President’s Message

Although I am sad to see 2011 depart (‘twas a very good year!), the promise of a new year always brings with it the hope of treasures undiscovered, stones to be turned, mountains to be climbed, and buds yet to be opened. What will 2012 hold? How can we in the world of physical therapy affect change for the better for our profession?

I jumped into the Presidency with two feet back in September and have so enjoyed my travels thus far across the state! At this writing, I have toured three of our nine districts, stopping in therapy clinics, local hospitals, nursing homes, PT and PTA schools in the Houma, Northshore, and New Orleans districts. I have met some amazing people, and have been so amazingly well received. If you have not, please follow my travels and photos of you in my blog at bethwardpt.blogspot.com. You just might see yourself there! And you might learn some of the issues facing us as therapists in this state.

What have I learned in listening to you? I have heard you express frustration at POPTS and our very limited direct access. I know in many of our more rural areas, staffing concerns are a major issue. The move to computerized documentation, especially in the outpatient arena, is also a large problem and it seems each clinic is trying something different, as if we all need to reinvent the wheel on this issue. The ever-changing tide in Medicare reimbursement and guidelines for various settings is a quagmire through which to wade. Workers Comp issues are a problem for some clinics as well. How can LPTA as a body make sense of this all, and assist you in your quest to provide the best possible care to the patients who so need our services?

I have learned that some PT’s use our ability to “eval only” to their advantage. I have learned that many PT’s utilize word of mouth to help get referrals from friends and family members of existing patients. I have learned that we must self-promote to ensure those referrals continue to come in. I have learned that the wellness component for which we fought so hard some years back has proven to be a useful adjunct to the therapy services we provide. I have learned that even in the face of adversity, physical therapists are a strong bunch and are quite well respected in this state.

I have heard and I have listened and I am assimilating all of this information into a plan, as if I have a piece of clay and I am molding it

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Please continue to encourage your fellow PTs, PTAs and students to join or renew their APTA/LPTA membership!

Current     Last Year
Active members  683     681
Life Members    29      25
PT Students     203    116
PTAs            106     77
PTA Students    37      27
Total           1,058   926
with my hands. Right now, it is an amorphous mess, a jumble, a heap, but as I work it over in my head, as my thoughts become words, as I hear many sides to different stories and seek counsel from those who currently serve and those who have gone before, both at the state and national level, the ball of clay is beginning to take shape.

As President, I work in conjunction with your Board of Directors to make a strategic plan to work toward the mission and vision of LPTA. As a Component Leader in APTA’s vast network of resources and assets, I have at my fingertips an amazing body of knowledge and experience from which to draw. In my case, as a new President, I have just begun to scratch the surface of all the resources that are available to me, to us.

All of these resources and assets are available to all of us if we want to begin to make a plan to fight the good fight, to make our collective voice heard. But, as you are keenly aware, for us to be a collective voice, we need to show active participation in and support of our professional organization. We need to have strong support of our PT-PAC monetarily. We need to be able to express our voices singularly and as a united group. Only 28% of licensed therapists in this state are members of LPTA/APTA. That number must grow. In Alaska, for example, 58% of their therapists are members.

That is one amazing key to social networks such as our Facebook group page. I’d love to have as many therapists and students on that page as possible, and for you to voice your opinion on issues presented there. I want to hear your thoughts to some of the posts from my blog. Links to both can be found on our LPTA’s updated website at lpta.org. Actually, that is one reason I am touring the state. I want to hear first-hand about the issues affecting you as physical therapists and physical therapy assistants and physical therapy students. LPTA represents you all.

In closing, I want to extend a challenge to the Shreveport, Monroe, and Alexandria Districts. The first weekend in March is the Spring Meeting; it is in Bossier City at Diamond Jacks. Rob Wainner, PT, PhD, ECS, OCS, FAAOMPT will speak. I challenge Shreveport/Bossier/Ruston/Monroe/Alexandria to come out and support this last meeting in the north for the foreseeable future. I want to see a sea of faces from the Shreveport area at the welcome reception to support the vendors there and to enjoy each other’s company, to network. I want the business luncheon on March 3rd to exceed quorum by 100%. Invite therapists from your class from across the state to come as a mini-reunion. Put it on your new 2012 calendars NOW! And find me in that vast crowd and give me a hug and tell me what’s on your mind! See you there!

Beth Ward, PT, DPT
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Did you know that you can find LPTA on Facebook? Join our group! We are just over 400 group members! Help us to reach 500! You can find us at www.facebook.com/groups/310700435436 or you can search for Louisiana Physical Therapy Association.

Also, have you checked out the LPTA President’s blog? Beth has taken to writing about her visits to each of the districts around the state. Check it out! www.bethwardpt.blogspot.com “Loitering Through Louisiana, 2011/2012”
Even though this month’s spotlight member is not a native Louisianan, Judith Halverson, PT, certainly can be considered an “honorary” native Louisianan. Originally hailing from the Iowa, Judith decided in 1991 to make New Orleans her home saying goodbye to the brutal Midwest winters. Fortunately for the LPTA she has truly settled in quite nicely down here in the south.

A PT since 1983 and an APTA member since her days as a student, Judith is also a member of the Orthopedics, Health Policy and Legislation, and Women’s Health Sections. Her talents and expertise are currently put to good use for Tulane Medical Center as the Manager of Rehabilitation Services at Tulane-Lakeside and Tulane Institute of Sports Medicine. No doubt her vast experience which includes management of both outpatient and rehab units, as well as patient care in long term, home health and outpatient settings, serve her well in her present position.

The LPTA has long been aware of Judith’s talents since Judith has been a very active member, has served and continues to serve in various capacities, currently as treasurer. Because of her enthusiasm, talents and energy she garnered the well deserved Dave Warner Distinguished Service Award in 2003.

Judith has quite an interesting list of hobbies. A few years back at one of the LPTA meetings, she and Rick Coogler showed off their pipes during karaoke night. At times she’s paid to use her pipes with a local choir, but she says she’ll keep her day job and continue to perform pro bono with her church choir.

She and her husband, who is an antique dealer, restored an old sidehall townhouse circa 1838/1870 in Uptown New Orleans. And when she is not busy with a restoration project she enjoys cycling and reading. But that’s not all this Midwest gal enjoys as she states she’s an avid gardener as well.

We’re certainly glad she finds time for the LPTA, and are very grateful for her contributions to our association. Thanks, Judith!
Students Hold Health and Wellness Events in New Orleans Area

In October and November of 2011, the 2nd year DPT students of LSUHSC New Orleans held two separate health and wellness events in the New Orleans area. The two events were our class projects which were aimed at improving our skills in planning a community health-focused event and working as a team with other health care professionals.

The first was held in October at the LSU Health Sciences Center for all faculty and students. Students set up a “Highway to Health” which included over twenty stations that could test different aspects of an individual’s health including blood pressure readings, strength and balance testing, as well as stations that tested an individual’s knowledge on their own health. Participants enjoyed activities such as games on the Xbox Kinect and the Nintendo Wii as well as gathering helpful information on improving their health.

The second event was held in conjunction with the American Heart Association’s annual Heart Walk at Audubon Park. Participants included individuals from the New Orleans area who had either pre-registered for the event, or other sponsors of the heart walk. Students set up four booths along the walking route that would provide various tests that would aid in the participants’ knowledge of their own health. Participants were able to take part in various tests in order to determine their cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, and body composition. The experience was one of learning for both walkers and students, as we were able to aid individuals in our community by providing essential information for reducing the risk of heart disease.
We would like to thank all of you who participated in our fundraisers held in conjunction with the Fall meeting in Baton Rouge. As a reminder, the money raised will assist in the costs to send the student delegate to the House of Delegates in June. This really is a great experience to see how the APTA’s policies and procedures are shaped to maximize the potential of our profession in the future.

Want to get involved with the SSIG?! We will be accepting applications for student delegate, as well as all positions, to be voted on at the Spring meeting. Our bylaws as well as all necessary forms can be found on the LPTA website (http://www.lpta.org/student_sig.html).

Thanks again to everyone who attended the Fall SSIG meeting with Erin Conrad from the University of St. Augustine. She was able to give us some invaluable information about residencies and fellowships available through the APTA. As an added bonus, the residents from the LSUHSC Shreveport campus were able to participate in a Q & A session, offering us insight from actual participants in such programs. We certainly hope this was a great way for all of you to see how easy it is to continue with your professional development following graduation.

Everyone should make plans to attend the SSIG meeting held during the LPTA Spring meeting at Diamond Jack’s Casino on March 2nd at 4:00 p.m. We will have someone speaking to us about home health physical therapy and how you can break into that field following graduation. This will be a great topic for PT and PTA students alike—you won’t want to miss it!

Robbie Banta  
Student SIG Chairman

On Tuesday, November 28, 2011, the Bossier Parish Community College's PTA program headed up by Kim Cox and Laura Bryant hosted the Shreveport District Meeting. Kim and Laura went out of their way to make the 25 of us in attendance feel welcomed, with homemade goodies and a holiday theme. They even had yours truly dancing as an elf on a video!

The changes to the Practice Act, new Rules and Regs were discussed, along with a Worker's Comp presentation prepared and originally presented by Seth Kaplan, PT. There were many questions about the former and all were educated that the Board will come around to each district in the first quarter of 2012 to answer questions and clarify issues.

Final tallies are in regarding the eighth annual Hustle for Your Health Fun Run, and this year we raised nearly $1000 for our chosen non-profit, which is the Pool of Siloam Medical Ministry. That run on Oct. 8th of this year was great fun for all who came out to run or volunteer. The profession of physical therapy was promoted, as well as the importance of overall health and conditioning.

And, last but not least, we elected a new Shreveport District Chair, Julie Danieles, DPT who trained at Loma Linda in California and is now working as the Resident Coordinator and practices outpatient ortho physical therapy at LSU Health Shreveport. Julie is not a total stranger to the area as she went to Centenary College on a basketball scholarship for her undergrad studies. She brings great enthusiasm and a desire to serve, and the LPTA Board is blessed to have her for the next couple of years.

Respectfully submitted by  
Beth Ward, PT, DPT  
(former Shreveport District Chair)
I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and welcome our new 2012 Governmental Affairs Committee Liaisons:

- Northshore: Tony Miller, PT, DPT, MTC
- New Orleans: Jeffrey Thompson, PT, DPT, OCS
- Lake Charles: Jeremy Stillwell, PT
- Baton Rouge: Greg LeBlanc, PT, OCS, MTC
- Alexandria: Kevin Garrigan, PT

We are looking forward to an exciting year! 2012 is a pivotal year for our Physical Therapy profession and you can play a pivotal role in governmental affairs as it influences our allied healthcare field. We are still in need of Governmental Affairs Liaisons for the following districts: Houma, Lafayette, Monroe, and Shreveport.

Please contact me, Chris Juneau, at chris.juneau@concentra.com if you are interested in applying. All applicants must be a member of the LPTA and a Louisiana licensed physical therapist in good standing.

Chris Juneau  
Governmental Affairs Committee Chair
Program Director Slated for National Office

The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) recently reported on the nomination of LSU Health Sciences Center, Physical Therapy Program Director, Sharon Dunn, PT, PhD, OCS for the position of Vice-President of the Association. Dr. Dunn, a graduate of the LSUHSC Program in Physical Therapy, is completing her second term on the Board of Directors of the APTA and is slated to run for the office of Vice-President against Steven McDavitt, PT, DPT, MS, FAAOMPT of Maine. Elections will be held during the annual House of Delegates meeting to be held in Tampa, Florida in June of next year.

Dr. Dunn has been an active member of the APTA since joining as a student and has served in various capacities at the local, state, and national level. The American Physical Therapy Association represents more than 77,000 members: physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students of physical therapy.