President’s Letter

Change. It’s the one constant in everyone’s life. Lately, I’ve been surrounded by lots of change from changing my clocks to adjust to daylight saving time, the dramatic changes in weather of late (do I wear snow boots or flip flops?), even changing internet and cable providers to save money. Amidst all of this change and much more, one thing has not changed and that’s my passion and commitment to our profession of occupational therapy.

In January we held our annual Legislative Day with our lobbyists Alexander Macaulay and Hunter Jamerson providing insight into issues before the General Assembly that may impact OT. We had a large student delegation as well as several seasoned clinicians present and afterward we walked to the General Assembly Building to meet, greet and educate our legislators about OT. Seeing the eagerness and excitement on the faces of those present was invigorating and encouraging as we embarked on a new year.

Last month, VOTA presented our 20th annual School System Symposium hosted at James Madison University. Practitioners turned out for a packed 2 day event of continuing education covering topics applicable to those working with children as well as other areas of OT. It was a record event in that we had over 100 attendees!! (and with a potential weather hazard)

I am excited to attend my first AOTA conference as VOTA President later this month as I travel to San Diego, CA. (I’ve never been to the west coast) The ASAP and RA will be meeting jointly on Wednesday, April 24, 2013 and then the fun begins Thursday with Opening Ceremony and of course the great Exhibit Hall!! I can’t wait. It is truly exhilarating to be in the company of 5000+ OT practitioners and students who all share the same passion, commitment and excitement about our profession.

So, as the warm weather settles into Virginia, and as we all adapt to the change this brings (including that lovely yellow dust film called pollen), I ask all of you to make the commitment or re-acquaint yourselves and colleagues to our profession through renewing your membership, recruiting new members, finding a new CE course or taking on an OT or OTA student. I’ve been an OTA for 15 years and I learn something, meet someone or find a new way to do something every day.

Change your view, change your perspective - you will NOT be disappointed - I Promise.

Happy Spring Everyone!!

Michele
The 20th Annual School System Symposium was held on the campus of James Madison University on March 8th and 9th, 2013. It was the first time that VOTA offered a two day continuing education event filled with topics related to pediatric practice. Dr. Judy Ericksen, Ph.D. OT, Professor and Chair of the Occupational Therapy Department at Elizabethtown College presented a wonderful keynote address on professional reasoning and how we use narratives throughout our collaborative decision making processes. Dr. Cole Galloway, Ph.D., PT, Professor at the University of Delaware shared his lively practice and research on mobility and technology for real world participation. Thirty-four presenters from school divisions, pediatric practices and universities throughout the state practices shared an array of timely and relevant practice topics on evaluation, intervention, collaboration, and technology to a record audience.

Virginia’s Department of Education’s Related Services Specialist, Marie Ireland, M.Ed, CCC-SLP facilitated a discussion regarding occupational therapy services in Virginia to build supports for providers and to enhance student outcomes. Students in attendance participated in a luncheon and a presentation on school based practice entitled: Is it for me? presented by Sam Townsend, MS, OTR/L.

Patricia Laverdure, OTD, OTR/L, BCP

"Celebrating April as OT Month at Western Branch Primary in Chesapeake Public Schools."

Dr. Gracie Bitgood MS, OTD, OT and June Sutton TCC OTAS.

How did YOU Celebrate OT Month? Send us a picture and we will feature you in the next issue of the VOTA Voice!

Email to office@vaota.org
The Spring RA Meeting will be held in San Diego on Wednesday April 24, 2013. There were three motions made this year. They were published in OT Practice. I have had the opportunity to speak with two districts and two OT classes about the motions. AOTA members can provide feedback in a survey and cast their votes on the motions by going to the member survey under Governance on the AOTA website at: [http://www.aota.org/Governance/RA/SpringRA.aspx](http://www.aota.org/Governance/RA/SpringRA.aspx) The information collected on the survey is shared with each state RA Representative. At the time of this writing 55 Virginia AOTA members had expressed their opinions on the motions. Thanks to all of you who expressed your opinions on these issues!

The three motions as originally proposed are:

**MOTION 1 to expand the level of education for an OTA degree:** I move that the Speaker, with recommendations from the President, establish an ad hoc committee to investigate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of moving the occupational therapy assistant entry level to an associate or bachelor’s degree.

**MOTION 2 AJOT Best Article Award:** I move that the Speaker recommend the Volunteer Leadership Development Committee develop an annual Best Article Award to highlight important, high-level occupational therapy literature in the journal, thus reflecting the journal’s current publication mission.

**MOTION 3 Rescind Cordelia Meyers Award:** I move that the Speaker recommend the Volunteer Leadership Development Committee rescind the Cordelia Myers Award.

Since their publication the RA has concluded two weeks of online task groups to discuss these motions and to prepare them to come to the floor of the RA. These online sessions resulted in recommendations for amendments to the original motions. The first motion was amended by Task Group I to further clarify the motion to establish an ad hoc committee to investigate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of changing the occupational therapy assistant entry level degree from the current associate degree to either 1) include both the associate degree and bachelor’s degree as options for OTA education, or 2) elevate the entry level degree exclusively to the bachelor’s degree. Should this motion be passed as amended, the ad hoc committee would be charged to provide an interim report to the fall 2013 RA meeting and a full report to the spring 2014 RA meeting.

After extensive discussion Task Group II recommended the withdrawal of Motion 3 and amending Motion 2 to read:

Task Group II moves that the Speaker recommend the Volunteer Leadership Development Committee revise the criteria for the Cordelia Myers Writer’s Award and rename it the Cordelia Myers AJOT Best Article Award to highlight important, high-level occupational therapy literature in the journal, thus reflecting the journal’s current publication mission. In addition, it is recommended that the monetary award be increased to an amount in keeping with current standards.

The full discussion of these motions can be seen on the Connections @RA online meeting site at: [https://ra.aota.org/ra/f/2.aspx](https://ra.aota.org/ra/f/2.aspx)

These motions will be debated at the RA later this month. Please feel free to make your opinions known to me on either of these issues prior to my departure on Tuesday April 23rd. I can be reached by email at dfsimons@vcu.edu, by cellphone or by text at (804)833-2811. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your RA Representative.

Dianne F. Simons, Ph.D., OTR/L
VOTA 2013 Fall Conference—Call For Papers

Save the Date and Consider What You Might Contribute to Make This Year’s Annual Conference a Success!

It is never too early to start thinking about VOTA’s annual fall conference. Do you have ideas, discoveries, research, a new twist on a traditional OT skill or experiences to share with your colleagues? Of course you do! VOTA invites you to submit a proposal to present your work. VOTA encourages practitioners and students to “show what you know.” Traditional presentation formats not your style? That’s O.K. Think about a panel presentation, a poster, a round table discussion, or facilitating a “show and tell”. This year, we will be at the newly remodeled Sheraton Norfolk Waterside October 25, 26, & 27, 2013. The Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel is Norfolk’s only waterfront hotel and provides stunning views of the Elizabeth River. From the hotel, stroll down the waterfront esplanade to Town Point Park, a main hub for festivals, concerts and special events in downtown Norfolk. When you are not attending sessions, enjoy great shopping at MacArthur Center, the largest mall in the Norfolk – Virginia Beach area. The profession of occupational therapy continues on its journey towards our centennial in 2017, committed to meeting the occupational needs of society. Join us for:

VOTA 2013: Passport to Excellence (Where will the Journey Take You?)

Several opportunities to contribute to making the conference a success include our Call for Papers, the Annual Fall Logo Contest, contacting potential exhibitors, and seeking donations for the raffle and silent auction. Deadlines for the Call for Papers and the logo contest is July 1. Contact the VOTA office at office@vaota.org for more information.
A Word from the VOTA International Liaison- Dr. Cynthia Normandia, MS, OTR/L, OTD April 2013

As we all get ready for summer 2013 some of us are feeling that we would really like to move out of our comfort zone and reach beyond our home borders. We are thinking that there must be ways for us to support the Centennial Occupational Therapy Vision internationally. Well, as your International Liaison I am here to share that there are many opportunities for you to reach beyond our borders to share a level of therapeutic expertise that is not found in many countries across the globe.

One such opportunity is available in “Ukraine 2013”. This coming summer from July 21 – August 1, as in the past two summers, I will be returning to Ukraine to assist in presenting the Third International Conference on Children with Disabilities which in 2012, was attended by over 200 people from 54 cities from the 4 countries (Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Moldova) of the former Soviet Union. In Ukraine 2012 a very effective team of occupational therapists (including Amanda Leo, Past VOTA President), occupational therapy assistants and COTA students, special education teachers, a physical therapist, parents of children with disabilities and a keynote speaker with Down Syndrome, Jenny Cherry, presented the 2 day conference and visited and provided training at 5 orphanages.

For Ukraine 2013 we hope to develop a team of occupational, physical & speech therapists, & special education teachers to present the conference in Kyiv and provide direct training at two orphanages in Znamenka and Romanov. To give you an idea of the need for your expertise consider the following: there are an estimated 153,000,000 orphans worldwide. Some of these orphans have lost one parent, some both, and some are “social” orphans that have been turned out onto the streets by their families. Without assistance these orphans continue in the cycle of poverty, HIV/AIDS, trafficking, prostitution, slavery, etc. These estimates do not count the estimated 2 to 8+ million children living in institutions. Nor do current estimates include the vast number of children who are living on the streets, exploited for labor, victims of trafficking, or participating in armed groups.

The overarching goals for Ukraine 2013 are as follows:

- Establish collaborative relationships at varied orphanages & centers
- Bring needed supplies & durable medical equipment: e.g. wheelchairs
- Provide hands on treatment and provide training to parents and caregivers to improve quality of life & occupational performance of children with disabilities in varied settings
- Organize & present the Third International Conference on Children with Disabilities in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Cont. Page 8
We are seeking entries for the Annual Fall Conference Logo Contest! Members are asked to make submissions based upon this year’s theme:

**VOTA 2013: Passport to Excellence (Where will the Journey Take You?)**
The winning entry will be recognized and become the official logo of the

**2013 VOTA Fall Conference**
October 25-27, 2013
Sheraton Norfolk Waterside
777 Waterside Dr.
Norfolk, VA 23510

The Official Logo will be printed on all conference tote bags & our Conference T-shirts!

Submit your entries electronically to office@vaota.org by July 1, 2013

*There is no limit on the number of submissions per member so long as entries are received by the deadline.*

**Submitter agrees that VOTA shall own all rights in and to submitter’s proposed logo, including all related intellectual property rights and copyrights.**
News from Virginia College

The faculty and staff at Virginia College in Richmond are happy to announce our OTA inaugural class cohort has officially begun! We have 10 students enrolled in the OTA Program from a diverse background and they are quickly becoming entrenched in their studies as classes began April 8, 2013. Our program runs on four, 11 week terms throughout the calendar year. Meanwhile, we are busy working on our self-study in anticipation of our ACOTE visit in late 2014 as well as securing fieldwork sites for our students to begin placements in January 2014.

Patricia Cooper, Program Director and Michele Stoll, Fieldwork Coordinator will be attending AOTA Conference in San Diego looking to network with other academicians and practitioners and bring back lots of information for their students. Hope to see Virginia OTs in San Diego! Congratulations to our first class of OTA students – we wish you all the best!!

Michele Stoll, BS, OTA
Academic Fieldwork Coordinator

Join the conversation!
The VOTA Pediatric Special Interest Group on Facebook!

The VOTA Pediatric Special Interest Facebook Group is a place to share practice ideas and insights regarding pediatric occupational therapy practice. Join your peers from across the Commonwealth of Virginia in discussion about practice, trends and resources and stay abreast of VOTA happenings!
Northern Virginia Community College’s Occupational Therapy Assistant Program is now in full gear. The first OTA class of 15 students started their studies in January of this year. The class is already well-bonded and has entered quickly into the depth of their studies together. This semester the students are gaining foundational knowledge in their coursework, taking Intro to OT, Therapeutic Media, and Neurological Concepts for OTAs in addition to some general education coursework.

The OTA faculty at NOVA has been busy continually preparing for the initial ACOTE accreditation review. The program currently has earned Candidacy status. In preparing for accreditation, the program had an official ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday, March 22nd to introduce the new state-of-the-art Occupational Therapy Assistant Apartment Simulation Laboratory to the Medical Education Campus (MEC) of Northern Virginia Community College. The OTA Simulation Lab is designed as a multi-purpose apartment. This lab will allow OTA students as well as other MEC students to participate in laboratory, hands-on, high-tech simulation exercises to best prepare the students to be successful in various healthcare contexts. As an OTA department, we hope that the OTA Apartment Simulation Lab will be a location where interdisciplinary collaboration is promoted. Within the laboratory, there is a fully functional bedroom and living room, a handicap accessible tub and toilet, a laundry room and a kitchen. The students will have the opportunity to learn in the OTA Apartment Simulation Lab through the use of various technologies, including the high-tech, programmable simulation mannequins of various sizes as well as video-recording capabilities. Providing students with these simulation exercises will help them gain confidence in their skills, learn from their simulation activities, and grow to become successful healthcare professionals.

On February 8-9, 2013, the OTA program of Northern Virginia Community College co-sponsored the AOTA Fieldwork Educators Certificate Program with Fairfax County Public Schools. Participants found the course, taught by Jayne Shepherd of VCU and Lauren Carter-Smith of Sheltering Arms, to be very valuable and helpful as both academic fieldwork coordinators and fieldwork educators.

Additionally, the NOVA OTA students have enthusiastically started a Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA). We have had a few meetings already. The students have designed class shirts to be worn during our OT Month activities. The SOTA club will be participating in Stress Management week at the College with the goal to promote OT while also providing tips and tools on how to manage stress effectively with final exams approaching. Also, the SOTA club will be serving the community by participating in a Walk for Life event at the College on April 20th. NOVA’s OTA program will be hosting the Northern District VOTA meeting on Monday, April 8, 2013 in the Provost Conference room from 7:00-8:30 PM. For VOTA members of the Northern District, we hope to see you there! The NOVA OTA Program is in an exciting and busy phase of development.

For further inquiries about the NOVA OTA Program, please contact Meg Cook at: megancook@nvcc.edu.
The VCU Department of OT has been a very active place this spring. We are very proud to announce that we have two Ph.D. students and five Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) students graduating on May 11th. Cathy Piersol, and Audrey Kane will receive their Ph.D. degrees in Health Related Sciences. Cathy’s dissertation examined “Caregiver Appraisal of Functional Capacity in Family Members with Dementia.” Audrey’s dissertation was entitled “Sensory Modulation Disorder: Impact on Coping and Occupational Performance.” The five OTD students, Kathy Coppa, Angela Denton, Amanda DeLizzio, JoAnn Kennedy, and Kim McInnis have successfully completed capstone leadership projects that ranged in focus from sensory solutions in schools, and sensory-integration in trauma-informed care, to program development in fall prevention in older adults, FAITH: Finding Abilities in the Heart, a specialized Christian formation program for Catholic youth with disabilities, and hippotherapy. Join us in congratulating these seven graduates on their hard work and well-deserved new credentials!

The halls of Theater Row have been buzzing as 45 Grad IIs and 41 Grad Is finish up their coursework and final assignments for the semester. The Grad IIs will don caps and gowns and take part in the School of Allied Health celebration ceremony in conjunction with commencement. These students participate in the May ceremony because the December commencement ceremony occurs before some of them complete their final weeks of their second Level II fieldwork. We have students who will be doing their Level II FW around the country including the Shepherd Center in Atlanta, Brookdale Living in Florida, Johns Hopkins, Penn State, Therapy West in California, and Harris Therapy Center in Hawaii. As always, a special thank you goes out to all Virginia therapists who have served as a Level I or II fieldwork supervisor this year. The Grad I students are preparing for a summer break after three intense semesters of work. Some of them will serve as teaching assistants for the anatomy course. Many will be working various camps around Virginia like Camp Bruce McCoy in Chesapeake, Burn Camp in Charlottesville, and Camp Easter Seal in Roanoke. Others will work as OT aides at various facilities around the state.

The Graduate Admissions Committee has completed its work for the year. Forty-two new students have been accepted to start in June. It is a very talented group of new students, including five males. We’ll be welcoming students from across the Commonwealth, and from across the United States. We have students coming from Washington, California, Arizona, Ohio, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, North Carolina, and Florida. A full report on the new class will be in the summer VOTA Voice.

The faculty are every bit as busy as the students. Dr. Carole Ivey is part of an interdisciplinary VCU Community Engagement grant, CMoR Learning, which is working on assessing and adapting the physical and learning environment of the Children’s Museum of Richmond to increase the learning of ALL children. Grad II students in Jayne Shepherd’s Activities III course are supporting the project by designing and creating adaptive projects, such as an easel that can be accessed by children in wheelchairs and adjustable to various heights, laptrays and slantboards, adapted art supplies, adapted mallets for musical instruments, Social Stories™, communication boards, switches, iPad apps, and design of an accessible playhouse.

Dr. Shelly Lane and her husband, Dr. Rick Thornton returned recently from a three week trip to teach Sensory Integration to therapists in India. Dr. Tony Gentry has made several trips around the country this spring presenting on assistive technology and cognitive prosthetics. He was recognized as one of 5 innovators occupational therapy in the US for his research and writing about cognitive prosthetics in a recent edition of OT Today. Dr. Stacey Reynolds was awarded a community engagement grant to travel to Ghana this June to establish opportunities for an annual study abroad opportunity for fieldwork community and I service. Stacey will be joined on the trip by Dr. Carole, Ivey, Dr. Jodi Teitelman, Dr. Shelly Lane, Dr. Rick Thornton, and VCU OT alum Kacie Hopkins. Dr. Al Copolillo, Jayne Shepherd, Dr. Shelly Lane and Dr. Kelli Williams Gary are all presenting at the AOTA National Conference in San Diego at the end of April.

Happy April is OT Month to all VCU OT alums! We hope to see some of you in San Diego!
VOTA Board Member Spotlight—Alesha Kelly, COTA/L

Alesha N. Kelley is a graduate of Baker College of Michigan, class of 2005. She has been a practicing COTA/L for 5 years and is currently employed with Jackson Therapy Partners LLC. Alesha brings a range of experience and a personal passion to the field. Her college fieldwork allowed her to hone her skills in an elementary school, acute care, home health, and a woman’s homeless shelter. Alesha has experience working in sub-acute, outpatient and SNF settings. Alesha is a member of the AOTA, VOTA, and is ACP, Bioness, and Saebo certified. She is happily married to Johnny Kelley and they reside in Midlothian, VA.

Call for Board & Scholarship Nominations!

Executive Committee Nominations – Deadline Extended to Monday, May 6th!

VOTA is soliciting for nominations for the following Executive Board Positions:

President Elect: Serves on the Executive Board and Committees/Prepares to assume the duties of presidency. This is a one-year term, with a two-year presidency term immediately following.

Vice President: Participates in conference planning and other continuing education committees -2 yr term.

Treasurer: Oversees collections and disbursements on behalf of VOTA (two-year term).

Positions are open to all VOTA OT, OTA, and Senior Members in good standing. Join the Board and reap the benefits of leadership in VOTA.

• Share Your Ideas and Expertise • Help to Shape the Direction of the VOTA • Professional and Personal Growth • Networking • Resume Building

Don’t Wait---NOMINATE! Contact Anita Wyrick for more information: amwyrick@cox.net A full description of each position can be found in the VOTA bylaws available here. To complete a nomination form, click here.

Call for Scholarship Nominations - Deadline, May 30th

We are excited to inform you about 5 scholarship opportunities available for VOTA members.

• OT Graduate Award
• OTA Student Award
• Barbara Howard Memorial Scholarship
• Kirsten Akehurst Memorial Scholarship
• *NEW* - The Fred Sammons Endowed Scholarship of the VOTA

Click Here for a full description of each scholarship.

Applications must be delivered electronically to VOTASTars@gmail.com.

You will receive an e-mail acknowledging the receipt of your application. **Please note, your application will not be considered until receipt of the faculty endorsement form and accompanied by a faculty letter of support/letter of recommendation which must be submitted by a faculty member by the deadline listed above.

Required Components:

Completed Student Scholarship Application Form/2-3 page essay
Faculty Endorsement Form submitted by faculty member
Faculty letter of support/recommendation (up to two letters will be considered)
Western District Update

Passion for professional development and the OT profession is about in the Western District. In March we hosted a spring meeting at Friendship Retirement Community in Roanoke, VA with a special presentation on OT driving rehabilitation. Guest speakers Pam Hart, Shannon Radmacher, and Vicki Osborne shared their experience with starting an OT driving evaluation program to address a need for this service in Southwest Virginia. On May 4th in Richlands, Virginia, we are having a wheelchair positioning workshop geared toward OT in skilled rehabilitation settings. We are currently planning on a newsletter featuring OT practitioners in our district to promote connectivity amongst our members. Persons interested should contact Tara Morris or Sheila Krajnik. Positions for secretary and treasurer are also available and western district members can express interest through email at tmorris140@me.com.
Virginia Asset Management was founded in 1986 with a single thought in mind: What people really need is objective financial advice, from independent financial experts who are free to choose the best financial strategies for their clients.

Virginia Asset Management offers a full range of financial services for both individuals and businesses. Since we are independently operated, we can choose from an array of financial products and services to customize a solution for your situation. That’s the power of independence.

We can help you plan for all the important things. From buying your dream house, to paying for college, to retiring comfortably, to building and leaving an estate.

If you own a business, we can help you find attractive yet affordable employee benefit plans, help you minimize your tax burden, and help you leave your company in good hands when you retire.

Financial independence affords security, flexibility, and opportunity. The security that comes with taking care of your family financially, the flexibility to choose the work and service for which you are passionate and the opportunity to reach back and help others.

Our mission is to help those people with whom we have a working relationship to define, plan for, and achieve their financial independence.

**Solutions for Individuals:**

- Investments
- College Funding
- Investment Advice
- Estate Planning
- Mutual Funds
- Asset Allocation Strategies
- Stocks and Bonds
- Cash Flow Analysis
- Retirement Plans
- Annuities
- Estate Tax Minimization
- Long-Term Care Insurance
- Pension Maximization Planning
- Life and Disability Insurance
- Retirement Distribution Planning
- Health Insurance

Please feel free to contact Tyler Sorensen or Dwain Blake if you would like to further discuss your individual situation as it pertains to you.

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As part of our ongoing commitment to the VOTA, we have agreed to offer initial consultations at no cost. In addition we have agreed to provide a reduced fee schedule for fee based plans and have coordinated with certain vendors for discounts on insurance products.

Financial advisors do not provide tax/legal advice. This information should not be considered specific tax or legal advice. You should consult your own tax/legal advisor about your own situation.