



GMSAAI ALUMNI CONNECTION

VOLUME I

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## **From The President Tim Snyder**

I want to begin by thanking Fred for doing such a fine job editing his first newsletter. As he was putting the newsletter together, I was in the middle of recovering from a recent stroke. Thanks Fred for helping me with my report.

I now have the microphone back in my hand, and I'm ready to give my announcements for this issue over our paper or cyber intercom, depending upon how you are reading or listening to this newsletter.

### **The Mid-Winter Meeting**

I was unable to attend our midwinter meeting due to the above-mentioned medical recovery. I appreciate Vice-President Robert Parrish conducting the meeting in my absence. I also appreciate the hard work that Lawrence Carter and others gave to see that the meeting ran smoothly. I understand that the program

presenters were both engaging and informative. The food was also delicious. While I was absent, I sent a recorded message from me to bore, or perhaps entertain but hopefully to motivate those in attendance. We do have a great alumni association that does more than simply gather once a year. We all work together to make our association great!

### **Candy Sale, Success!**

A couple of weeks ago I tried to get another case of candy to distribute to someone to sell and was told that all of the candy had already been distributed. I want to congratulate everyone for a job well done. Thank you for selling 61 cases of candy. Because of your hard work, we can give awards, scholarships and help others through our benevolence committee work. We also can assist young people to learn and grow through our annual EYE Retreat.

## **Voter Education Seminar**

On March 15, 2014 we co-sponsored a voter education seminar with the Raleigh Wake Council of the Blind. Various organizations were represented at the seminar. We are pleased to conduct educational opportunities that will help us as blind citizens fulfill our roles in our localities, state and nation. Thanks to all who helped plan, coordinate and conduct this event. We have been busy this first quarter of 2014. As president I can say that this organization is on the move because of the many working together to get things done. Let's keep working together. Please don't hesitate to call me with any Association matters you want to discuss. Every GMSAA member is valuable to our progress. I am signing out for now.  
Tim Snyder, President

## **Committee Reports**

### **NOMINATIONS**

#### **Darryl Eaton**

Greetings GMSAAI members!

It's time to elect new officers and board members for your GMS Alumni Association. Elections will take place on Saturday, August 2nd, during the business meeting held on the weekend of the alumni reunion.

The call for nominations begins now! The nominating committee is seeking candidates for the positions of Assistant Secretary and three board seats. Those interested in one or more of these positions should reach out to any of the nominating committee members whose contact information is listed below. Candidates should have good communication skills, an enthusiasm for working in a group and the ability to work hard on special projects, such as committee assignments. For more information regarding duties and responsibilities of officers and board members, please visit the GMSAAI webpage at <http://www.gmsaai.org/bylaws.html> and look for Article II of the GMSAAI Bylaws. If you do not have internet access, a large print or Braille copy of

the Bylaws can be mailed to you upon request.

You have until June 1st to submit a letter of interest for the position you are seeking. Your letter should include which position you are interested in running for as well as some information about yourself so that the membership knows why you would be a good choice for their vote. Once we have a response from all interested candidates, a report containing all nominees' names will be sent to the membership via email in early July. Thank you for your participation in the election process.

Submitted by  
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### **Constitution & Bylaws By Dr. Ricky Scott**

The Constitution & Bylaws Committee convened in January 2014 to discuss revisions of the constitution and Bylaws. In the upcoming April meeting, the committee will discuss possible amendments revisions. It is anticipated by June 15, 2014 that recommendations will be submitted to be published in the summer edition of The Alumni Connection. Therefore, if you have any suggestions related to amendments, you should email them to me at [rickyscott09@gmail.com](mailto:rickyscott09@gmail.com).

## **Membership Committee Patricia Coley-Duncan**

Hello fellow GMSAAI members. Here we are three months into the New Year and some of us have outstanding balances on our membership dues. Our membership year is from January 1st through December 31st and our \$15 membership fee covers this period. Many of us include our \$15 membership fee with our \$50 August Convention registration fee; however, for accounting purposes, we would appreciate you paying your membership dues as early as possible. If you would like to combine your dues with your convention/reunion registration, that would be fine as well.

Now you can conveniently pay our membership and registration fees through our website at (GMSAAI.org) using PayPal. Log onto the GMSAAI.org website and click on the registration link to the left of the screen, under the convention/reunion link. This link will take you to a page that has the PayPal (Pay Now

button). Click on the pay now button and it will take you to a secured page that has gmsaai.org donation. The page will have a field that says purpose and amount. In this field state the purpose of the donation, such as registration, dues or just registration. In the amount field enter the desired amount to be given. You may also submit any fundraising sales through this same portal. You must have a PayPal account to use the PayPal only feature. However, you may also submit monies by using the secure credit card feature located at the bottom of the donation page. You do not need to have a PayPal account to use this feature. Just click on the word (continue) at the bottom of this page under the (Don't have a PayPal account?) statement and you will be taken to a secured credit card page where you may enter the required fields for using the credit or debit card. For those of you, who want to continue to pay the traditional way, please send your certified checks or money

orders to the following address: Margaret Carter, 1704 Picnic Place, Raleigh, NC 27603. One of the main goals of our membership committee is to recruit new members to our organization. Our incentive for this year is to give a surprise worth winning to the member who brings in the most new members to GMSAAI. Thank you very much for your continued support and loyalty to our organization.

If you have questions or need additional information, contact Pat via email at [patcd11@earthlink.net](mailto:patcd11@earthlink.net) or via phone at 919-469-4853.

## **AUCTION REMINDER**

Attention GMSAAI reunion attendees,  
I just want to remind you all about our auction. Having this auction as a fundraiser was Robin Littlejohn's idea; she had started planning it, but told George that he would have to continue in her behalf with the auction. So George is honoring his wife's last wish.

We want to make this auction a great success. However, we need you to help us with this goal. We will have some very, very nice items, so come prepared to spend, spend, and spend. This event will be lots of fun and can be very lucrative for us as an organization if we all do our part. The auction will be held on Saturday, Aug. 2, 2014 from 6 to 8 PM; from 6 to 7 you will be able to view the items being auctioned, and from 7 to 8 the auction will be held. Therefore, let's make this a successful event for GMSAAI; but moreover, let's make this a success for Robin.

## **Educational seminar Report By Dr. Ricky Scott**

One of the purposes of our Alumni Association is to promote the education of adults who are blind or visually impaired. Thus, to achieve this purpose, the Association sponsors educational seminars on a regular basis. On Saturday March 15, 2014, the

Association in collaboration with the Raleigh-Wake Council of the Blind hosted such a seminar involving presentations providing information related to the Alumni Association, Voter Identification measure enacted by the General Assembly of North Carolina, advocacy organizations and the formal establishment of a support group for the blind and visually impaired. First, information regarding the Alumni Association was presented by former President Dr. Ricky Scott which related to the purposes of the Association, who could become members and a brief description of its activities. Following Dr. Scott's general comments, Mr. Alan Chase provided detailed information related to the Alumni Association's Envisioning Youth Empowerment Retreat which is a weeklong conference of blind and visually impaired youth who are transitioning to college. Mr. Chase provided information related to the activities planned for the summer and current

fundraising activities to support the program. Second, Attorney Klen, from Disability Rights North Carolina presented detailed information related to the Voter Identification Act which impacts all North Carolina citizens requiring that one of three types of identification be presented when voting effective in January 2016. She also mentioned that same day registration and voting had been eliminated and that early voting had been reduced to ten days and that polling hours had been reduced. She concluded her presentation by commenting about the rights of individuals with disabilities to cast a private ballot and that assistive technology is available for those who need it in order to cast their vote along with the availability of curbside voting. Third, Mr. Terry Lewis, President of the Durham Council of the Blind and First Vice-President of North Carolina Council of the Blind, presented information related to the mission of the American Council of the Blind and NC Council of the Blind. He

concluded his remarks by providing examples of the activities supported and sponsored by his local chapter.

Fourth, Ms. Miriam Dixon, President of the Wake Federation, presented information related to the philosophy of the National Federation of the Blind, the number of chapters in North Carolina and some specific information related to the Wake Chapter.

Fifth, Ms. Ginny Lou, President of the Visually Impaired Persons, support group remarked that this newly established organization, in terms of seeking tax exempt status, seeks to provide programming to support the blind and visually impaired through hosting seminars on issues impacting this population at each of its meetings. She welcomed all to attend and participate in their activities. In conclusion, it is the writer's opinion that this seminar providing information on a

variety of organizations impacting the blind and visually impaired of our local area and state was very informative and well received by all in attendance. It is his expectation that similar collaborative activities will continue into the future.

### **Finance Committee By Fred McEachern**

On November 1, 2013 GMSAAI purchased 166 shares of Fidelity Balanced Fund (FBLAX) for \$3,713.00. As an investing organization we opted to have our dividends or proceeds rolled over to purchase additional shares. We now have 170.476 shares at \$23.06 per share. We have a gross fund value of \$3,931.18. We have a net gain of \$218.18 since the November 1, 2013 purchase. Remember the market fluctuates, which means our stock value moves up or down depending on market trends.

## **GMSAAI 2014 Slate of Officers, Board and Committee Chairs**

### ***Officers***

President	Tim Snyder
Vice President	Robert Parrish
Secretary	Alan Chase
Treasurer	Margaret Carter

### ***Board of Directors***

Annie Burris  
Douglas Davis  
Darryl Eaton  
Terry Lewis  
George Littlejohn  
Rufus Poole  
Ricky Scott

### ***Committee Chairs***

Tim Snyder	Archives & History
George Littlejohn	Awards Scholarship
Robert Parrish	Benevolence
Fred McEachern	Finance/Communications
Ricky Scott	Constitution and Bylaws
Frances Council	Convention/Reunion
Alan Chase	Secretary/Education
James Benton	Legislative Advocacy
Patricia Duncan	Membership
Darryl Eaton	Nominating Committee
Douglas Davis	Resource Development

The Board of Directors meets via telephone conference every 2nd Tuesday of even numbered months at 7:30pm. To join, simply call 1 (605) 475-6006 and enter access code 575084.

### Contribute to the Alumni Connection

The GMSAAI communications chair reserves the right to edit for grammar, content, and formatting any material submitted for publication in this newsletter. All submissions must include the name of the author. Submissions can be e-mailed to [FredMcEachern@bellsouth.net](mailto:FredMcEachern@bellsouth.net).