

# NEWS FROM NOVA

SPRING 2007

Volume 28

Number 2

## The Power of One Continued

By Cecilia McVey, RN, MS



In the last issue, I discussed the difference one person can make. This time, I'd like to challenge each of you to recruit at least one new NOVA member before the Annual Meeting. If we each were successful, we would double our membership in a very short time!

An alliance is defined as "a formal pact of confederation between Nations in a common cause; a union, relationship or connection by kinship, marriage or common interest."

There is power by virtue of an alliance, and that alliance is the Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs. If each and every VA nurse was a Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs member, we together would be able to create a preferred future for nurses in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

By joining together, we can share our vision for the future and employ "The Power of One" concept. "Success" for the Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs is finding members and keeping them. You are our organization.

This past January, we had a very successful Board of Directors meeting and Legislative Roundtable. Your board members and officers work very hard each meeting to keep your needs and the needs of the veterans we serve front and center. As of our last Board meeting, we had 2,964 members! Now, those of you reading this column are already NOVA members, so please copy and share this newsletter with at least one other non-member. Encourage them to join. It only takes one!

At our Legislative Roundtable on Friday, January 12, 2007, we had the opportunity to dialogue with **Audrey Drake** and **Karen Ott** from the Office of Nursing Services. Other distinguished guests included representatives from the American Legion, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Professional organizations included representatives from the American Thoracic Society, National Association of VA Nurse

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## NOVA NURSES ON THE HILL

### Tips for your Congressional Visit

#### Preparation:

> Have the following information readily available for reference during your visit:

- Names of your Senators

\_\_\_\_\_ and

- \_\_\_\_\_ and the Representatives for your congressional district and that of the congressional district of your medical center

My Congressional District: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Center Congressional District: \_\_\_\_\_

You can locate the above information at [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) and [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) – both have sites for Find Your Senator or Representative

#### > Know your issue:

- NOVA will provide you with a one-page easy reference document that identifies our legislative priorities for 2008. You will be briefed prior to your appointment.
- If you have additional issues specific to your medical center you need to be able to provide accurate and factual information. A brief (one page) written summary to leave with the congressional staff is helpful.

#### > Know your role:

- It is important to remember that you are making this legislative visit as a NOVA member – not as an employee of the VA
- Print a few business cards for your visit. The following format is suggested:

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Join us for NOVA's 27th Annual Meeting in Washington, DC May 9-12, 2007

## Thank You

By Deborah Beck



I sincerely apologize for not writing an Executive Director's column in the past two issues of NEWS FROM NOVA. As many of you know, my husband passed away quickly and unexpectedly from an infection he developed during our last sailing trip in June. He was fine one day and left my family and me within 32 hours. It has been an emotional ride, but I

truly appreciate the many condolences and support from the NOVA membership.

I am also honored and thrilled the NOVA Foundation Board of Directors formed a William S. Bergman research grant for nurse researchers who are conducting research in the area of infectious diseases. This was extremely meaningful to my family, and I was able to raise \$6,850 toward this valuable grant during the Marine Corps Marathon. An exceptional friend from South Carolina raised nearly \$2,000, and many nurse friends from around the country made generous donations. I thank each and every one of you!

### THE POWER OF ONE

NOVA President Cecilia McVey talked about the *power of one* in her last column. Everyone has the ability to affect change in the legislative arena. Her article outlined specific examples of nurses who have impacted nursing in the Department of Veterans Affairs. Participants at the NOVA Annual Meeting will be able to lobby on behalf of all registered nurses during their Capitol Hill visits.

The upcoming NOVA Annual Meeting in Washington, DC will feature a legislative day on the first day, May 10 beginning with a keynote address by Brig. General Wilma Vaught, Women in Military Service Association. A Washington lobbyist will address how to make effective Hill visits which will be followed by veterans' service organization and Senate/House Committees on Veterans Affairs panels. These panel participants will outline their legislative agenda for the first session of the 110th Congress.

Buses will take participants to Capitol Hill after the educational sessions. The afternoon will begin with a group photo on the steps of the Capitol. Representative Julia Carson (D-IN) will address the group before everyone is unleashed on the Hill to meet with their Senators and Representatives.

Prior to the Annual Meeting, the National office staff will set up Congressional visits for each delegation, who will meet with their Representative and two Senators. Delegations will discuss NOVA's legislative priorities which

## Annual Legislative Roundtable

NOVA held its fourteenth Annual Legislative Roundtable on January 12, 2007 at the DAV Legislative Headquarters in Washington, DC, providing an opportunity for key stakeholders in veterans' issues to gather and share information. **John Bradley**, Legislative Consultant for the DAV, welcomed everyone to the event. NOVA President **Cecilia McVey** identified NOVA concerns about the effects of the continuing resolution on VA facilities, and expressed NOVA's support for the Independent Budget. She identified NOVA's concerns regarding providing care for new veterans, the impact of the new regulations for background checks resulting in additional delays in hiring staff, centralization of information technology, and unfunded mandates. NOVA also supports direct hire for nursing assistants. **Mary Raymer**, NOVA's legislative chair, added her welcome and invited participants to discuss concerns

Major topics and issues presented included:

- o Legislative to eliminate the salary cap for registered nurses at grade 5, which currently results in a pay disparity of approximately \$10,000 with similar positions in the private sector
- o Legislation to allow restructuring of the nurse pay grades to result in a seven grade pay scale, and allowing nurses in the lowest three grades a more defined rank acceleration and more visible advancement (related to outcomes of National Commission on VA Nursing)
- o Legislation to recognize nursing assistants as part of the hybrid title 38 series, which would result in the ability to hire them directly
- o A legislative proposal to develop a VA nursing academy, beginning with similar affiliations with schools of nursing to those currently in place with schools of medicine
- o Reinstating legislation for the Health Professions Scholarship Program, providing funds for students to obtain a BSN in exchange for work at a VA facility after graduation
- o Legislation to waive the federally mandated per diem travel rules so that the Travel Nurse Corps members can be paid according to locality pay
- o Implementation of the physician pay bill
- o Research identifying occurrence of homelessness in veterans within 8-10 years after discharge
- o Supportive services for homeless veterans including access to health care, ensuring income security, affordable



Joe Chennelly, AMVETS; Mary Raymer, NOVA Vice President; Margaret Kruckemeyer, NOVA Past President; and Mark Potter, Veterans of Foreign Wars

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## NOVA Foundation Chair Update on the NOVA Foundation

By Lula Cumberlander



Lula Cumberlander,  
NOVA Foundation  
Chair

The NOVA Foundation met in Washington DC recently and reviewed the results of our extremely successful participation in the Marine Corps Marathon. We raised nearly \$60,000 during our first marathon. I am pleased to announce that the NOVA Foundation has been accepted as a charity partner for the 2007 Marine Corps Marathon on October 28. We are going to purchase 1-39 slots for

the marathon and will have an unlimited number of slots for participants in the 10 K. Our 10 K participants did a tremendous job of fund-raising for us last year, and I challenge all NOVA members to participate or sponsor a participant in this year's race. This year we have several committees working on the marathon; Fundraising chaired by **Joan Clifford**; Logistics chaired by **Margaret Kruckemeyer**; Marketing/Communications chaired by **Velma Hart**; Sponsorships chaired by **Mary Raymer**; and Volunteers chaired by **Kate Bent**. Watch E News from NOVA and the NOVA web page for more information about the race.

The NOVA Foundation is sponsoring a gala, including a silent auction, on May 9 during the NOVA Annual Meeting at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Crystal City, Virginia. Send your items for the auction; details can be found in this newsletter and on the website. We will be awarding a new award, the Legacy Award. Join us to support the NOVA Foundation and nursing scholarships by attending a great event. Congratulations to our NOVA Foundation scholarship winners for 2007. The **Jesse Brown** scholarship will be awarded to **Beth Palmer**, San Diego VAMC. NOVA Foundation scholarships will be given to **Jenean Barney**, Sheridan VAMC; **Sue Cefola**, West Palm Beach VAMC; **Cara Drinovsky**, Southern Arizona Healthcare System; **Beatrice Grant**, Maryland Healthcare System; and **Frances Phillips**, Dallas VAMC.

### NOVA Foundation Gala Silent Auction May 9, 2007



Send your individual or chapter items  
for the auction to:  
NOVA National Office  
1726 M St, NW, Suite 1101  
Washington, DC 20036

## Efficacy of Mantram Repetition for PTSD Symptoms in Veterans: Pilot Study

By Jill E. Bormann, PhD, RN, Principal Investigator

This study received a grant from the NOVA Foundation.

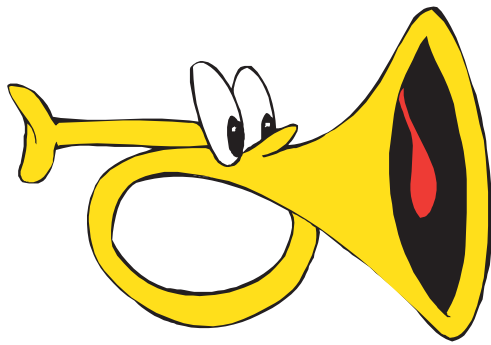
**Objectives:** This one-year pilot study was conducted to examine the feasibility and efficacy of a 6-week, complementary, portable intervention of frequently repeating a silent mantram (mantra)—a word or phrase with spiritual associations—to manage post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms and improve quality of life in combat veterans. The intervention is designed to provide immediate aid for managing PTSD in the form of a 6-week intervention that incorporates spirituality.

**Research Design:** This was a randomized study using a 2 group (mantram versus delayed-treatment control) by 2 time (pre- and post-intervention) design. A mantram-based group intervention ( $n = 14$ ) was compared to a delayed treatment control group ( $n = 15$ ) on PTSD symptoms, psychological distress, quality of life and spiritual well-being. Within-group comparisons on the intervention group were also compared from pre-intervention to 12-week follow-up.

**Methods:** Veterans from an outpatient PTSD clinic in southern California were invited to enroll in the study. They were screened for diagnosis and severity of PTSD symptoms. Assessments were conducted at pre-intervention, post-intervention and follow-up at 12 weeks. Outcomes were measured using the PTSD Checklist, Clinician Assessed PTSD Scale, Brief Symptom Inventory, State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory, Quality of Life Enjoyment and Satisfaction Questionnaire, Functional Assessment of Chronic Therapy Spiritual Well-Being Scale, Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale, Health Survey Short-form 12, and Client Satisfaction Questionnaire. Repeated measures analysis of variance (RM-ANOVA) was performed. Because this was a pilot study with small sample and low power statistically significant results were not expected. Effect sizes ( $d$ ) on pre- to post-intervention change scores were calculated.

**Findings:** Twenty-nine male veterans with an average age of  $58 + 8.48$  years and an average of  $11 + 6.99$  months of combat were enrolled and randomized to the intervention ( $n = 14$ ) and control group ( $n = 15$ ). They were 66% Caucasian, 14% Black, 10% Hispanic, and 10% other. Compared to controls, the mantram group's self-reported PTSD symptom severity trended toward a large improvement ( $p = .07$ ,  $d = -.72$ ) whereas clinician assessed PTSD symptoms improved with small effect size ( $p = .58$ ,  $d = -.33$ ). Psychological distress using Brief Symptom Inventory improved with a large effect ( $p = .06$ ,  $d = -.73$ ) including subscales of anxiety and depression. Quality of life enjoyment and satisfaction ( $p = .069$ ,  $d = -.70$ ) and spiritual well-being ( $p = .09$ ,  $d = .67$ ) both showed medium sized improvements. In the mantram group, there were desirable changes at week 12 follow-up in clinician assessed PTSD symptoms of hyperarousal and total function; overall psychological distress, depression, trait-anger,

*Cont. on page 11*



# ANNOUNCING!

## NOVA AWARD WINNERS FOR 2007

NOVA announces the award winners for 2007. Congratulations to these outstanding professionals.

The **Professional Nurse Award for Clinical Excellence** is awarded to **Jenice Guzman RN MSN**. Jenice Guzman is the Nurse Practitioner in the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center (GRECC) Outpatient Clinic. She is well-respected and highly regarded as an excellent clinician in her care of frail older adults. She has always believed in the importance of excelling and combining clinical practice, education, research, and community awareness in raising the quality of nursing as a profession. She initiated an interdisciplinary project to develop a GRECC Medication Review Clinic involving members from medicine, nursing, and pharmacy to provide a one-time clinic visit for the geriatric clinician to review all of the elderly patient's medications, provide education, and make recommendations to the patient's primary care provider using the Beers Criteria for Potentially Inappropriate Medication Use in Older Adults. She is both the first nurse and the youngest person to receive one of VA's most prestigious awards, the 2005 Mark Wolcott Award for Excellence in Clinical Care Delivery.

The **Professional Nurse Award for Leadership** is awarded to **Cynthia McCormack RN MS**. Cynthia McCormack has served as the Nurse Executive and Associate Chief of Staff for Inpatient Care Service at the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center in Phoenix, Arizona since 2000. She is an active NOVA member and strong supporter of NOVA, currently serving as the local chapter treasurer. She established a vigorous Evidence Based Practice Committee which has sponsored many exemplary projects directly related to the delivery of safe patient care. In a groundbreaking move, she created and hosted the first Arizona VA Evidence Based Practice Consortium, including VA registered nurses from Phoenix, Prescott, and Tucson. She created a new position of Nurse Researcher for Inpatient Care Services to serve as a resource for staff and management by facilitating nursing professional activities related to research and academic supports, and supporting the evidence based practice culture within nursing.

The **Distinguished Service Award** is being given **Kenneth Kizer MD, MPH**. This award is given for distinguished service to the registered nurses of the Department of Veterans Affairs and for dramatically and significantly improving the health care of veterans. Ken served as Under Secretary for Health in the Department of Veterans Affairs beginning in 1994. He had a vision for VA health care to change the Veterans Health Administration from a tertiary care, bureaucratic system with poor quality outcomes to a system focused on providing high quality primary care delivered in outpatient community clinics using resources much more efficiently. He also envisioned VHA using information technology to create a paperless medical record and significantly improve patient care. These goals have been achieved, and VHA is now considered the leading health care organization in the United States, a monumental change from just fifteen years ago.

The **Vernice Ferguson Award** is being given to **Phyllis West**. Phyllis served as the chair of the first NOVA Foundation Marine Corps Marathon Charity Partners event. Orchestrating NOVA's participation as a charity partner required a tremendous amount of organization and planning, as well as enthusiasm. Phyllis devoted many hours of her personal time to assure the success of this event. Her careful attention to detail assured that all of the NOVA Foundation Marine Corps Marathon participants were well-informed and on schedule with their assigned tasks. Phyllis skillfully organized the volunteers for not only the hospitality tent, but also for the water and first aid stations. The event generated approximately \$60,000 for NOVA Foundation scholarships and research grants. Throughout the planning and fulfillment of this event, she never wavered in her enthusiasm. On the day of the race, she was on the sidelines cheering the runners and walkers, as well as keeping all of the volunteers on track, and followed up to begin planning for the 2007 event. In addition to her efforts related to the Marine Corps Marathon, she also contributes monetarily to other NOVA Foundation fund raising activities.

Congratulations to all the award winners! Join us at the NOVA Annual Meeting to recognize them for their contributions.

## Board Briefs

The NOVA Board of Directors met in Washington D.C. on January 12, 2007. The following actions were taken:

- Reviewed NOVA Foundation Legacy Award to be presented at the gala event on May 9.
- Approved award winners as follows: Phyllis West for Vernice Ferguson Award, Kenneth Kizer for the Distinguished Service Award, Jenice Guzman for the NOVA Professional Award for Clinical Excellence, and Cynthia McCormack for the NOVA Professional Award for Leadership.
- Approved NOVA history for 2006.
- Reviewed NOVA calendar.
- Approved support of Office of Nursing Services objectives:
  - o Removal of cap on grade five pay for registered nurses
  - o Restructure nursing grades into seven grades
  - o Make nursing assistants hybrid title 38 employees
  - o Continue to move forward with Nursing Academy
  - o Continue to develop Travel Nurse Corps.
- Agreed to develop a white paper on the Mandatory Budget.
- Approved legislative plans for the Annual Meeting.
- Approved the 2007 ballot.
- Approved the 2007 Annual Meeting program.
- Reviewed information on the 2008 Annual Meeting to be held at the Radisson in Boston April 10-12, 2008 pending final negotiations with the hotel.
- Approved annual meeting in 2009 to be held at the Hyatt in Crystal City pending negotiations with the hotel.

## Chapter Contributions to NOVA Foundation

**NOVA Chapters are encouraged to make a contribution to the NOVA Foundation in the name of a deserving nurse colleague (minimum donation of \$150)**

Chapters will develop their own criteria for the nomination of individuals to be recognized. These individuals will be listed in each issue of the newsletter and will be included in the Annual Meeting program as well as on the website.

## Good Evening, VA Nurses!

**Come and meet the legend and the man behind the movie "Good Morning, Vietnam!" Adrian Cronauer will be our Master of Ceremonies for the NOVA Foundation Gala on May 9, 2007!**

Adrian co-authored the original story for Good Morning, Vietnam! He is an expert on the role of military radio in Vietnam and he was the voice behind the microphone that broadcasted to our troops during the Vietnam conflict. His character was played by the legendary Robin Williams in this historic and funny film. Adrian is being honored with NOVA's Sonny Montgomery Award.

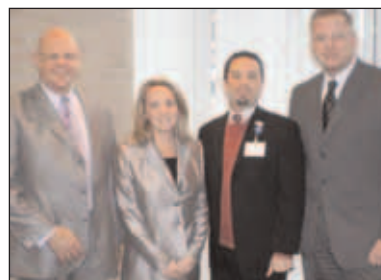
The theme of the Gala is: ***Celebrating the Legacy of VA Nursing: a Profession and a Passion.*** We are planning a stunning event highlighting VA nursing and featuring renowned VA nursing leaders, a cocktail reception, silent auction and dinner. The atmosphere will be less formal than galas of the past; the attire will be business and the color scheme will be dynamic—red, silver and black. Please join us for this exciting Nurses Week event to raise money for NOVA Foundation scholarships and research grants!

***Adrian has been challenged to bring another stellar performer to the Gala, so stay tuned for more announcements as to the identity of our mystery guest!***

Also remember, in honor of this special occasion, the NOVA Foundation has developed two special awards: the **NOVA Foundation Legacy Award for Leadership and the Legacy Award for Clinical Excellence.** While every VA nurse contributes to the legacy of VA nursing, the recipients of these awards display professionalism and actions that go above and beyond their normal duty and responsibilities. Please see [www.vanurse.org](http://www.vanurse.org) for more details.

And, in conjunction with our Nurses Week theme, we are featuring an **essay/poetry contest.** Please submit an essay or a poem describing the legacy of VA nursing or your personal legacy as a VA nurse. The contest is open to any current or retired VA nurse. The essay or poem should not exceed one typed page (12-font) and can be submitted via the webpage, email or regular mail to National Office and must be postmarked by April 1, 2007.

The winning essay or poem will be read by Adrian during the gala, so get your creative juices flowing and send your essay or poem to [nova@vanurse.org](mailto:nova@vanurse.org)!



Ron Hopper, NOVA Treasurer; Angela Mund, National Association of VA Nurse Anesthetists; Larry Lemos, NOVA Secretary; and Brian Bullard, American Association of Nurse Anesthetists

### Northampton Chapter 232 By Janice Pastuszak

The Northampton Chapter of NOVA will be having a program and meeting on March 21, 2007 in Northampton, MA. The program will include the showing of the DVD documentary, "Vietnam Nurses." This DVD identifies the conditions under which a nurse practiced and the extent to which it left its memories.

### Palo Alto Chapter 129 By Ann Narciso, RN



*Palo Alto Chapter New Board Members*

On January 27th, the Palo Alto Chapter held our Annual Meeting "Traumatic Brain Injury: What Health Care Professionals Should Know." The day started by Chief Executive Nurse **Alice Naqvi** presenting on the challenges facing nursing at the local level. Health Care System Director **Elizabeth Freeman** expressed her deep appreciation to NOVA for presenting such a timely conference on this very important program at VAPAHCS. A variety of clinical experts from the Polytrauma Center, TBI unit and Outpatient programs presented to an audience of 85 VA and non VA staff that joined for a day of learning and networking with colleagues. The day ended with a panel presentation which included a veteran patient who has progressed through the TBI program here at VAPAHCS. His determination and spirit was inspiring to all present. Several recent Palo Alto nursing retirees also joined for the day, and it was nice to reconnect and learn that they are keeping busy by going back to school, volunteering at local humane societies, and working as visiting home nurses, running antique shops, and connecting with families.

At the annual business meeting **Joni Drobick** and **Nina Bellatorre** were presented with plaques as NOVA Foundation Honorees for their ongoing dedication to providing excellent nursing care to the veteran patient. Outgoing board members **Pam McFarlin**, **Cherinia Tinio**, **Betty Wexler**, **Jill Gandolfi** and **Judith Rosen** were thanked for their years of service to the local chapter. New board members were installed and are ready to plan another exciting year of chapter activities.

### Wade Park Needs You

Are you working at the Wade Park Division of the Cleveland, VA? Would you like to help reactivate our chapter at Wade

## Chapter News



Park? Please contact Christine Mladineo if you are interested in creating NOVA activity at Wade Park.

### News from Chapter 420 Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center Richmond, Virginia By Thelma Roach-Serry and Beverly Ross



*Linda McConnell and  
Beverly Ross*

Nursing is "A Profession and a Passion" is the theme for the Week of the Nurse 2007. Those of us in the VA system proudly serve those who have served our nation with professionalism and passion. Our chapter continues to value the importance of sharing education and opportunities with our members by means of the programming that we provide. We proudly serve our nurses.

The chapter had the good fortune and opportunity to have our new nurse executive as the speaker for the annual Christmas program. **Linda McConnell, RN, MSN, CNA, CHE** was appointed as the Associate Director for Nursing Services at McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond, VA. Her presentation was titled ***VA Nursing: From the Present to the Future***. During the program, she discussed the VHA nursing strategies and possible goals to assist this medical center in achieving Magnet Status. This was well attended with over forty nursing staff present. Our chapter was also able to award door prizes to our members and potential members.



*Richmond  
dinner meeting  
with Robyn  
Moorhead*

We extend appreciation to **Robyn Moorhead** of Professional Planning of Virginia for the dinner program she pro-

vided in November at a local restaurant. **Robyn** has been a financial adviser for over 15 years and she has been a strong supporter of Chapter 420 and NOVA through the years. **Robyn's** knowledge of the federal system and nursing allows her to do the best for our members. If you need financial planning advice, please contact her at (888) 529-1462.



*Marine Corps Marathon  
10K Participant Landis  
Shepherd*

The chapter's participation in the Marine Corps Marathon (MCM) was awesome. **James Schmitt, MD**, **Beverly Ross** and **Landis Shepherd** participated in the MCM. Jim completed the entire marathon. **Beverly** and **Landis** were also successful in finishing the 10K walk. They helped each other to complete the course. **Beverly's** daughter, **Joy**, was also present to cheer her mother on. Thanks to **Sheila Mines**, Utilization Review Nurse for Consolidated Patient Account Center and her daughter **Jasmine** along with **Thelma Roach-Serry** for handing out water to the 10kers.

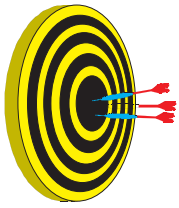
The chapter continues to expand the educational calendar. The February and April presenters and topics will be: **Treven Pickett**, Neuropsychologist on "Polytrauma Care" **Kimberly Ketter, RN** and **Shaun Miller, RN** on "Nurse Entrepreneurship"

Educational meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of even months at 5:00 pm in Room 2K-113 at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VAMC. Members and guests are welcome. Contact hours and refreshments are provided.

Members of Chapter 420 proudly serve veterans at McGuire and share in the continued work of recruiting and retaining nurses to also serve and join the NOVA team.

## NOVA Congratulates VA Nurses

News from NOVA seeks to recognize VA nurses for achievements. If you know a VA nurse who has received an award or other type of recognition for an achievement, please send the information to Nancy Claflin at [nclaflin@cox.net](mailto:nclaflin@cox.net).



## On Target: The Clinical Nurse Leader and Evidence- Based Practice: eHarmony™ Couldn't Have Made a Better Match!

By Anna Alt-White and Karen Ott

The Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) Initiative launched a new career path for an advanced generalist clinician as an alternative to a more traditional administrative or advanced practice career path in VA nursing. Since the CNL has the ability to provide continuous, advanced clinical nursing leadership at the point of care, this role offers a significant opportunity to redesign the delivery of nursing care throughout the VA. As noted by **Tornabeni**, the role was especially designed to laterally integrate the care that is provided by multiple interdependent and independent disciplines across the continuum of a patient admission or an encounter and to address the gaps in communication between caregivers that fragment care.

In today's healthcare settings, the need for advanced clinical nursing leadership at the point of care is imperative. The CNL is a "hands-on" provider of increasingly complex care and has the responsibility to identify opportunities to enhance nursing care processes and effect the necessary change to improve patient care outcomes.

The CNL is ideally suited to assume accountability for care and its outcomes through setting the pace for all aspects of the delivery of nursing care for a group of patients within a unit or specific setting. One way the CNL accomplishes this by being proficient in evidence-based practice processes. The CNL daily utilizes the best available evidence and provides the "gold standard" in evaluating both the delivery and effectiveness of care for the patient and influencing the delivery of the highest standard of nursing practice. As a consumer of evidence-based practice the CNL also models a critical advanced practice skill for the entire nursing care team and continuous improvement in nursing practice is ensured for that unit or clinical setting.

In this way, as a valued clinical leader and mentor, the CNL creates and maintains an environment of nursing practice excellence for the veterans and the team.

### References:

- Caramanica, L, Roy, J**, Evidence-Based Practice: Creating the Environment for Practice Excellence, *Nurse Leader* 2006; 38-41.
- Harris, J, Tornabeni, J, and Walters, S**, The Clinical Nurse Leader: A Valued Member of the Healthcare team, *JONA* 2006; 446-448.
- Tornabeni, J**, The Evolution of a Revolution in Nursing, *JONA* 2006; 3-6.

## Honoring NOVA's Treasures: Friends, Family Members, Colleagues

NOVA nurses have many treasures. Your treasures may include valued NOVA members, colleagues, and mentors as well as friends, family members and other treasures in your life. Would you like to honor one of those treasures? Consider making a donation to the NOVA Foundation in his/her name. This donation will be listed on a plaque that is displayed at all NOVA and NOVA Foundation events. It will also be included in the newsletter as well as in the Annual Meeting program booklet.

The NOVA Foundation grants scholarships to VA nurses to advance their education. Research grants fund nurse investigators who are researching ways to improve the care to our veteran patients. Send your donation to the NOVA Foundation, 1726 M Street, NW, Suite 1101, Washington, DC 20036. Please let us know who you are honoring and why. This will be published in *NEWS FROM NOVA*. For more information on honoring an individual, please contact the NOVA Foundation National Office at the above address, or by calling 202-296-0888.

## IN MEMORY OF LINDA-DELL ARCHULETA

The Salem, Virginia NOVA Chapter 422 has made a \$250 donation to the NOVA Foundation in memory of Linda-Dell Archuleta. Linda was considered one of the most valuable chapter members and was a National NOVA Board member for four years. She passed away recently after a brave battle with cancer. Linda-Dell was devoted to the mission of NOVA, and she will be missed by her local chapter as well as nurses nationally.



*NOVA Board of Directors:  
Back Row - Marian Ehrhart,  
Maggie James, Cheryl  
Knowles, Mary Seaman, Past  
President Dianne Nelson and  
Membership Secretary Nancy  
Claffin. Front Row - Secretary  
Larry Lemos, Treasurer Ron  
Hopper, President Cecilia  
McVey, Vice President Mary  
Raymer, Director of  
Administration Susan Dove,  
and Executive Director  
Deborah Beck.*

## Featuring Membership Committee Member Thelma Roach-Serry



Thelma Roach-Serry

Thelma R. Roach-Serry, RN, BSN, CNA, BC has been employed at Hunter Holmes McGuire Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) in Richmond, Virginia since 1985. She has 23 years of government service. She attended Howard University and Central Michigan University (CMU). She holds certifications in

both nursing administration and health services administration. She is a recent graduate of the 2006 VISN 6 Leadership Development Institute (LDI).

Ms. Roach-Serry's nursing career has encompassed numerous experiences in both the inpatient and ambulatory care settings. Through the years, she has demonstrated leadership as a staff nurse, nurse manager, and through her participation in community service. As a staff nurse, Thelma worked on medical-surgical units and intensive care leading others in the delivery of patient care. As a nurse manager, she has been responsible for leading others in the development of new clinical programs in the medical and ambulatory care arenas including primary care, community based outpatient services, emergency services, cardiac catheterization, radiology, and other specialty care services. In August 2006 with service realignment, Ms. Roach-Serry was selected as the nurse manager for Specialty Clinics in ambulatory care which encompasses eleven clinical areas and numerous ambulatory care programs for medicine and surgery. During the past year, she has been involved in developing, implementing, and coordinating new programs including the Motivating Obese/Overweight Veterans Everywhere (MOVE) program for the medical center. She has coordinated the annual influenza campaign for the Richmond VAMC for 12 years.

Since completing LDI, Thelma has been involved in numerous stretch assignments for the medical center including working on the Goal Sharing Committee (employee incentive award program), application process for the Carey Award, and Advance Clinical Access committee. She was recently appointed to serve as a secretary for the Nurse Professional Standards Board.

Ms. Roach-Serry has also displayed leadership within NOVA. She has served on the National Membership Committee since 2000 and is the Vice President and Program Coordinator for Chapter 420. She was elected and is serving her first term on the Board of Directors for the Virginia Nurses Association, District 5. She is a member of Alpha

## Become a NOVA Contact

Last year, NOVA reached 3000 members for the first time in its history. The NOVA Membership Committee has set an ambitious goal to reach 3500 members by the NOVA Annual Meeting May 10-12, 2007. To help us accomplish that, we need to have a NOVA member who is willing to act as a NOVA contact at each VA facility. The NOVA contact receives a copy of the updated NOVA Chapter Starter Kit, an updated NOVA Membership list every two months, and other information to help get a NOVA Chapter started. You'll have an assigned member of the NOVA Membership Committee to help you get started. They are listed at the end.

Please let me know if you'd be interested by sending me an email to [nclafin@cox.net](mailto:nclafin@cox.net) or calling me at 602 277-5551 x7333. NOVA needs you!

**The following facilities listed by state do not have a NOVA member who is a contact:**

Alabama: Montgomery, Tuscaloosa, Tuskegee  
 Arkansas: Fayetteville  
 Colorado: Grand Junction  
 Florida: Bay Pines, West Palm Beach  
 Hawaii: Honolulu  
 Idaho: Boise  
 Illinois: Marion, North Chicago  
 Indiana: Fort Wayne, Indianapolis, Marion  
 Iowa: Des Moines, Knoxville, Iowa City  
 Kansas: Wichita  
 Kentucky: Lexington, Louisville  
 Louisiana: New Orleans  
 Maine: Togus  
 Michigan: Allen Park, Battle Creek, Saginaw  
 Minnesota: St. Cloud  
 Missouri: Kansas City, Poplar Bluff  
 Montana: Fort Harrison  
 Nebraska: Grand Island, Lincoln, Omaha  
 Nevada: Reno  
 New Mexico: Albuquerque  
 New York: Albany, Bronx, Canandaigua, Montrose, Castle Point, Syracuse  
 North Carolina: Fayetteville  
 North Dakota: Fargo  
 Ohio: Columbus  
 Oklahoma: Muskogee, Oklahoma City  
 Pennsylvania: Erie, Wilkes Barre  
 Puerto Rico: San Juan  
 South Carolina: Columbia  
 South Dakota: Hot Springs  
 Tennessee: Memphis, Murfreesboro  
 Texas: Amarillo, Big Spring, Kerrville, San Antonio  
 Utah: Salt Lake City  
 Vermont: White River Junction  
 Washington: Walla Walla  
 West Virginia: Beckley, Clarksburg, Martinsburg  
 Wisconsin: Madison, Tomah, Milwaukee  
 Wyoming: Cheyenne, Sheridan

NOVA Membership Committee Members by assigned State:

**Mary Seaman:** Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah

**Marian Allen:** Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming

**Kathleen Lehmann:** Illinois, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska

**Lee Fealy/Providencia Cardona:** Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Mississippi

**(Curtis) Jay Purser/Jeff Allen:** Oklahoma, Texas

**Joan Clifford:** Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin

**Magelene James, Mary Powe:** Arkansas, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Puerto Rico, Tennessee

**Marian Ehrhart:** Michigan, Pennsylvania

**Cheryl Knowles:** New Jersey, New York

**Janet Parrish/Ron Patrick:** Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia

**Thelma Roach-Serry:** Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Virginia, District of Columbia

*Cont. on next page*

Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and Chi Eta Phi Nursing Sorority, Inc.

Thelma is married to Henry P. Serry and the proud mother of Aprile, Armand and Adrian and grandmother of Armand, Jr. "AJ". In her spare time, Thelma enjoys music, traveling, and the arts.

Thelma plans to continue her dedication and loyalty to serving America's finest. Her long term plans involve expanding her leadership experiences in an executive position, being a voice for the nursing profession, and increasing her involvement in healthcare for third world countries.

## E- NEWS FROM NOVA

Have you seen NOVA's new improved web page? Visit the site and be sure to sign up for E-News from NOVA (formerly Hot News) and encourage all NOVA members at your facility to do the same. Log onto <http://www.vanurse.org> to sign up. E-News from NOVA is NOVA's e-mail news service highlighting the latest in health care and health care policies. NOVA uses E-News from NOVA to keep NOVA nurses updated on important legislative and other nursing issues. Sign up today!

Have you signed up for E-News from NOVA but don't seem to be getting your messages? We have some email addresses in the database that aren't correct, as we can't send messages. Be sure that you enter a valid, correct email when signing up for E-News from NOVA on the NOVA web site. If you have previously signed up for E-News from NOVA but aren't receiving any messages, please contact **Katelyn Turner** at the NOVA office at [ktturner@vanurse.org](mailto:ktturner@vanurse.org) or call her at 202 296-0888.

## BE A NEWS FROM NOVA REPORTER

News From NOVA would like to have news from each chapter. Write a few lines about what your chapter did this year and send a picture. Sharing what you do can provide recognition for your chapter as well as ideas for other chapters. The following are News From NOVA deadlines. Send the information by email to [nancy.clafin@med.va.gov](mailto:nancy.clafin@med.va.gov) or [nclafin@cox.net](mailto:nclafin@cox.net)

Mail to: **Nancy Clafin**  
2237 E. Tahitian Way • Gilbert, AZ 85234  
602 277-5551 ext. 7333

### Deadline Dates

May 25, 2007

August 10, 2007

November 16, 2007

Questions? Call me at 602 277-5551 x7333. Thank you for sharing your information with News From NOVA!

## Membership Campaigns

As all of us in NOVA know, it takes strong membership to have a strong organization. Every VA nurse should be a member of NOVA. NOVA is committed to increasing membership this year. NOVA is our voice in Washington, and NOVA's voice is clearly heard! The Member-Get-A-Member Campaign is ongoing and ends April 30, 2007. If you sign up 5 new members, your **MEMBERSHIP** is **FREE** for the next year! Sign up 15 new members, and you'll get a **FREE conference registration!** Sign up 25 new members, and you'll get a **FREE Conference Registration and three nights' hotel FREE at the conference!** You must contact the NOVA office regarding your new members to get credit for them. For dues by payroll deduction, a copy must be taken to the local payroll office, and you will get credit for the membership when dues are deducted. Encourage everyone at your facility to sign up 5 new members this year!

NOVA will also be awarding membership awards in three categories at the annual meeting for those chapters who have had the greatest increase in membership numbers.

The chapter size for the membership awards will be as follows: Small--up to 25; Medium--26-99; Large--100 or greater. This will end April 30, 2007.

All awards will be publicized in the newsletter and on the website.

If you would like help in setting up a NOVA Chapter, contact me at [nclafin@cox.net](mailto:nclafin@cox.net) and we'll get you in touch with a member of NOVA's Membership Committee.

## Welcome Aboard

12/06/06 – 2/07/07

**Birmingham, AL**  
Lorraine Bern

**Boise, ID**  
Rachel Clements

**Bonham, TX**  
John W. Stevens

**Boston, MA**  
Sherry Clement  
Jeannette Spencer

**Chicago, IL (Jesse Brown)**  
Gloria Bengoa-Farrington  
Anita Bor-Brown  
Adell Cooper  
Lilia Dulce  
Lillie Geater  
Merle Pray  
Aurora Saini

**Dallas, TX**  
Regina Strowd

**Danville, IL**  
Virginia Daggett

**Dayton, OH**  
Tamara Jackson

**Denver, CO**  
Peggy Ajax  
Maria Burke  
Jodie Lawson  
Valerie Owens

**East Orange, NJ**  
Marsha Oliver

**Eastern Kansas**  
Cheryl L. Holz

**Hines, IL**  
Jan Sheldon

**Gainesville, FL**  
Donna Moore

**Lebanon, PA**  
Sandra Jones

**Miami, FL**  
Islamia A. Kasali  
Cynthia Ann Miller  
Ellis Valentin-Torres

**Palo Alto, CA**  
Rosemarie A. Avanzado  
Ruby Bacalocos  
Guinti Bano  
Florence Foulke  
Elisa Marie Lucchese  
Molinda Martin  
Cynthia C. Nieves  
Merryl Young

**Phoenix, AZ**  
Suzanne Gilbert  
Gwendolyn Johnson  
Rhia Nkulu  
Lana Peoples

**Richmond, VA**  
Linda McConnell

**Tampa, FL**  
Cathy M. Brown  
William Messina

**Tucson, AZ**  
Cindy Mapelli

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** *cont. from page 1*

Anesthetists, National Association of VA Physicians and Dentists, National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, among others. We had the opportunity to express our concerns about the VA budget and the fact that we are still on a "Continuing Resolution" as well as to provide our support for an Independent Budget for VA. We learned of some exciting initiatives from the Office of Nursing Services including the Traveling Nurse Corps, proposals to restructure the current RN pay grades from 5 to 7 and proposals to potentially convert the current Nursing Assistants to hybrid Title 38 among others. It is an exciting time to be a VA nurse and, particularly, a VA nurse who belongs to the Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs.

This May, we will be holding our Annual conference during Nurses' Week. **Florence Nightingale** used her extraordinary influence and power to change the system. She always exhibited tenacity and perseverance in the achievement of her goals. She recognized that Nursing was and is an opportunity to respond and reconfirm our belief in human caring, healing and values. Our contributions to health care are truly amazing. We need to be leaders – each and every one of us -- and support our professional organization. NOVA is that professional organization. Get one person to join today!

## Mark Your Calendars!



Join us in Washington, DC on May 9-12, 2007

For the First NOVA Annual Meeting  
to be held during  
Nurses Week!

Join us for a NOVA Foundation Gala Event:  
Celebrating the Legacy of VA Nursing

Participate in the ceremony to honor the recipients  
of the Secretary's Awards for Nursing Excellence

Earn CEU's for attending the NOVA Annual Meeting

Nominate a NOVA colleague for the NOVA  
Nurses Week Legacy Award

Send us an essay or a poem describing the Legacy  
of VA nursing

Check out the NOVA web page for award criteria  
and other details [www.vanurse.org](http://www.vanurse.org)

**NOVA NURSES ON THE HILL** *cont. from page 1*

NAME, RN, plus other credentials  
NOVA Member (or officer name if appropriate)  
Location of Local Chapter (Name of VAMC)  
TELE: Home or cell phone  
EMAIL: Home address

The professional organization of registered nurses in the VA

- Dress should be business attire. You are representing professional nurses in the Department of Veterans Affairs and your attire should reflect that role. Shoes should be comfortable, as you will be walking a significant amount.
- Wear the name badge provided by NOVA – do not wear your VA Badge

**Presentation:**

- Introductions
  - Be on time
  - Introduce yourself, representing the Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs and your position and location of VA
  - Present your business card
- Issue presentation
  - Provide brief synopsis of issues
  - Dialogue with staff – listen, provide factual information and response, do not be argumentative or judgmental,
  - If you are part of a group do not monopolize the time – allow all members time to participate
- Closing
  - Summarize your major points
  - Thank the staff for the opportunity to meet
  - Leave a copy of NOVA Legislative Issues
  - Obtain a business card from the congressional staff

**Post-Presentation:**

- Congressional Staff
  - Send thank you note (via email is best) which reflects appreciation for the appointment and the organization
  - Provide any follow-up information you promised during the visit
- NOVA Board of Directors
  - Notify Executive Director or member of the Board of Directors of any issue identified during your visit that needs follow-up by the Board. This may include new issues identified by the congressional staff or information requested by the staff that you are not able to provide.

"Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does."

William James

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S** *cont. from page 2*

are described below.

**Budget:** The 2006 membership survey identified patient safety as the legislative issue most important to NOVA members, followed by concerns regarding the VA budget. (adequate budget for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA)). Specific issues that impact the budget include:

- Pay comparable to the private sector with the pay cap for Nurse V's revised to be equitable to GS 15 employees.
- Recruitment and retention of staff which will impact the nursing shortage. Specific issues are:
  - > Direct hire authority for nursing assistants.
  - > Elimination of the disparity in cost of health care benefits for part time employees. The current system results in a significant financial penalty for working three to four days per week with cost of the health care benefit exceeding that of the nurse who works one to two days per week.
  - > Restoration of the Health Professional Scholarship Program.
  - > Restructure pay grades for RNs from the current five grade system to a seven grade system which would eliminate the current compression of three grades in Nurse I.
  - > Revise current legislation governing employee travel pay to allow implementation of a VA Travel Nurse Corp.

NOVA supports the 2008 Independent Budget for the VA. This includes the following VHA critical issues.

**OIF/OEF Veterans:** There are currently over 400,000 OIF/OEF veterans who are eligible for VA health care, and 28 percent of these individuals have sought some level of care. VA nurses are very concerned the current budget does not and will not provide adequate resources to provide care for these veterans.

**Information Management Technology:** NOVA has concerns about this consolidation and its potential impact on the care to our Nation's veterans. The IT reorganization is taking local discretion and flexibility away from the IT staff in the field and will force all IT to be handled identically at every VA facility and be controlled by a centralized function. This policy will inhibit and stifle local innovation and initiative which has been the cornerstone of VA leadership in the electronic medical record. The resulting products will impose changes in workflow at all medical centers to a one size fits all environment. This is not reality and will not serve in the best interest of veterans.

The first session of the 110th Congress begins with Democrats in control of both the Senate and House which means there are two new Chairmen of the Senate and House Committees on Veterans Affairs. Senator Akaka (D-HI) will lead the Senate VA Committee with Representative Bob Filner (D-CA) assuming the Chairmanship of the House VA Committee. Both Chairmen are dedicated to providing an adequate budget for the VA, and hearings are scheduled to explore mandatory vs. discretionary

funding. We will see how the 110th Congress unfolds. Remember the *power of one!*

**LEGISLATIVE ROUNDTABLE** *cont. from page 2*

- housing, and prevention of homelessness
- o Concern with VA budget, support of Independent Budget, and need for mandatory funding for VA
- o Funding for veterans requiring mental health care
- o Ensuring disability compensation for disabled veterans
- o A GI Bill for the 21st century
- o Support for VA medical care and research
- o Accountability from VA regarding funding priorities
- o Concerns regarding VA's proposal to use anesthesia assistants

Participants included: NOVA Board of Directors President **Cecilia McVey**, Past President **Dianne Nelson**, Vice President **Mary Raymer**, Treasurer **Ron Hopper**, Membership Secretary **Nancy Claflin**, Secretary **Larry Lemos**, Directors **Joan Clifford**, **Marian Ehrhart**, **Magelene James**, **Cheryl Knowles**; and **Mary Seaman**. Executive Director **Deborah Beck**; Director of Administration **Susan Dove**; Account Executive **Luke Zorich**; Past President **Margaret Kruckemeyer**; Department of Veterans Affairs Deputy Chief Nursing Officer **Audrey Drake RN MS**; AMVETS Deputy National Legislative Director **Joe Chenelly**; Disabled American Veterans Legislative Consultant **John Bradley**; Veterans of Foreign Wars Field Representative **Mark Potter**; Friends of Medical Care and Health Research Executive Committee Member **Gary Ewart**; Association of VA Nurse Anesthetists President **Angela Mund**; National Association of VA Physicians and Dentists Executive Director **Mike McLendan**; National Coalition for Homeless Veterans President and CEO **Cheryl Beversdorf**; and American Association of Nurse Anesthetists Legislative Staffing Officer **Brian Bullard**.

**EFFICACY OF MANTRAM** *cont. from page 3*

total spiritual well-being and faith/assurance (all  $p < .05$ ). The physical function component of the SF-12 indicated deterioration ( $p = .048$ ) at week 12. Seventy-six percent of both groups rated the program with high satisfaction.

**Clinical Relationships:** Despite small sample size, mantram-based intervention as a psycho-spiritual portable practice, was found feasible and promising for managing PTSD. These findings must be viewed with caution. A larger randomized trial (N=140) funded by VA Nursing Research Initiative is currently in progress for more conclusive evidence of efficacy.

**Impact/Significance:** As the number of combat veterans with PTSD increases, more interventions are needed. Mantram repetition is a non-pharmacological, inexpensive and complementary therapy that may contribute to the current standard treatments for PTSD symptoms.

2006-2007  
NOVA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	<b>Cecelia McVey</b> New England HCS Boston, MA 617 232-9500, x5051
Vice President	<b>Mary Raymer</b> HRR0 New Orleans, LA 504 589-5267
Treasurer	<b>Ron Hopper</b> Maryland HCS Baltimore, MD 410 605-7426
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Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs  
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e-mail address: [nova@vanurse.org](mailto:nova@vanurse.org)  
Web page: [www.vanurse.org](http://www.vanurse.org)

## Our Mission Statement

"NOVA: Shaping and Influencing Health Care Within The Department of Veterans Affairs."

## Our Vision Statement

VA nurses will provide high quality nursing care. VA nurses will have an optimal work environment. VA nurses will be well informed on relevant issues that impact VA healthcare and nursing practice. VA nurses will have a strong voice in the legislative arena. VA nurses will have a strong presence at the VHA corporate leadership level. VA nurses will be NOVA members.

# important

## INFORMATION

**NEWS FROM NOVA**, edited by Nancy Clafin. This newsletter is yours, please feel free to quote, photocopy, or share, but always reference **NEWS FROM NOVA**.

**NEWS FROM NOVA** is the official publication of the **Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs**. It is published four times per year. Subscription price is included in annual dues for members. Postmaster: send change of address and correspondence to NOVA, 1726 M Street NW, Suite 1101, Washington, DC 20036.

It is extremely important that you notify the National Office as soon as possible whenever you have a **change of address** or VA facility. Crucial legislative and other correspondence will then reach you in a more timely manner. If you have not received your election ballot, **NEWS FROM NOVA**, Annual Meeting brochure, or dues notice, please contact National Office so we can correct the problem.

### REMINDER:

Put your questions or requests in writing when communicating with NOVA National Office.

Use our website for faster service:

[www.vanurse.org](http://www.vanurse.org)

or fax your comments to:

**202-833-1577**

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