

ARA PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

The following remarks were made by John J. O'Neill at the Fourth Annual Meeting of the ARA, concluding his term of office as President.

Where Are We Going?

As we have assembled here for our fourth annual meeting I am inclined to raise several questions in my role as President of the Academy of Rehabilitative Audiology. First of all, "have we accomplished any of the things we had hoped to accomplish?" In answering this question I would be inclined to say we have accomplished a few things. We have started a clustering of individuals who are truly interested in the rehabilitative aspects of audiology. Also, the term, rehabilitative audiology, is beginning to appear in professional conversation. It is even showing up in the description of positions that need to be filled!

However, there is still a great deal that has not been accomplished. For example--we have a Newsletter which is quite professional in appearance. Its stated purpose was that it would serve as a vehicle for those clinical articles that would not be applicable for publication in existing journals. However, the Editor of the Newsletter has not received one article this year. Over the past few years I have heard many clinicians say, "you just can't get people to accept clinical articles." I would say that it is time that we stop this chant. We should ask ourselves, "do we really have anything to publish?" If we do not, then I think all of us are fooling ourselves. It is time for us to publish accounts of what we are doing. We need to make the editors of such journals as the Journal of Speech and Hearing Disorders sit up and notice that there is a volume of material that should be published. It is time to submit material--if not then submit to the notion that we do not have much to offer and that all of the interest that led us to our present situation was the result of visceral rather than intellectual unrest.

A second area that needs to be considered is the area of joint studies. We claimed--awhile back--that if we developed a cadre of interested persons that we could pool our population of hard of hearing subjects and conduct some joint studies. Other than Dr. Oyer none of us have even attempted such an approach. Why not? Is it a lack of ideas, a lack of interest or a lack of professional commitment?

Last year we held a summer conference in Denver. All of us thought it was a great idea. We tried to arrange for such a conference this summer but we were unable to obtain federal funding for such a conference. I feel we need such yearly conferences. Also, I feel we should be willing to "dig into" our own pockets as well as use some of the Academy's funds to arrange for such a conference. If we want and need such conferences then let us have them--independent of whether we can obtain outside support. Are we motivated enough or do we "believe" enough that we are willing to spend our own money for such conferences?

A final area involves group pressure activities. We verbalized how we would use our group strength in terms of influencing legislative activities, the adoption of appropriate standards for certification and the development of suggested curriculums. We have been very silent in this year.

If there is any blame to be cast I would start with myself. As President I should have been "whipping" you into action. I guess I haven't been ready to accept the idea we have been delivered and we need to progress through infancy. Dr. McConnell will have an opportunity to start some activity. But, we must assume that in the future the Presidency of the Academy is a "working" job.

We must start to make some moves. Otherwise, the "glow" of our adventure may wear off. Let us get down to making the concept of Rehabilitative Audiology live. There is no better time than tomorrow to start this activity.