



Inside this issue

-2012 AAPRA Committee Assignments	2
-Congratulations!	2
-DOJ Issues Guidance	3
-Pugsley Nominations	3
-Legends Program	3
-Academy Member Perspectives - Certification	4&5

## President's Message

### "Academy Happenings"

Happy Spring to all as the Academy springs into 2012 activity! Committee chairs, vice chairs and members have been approved by your Board and distributed. Thank you for your commitment to being involved in Academy activities for 2012.



Lori Daniel,  
2011-12 AAPRA  
President

Your Board has had one regular meeting and one special meeting and I can report that your elected Board members are engaged and all are contributing to Academy business! Committees and Leadership work is essential to keeping the Academy headed in the right direction. Board actions to date... (besides regular business activities)

- ▲ Approved Committee and Task Force assignments
- ▲ Approved 2012 operating budget
- ▲ Reviewed and provided direction on first drafts of the Gold Medal agreement between the Academy and NRPA for daily administration of the Gold Medal program – negotiations continue
- ▲ Forwarding to Externship Committee a proposed Legislative Forum scholarship program
- ▲ Approved the continuation of the Academy coordination of the Open Forum at NRPA Congress
- ▲ Approved Academy participation in collection of data for a researched-based, national project based on community case studies of school-park partnerships spearheaded by member Jodie Adams and colleague Dr. Peggy Riggs, and supported by PLAYCORE.

#### NEXT Board meetings:

- May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1 PM Central time
- July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1 PM Central time
- October 18<sup>th</sup> at the NRPA Congress in Anaheim, CA.

On another note, congratulations to Rich Grodsky on his recent retirement! We are pleased he will continue in his role with the Academy. And, congratulations again to Andee on her retirement and her continued

role with us. Within this Newsletter note their new contacts. They both are greatly appreciated and valued for their Academy work!

Leaving you with some thoughts...

1. Act on your dues and please contribute to the Foundation
2. Chairs - don't forget to contact your committee members
3. Consider Pugsley Award nominations, new member nominations, potential Pottsie Scholarship and Extern candidates
4. Share Open Forum participants and topics with the Program Committee
5. Contribute a report and/or article to the Academy Newsletter!

If you have any comments or suggestions on any Academy activities or items please contact me at 303-739-6591 or email [Ldaniel@auroragov.org](mailto:Ldaniel@auroragov.org).

*Lori*

Lori Daniel  
AAPRA President

### Academy Reflections...

In 2001 the Academy held its first "Renaissance" Retreat in Estes Park, CO that looked at the past and the future for the Academy. The first panel (T. Mobley, B. Toalson, M. Grogan) shared "the Academy was founded because there was a vast amount of expertise in the field among administrators who had served in all the possible capacities of the NRPA and still had much wisdom to contribute, but there was no place for the sharing of this information. There were 50 founding members. The intention was not to compete with NRPA, but to complement and enhance. One of the benefits of the Academy was that decision-making was easier-less cumbersome. The Academy has accomplished a lot, but there's a lot left to do." A retreat was suggested for every other year and also to establish five-year goals. – Academy Bulletin March 2002.  
(More Reflections to come!)

## 2012 Academy Committee Assignments

### Agency Services

Max Ramsey, Chair  
Joe O'Neill, Vice Chair  
Jim Garges  
Arnie Biondo  
Bill Beckner  
Bob Bierscheid  
Don Cochran  
Michael Meadors  
Mary Beth Thaman  
Harvey Feldman

### Banquet

Michael Blazey, Chair  
Tony Cisneros  
Dirk Richwine

### Best Paper Award

Randy Virden, Chair  
Vice Chair, TBD  
Mark Young  
Deb Jordan

### Bylaws

John McGovern, Chair  
Linda Kotowski, Vice Chair  
Tony Cisneros  
Robert Armistead  
Mark Eynatten  
Tom Farrell  
Steve Neu

### Externship

Andy Kimmel, Chair  
Robert Armistead, Vice Chair  
Michal Anne Lord  
Linda Kotowski  
Walt Bratton  
Katherine Bradshaw  
Chappelear  
Tom Farrell  
Bill Hendricks  
Michael Meadors  
Richard Rose  
Tom Shuster  
Bettie Yahn-Kramer  
Mark Young  
Jerry Pagac  
Harvey Feldman

### Gold Medal

Jane Hodgkinson, Chair  
Steve Messerli, Vice Chair  
Chris Jarvi  
Bertha Cato  
Sue Black  
Art Anselene

### Gold Medal (cont.)

Bill Beckner  
Bob Bierscheid  
Don Cochran  
Mark Eynatten  
Walt Johnson  
Greg Mack  
Jamie Sabbach  
Judy Weiss  
Ellen O'Sullivan  
Kathy Merner  
Harvey Feldman

### Legends

Barry Weiss, Chair  
Gail Elder White, Vice Chair  
Walt Bratton  
Chris Dropinski  
Mark Eynatten  
Sara Hensley  
Dianne Hoover  
Jonathan Korfhage  
Jim Niskanen  
John Potts  
Phil Rea  
Susan Trautman  
Linda Caldwell  
Jan Geden

### Membership

Jane Adams, Chair  
Mark McHenry, Vice Chair  
Jodie Adams  
Graham Skea  
Art Anselene  
Susan Trautman  
Lori Daniel, President

### Newsletter

Jamie Sabbach, Editor

### Nominating

Tony Cisneros, Chair  
Lori Daniel, Vice Chair  
Joe Wynns  
Jim Garges  
Jody Stowers

### Program

Ray Ochromowicz, Chair  
Dirk Richwine, Vice Chair  
Chris Dropinski  
Carolyn McKnight-Bray  
Mark Young  
Bob Bierscheid  
Harvey Feldman

### Pugsley Award

Fran Mainella, Chair  
Chris Jarvi  
Tony Mobley  
Bob Stanton  
Max Ramsey (ex-officio)  
Henry Diamond (ex-officio)

### Urban Directors Committee

Ernest Burkeen, Chair  
Jim Garges, Vice Chair  
Joe Wynns  
Sandra Whitmore  
Bill Beckner  
Dale Larsen  
Carolyn McKnight-Bray  
Mark Young  
Bob Bierscheid  
Harvey Feldman

### Technology Task Force

Kathy Perales, Co-Chair  
Kathy Spangler, Co-Chair  
Don Cochran  
Chris Jarvi  
Fran Mainella  
Tony Cisneros  
Lori Daniel  
Joe Bannon  
Greg Mack  
Jim Hall

### Relationship Task Force

Rich Grodsky, Co-Chair  
Lori Daniel, Co-Chair  
Tom Lovell  
John McGovern  
Susan Trautman  
Linda Kotowski  
Dianne Hoover

### JPR

Jim Busser, Editor

### CAPRA

Jim Garges  
Gail Elder White  
Judy Weiss  
Sara Hensley

### NRPA Hall of Fame

Jane Adams  
Joe Bannon  
Michael Meadors  
Dale Larsen

## Congratulations!

According to the University of Waterloo in Canada – Dr. Karla Henderson, a professor in the Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism Management at North Carolina State University, is widely regarded as the dominant scholar in examining leisure and gender and leisure and people on the margins of society.

Waterloo awarded Henderson an honorary doctor of science degree in recognition of her many contributions as scholar, advocate, academic leader and community builder.



Dr. Henderson has a lengthy relationship with Waterloo's recreation and leisure studies department. A leading researcher – Henderson has published more than a dozen books, four dozen book chapters and about 150 peer-reviewed papers, has held leadership positions in professional organizations and has received numerous prestigious awards for both teaching and research.

Dr. Henderson teaches primarily graduate courses in recreation and leisure theory and qualitative research methods in the Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism Management at North Carolina State University.

**"In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt."**

**-Margaret Atwood**



American Academy of Park  
and Recreation Administration



## Academy Issues of Interest

### DOJ Issues Guidance on Accessible Swimming Pools *Submitted By: John McGovern*

On January 31 the US Department of Justice (DOJ) issued guidance regarding swimming pool access, and in particular, swimming pool lifts. This was helpful guidance and applies to units of local government with pools as well as to businesses, such as hotels and resorts with pools.

It also caused some controversy. The American Hotel and Lodging Association emailed members about this "burdensome" regulation and asked to meet with DOJ staff. They did, on February 8. While we were not there, we know what happened in the meeting because on February 21, 2012 the DOJ issued a seven page letter which, in its words, is written to "memorialize that discussion." In the letter DOJ notes that the rulemaking process was a six year process and AH&LA had ample opportunity to comment. It notes that DOJ received and considered 4,435 written comments. It notes the many opportunities to comment that were made available. This letter, with the January 31 swimming facility technical assistance piece, are further evidence of the awareness of recreation at DOJ. Every Academy Member reading this article should be clear on that subject: DOJ is interested in recreation sites complying with the ADA. Agencies are urged to acquire the pool technical assistance document at [http://www.ada.gov/pools\\_2010.htm](http://www.ada.gov/pools_2010.htm). That said, there still are some gray areas. This is an attempt by one Academy Member to shed some light on this discussion.

Swimming pool lifts are workable as a retrofit for your **EXISTING** pools, whether indoors or outdoors. There is not a black-and-white always right answer, but the following helps determine the right approach.

**QUESTION:** Can a pool lift solve my access to the water issue at our existing pool? **ANSWER:** Yes!

**Dedicated or Shared?** Each body of water needs either a pool lift or a sloped entry. However, many **existing** sloped entry pools (zero depth pools) fail the technical requirements (slope max 8.33%, level landing at 24" to 30" of water depth, and two handrails). As a result a pool lift is often a better solution than punching holes in the pool floor to install handrails, or create a level landing. **If using a lift, the lift must be dedicated to that body of water.**

**Portable or Permanent?** If using a lift, **the best practice is to make one permanently installed** in a sleeve on the deck. It must be independently operable by customers. That said, if you are a **state or local government, a portable lift may be used**. The test for governments versus nonprofits and businesses is different, as many of you know. If you choose a portable lift, implement the following smart practices **to make it not quite so portable:**

1. Revise the pool opening checklist to show moving pool lift to proper place on deck at opening of pool, securing the lift to the deck, and turn it on so it can be independently used;
2. Revise closing checklist to show turning lift off, unsecuring it from the deck, and storing it safely when the pool closes; and
3. Acquire a portable lift that can be secured to the deck. **Do not acquire a lift that cannot be secured to the deck.** If battery operated, acquire at least one backup battery kit. Make sure staff know how to charge batteries and swap dead ones for live ones.

**Timing:** Finally, as to timing...do this sooner, not later. Acquire a pool lift now before the swim season starts and get any necessary permits before opening day so that your pool is compliant.

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### 2012 Pugsley Medal Nominations

The Pugsley Committee is accepting 2012 nominations! **SUBMIT CANDIDATE RESUMES BY APRIL 30** to Fran Mainella at [Fmainel@clemsun.edu](mailto:Fmainel@clemsun.edu). Call 864-656-2566 for discussion/questions.

Pugsley nominations recognize outstanding "lifetime" contributions of individuals who have:

1. Preserved, enhanced or created park values which significantly enriched the lives of people,
2. Reflect original, courageous decisions and actions that are dedicated to the public well being,
3. Significantly developed or refined techniques which have advanced the effectiveness of park and conservation programs.

### Legends Program

The Legends program consists of videotaped interviews of distinguished administrators and educators who have made outstanding contributions to the field of Parks and Recreation. The 30-40 minutes interview record individual's personal background, professional insights, advice and philosophical beliefs.

If you have someone you would like to nominate for "Legend" status, please e-mail Barry Weiss their name, title and agency/university. Barry can be contacted at [redtailbw@comcast.net](mailto:redtailbw@comcast.net) or call 925-600-0621.





## Academy Member Perspectives

### Understanding the Benefits of Professional Certifications in the Parks and Recreation Profession

*Submitted by: Judy Weiss, CPRE and Candi Rawlins, CPRE, CAE, IOM, Chair, National Certification Board*

How many national conferences have we attended where the keynote speaker bemoaned that parks and recreation professionals were not taken seriously? How many conversations about the benefits are endless, quality of life, and discretionary services must we sit through to justify the work that we do?

Professional certification is one necessary and accepted method to proclaim to professionals, citizens, and policy makers that we indeed practice a profession.

In 1981, the National Registration Board was replaced by the National Certification Board (NCB) to “ensure the highest standards of practice are applied to the field of parks, and recreation and leisure services...” In addition, the NCB establishes guidelines in certifying parks and recreation professionals based on standards set by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), a separately governed accreditation arm of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE). In other words, the certification process is in the process of becoming accredited and is a very intricate, professional process within itself.

Our profession is diverse. That is the reason that the NCB oversees more than one certification: the aquatic facility operator (AFO) and the certified playground inspector (CPSI) are in addition to the certified park and recreation professional (CPRP) and recently initiated mastery level of the CPRP – the certified park and recreation executive (CPRE). In addition, there are certified therapeutic recreation specialists (CTRS) credentialed by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC), certified pool operators (CPO), and the certified association executive (CAE) designation credentialed by the Center for Association Leadership (ASAE).

Experience is a key component of these certifications. The path to certification involves study, experience with proven core competencies, and the passing of a standardized, strictly moderated written exam. The integrity of the process is maintained through the NCB and its oversight and administration of this program. Where the rubber hits the road is the continuing education and commitment to the profession that maintains the certification.



It is interesting to note, that NRPA and the NCB make every opportunity available to maintain the professional certification. Opportunities through the Professional Service Experience (PSE) Program offer not only the traditional CEU or academic credit, but PSE credits enable individuals to maintain professional certification by utilizing their professional activities. Points fall into two different categories: Service and Literary/Training Material Contribution. Service may include service as an officer, chairperson, or committee member of NRPA, society or state association; service as a speaker, presenter or instructor at NRPA or state association conferences or seminars or at accredited universities and colleges; or service as an accreditation visitor. Literary/Training Material includes service as an author of a published professional article, manual, book, video or computer software program.

Traditional CEUs can come from any organization. Not just NRPA or your state recreation and parks association. The NCB recognizes the diversity of our field and to that endeavor accepts “any documented CEU” with the CEU being the standard for counting hours of education. If finance is your specialty, find a class that offers CEUs or go through the petition process. By petitioning, education hours can be accepted even if the session does not offer CEUs. Under petitioning, classes can be taken from any provider, in any subject that relates to work in parks and recreation. Then, petition the certification program to accept them to meet the CEU requirements. Certified individuals petition classes all the time from city manager conferences, league of cities conferences, and more.

The NCB has made it relatively painless to maintain certification through petitioning, professional service experience, etc. However, to its credit, and to maintain the integrity of the profession, the NCB has refused to decrease the standards, process and commitment needed to be certified.

Certification is the ultimate statement to peers, policy makers and the citizens we serve that we have a serious commitment to the highest standards of professionalism. It is not hard to meet the certification criteria; it does take dedication to maintain it, but its value to the community, the profession, to the agency, and to the individual is incalculable.



## Academy Member Perspectives (cont.)

### Professional Certification Contradictions?

Submitted by: Arnie Biondo, CPRP & Ray Ochromowicz, CPRP

The results of a February 2012 Illinois Park and Recreation Association survey on professional certification (CPRP/CPRE) have just been published. The results should be very interesting to Academy members, and all professionals in our field.



The first aim of the survey was to determine to what extent agencies paid for their staff's certification fees. Next, it sought to measure the level or extent of certification as a requirement for hiring. What makes the results so interesting is the apparent contradiction in the 106 agencies that responded to the survey. Read on.

A substantial 76% of respondents say their agencies pay for staff to take the certification exam. Just 21% do not. In answer to, "who pays for initial/renewal CPRP cost?" an even larger 85% said the agency does. Following the same pattern, 92% of agencies "pay the per educational seminar CEU fee" (to amass the needed, ongoing CEU's).

This is some really strong-sounding support for Certification. If an agency puts its money out for achieving and retaining Certification, one might be expected to find that the same agencies place a very high value on Certification. Right? But, then the survey goes on.

"Has your agency made a decision on encouraging/paying for ... the new CPRE certification?" Answer: just 31%. But, of those who made a decision, 87% will pay the fee. Same pattern.

Then the survey moves to which agencies require Certification for different positions:

CEO	23%
Department Head	8%
Supervisory Staff	4%

At all levels of staff denoted, a majority of respondents said they "desire" certification. Desiring and requiring are significantly different. Herein lies the contradiction that seems to exist in the surveyed agencies. Whereas the agencies are willing and ready to pay for certification, they don't often require it. Further, it is required most often at the highest level, where, it can be presumed, the individual professional has advanced because of his or her accumulation of education and experience.

To cap the seeming contradiction, one needs to read the comments. While not statistically reliable, they are anecdotally revealing.

Of the 106 respondents, 33 (30%) gave comments. Only 10 gave un-restrained comments supportive of the certification program. Those comments can be represented by the following excerpts:

- ▲ "Seems to be working"
- ▲ "As Director, I encourage all staff to get certification..."
- ▲ "Nice to see it improved"
- ▲ "I feel certification is essential for our field"

The majority of the comments were decidedly NOT supportive of the Certification program, as exemplified by the following:

- ▲ "I considered taking the exam, but don't see much benefit at this time..."
- ▲ "I'm sorry, but I let my CPRP lapse... do not plan to renew..."
- ▲ "I view professional certification ...as an artificial incentive to drive conference attendance..."
- ▲ "Honestly? ...it's another hoop to jump through and a way for NRPA to make money."

Granted, this is a small survey taken in just one state, but the contradictions that are suggested should be of interest to all. Does certification need to be changed to be meaningful? Is it needed at all? What purpose does it serve? Why is it not required?

Beyond an agency's value system, what is the working professional's beliefs about certification? Do they value it enough to maintain it if their agency wasn't paying for it? If not, is it safe to assume that the only reason they are certified professionals is because someone else is paying for it? If that's the case, what does that say about the quality and integrity of park and recreation professionals? No matter who is paying for it, the question remains, what value is there in being certified? What tangible benefits does it bring to the individual and the agency?

These and many more questions come to mind. Perhaps the Academy will volunteer to take a lead role in examining this aspect of the public park and recreation profession. Perhaps this topic - one submitted and denied as a session at the NRPA Congress - can be the subject of an Academy sponsored forum at a future Congress. Or perhaps we sweep it back under the rug.

