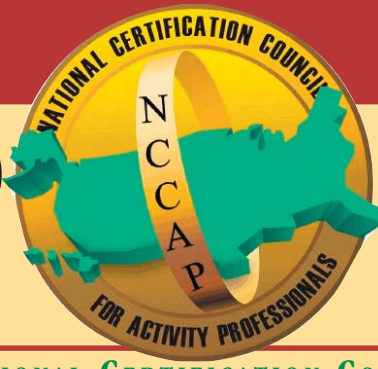


# NCCAP NEWS



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL CERTIFICATION COUNCIL FOR ACTIVITY PROFESSIONALS

## Education and New Ideas Will Help Us to Meet New Healthcare Challenges

By Donna Tennant, ACC/NCCAP Treasurer

West Virginia has moved with great stride in the last six months. It all started with the West Virginia Therapeutic Recreation Association decided they no longer wanted to handle the qualification process for Activity Directors. The West Virginia Activity Professionals Association was contacted by the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Health Care and Licensure Director and asked if we were interested in resuming responsibility for that role. The board agreed and we proceeded.

For the past couple of years we have worked to get the state regulations changed to include the MEPAP 90 hour course as the state required course for WV State Qualification. It never made it out of public comment because it did clarify that Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist would not be required to take the course. After much work in that area and rewriting, we have been able to take a different route.

Since our current regulations (5.7.b.5.) reads *Has completed a training course approved by the State*; we were able to

request from OHFLAC that the state approved course be the MEPAP 90 hour course, and since that is all that is being taught in WV at this time, it was easy to make that adjustment.

As an Activity Director, a consultant, and an instructor in the state of West Virginia, I believe having a course that is uniform in the information that we are teaching and providing is important to make sure we are meeting the criteria of what it takes to meet the needs of our residents which is our ultimate goal.

West Virginia Activity Professional Association holds an annual conference each year offering between 15 and 17 hours of continuing education. As an association we feel it is important to offer education and new ideas that will help us to meet the challenges of a changing healthcare arena. NN

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## The Power of Music and Memory – A Scientific Fact!

*By Gloria Hoffner, BA, ADPC*

**F**or every Baby Boomer who knows what comes next after, “Here we come, walkin’ down the street...” there is a member of the World War II generation to whom, “I’ll Be Seeing You” reminds them of empty days and nights waiting for a loved one.

That is the unmistakable power of music to fire up the brain’s recall abilities. Gene D. Cohen, MD, PhD, director of the Center on Aging, Health and Humanities at George Washington University and former acting director of the National Institute on Aging, explains how the brain reacts to a familiar piece of music.

“Memories are created when clusters of hundreds or thousands of neurons fire in a unique pattern,” Cohen writes in his book *The Mature Mind*.

He further explains that when you hear a catchy song your brain neurons light up. Later, when you hear the same song again, those original memory patterns are automatically strengthened. “The more often a particular pattern is stimulated, the more sensitive and permanent are the connections between the neurons in the pattern,” Cohen writes. “Not only does learning link neurons in new patterns, it also stimulates neurons to grow new connections.”

Cohen urges directors of retirement communities to implement arts programs because national studies have proven seniors involved in the arts improve physically and mentally.

A study conducted with the Levine School of Music in Washington DC studied 300 seniors – half enrolled in an arts program once a week and half not enrolled - over a two year period. The study reviewed the health and social functioning of the participants before, at one year and at the end of the study. The results, Cohen reports, those who attended the arts program had better health while those who did not attend saw their health deteriorate.

In addition, the arts group used fewer medications, felt less depressed, were less lonely, had higher morale and were more socially active, Cohen wrote.

As a musician playing for senior clubs in the Philadelphia Archdiocese as well as at retirement communities, nursing homes, and adult day centers I see the power of music to recall memories every day! The transforming power of music works for those with and without cognitive disabilities due to dementia or other brain diminishing conditions.

Examples – I was playing a Frank Sinatra tune for a couple. The wife suffers from dementia and had not spoken in several months. During the music she turned to her husband and said, “I remember when we saw Frank Sinatra on our anniversary...” Her husband and the caretakers were stunned!

I play on a twice monthly basis for residents of a dementia unit. Most of these residents are in the mid-to-late stage of the disease. When I started there was a man who was non-verbal.

NN

He did not even lift his head during the music. About two months into playing, he started watching me, listening, and seemed to focus, but still didn't speak. The following month, to everyone's surprise, he started singing "Amazing Grace".

Every time I returned he sang a little more. In six months he was singing all the time, and then asked to come with me as I moved from room to room playing for the residents. Through music, he came out of his withdraw and became engaged and vocal again.

Another similar but different situation, I play at a facility for young adults with mental and physical disabilities. I noticed that when I came to play, one man in his mid-30s would walk over and stand next to me, not speaking, but sort of moving his body with the music.

This didn't surprise me – but it did surprise his caseworker. The caseworker told me the man sat in the corner all the time, never spoke, never acknowledged anyone 99 percent of the time. It was only when I came and played music that this man gave any response.

Final example, I arrived to play music at a facility and as I was setting up a nurse brought a resident in a wheelchair to the front row. The resident was angry. She said, "I don't want to be here. My legs hurt. Take me back to my room and let me lay down." The nurse refused saying the resident needed time out of bed and suggested the resident give the music program a chance.

The woman was clearly angry as the nurse left. I played a couple of songs and the same resident stopped frowning. I played a few more and she gave me a curious look. About 3/4th of the way through the one hour program, the resident started singing along and at the end she was leading the clapping motions in the song, "Bingo".

The resident wheeled herself to me as I was packing up. She thanked me and asked me to return. She WHISTLED her way out of the room!

These examples are backed up by studies conducted by The National Institute of Nursing Research who found that listening to music reduced patient pain levels. The National Institute of Education and Health Sciences found music tempo can improve mood and heart rate.

A research study of stroke victims gives even more proof of the positive power of music on the brain.

Dr. Gottfried Schlaug, a neuroscientist at Harvard Medical School, reported on a research study that found stroke victims who had lost the ability to speak regained their speaking ability through singing.

The researchers believe the melody helped the stroke victims' brains rewire and bypass damaged regions of the brain to restore communication skills.

A small number of patients in the study did so well with the singing therapy that was able to hold full conversations and even make a speech, he said.

Schlaug told the American Association of Advancement of Science, "The great advantage of this technique is that it is very simple by encouraging people to sing you can get them back to speaking again." (reported in the <http://telegraph.co.uk> in February 2010)

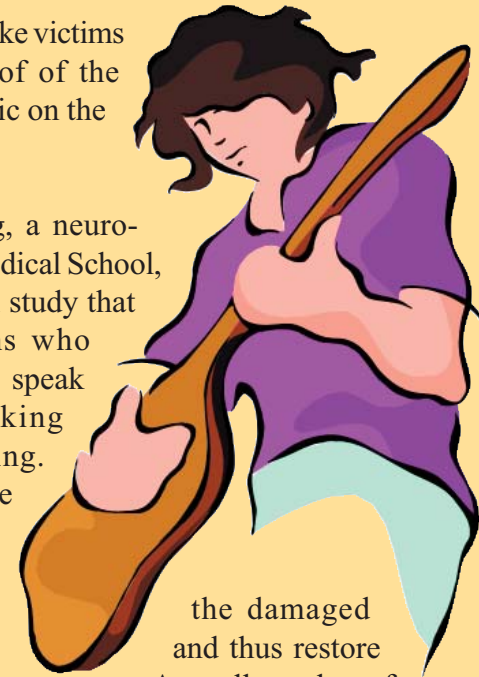
When a song reminds you of your mother doing the dishes, or your freshman dance in high school, or your first drive in a new car, the music is also firing up your brain, forming new connections, and keeping your brain healthy.

The saying, "You can't teach old dog new tricks" comes from the writing of Sigmund Freud in 1907! Over 100 years later, scientists are proving every day that we can continue to learn throughout our lives if we make the effort to continuously learn new things and exercise our memories.

So keep right on singing with the radio, in the shower, in the choir or alone in the woods. That song in your heart and on your lips is keeping your brain healthy and strong.

Tagline - Gloria Hoffner, BA, ADPC, is owner of Guitar with Gloria, providing live music and sing-a-longs in the Greater Philadelphia area. [NN](#)

Further information at: <http://guitarwithgloria.com>



## The Center for Excellence in Assisted Living (CEAL) WEBINARS

**D**on't miss this webinar series. The Center for Excellence in Assisted Living (CEAL) is bringing you four, one-hour webinars on practices of excellence in assisted living from across the country, including topic experts and the award winners from the Promoting Excellence in Assisted Living Awards Program. Who should participate: Executive directors, direct care staff, nurses, activity specialists, social workers and regional managers. Continuing education Credit: 1 CEU per registered participant will be offered for administrators/executive directors, nurses, direct care staff, social workers and activity professionals.

### DATES:

**September 29, 2:00--3:00 ET**

“Workforce Practices: How to Achieve Successful Outcomes”

Moderator/Steve Maag, JD  
CEAL Speaker/Barbara Frank, MPA  
B&F Consulting

**October 27, 2:00--3:00 ET**

“Person-Centered Care:  
It's More Than an Art”

Moderator/Cathy Liebich  
Pioneer Network  
Speaker/Bill Keane, MBA  
THE GREEN HOUSE Project

**November 16, 2:00--3:00 ET**

“Dementia Care: What Works”

Moderator/Sheryl Zimmerman, PhD  
University of North Carolina  
at Chapel Hill  
Speaker/Dan Kuhn, MSW

Alzheimer's Association/Greater Illinois Chapter

**December 7, 2:00--3:00 ET**

“Medication Administration:  
Getting It Right”

Moderator/Kathy Cameron, BS Pharm, MPH--JBS International, Inc.  
Speaker/Josh Allen, RN-Care and Compliance Group Inc.

Bonnie Ruggles-Ruechel BS/ACC/  
ALF/EDU/MC

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Send NCCAP your activity photos with captions and details. Photos must be for public release. Send your pics to info@nccap.org



### ASSISTED LIVING CORNER

**At the NCCAP symposium in Ohio, the round table for assisted living, said they would like to see a corner in the NCCAP Newsletter concerning assisted living. Here is the first one.**

**There are no standard assessments for assisted living, so it was decided, that we should develop one. Anyone who would like to help should contact me. If you have an assessment that you use could you send me a copy, and I will make sure the committee gets them and we will try to come up with a standard one. It will go to the NCCAP board for their approval. Thanks. The sooner I get some assessments, the sooner we can develop one.**

### Stepping Up to the Plate: Nominations

By John Rowlett, ACC

Baseball season is in full swing (sorry about the pun) and the NCCAP Board is asking you to join our team. We have two positions that will be open for the 2011 elections with one incumbent on the 2011 ballot. This is a great time to give back to the profession of Activities by volunteering your services on the NCCAP Board.

We had some outstanding professionals who stepped up to the plate for the 2010 elections. We are asking you to follow suit, prayerfully consider, and accept this challenge by filling out the application. You can fax the application to me, John Rowlett, at 260 496-8538. I'll need the application by January 1, 2011 in order to make sure your name is on the 2011 ballot.



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Meet

**Naomi Wolfe**  
the newest NCCAP  
employee

Naomi Wolfe is very excited to be a part of the Administrative Team! Her background spans from Business Development to Real Estate Sales as well as she has an extensive

history in Volunteer work in Elderly Care as well as Domestic Violence Intervention and Prevention. She recently gave birth to her first child this past February (baby girl- absolutely amazing!), and she enjoys attending family gatherings and outings with her husband and friends. She prides herself in being organized and task oriented. Her skills and talents will lend support to the NCCAP team, as they are relevant to the needs of the company. **NN**

## NCCAP State Rep News

By Debbie Hommel, ACC/MC/EDU, CTRS

**EXTRA EXTRA ...**

The NCCAP state representatives have been regularly networking via e-mail. Each state now has a table top display at their disposal which can be utilized at state or local meetings. The display contains current certification information and guidelines. The NCCAP web site has current names of all representatives and 99% of them have an e-mail address. The state association web sites have been added to the state representative listing page as well. There are eight states (Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Montana, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, and Utah) without representatives and NCCAP is looking for certified individuals who reside in those states to volunteer. News shared from the state representatives includes a new state association formed in Tennessee called the Tennessee Association of Activity Professionals (TAAP). In other news, West Virginia was successful in having the MEPAP course be the recognized course in their state regulations.

NCCAP is now on Facebook as well as some of the states. So far, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Florida, Colorado, Southern Nevada, Maryland, Illinois and Georgia activity associations have pages on Facebook. Future goals of the state representatives include continuing to share information amongst their membership and work toward increasing awareness of the national certification program. **NN**

## GETTING TO KNOW JOHN ROWLETT

By Michael A. Bower, BA, ACC

John Rowlett was born in "the Great State of Kentucky", but only lived there a short time. At age 6 weeks his family moved to Madison, Indiana, and he lived there until he graduated from high school. John moved to Fort Wayne, Indiana close to his high school sweetheart, the 'love of my life,' Barbara, also known to some as "Pooh Bear" (Okay, only to John!). It was in Fort Wayne that he began his career in activities when he took a job as a recreation aide at the Fort Wayne State School, working with students who were mentally challenged.

Continued on the next page.

After John's years in the Air Force they returned back to Fort Wayne and he started working for his former boss, who had become the Administrator of a very large health care facility (500 residents). He worked as their Activity Director for 23 years and tells us that he "loved every minute!" During this time he was also attending college (Thanks to Uncle Sam) and earned his Associate Degree in Recreation.

John left Byron Health Center to start working at Lutheran Homes, Inc.; he has been there for over 15 years as the Director of Volunteer Services. He has approximately 175 – 180 activity volunteers and works very closely with the Activity Department. He reports, "My volunteers give between 30 to 40 thousand hours of their time to us and raise between 45-50 thousand dollars a year for various projects at the Lutheran Home. In addition, John is an experienced provider of activity education, including the MEPAP 2nd Edition.

John also attended Christian Training Center, taught 9th grade Sunday school for 17 years, and was a licensed minister for 14 years before becoming an ordained minister three years ago.

When he served in the Air Force, John was awarded the Airman and Instructor of the month. He has been awarded the Outstanding Education Award by the State of Indiana Association Homes and Services Association. He's served on the NAAP Board, and has been Vice President and President of the Indiana Activity Directors Association; he is one of the founding fathers of that association. Presently he serves on the Retired Senior Volunteer Services (RSVP) Board, the Audiences Unlimited Board, and the NCCAP Board.

Says John, "I've been blessed to have had a wonderful wife of 44 years. Two very good looking and intelligent children. I have two of the greatest grandchildren that any one would ever want."

His philosophy is: "I cannot help but look at the profession of Activities as a ministry. I really believe that Activity Directors are just as much ministers as any Pastor. You see, the Good Lord made us Body, Soul, and Spirit, and if you break that down it's physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual! Every program we do as Activity Directors touches on one of these; therefore, we are truly God's Hand extended."

John Rowlett was welcomed to the NCCAP Board in June 2009; he brings his dedication, skills, professionalism, and caring perspective to serve the NCCAP membership. John currently serves as the Nominations Chair. He is a great asset to NCCAP and the Activity Profession. **NN**

## For the times, they are a changin'...

*By Debbie Hommel, ACC/MC/EDU, CTRS*

As a second wave baby boomer, I never liked Bob Dylan. However, looking back at his trademark song – I realize the man is not only wise, but timeless. The activity profession

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is currently surrounded by the waters of change and as Dylan suggests “you better start swimmin’ or you’ll sink like a stone”. The MDS 3.0, the culture change movement, the universal worker concept, reduced funding for health care, and increased expectations from regulatory agencies are a few of the pressing issues facing our profession. Will the activity professional allow others to define our path and tell us where we belong? Or will we assume responsibility for our future and define our own destiny?

**A**s a new profession, we have been working hard to find our voice and be heard. Our profession has grown rapidly and we have gained considerable respect for the good works we do, in the short amount of time we have existed. However, we have reached a turning point and as Dylan says “Don’t stand in the doorway, don’t block up the hall for he that gets hurt will be he who has stalled.” It is time for our profession to assert ourselves during these waters of change and join forces to define our role in the days to come.

The National Certification Council of Activity Professionals, in collaboration with the Coalition of Activity Professionals, is inviting all activity professionals to participate in shaping a brighter future for those who serve the elderly population. NCCAP and COAP are hosting a Call to Action Meeting on November 13th, 2010 in Raleigh Durham, North Carolina. The meeting will offer open and active networking, information sharing and collaboration on the following topics:

- ~ Where we are as an industry?
- ~ Where we are as a profession?
- ~ The initial intent of the

#### “Universal Worker”

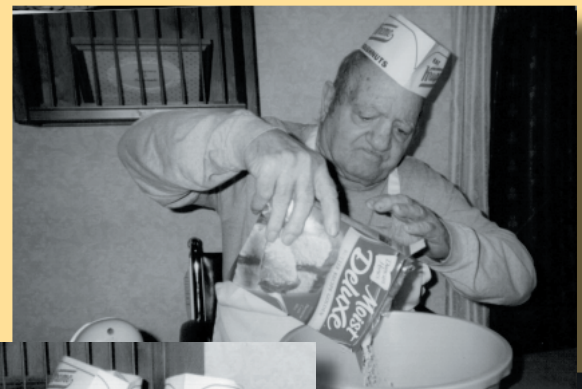
- ~ The need to assure continued recognition as a profession in light of the MDS 3.0.
- ~ Assess where we are for state and national regulatory compliance.
- ~ The future of the Activities Profession and the Recreation/Activities Professional.
- ~ What NCCAP needs to do toward the future.
- ~ Collaboration of other associations as well as NCCAP of where we should be as an industry.
- ~ Strategic planning of NCCAP, National Associations, State Associations and others for the future of the Activities Profession.

This meeting is open to any and all activity/recreation professionals concerned about the future of the profession. It will be an open meeting, not limited by membership or certification, and promote constructive dialog intended to drive our future and strengthen our profession. Dylan says “don’t criticize what you can’t understand”. In times of change, we need to work together toward common goals. This meeting is an opportunity to identify and define those goals as a united front.

The organizers of the meeting are investigating opportunities to secure input from activity professionals all over the country, through live streaming of the meeting, input via e-mail and regional meetings. This initial meeting is just the beginning of a combined effort which will serve not only our needs as a profession but ensure the elderly with whom we work receive the best services possible.

Please visit the NCCAP announcement board on [www.nccap.org](http://www.nccap.org) or the Official NCCAP page on Facebook for information. You may also contact [debbiehommel@comcast.net](mailto:debbiehommel@comcast.net) for a brochure or additional information about the meeting.

Keep in mind Dylan’s final advice “Your old road is rapidly agin’. Please get out of the new one if you can’t lend your hand. For the times they are a changing”. I, for one, am looking forward to working together with other activity professionals building this new road to the future. **NN**



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## ACTIVITY CHALLENGE

*By Nancy Best, ACC*

Some facilities provide adequate Activity staff and some do not. Those that recognize the importance of [us] provide more individualized programming. If we were mandated, for example, one Activity Staff per 28 residents, our job would be easier. We are becoming more accountable and visible with 11+ states requiring certification through NCCAP.

If universal care is implemented we will take those two (gigantic) steps back with the cross-training of all areas of patient care, we are aware of what will happen to the programming. In the rare scenario

of staff reporting- what will be the last patient care issue to be addressed? You got it – Activities. Many facilities ask aides, PRNs, etc. to provide programs in the evening and when Activities Staff is gone for the day. How many Activities are provided? Nada

I challenge all Activities professionals and NCCAP State representatives to call, better yet, make an appointment with their Congress Representatives at the state and federal levels to fight to have NCCAP certification recognized as the national accrediting body in our profession.

For those states which are already on the proverbial Band Wagon, God Bless you! For those states where certification is not required, there are seats available on the Wagon. **NN**