

President's Commentary on the State of the Association

by Roger N. Kasten

This message is going to be blessedly short. I want to present to you three specific items that have real bearing upon our Academy and upon the future of rehabilitation of the hearing impaired. These items will be called the Three P's: politics, publish and participate.

The first of the three items is POLITICS. There was a time, not too many years ago, when people who wished to make the rehabilitation process their life's work could simply receive an appropriate (or sometimes inappropriate) education and then devote their time to trying to help the hearing impaired. Unfortunately, the age in which we live is an age of legislation. Political beings in professional organizations, in state legislatures, and in Congress have become interested in the furnishing of services to the hearing impaired. This is a commendable situation because finally actions are being mandated regarding the provision of these services. The truth of the matter, however, is that all too often the well meaning individuals who are attempting to mandate services are not really familiar with the provision of services.

I do not wish to imply, even though I believe it to be true, that Academy members may be the primary individuals with the insight and dedication to be involved in the formulation and execution of rehabilitation programs. Rather, it should be apparent that the most logical people to provide input regarding the formulation of legislative programs for the rehabilitation of the hearing impaired would be people who have already committed themselves to the rehabilitation of the hearing impaired. As Academy members, each of you must become conversant with proposed professional, State and Federal mandates and you *MUST* provide your input into these planning processes. This you can do only by knowing the decision makers and the decision making process.

Please, keep one fact in mind. I am addressing myself to potential legislation for the hearing impaired and not to potential legislation for the people who provide services to the hearing impaired. Let us not approach

the legislative process from a selfish or biased point of view. Comprehensive rehabilitation of the hearing impaired involves the services of many diverse specialists and our activities regarding potential legislation should be directed toward maximizing the contribution of everyone involved in the rehabilitative process. I firmly believe that this type of approach can and will, in the long run, be of major benefit to our profession.

The second of the P's stands for PUBLISH. Those of us in the academic field understand this word only too well. Unfortunately, all too many of us seem to have forgotten the real significance and the real meaning of the word.

I have had recent discussions with publishers who have lamented the fact that there are so few good books or journal articles that truly deal with rehabilitation. This is ironic since the number of rehabilitation presentations at our ASHA conventions have increased drastically in the last seven or eight years. Perhaps we are perpetuating something that we might fear the most—people who think of themselves as rehabilitationists like to talk about what they do but hesitate to put it in writing. The time has come for us collectively to destroy this myth.

The Academy has a Journal of its own. Our State associations have Journals of their own. There are several professional or learned Journals that would willingly accept articles that deal with rehabilitation. In short, we can attract, excite and stimulate those with whom we come into contact more by the written word than by the spoken word. Let's let the world around us see what we know, read what we have to offer, study what we profess and learn from our mistakes and experience. A brilliant man many years ago demonstrated that it was necessary to write the word in order to teach the Gospel—his was a good example.

The last of the three P's is PARTICIPATE. The Academy is not a large organization, and, as a result, it must be looked upon as a working organization. The Academy has on-going committees and special project committees. Every effort has been made to place people in project areas where they would be most interested and most useful. Things would work even better if we knew exactly what each member would like most to contribute to the Academy. Many members have found that participation with the working groups has not only been a contributory experience but has been an excellent learning experience. As a result, make your areas of interest known. Write to me, or to any member of the Executive Board, and indicate the activity that would be most interesting to you. This is your organization and we want it to be as strong as you will make it.

These three words have been my brief message. Politics, publish and participate are the words that I will continue to refer to as we reflect upon our future. If we can concentrate our efforts in those three areas, then I can happily close with one last word. Peace!