

## ***Proposed AAMR Re-Organization***

The Board of the National AAMR has passed and will need to submit to the general membership for vote, possibly as early as this Fall, proposed organizational changes that require a revised Constitution and By-Laws. These proposed changes are designed to move AAMR nationally into more of a business model vs. an organization for professionals, where AAMR will serve a unique niche in the disability field and focus on developing services and products that enhance that unique niche. AAMR is to function as a business in addressing issues of fiscal solvency in a more efficient manner while not detracting from creating and developing important niche services and products.

Compared to the present structure the proposed structure would:

- Create a smaller Board to the size of 9 members.
- Eliminate an elected Conference of Divisions as well as the professional Divisions themselves. Special Interest Groups would also be eliminated. Member representation will be through Focused Workgroups and Ad hoc Committees appointed by the President of the National AAMR

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## ***The President's Corner***

By Sid Blanchard

### Notes from June, 2004 Region IX Meeting

Nearly 20 Region IX members turned out for a 7:00 AM Annual Meeting chaired by Kay Mirick, held at the National Conference in Philadelphia. While the main topic was the structural changes at the National level (discussed elsewhere); plans were discussed for Regional support of local (state) chapters through workshops by national leaders in the field and active advocates, with time set aside for interaction with the membership. In addition, frequent communications between the Regional and State officers through meetings, e-mail, and the newsletter "Line on" were promised. After a very successful Regional Conference in December 2003 with over 285 people attending, the Region has a net worth of \$14,089.36

The following are the officers for 2004-2005:

Chair:	Sidney Blanchard
Chair Elect:	Patricia Voorhees
Vice-Chair:	Alvin Cox
Secretary:	Bonnie Minnick
Treasurer:	Mary Sowers
Assembly Rep.:	Kay Reed Mirick
Assembly Rep.:	Todd Wilson
Assembly Rep.:	Nancy Kirchner
Member at Large:	Sid Katz
Member at Large:	Karolina Scutari
Immediate Past President:	Kay Reed Mirick

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Board. The function of the Focused Workgroups and the Ad hoc Committees would be to develop niche products as directed by the Board.

- Eliminate the elected Assembly of Regions. Representation would continue through state, provincial, Canadian and International chapters that would meet with the President-elect. This group would also have work groups to help develop member services and benefits.
- There would be four elected Directors who will serve as Member-at-Large who are not officers of the organization. They would be elected for a four-year period of time on a rotating basis and cannot succeed themselves.

These proposed changes were discussed thoroughly at the June Region IX Annual Membership meeting and were rejected by a vote of 12 opposed, 3 in favor, and one abstention. A committee was appointed to develop a position statement. The pros and cons will be presented to the general membership at the time the ballots are sent to the total membership for vote. During the National Conference there were a number of National, Regional, State, and Divisional leaders opposed for various reasons. This is a major proposal with potentially profound long term effects on the organization and each member should take time to consider both sides of the issues and then vote.

## ***Mid-Winter Leadership Meeting***

Each year the National AAMR holds the mid-winter leadership meeting in Washington, DC to review AAMR issues of importance and to help plan for the future. National Board, Regional Officers, and State Presidents met this last January to brainstorm building AAMR membership, successful fundraising, promoting the Supports Intensity Scale nationally, and how to advance the National Health Goals Agenda. The specifics are available through the National office as well as through those AAMR members who attended. Results of the leadership meeting were implemented at the National Convention in Philadelphia and are now driving a number of activities of AAMR National.

Sid Blanchard, Chair  
c/o Community Access Unlimited  
80 West Grand Street ~ Elizabeth, New Jersey 07202  
Phone: (908) 354-3040 ~ Fax: (908) 354-3186 ~ [sblanchard@caunj.org](mailto:sblanchard@caunj.org)

The December, 2003 Regional Conference saw over 285 attendees who actively attended over 55 workshops and sessions at the Regional Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey. National and regional leaders led many workshops. Surprisingly, self-advocates also led over 15 of the workshops. Over 50 self-advocates paid and attended the three-day conference.

The National Conference in Philadelphia this past June was also a success. Numerous workshops were not only attended but led by regional AAMR members including self-advocates. Again, over 50 advocates paid and attended the conference and added a good balance to the professionals, parents, and first time attendees. Numerous National Awards went to Region 9 members including Dybwad Humanitarian Award to Ofra Bikel, Maria Deans, Margaret E. Edds, Eric M. Freedman, Barry A. Weinstein, Gerald T. Zerk; the Education Award to Martha E. Snell; the Full Community Inclusion Award to Community Access Unlimited of New Jersey; Te Harvey B. Wilbur Historic Preservation Award to J. David Smith; the Leadership Award to James F. Gardner.

### ***Future Events***

- Alliance for Full Participation, "Many Voices, One Vision" Summit, September 21-24, 2005
- Mid-Winter Leadership Meeting
- Region 9 Fall Meeting
- 2006 International Alliance for Social Inclusion, Montreal, Canada

AAMR can give you that competitive edge.

**Joining is easy...join online!**

Log on to [www.aamr.org](http://www.aamr.org) and click on "I want to join!"