA, toll free, at (866) 2CBETTR.

NORA Website. The NORA website continues to be updated. Please visit the website at NORA.cc.

New AOA Liaison. We have recently been assigned a new AOA liaison, Dr. Ronald Hopping. His e-mail address is: rlhopping@aoa.org

Members On The Move

In June this year a unique interdisciplinary gathering occurred in Austria. ***Diana Ludlam, C.O.V.T.***, participated in an interdisciplinary day-long workshop addressing evaluation and intervention for individuals with various conditions ranging from traumatic head injury, congenital neurological syndromes, cerebral palsy, etc. This was especially significant as it was sponsored by the Osterrichi-Klinik at the rehabilitation hospital in Mauer. The workshop was opened and participants welcomed by Herr Primar Dr. Kepplinger, who stayed throughout the day. There were hands-on demonstrations and joint application of interventions by OT's, PT's, Vision Therapists, etc. This opportunity was brought about through the efforts of Fred and Alexandra Androsche. Fred is a survivor, and as a couple they mentor and sponsor many individuals in Austria and Germany. Diana will also be participating in a week-

long workshop in Pforzheim Germany given by Mindwalk, an interdisciplinary group helping this same population. Hopefully there will be one or two Optometrists from Germany joining during the week.

Brenda Montecalvo, O.D., F.C.O.V.D., will be speaking on neuro-optometric rehabilitation in Frankfurt Germany at the first international meeting of behavioral optometrists Germany, November 12-13, 2005. The title of the meeting is Erste Nationales/Internationales Treffen der Funktionalen Optometristen Deutschland.

Robert Sanet, O.D., F.C.O.V.D., will be presenting four seminars on "The Optometric Evaluation and Management of Vision Problems to Traumatic Brain Injury" in November. He will also be presenting a five-day seminar in Brescia, Italy as well as Madrid, Spain. In December he will present seminars on the same topic in San Diego, CA and Raleigh-Durham NC.



Diana Ludlam, COVT and Alexandra Androsche at the entrance of the lecture hall at the rehabilitation hospital in Mauer.

Other Meetings

The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. (AOTA): Will be holding their annual conference & expo April 27-30, 2006 in Charlotte, NC. For more information visit their website at AOTA.org.

The College of Syntonic Optometry: The College of Syntonic Optometry will hold their 74th Annual Conference on Light and Vision May 4-7, 2006 at the Sirata Beach Resort, St. Pete Beach, FL. For information visit their website at syntonicphototherapy.com.

The International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals (IARP): Will hold their Annual Conference May 19-21, 2006, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. For more information visit their website at www.rehabpro.org.

Optometric Extension Program:

OEP has numerous meetings. Just a few are listed here. To see their complete calendar, visit their website at oep.org.

The Southwest Congress will be held at the Drury Inn Riverwalk, San Antonio, TX, January 20-22, 2006. Contact Judy Hughes, O.D., jhughesod@earthlink.net.

The Optometric Treatment of Autism will be held January 21-22, 2006 in Phoenix, Arizona. Contact Theresa Krejci 800-447-0370, or visit www.babousa.org.

The Northwest Congress of Behavioral Optometry will be held February 18-19, 2006 at Pacific University, Forest Grove, OR. Contact: Eric Hussey, O.D. 509-326-2707 spacegoggle@att.net

The Great Lakes Congress will be held at the Renaissance Chicago North Shore Hotel Northbrook, IL March 5-6, 2006. Contact: Jeff Getzell, O.D., jeffgetzell@sbcglobal.net.

Neuro-Optometric Pearl

Subtle Vertical Phoria Following Traumatic Brain Injury

Penelope S. Suter, OD FCOVD, FABDA, FNORA

Following traumatic brain injury (TBI), patients will frequently complain of imbalance, disorientation, difficulty reading, and confusion in visually busy spaces such as the supermarket. For the clinician familiar with neuro-optometric rehabilitation, post trauma vision syndrome and visual midline shift syndrome come to mind when hearing these symptoms. However, subtle (1-4 pd) variable vertical phorias—frequently the result of mild CN IV palsy—are common in the patient population with TBI and also cause these symptoms. The CN IV emerges from the brainstem in a series of fragile rootlets, which are easily injured in a traumatic situation. The action of the superior oblique muscle, which is innervated by CN IV, is to pull the globe downward when viewing in the adducted position. Therefore, shortly after the injury, the vertical phoria is variable, and greatest when viewing in downgaze in a converged position or to the side. This causes binocular instability, and often image shifting during both reading and mobility. Difficulty during mobility is most pronounced when walking on uneven ground or judging curbs.

Subtle CN IV palsy or other vertical phorias will tend not to present in primary gaze where the cover test or phorometric testing are generally performed. In fact, they are small enough to be difficult to pick up on cover testing at all. The Maddox rod test in all fields of gaze, combined with a Park's three step diagnostic to isolate the involved muscle is an easy method for finding these subtle verti-

cal phorias, and should be performed on each patient with TBI, when possible. The Maddox rod is available with a built in Risley prism for measuring small phorias, which makes this test quick and easy for most patients to perform.

Spread of comitancy, or the presence of skew deviation (i.e. non-comitant vertical phoria which does not isolate to a CN, due to damage to the posterior fossa), often confuses the exact etiology of mild vertical phoria. However, prescription of small amounts of vertical prism followed by compensatory orthoptic therapy can frequently alleviate the binocular dysfunction and accompanying symptoms.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Our website continues to undergo changes. Soon you should be able to download applications for membership as well as register for conferences online.

Our curriculum committee continues to work diligently. Dr. Carl Garbus and his committee are making progress, improving the education and the overall process of completing the various levels. The format will certainly enable each of you to better serve your patients.

In June, Dr. Fong and I had the opportunity to participate in the American Optometric Association 20/20 Summit. We were provided information that helps to gain greater insight into what we need to expect in the future (economic and social trends affecting healthcare). As we reflect on the current changes affecting healthcare, it is vital for us to prepare for further changes as it relates to our role in rehabilitation.

NORA is also actively participat-

ing in collaboration with the Veterans Administration. We have recently completed our second phone conference on Low Vision and Vision Rehabilitation. Also, Dr. Carman-Merrifield is continuing her work as chair of the Neuro-Optometry Project Team (AOA).

Dr. Chauvette and Dr. Wenberg are finalizing details for the 15th Annual Conference in Tucson, Arizona. The board had the opportunity to survey the site at our mid-year board meeting. We are certain that all who attend will not be disappointed, with the education or the facilities.

At this mid year meeting, your board members had continued to discuss the issue of Fellowship and the curriculum program itself. Many of you have known that since its inception, the Curriculum Program had been open to all active members of NORA and that successful completion of the process leads to fellowship. It has been suggested that this board had recently decided to grant fellowship to those completing the program. As I stated, this had already been the case and is the primary reason we have been exploring solutions to address the concerns brought up by some members and discussed at the General Membership meeting in Chicago. Many factors are being considered, including what fellowship really signifies, the ramifications of how fellowship may be perceived, can we exclude active members--without discrimination—from obtaining fellowship and by excluding certain members it would contradict the stated mission of NORA. Knowing the current status of the program, as well as, trying to address this issue, the board had been polled as to whether we can as an organization deny this to any active member (not a vote). A

board majority had agreed that NORA could not deny anyone from receiving FNORA if he/she successfully completed the process. However, the problem remains. This resulted in a motion that "all members in good standing of NORA are eligible to apply for fellowship in NORA **within the scope of their respective professional licensure**. Once successfully completed, the participant will receive FNORA with the **designation of their specific discipline**". This motion was approved. This motion was not changing what is currently in place. Instead, it sought to clarify the current process and was never intended to represent a final action. The board is fully aware that we need to continue to work on this issue. It further recognized that there is a need for additional resources to resolve this issue that the past presidents council work with the curriculum committee and select individuals within the NORA membership to review all suggestions in an effort to resolve the issue of fellowship to non-optometrists. Therefore, I strongly encourage all members of NORA to attend the general membership meeting in Tucson, Arizona to participate in discussions on this important issue.

I wish to thank each of you for your contribution to NORA, not only through your continued membership, attendance to the annual conference, and volunteer work in various committees, but also by your comments and feedback. Remember, NORA is and remains, a multi-disciplinary organization which exists to serve the neurologically challenged patient population.

I am looking forward to seeing each of you at the annual conference.

Eric