

# THE RAMBLER

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Renee Elizabeth Skalij  
2015

2015  
**NRA  
SERNRA  
RAM  
CONFERENCE**

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October 5-8 2015

Beau Rivage ~ Biloxi, MS

## LETTER FROM THE RAM PRESIDENT



Donny Frazier, RAM President

Greetings fellow RAM members!

It is halfway through the year and it is hot in Mississippi. We made it through what seemed to have been a difficult winter and now the heat is on. Your RAM Board continues to work hard while making a difference in lives of Mississippians with disabilities. RAM is determined to be the best state chapter of the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA). In an effort to do so, we would like for you to continue with determination to grow our association by participating in the Member-Get-A-Member contest.

The time is drawing closer for the upcoming NRA/SERNRA/RAM conference (57th RAM Conference) on October 5-8, 2015 at the Beau Rivage in Biloxi, Mississippi. We are planning to move forward with the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual RAM Golf Tournament. Information about the date and location will be on the way to you. In the meantime, please contact Allison Lowther about team play.

Sheila Browning's service to NRA for many years helped to grow the Mississippi Chapter, RAM. She retired on April 30, 2015. We wish her well in her future endeavors.

RAM would like to thank H. S. Butch McMillan for his gratitude over the years. Whether as the NRA President or a conference speaker, he has supported our association. On June 30<sup>th</sup> he will retire from the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services.

Please let me know what we can do for each of you throughout the year to make RAM and your experience even better. You are encouraged to contact me or any of our Board Members with ideas and/or comments.

~Donny Frazier, RAM President



RAM President, Donny Frazier, presenting Mr. McMillan with an award of appreciation at the Statewide Conference in May 2015.

## TRIBUTE TO MR. H.S. "BUTCH" MCMILLAN



Mr. McMillan announced his retirement on February 10, 2015 effective June 30, 2015. He has been with MDRS for twenty-two years and served as Executive Director for eighteen of those years. We will deeply miss him here, but are happy to see him begin a new journey! We will forever be grateful for all of his contributions to this agency, it's employees, RAM, and most importantly Mississippians with disabilities.

Congratulations, Mr. McMillan, on your newest journey! We wish you all the best!



# TRIBUTE TO MR. H.S. "BUTCH" MCMILLAN, CONT.



## LETTER FROM THE RAM PRESIDENT-ELECT



Shella M. Head, President-Elect

I would like to take this moment to thank all of our RAM board members, and our committee members for their hard work and commitment to their various roles and responsibilities as we approach the NRA conference which will be held on October 5-8, 2015 at the Beau Rivage Hotel in Biloxi, MS.

To date, the RAM board has been diligently working on initiatives and incentives that will expand our membership, advocate for our profession on legislative affairs, and increase our visibility in the community. We humbly accept any suggestions on how to improve on any aspect of RAM.

I would like to personally thank our RAM President, Donny Frazier for showing me the ropes as I acclimate into my new position as your RAM President-Elect. I consider myself very fortunate to have this opportunity to represent RAM and will work hard to meet your expectations.

~Shella M. Head, RAM President-Elect



## LETTER FROM THE NRA PRESIDENT

Hello! I hope this finds you well. We have been very busy developing comments to send RSA and DOL regarding the Notice of Proposed Rule-Making (NPRM) in reference to the Reauthorization of the Rehab Act, which is found in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA). This was our chance to comment on the proposed federal regulations; they can be viewed on the NRA website.

Currently, we are transitioning to a new membership software and website. We hope these upgrades are completed by mid-July. Our previous system has caused many delays in processing payments and renewals. It is our hope that the new software package will assist in serving you more effectively and more timely.

I want to thank all of our Mississippi members for helping to get our NRA/SERNRA/RAM Annual Conference together. Please make plans to attend; the conference will provide many opportunities to learn, renew and refresh so that we can continue to provide the very best services to all individuals with disabilities.

I look forward to seeing you there!

~Tarea Stout, 2015 NRA President

## TREASURER'S REPORT

At the 2015 MDRS Statewide Meeting held in Madison, MS in April, RAM presented Mr. H.S. McMillan, with an award recognizing him for his outstanding support of RAM during his tenure as the Director of MDRS. Mr. McMillan has been instrumental in support and commitment to rehabilitation professionals.

Once again, RAM has stepped up to the plate to make a donation to the Mississippi Association of Disability Examiners (MADE) for \$200.00. This donation was made on behalf of the fundraising efforts to benefit one current MDRS employee's children and the family of a recently deceased employee. It is in times like this when we remember the family that MDRS and RAM have become.

For the membership contest that is currently ongoing, RAM purchased two \$25.00 gift cards for the winners. As RAM gains new members, we gain strength and in strength we grow and support the foundations that RAM is based on.

The above purchases and minor expenditures totaled \$488.47. Income from donations made to the 2015 RAM Door prizes were \$650.00.

~Betsy Simoneaux, RAM Treasurer



## LETTER FROM MRCEA PRESIDENT

Greetings from MRCEA!

I hope everyone is having a safe and happy summer.

In the May 2015 edition of *Contemporary Rehab*, both Steve Autrey from Alabama and Rebecca Sametz Grassi from Michigan challenged each of us to ask ourselves, "Why did I join NRA"?



When I asked myself this question, I thought back to almost 25 years ago when I first began working as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. The answer that came to me was instantaneous. I joined both NRA and the related Counselor Division at the time, RCA, because that is the behavior expected of a professional. Part of the definition of being a professional is belonging to an organization of one's peers where activities such as ethical behavior, continuing education, and networking are provided and encouraged.

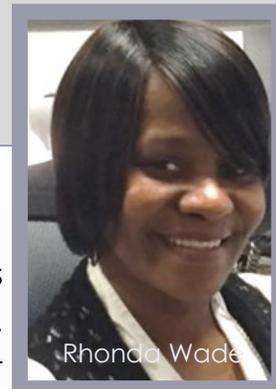
Little did I know at the time, what a major impact that decision would have on my life and career. I have had the opportunity to attend regional and national conferences both here and in other states where life-long friendships have been made.

Today, I would like to encourage all counselors, evaluators, and other interested individuals who are not members of NRA to take the opportunity available to them to enhance their abilities and consider joining the NRA/RAM family and its current Counselor Division, RCEA, or any other division that reflects your interests. However, the important thing is not just to join, but to become truly involved in the Association's mission. I also encourage you to run for an office or join a committee. Trust me, you will find that your life will be greatly enriched.

Watch for information on our MRCEA T-shirt fundraiser coming soon. I look forward to seeing all of you in Biloxi in October!

~Kathy Woodard, President

## LETTER FROM MAIL PRESIDENT



Greetings from the MAIL President,

I would like to thank everyone who came and supported our Mother's Day Bake Sale which was held May 9, 2015 at the Madison office. Thanks to your generosity, a total of \$393.00 was raised to support upcoming MAIL projects. I would also like to give thanks to Molly Minninger and her committee for doing an outstanding job. For those of you who are a fan of football, we are currently working on our second fundraiser, "Football Frenzy Baskets Raffle", which will be held later in the summer. So get your money together to buy some raffle tickets. Details will be sent out later regarding the raffle.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new members: Krystle Friedel, Amy Bush, Kimberly Evans, Allyshondria Ford, and Abbey Rush. We are always recruiting members who wish to be involved in MAIL's leadership and committee positions. Please feel free to contact any of the Board members if you are interested in serving in anyway.

Thanks for you continued support.

~Rhonda Wade, MAIL President

## 2015 RAM COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT

This year's community service project is titled "Carla's Closet" in honor of Carla Drummond, a former MDRS employee and RAM member. Carla's Closet will provide MDRS clients and others (Veterans, Homeless, Displaced Workers) with clothing and other personal items needed to "Dress for Success" when seeking employment. The mission of this project is to help build self-confidence in all aspects of their lives and will target those individuals located within the Mississippi Gulf Coast area.

This project was created and developed by RAM members DeAnna Ruzicka and Kathy McDonald with the support of VR/VRB/AbilityWorks of Harrison County and OSDP employees. The vision of this project is to have the entire MDRS/RAM family statewide to participate with such a worthy cause. We are now accepting donations of new clothing or a gift card in order to provide clothing items such as slacks, dress shirt, dress, skirt, ties, belt and shoes.

If you would like to make a donation, please contact DeLinda Armstrong at [darmstrong@mdrs.ms.gov](mailto:darmstrong@mdrs.ms.gov) or DeAnna Ruzicka at [druzicka@mdrs.ms.gov](mailto:druzicka@mdrs.ms.gov)

DeLinda Armstrong

RAM Community Service Project, Chairperson

601-853-5329

## 2015 RAM MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

### MONTHLY DRAWING WINNERS

**Congratulations!** Leigh Ann Ross was the winner of our April and May, Member-Get-A-Member monthly drawing! Leigh Ann has won a total of \$50 in Visa gift cards!

Everyone else stay tuned for the next monthly drawing, to be held at the end of June!

Thanks to everyone who recruited in the month of May. If you know someone who wants be a member of RAM, please spread the word about membership.

Kim Ratliff, Campaign Chair

# R **ecruit New Members and Earn Rewards!**

**The Rehabilitation Association of Mississippi (RAM)**

**2015 Member-Get-A-Member Campaign**

**April 1, 2015 - August 31, 2015**



RAM's 2015 Member-Get-A-Member Campaign is underway! Tap into your network of colleagues and help RAM grow! As a current member, you are the greatest testimony to the value of a RAM membership. Therefore, we are asking for your participation in recruiting at least one new member this association year. Share the benefits of joining this awesome organization with a colleague, recruit new members and you can win rewards!

## **EVERYONE HAS A CHANCE TO WIN!**

- **Monthly Prizes:** Each month during the campaign, RAM will hold monthly drawings and reward one recruiter who recruited a member in that month, with a **\$25 Visa Gift Card**.
- **Grand Prize:** At the end of the campaign, the RAM member who recruits the most new members wins **\$250**. The winner will be announced at the Annual Training Conference in Biloxi, Mississippi in October (**recruiters must recruit 5 or more members to be eligible for the Grand Prize**).

## **NEW RECRUITS WIN TOO!**

- **New Member Prize:** Each time a new member joins RAM, their name will be entered into a drawing to receive a **\$50 Walmart Gift Card**. The winner will be announced at the Annual Training Conference in Biloxi, Mississippi in October.

## **HOW THE CAMPAIGN WORKS**

- Your mission will be to recruit as many new RAM members as possible.
- Anyone you recruit must not have been a RAM member in the past, renewals don't count!
- Tell them to join online for faster processing or download the membership application at: <http://www.nationalrehab.org>
- To ensure you receive credit for your referral, the recruit must list your name as the referral in the "Who introduced you to NRA?" section, when they submit their application. Member referrals received after the application has been submitted are not eligible for the contest.
- All applications and membership dues must be received by August 31, 2015 to be counted toward 2015 Member Get-A-Member Campaign Grand Prize.
- For monthly drawings, recruiters will receive one entry for each new paid member during the designated time period. The more you recruit the more chances you have to win!
- If you are submitting an online application, please print a copy before exiting the website. Kim Ratliff must receive **copies of all applications** to ensure you receive credit for your referral.

Email or mail your paper applications to:

Kim Ratliff

1281 Highway 51 North

Madison, MS 39110

kratliff@mdrs.ms.gov

(601) 853-5212



## KATRINA STORIES NEEDED



U.S. Coast Guard

This year will mark the 10 year anniversary of the worst natural disaster to ever affect Mississippians. Since we are hosting the NRA/SERNRA/RAM conference on the beautiful MS Gulf Coast, I would like to get some stories and pictures/videos that you would be willing to share. These will be used in a future newsletter and possibly a video that we will show at the conference. This can be of clients and/or employees and the more we get the better!

Please contact Susan Smith-Patterson at 601.853.5174 or by email at [ssmith@mdrs.ms.gov](mailto:ssmith@mdrs.ms.gov) if you have stories, pictures, or videos that we could use.

**\*\*Note:** All persons included in photo, video, or stories will need to sign a release form in order for us to use their story. This can be found on MDRS connect under OCCR Forms >> OCCR2 - Media Release form

## OTHER BUSINESS



### RED RASBERRY HUMANITARIAN AWARDS DINNER

Summit Center of Tupelo at 852 N. Gloster • Tuesday April 14, 2015

Presented by Regional Rehabilitation Center

6:00 PM - Meet and Greet | 7:00 PM - Program



*This Year's Honoree*

Vernon R. (Randy) Kelley, III

Executive Director of Three Rivers  
Planning and Development District, Inc.

— ◆ —  
*Dinner Chairman*  
Kay Mathews

*Special Guest Speaker*  
David Kellum  
"Voice of the Rebels"

RAM is a 2015 Bronze Sponsor for the Regional Rehabilitation Center in Tupelo. A dinner was held on April 14, 2015 with a "meet and greet" at the Summit Center in Tupelo to honor Vernon Randy Kelley III as the Red Raspberry Humanitarian Award recipient. Four RAM members were able to attend the event: Cindy Goodin, Kenisha Thornton, Mona Broyles, and Barry Bray.

## OTHER BUSINESS, CONT.



Pictured above left—right:  
Rhonda Wade—MAIL President  
Kim Ratliff—RAM Board Member  
Betsy Simoneaux—RAM Treasurer  
Donny Frazier—RAM President  
Shella Head—RAM President Elect  
Donna Dungan—RAM Board Member  
Mylynda Dempsey—RAM Secretary  
Susan Smith-Patterson—RAM Board Member

The RAM Board previously approved sponsorship to help add an accessible playground at Liberty Park in Madison, MS. The ground-breaking ceremony was held at Liberty Park on May 20, 2015. Several officers and board members were present at the ceremony.

The wording for the RAM brick is:

**Rehabilitation Association of Mississippi  
“RAM”**

**Membership Organization Established in  
April 1959**

**To Promote Personal and Economic Independence  
Of Individuals With Disabilities**



AbilityWorks, Inc.-Corinth was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation by C.A.U.S.E. (Corinth Autism Understanding Support and Education) at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Autism Awareness Day held on April 18, 2015. In recognition of their hard work, thoughtfulness, creativity, and caring they were acknowledged as a VSPs, Very Special People and were honored for their knowledge, expertise, and taking on the challenge of teaching very special children with grace, humor, and enthusiasm.



Pictured left:

Front Row (left-right)

Mike Kemp—Evaluator

Dennis Miller—Instructor

Melissa Butler—Instructor

Barry Barnette—Evaluator

Back Row (left-right)

Jennifer Taylor—Facility Manager

Milissa Taylor—Office Manager

Pamela Parson—Production Manager

Shane Lowrey—Instructor

## OTHER BUSINESS, CONT.

### **Awards! Awards! Awards!**

Gwen Smith, RAM Awards Chairperson, will soon be requesting nominations for the following awards:

U.S. Coast Guard

Employer of the Year

Travis McCharen Award

RAMster of the Year

Professional of the Year

Personal Achievement Award

Please be thinking about who you would like to nominate. Rhonda Wade, MAIL President, and Kathy Woodard, MRCEA President, will also be presenting awards at the NRA/SERNRA/ RAM Conference so please work with them with nominations as well.



## OTHER BUSINESS, CONT.

### EXHIBITORS NEEDED!

Do you know a vendor or advocacy organization who wants to exhibit at the NRA/SERNRA/RAM conference. Contact Carolyn Mack, RAM Exhibits Chairperson, [cmack@mdrs.ms.gov](mailto:cmack@mdrs.ms.gov) or 662-453-2270

### JPD WANTS YOU

Tracy Hester, Facility Manager in Tupelo and Secretary of the NRA Job Placement and Development (JPD) Division, wants to breathe new life into the RAM JPD. If anyone is interested in joining, please contact Tracy at [trhester@mdrs.ms.gov](mailto:trhester@mdrs.ms.gov) or 662-842-2144.

### RAM PAGE ON MDRS CONNECT

We have a page just for RAM on MDRS Connect, the agency intranet. Currently we have announcements and newsletters there so you can go and find them anytime. Go to <http://mdrsconnect> and click on RAM on the left-hand menu.

### RAM WEBSITE—IDEAS NEEDED!

We will be developing a website for RAM! If you have ideas or information that you would like to see on the website, please email them to Susan Smith-Patterson at [ssmith@mdrs.ms.gov](mailto:ssmith@mdrs.ms.gov).

### IMPORTANT NRA DATES

⇒ NRA/SERNRA/RAM Conference – October 5-8, 2015 – Biloxi, MS

## 2015 RAM OFFICERS

<b>President</b>	— Donny Frazier
<b>President Elect</b>	— Shella Head
<b>Immediate Past President</b>	— Cindy Goodin
<b>Treasurer</b>	— Betsy Simoneaux
<b>Secretary</b>	— Mylinda Dempsey

## 2015 RAM BOARD MEMBERS

<b><u>Term Expires 2015</u></b>	<b><u>Term Expires 2016</u></b>	<b><u>Term Expires 2017</u></b>
Delinda Armstrong	Valerie Buckley	Donna Dungan
Gaylin Matthews	Carol "Sissy" Elrod	Melanie McClain
Kim Ratliff	Carolyn Mack	Susan Smith-Patterson

## 2015 RAM STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS

<b>Awards</b>	— Gwen Smith
<b>Program</b>	— Shella Head
<b>Nomination</b>	— Cindy Goodin
<b>Election and Credentials</b>	— Tommy Burnham
<b>CRC and CEU</b>	— Lou Ellen McDonald
<b>Membership</b>	— Dottie Blansett
<b>Necrology</b>	— Gaylin Matthews
<b>Constitution and Bylaws</b>	— Jolynn Hall

## 2015 RAM SPECIAL COMMITTEE CHAIRS

<b>Legislative</b>	— Vacant
<b>Exhibits</b>	— Carolyn Mack
<b>Registration</b>	— Brandi Kennedy
<b>Door Prizes</b>	— Kim Ratliff
<b>Service Awards</b>	— Betsy Simoneaux
<b>Newsletter and Publicity</b>	— Susan Smith Patterson
<b>Social Functions</b>	— Leslie Shake
<b>Community Service</b>	— Delinda Armstrong
<b>Special Fundraising Project</b>	— Michele Langford
<b>Golf Tournament (Recreational)</b>	— Allison Lowther
<b>Conference Facilitators</b>	— Patti Rayner
<b>Conference Program Book</b>	— Renee Skali
<b>Audio/Visual/AT</b>	— Denee Smith
<b>MAIL Representative to RAM Board</b>	— Rhonda Wade
<b>MRCEA Representative to RAM Board</b>	— Kathy Woodard
<b>RAM Representative to SERNRA Board</b>	— Lavonda Hart