



RAMblin' On...

REFEREES ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN

Since 1984

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's that time of year again. Summer is over. Yellow school buses are making their rounds, Michiganders are tail-gating at football games and autumn has arrived. At the risk of sounding ecclesiastical, I would note that there are seasons of all kinds. One of the more successful RAM seasons has been the presidency of Deb McNabb. Unfortunately, due to term limits, her time as RAM president has come to an end. She certainly would have been re-elected if allowed by our Constitution and By-Laws. But seasons change, as have the officers on the RAM Board of Directors.

Deb's tenure as RAM president witnessed many noteworthy accomplishment. Deb single-handedly transformed our newsletter, *RAMblin' On* into a true publication. She both figuratively and literally added color to *RAMblin' On*. More importantly, she made the publication accessible via email to RAM's membership. Under Deb the location of May conference became flexible—first to Shanty Creek then to Mackinac Island (which turned out to be a remarkably popular location). Also under Deb's leadership, RAM received a special tribute from the Michigan legislature and signed by Governor Granholm, declaring May as Referee Appreciation Month.

The good news is that Deb's commitment to the organization continues. She has graciously volunteered to work with *RAMblin' On*

in the years to come. We will also hear from her in her new capacity as Executive Secretary. Other board members include Kathy Oemke—Vice President; Paul Jacokes—Treasurer; Jean Dohanyos—Recording Secretary, as well as Jon Ferrier, Mark Sherbow, Art Spears, Erin Magley and Helen Hartford.

It is with humility that I take on the role as RAM's new president. I look forward to facing the many challenges we encounter both individually and as a group. Whether these challenges manifest from new legislation or changes in court rules, or perhaps from frustration with a new computer system or a cumbersome, revised child support formula, I assure you that RAM will take an active role to resolve problems. We will have a say in proposed legislation and proposed court rules; and RAM will continue to offer quality training conferences. It is also my hope that (logistics allowing) we will be able to post a permanent web site where copies of *RAMblin' On* (including back copies) may be accessed at any time. This web site would include updates in the law and other pertinent reference information that is helpful to us all.

Thank you for your good work as referees. Please feel welcome to attend any and all of RAM's board meetings. Your insight and input are appreciated!

~ Ken Randall

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A Note of Reflection & Thanks

It was with mixed feelings that I marked the end of my two years as RAM President this summer with the election of RAM's new Board of Directors. While feeling a sense of relief at the lifting of this burden, I simultaneously experienced a sense of loss. I thoroughly enjoyed my tenure at RAM's helm and deeply appreciate the opportunity you gave me to serve. I am proud of the strides our organization made during my term, particularly those which increased our influence with Michigan's Legislature and Supreme Court. We frequently made our collective voice heard regarding pending legislation and proposed court rules by sending letters of comment and testifying at public hearings. The "Powers that Be" began to not only listen to our position, but to seek us out. Our influence may not yet be what we would like it to be, but we have come a long way from whence we began. We must continue to build upon our gains in this evolutionary process. Thank you to all of RAM's Past Presidents for blazing the trail. I am confident that President Randall will continue this tradition.

We have accomplished the sometimes awkward leap into the twenty-first century with the creation of RAM's listserv and the creation of an electronic version of *RAMblin' On*. Our Board has even held a couple of "virtual" meetings and communication by email has become *de rigueur*, greatly improving both the frequency and efficiency of communication amongst our Board and members. While often criticized in the larger context as being too impersonal, this technology has truly made our referee world smaller and more collegial.

While I owe the entire Board and committee members a huge debt of gratitude, I could not have retained my sanity during the past two years without the support of some very special people who I will acknowledge here. First on my list are my colleagues

here in Kent County. Thank you to Doug Dok and Marie Kessler, who always had an ear ready to listen to my concerns and were always willing to cover hearings for me when RAM business required my presence elsewhere. During one particularly urgent snail mailing of *RAMblin' On*, they even pitched in to help me stuff envelopes. I was especially fortunate to have Past President Jon Ferrier serving as Vice President and always at my disposal in the adjoining office suite. While Jon stuffed his share of envelopes, he also provided reliably sage advice and was always willing to assist, including chairing the legislative committee and authoring the *Prancing in Lansing* article in our newsletter. Jon, you were and are invaluable.

Special thanks to the indefatigable Jean Dohanyos for organizing two wonderful annual conferences and the always-entertaining minutes of our board meetings. Our 20th Anniversary Conference this year was particularly spectacular. You outdid yourself, Jean! No "has been" despite his Ex-Officio status, Mark Sherbow continued to prove his exceptional prowess in obtaining great conference speakers and Art Spears continued our fine golfing tradition, ensuring that the 1st and 2nd Annual Phil Inghram Memorial Golf Scramble was fun for all. At this year's conference, Art additionally undertook the grave and fearsome responsibility of safely shepherding our hospitality room libations by ferry to Mackinac Island. Thanks, Mark and Art, you made me look good!

Last, but not least, thanks to Ken Randall for his commitment to RAM and his willingness to step up as our new President. Ken, it is a pleasure and an honor to pass leadership of RAM on to you. May the wind always be at your back.

~ Deborah L. McNabb



PRANCING IN LANSING

Effective October 1, 2004, February 28, 2005, and June 30, 2005, new laws will take effect that will change several practices in the courts and friend of the court (FOC) offices. See the summary of major changes at:

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/features/Mailings/2004/10-01-04/2004FOCLegislation.pdf>

Also, the New Michigan Child Support Formula went into effect on October 1, 2004. Review the new Formula at:

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/features/Mailings/2004/10-01-04/NewFormulaEffective10-1-04.pdf>

GET INVOLVED!

ATTEND ONE OR ALL OF RAM'S UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS



Thursday, November 18, 2004 10:00 a.m.
State Bar Building, Lansing

Thursday, December 09, 2004, Noon
Common Grill, Chelsea, MI

Thursday, February 17, 2005, 10:00 a.m.
State Bar Building, Lansing

Thursday, April 14, 2005, 10:00 a.m.
State Bar Building, Lansing

Friday, May 20, 2005, 9:00 a.m.
Chippewa Hotel, Mackinac Island

Thursday, July 21, 2005 10:00 a.m.
State Bar Building, Lansing



Join Our Listserv!

If you are not already a member, please consider joining the RAM Listserv. Its purpose is to provide a confidential forum for our members to discuss issues relevant to Michigan referees. This listserv is private and limited to member referees. It is secure from the eyes of non-referees (except, of course, the IT department of your County!). Only those persons who are current members of RAM and who have been approved by the list moderator may participate in the listserv. I encourage you to take advantage of this valuable new resource today! Just send an email to pjacokessr@yahoo.com for instructions on how to join!

CONFERENCE CORNER

Get away to beautiful Mackinac Island in

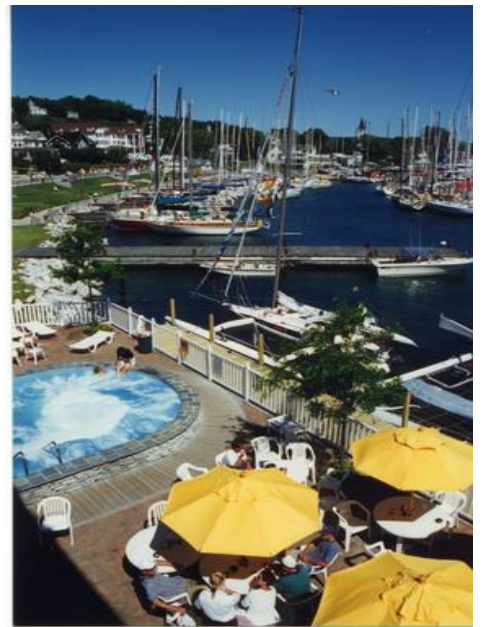
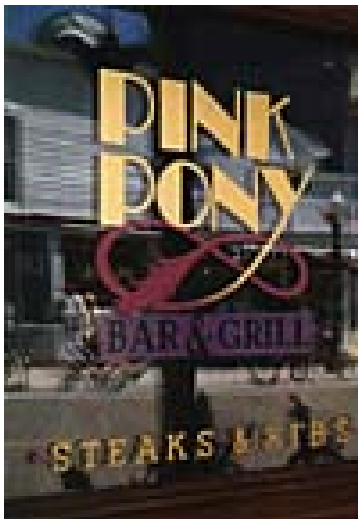
May 2005! SAVE THE DATES, DO NOT SCHEDULE HEARINGS, AND SET ASIDE A LITTLE SPENDING MONEY to enjoy our spectacular three-day training seminar!

Finally, pull out the indoor putting equipment and practice up – Art Spears is counting on a great turn-out for the 3rd Annual Phil Ingraham Memorial Golf Scramble on May 19^h! No golf experience required (or need be admitted to); in fact, that might turn out to be an advantage!

Come join your referee colleagues for an inspirational, educational, and entertaining get-away on Mackinac Island – see you there!

Check out www.chippewahotel.com and www.lilactree.com

Register Now! Join us for RAM's 21st Annual Conference at the historic CHIPPEWA HOTEL on MACKINAC ISLAND Wednesday May 18– Friday May 20



RAM's PHOTO ALBUM

2004 Conference Memories



Jean Dohanyos and Art Spears present Vince Welicka with the golf scramble winner's trophy. Doesn't Vince look proud?



RAM families enjoy a hayride around Mackinac Island



Barbara Forman, Barbara Doerr-Lee, Erin Magley and Art Spears hobnob with Chief Justice Maura Corrigan



2004 Golf Scramblers



Erin Magley, Barbara Doerr-lee, Ken Randall and Edward Messing enjoy a game of cards



More hospitality suite fun

MEMBER NOTES

SHARE YOUR TRIUMPHS!

Please e-mail personal and professional announcements to:

deborah.mcnabb@kentcounty.org



The Holiday Luncheon Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, December 9 at Noon at the Common Grill , 112 S. Main Street in Chelsea, Michigan (NE of Ann Arbor).

If you plan to attend, R.S.V.P to Barbara Kelly at kellyb@ewashtenaw.org or by telephone to Ken Randall at 989-832-6803 by December 7.

Check out the restaurant's website at www.commongrill.com

For directions , go to www.mapquest.com or call the restaurant at 734-475-0470 .

Past Presidents of the Referees Association of Michigan

Wayne Kristal, Jon Ferrier, Ronald Foon, Marie Johnson, Hon. Linda Hallmark, Wendlyn Machnik, Karen Liwienski, Vincent Welicka, Philip Ingraham, Zaira Maio, Mark D. Sherbow, Deborah L. McNabb

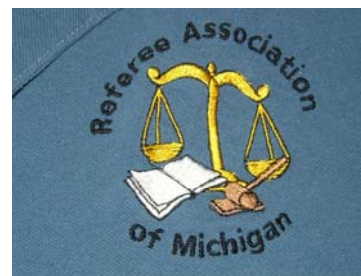
Referee Shirts for SALE!

Referee: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

e-mail _____



Short sleeve golf shirt

\$16.43 (\$15.50 plus tax) including S & H: \$21.78

Ladies S ___ M ___ L ___ XL ___

Men M ___ L ___ XL ___ XXL ___

Color _____



Long Sleeve Denim

\$25.97 (\$24.50 plus tax), including S & H: \$31.32

Ladies S ___ M ___ L ___ XL ___

Men M ___ L ___ XL ___ XXL ___

* Look at conference photos on page 5 to see example of long sleeve denim. The same logo is on both .

One of each shirt is \$42.40

Shipping and Handling: \$5.35/shirt

Send your order to: Kathleen Oemke
44th Judicial Circuit
210 S. Highlander Way, Suite 3
Howell, MI 48843
(517)540-7730

Payment received: _____

REFEREES' ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN

Minutes of the May 21, 2004 Executive Board/Annual Meeting

Harbor View Restaurant of the Historic Chippewa Waterfront Hotel
Mackinac Island, Michigan

Call to order: 9:22 am by President Deb McNabb, amid a sumptuous breakfast buffet.

Board members present: Doetsch, Dohanyos, Ferrier, Jacokes, Magley, McNabb, Oemke, Randall, Spears.

Board members absent: Elias, Sherbow.

Other members present: (gulp) My apologies to all of you who were present; I forgot to pass around a sign-in sheet – I can only attest that the dining room was full of us. Please send me your names so that I can correct the minutes in as speedy a fashion as possible. (Out of the 50 persons who had sent in their registration materials, 45 did attend the conference; and out of the 45, at least 31 voted at this meeting.)

Guests present: (ahem) Yes, we had some of those, too. Dr. Philip Stahl and his daughter, Franklin and Jordan Dohanyos, Kathy Oemke's daughter, and ... ? Please give me your corrections ASAP.

Announcements: Best wishes to Paul Jacokes and his bride and Mark Sherbow and his bride on their respective wedding anniversaries! And for anyone who would like bulk copies of Parenting After Divorce (at a discounted price) or materials on high-conflict parent education, you may request that from Dr. Stahl via his e-mail address, www.parentingafterdivorce.com. President McNabb thanked the Conference Committee for a delightful three days on the Island celebrating our 20th anniversary as a special purpose organization.

Corrections to prior minutes: Arthur Spears moved to accept the February and April 2004 minutes as written, seconded by Kathy Oemke, passed without objection.

Correspondence: Ken Randall reported that David Elias had e-mailed our President of his official notification of intent not to seek re-election as RAM treasurer; David has served faithfully for many years as only the second treasurer of our group, and his wit and Albanian brand of wisdom will be missed.

Committee reports: Jon Ferrier moved, seconded by Tom Doetsch, that we table all committee reports not included in the conference materials; the motion passed unanimously. Paul Jacokes then moved, seconded by Ken Randall, that we accept as written the committee reports contained in the conference booklet; and this motion also passed unanimously.

Unfinished business: Ken Randall announced ten changes to our Constitution and By-Laws currently proposed to the membership which had been spelled out in detail in our conference materials.

1. Constitution/Article 3, Section 3 – Delete the entire section.
2. Constitution/Article 6, Section 1 – Change the language to make this provision and the By-Laws/Article 1, Section 1 compatible.
3. By-Laws/Section 1A – Substantial change to the nomination of officers (no longer would we nominate at the May meeting, circulate a written ballot in June, and then have to wait until July 1st for the new officers to take office).
4. Article 2, Section 2 – Addresses the intent to include FOC/juvenile court referees.
5. Treasurer’s written statement – More specificity would be required.
6. (For some inexplicable reason, the Recording Secretary’s notes are completely DEVOID of any mention of proposed changes 6 and 7. Perhaps it was due to a wrinkle in time. Or maybe it was the cheese danish ...)
7. (See above.)
8. By-Laws/Article 4, Section 2 – Addition of responsibility for Executive Secretary to send out election ballots.
9. By-Laws/Article 5, Section 1E – Delete the Professional Relations Standing Committee as unnecessary.
10. By-Laws/Article 6, Section 2 – Establish March 1st as the dues deadline.

Mr. Randall moved to adopt the ten changes announced in the conference materials and orally at the meeting, seconded by Jon Ferrier, and put up for discussion prior to a general membership vote. Past President Vince Welicka spoke up in favor of retaining the staff attorney membership option in the original Constitution and By-Laws; his thought was, “No harm, no foul.” If reclassification were to take place in a county and a referee were to become a staff attorney, then that person might lose his/her eligibility to remain in RAM. Arthur Spears responded that it seemed to be a provision that never had been used; who would want to request associate membership if you would not thereby be permitted to vote? Someone piped up, “Once a referee, always a referee.” Ken Randall added that we do have other classifications, and Tom Doetsch suggested that no matter your title – if you handle referee duties, then you would fit into our group’s membership requirements. Mr. Welicka also requested an explanation about the proposed change to the nomination and election of Executive Board officers. The new process would require nominations to be solicited in February and a ballot established within seven days of the April board meeting. Then the new officers can be elected and installed at the end of the annual training conference in May, thereby passing the torch smoothly from one board to another. The current system creates difficulties for the incoming President. Jean Dohanyos spoke in favor of retaining the Professional Relations Committee and recalled that it had been used at least once during her tenure on the board; President McNabb responded, however, that its use was so infrequent that it really did not merit standing committee status. Any member requesting such a concern to be addressed could have their inquiry handled via a special committee established for that purpose. After further discussion, a vote by show of hands was taken, with 28 in favor of the ten proposed changes, three opposed, and zero abstentions. The

motion to amend the Constitution and By-Laws as indicated by Mr. Randall passed.

New business: Nominations were opened for the new Executive Board, and the following slate of candidates was established –

For President -	Ken Randall	Nominated by Ferrier/2 nd by Spears
For Vice-President -	Kathy Oemke	Nominated by Dohanyos/2 nd by Jacokes
For Executive Secretary –	Deb McNabb	Nominated by Jacokes/2 nd by Dohanyos
For Recording Secretary –	Jean Dohanyos	Nominated by Randall/2 nd by Oemke
For Treasurer -	Paul Jacokes	Nominated by Randall/2 nd by Dohanyos
For Board Member -	Tom Doetsch	Nominated by Randall/2 nd by Dohanyos
	Jon Ferrier	Nominated by Randall/2 nd by Dohanyos
	Helen Hartford	Nominated by Randall/2 nd by Dohanyos
	Erin Magley	Nominated by Randall/2 nd by Dohanyos
	Arthur Spears	Nominated by Randall/2 nd by Dohanyos
	Mark Sherbow	Nominated by Spears/2 nd by Randall
	Karen Transit	Nominated by Deb Brune/2 nd by Doetsch

Nominations were then closed, with the election to follow in June.

Jean Dohanyos moved that RAM cover the cost of President McNabb's Tuesday evening lodging, seconded by Kathy Oemke, and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Dohanyos then spoke in favor of returning to the Chippewa Hotel on Mackinac Island for the 2005 conference. Not only had the staff been extremely accommodating, but the hotel management and employees had gone out of their way to make the membership feel welcome and to provide extra attention in such things as fudge in each room, hors d'oeuvres and soft drinks in the hospitality suite, a magician during the lunch hour, a complimentary hay ride, a scavenger hunt for the children with hats and t-shirts as prizes, and truly outstanding cuisine at the group dinner and breakfast. Not only were the lodging prices well below the normal rate for this time of year, but the hotel altogether had provided over \$7,000 in complimentary items/services. Ms. Dohanyos pledged to attempt to hold the rates the same for the coming year and indicated she would be happy to continue to serve as conference chair if RAM were to return to Mackinac Island in 2005. It should be noted, however, that a luxury hotel in Kalamazoo had submitted a proposal for our consideration which had been available for review in the Hospitality Suite Wednesday and Thursday, and this was another possible location the membership might choose to consider. Past President Ron Foon made history when he stood up and announced that he had been skeptical of the decision to bring the 20th Anniversary conference to the Island but, having thoroughly enjoyed himself from start to finish, he surprised himself by saying that he was voting to return. Written ballots were then circulated among the membership and tendered to Ken Randall for announcement of the membership's vote tally at the end of the con-

ference.

Ivy Arbuckle of Jackson County had presented a resolution in jest which Ms. Dohanyos read aloud: “Whereas, the RAM will cease being obsessed with whether they can wear judicial robes and begin to concentrate on other areas that perhaps we can make a change.” An unidentified wag moved to table the resolution, amid the group’s chuckles and guffaws.

Tom Doetsch then moved to adjourn, seconded by Paul Jacokes, and our President concluded business at 9:59 am.

Respectfully submitted by Jean L. Dohanyos, Recording Secretary

Addendum to May 21, 2004 Minutes

At the conclusion of the 2004 conference, Ken Randall announced that the membership’s vote regarding the location for the 2005 conference had been tabulated according to a point system devised by him, with the following results:

Mackinac Island – 108 points	Grand Rapids – 6 points
Traverse City – 36 points	Kalamazoo/Garland – 4 points
Saugatuck – 18 points	Shanty Creek/Ann Arbor/Mack. City – 3 pts.
voix/Holland – 10 points	Flint/Sault St. Marie/Detroit – 2 points
Petoskey – 7 points	Battle Creek/Dearborn/Manistique/Mt.
	Pleasant – 1 point

Mackinac Island, with 108 points, out-totaled all of the other suggested locations combined.

Virtual Meetings/Announcements

The President called a virtual meeting via e-mail from May 27, 2004 to June 9, 2004 to address the issue of payment of incoming President Ken Randall’s expenses to attend the State Bar Leadership conference. A motion was made to pay \$321.05 to cover his expenses, and it passed with eight voting in favor, zero in opposition, with two abstentions.

The President continued the virtual meeting via e-mail from June 9, 2004 until June 18, 2004 to address the determination of the location and date for next year's conference. Jean Dohanyos reported that the Chippewa Hotel was offering a continuation of our contract for lodging and meals at the 2004 rates. Tom Doetsch moved to have the conference at the Chippewa Hotel on Mackinac Island on May 18/19/20, 2005; the motion was seconded by Jon Ferrier, and eight voted in favor with two in opposition. The motion passed.

On June 30, 2004, the President then circulated an e-mail message to all RAM members on her list to announce the result of "the closest and most contested election in RAM's history (many of the at-large board candidates were separated by only one vote)," with the following results:

President – Ken Randall, Vice-President – Kathleen Oemke, Executive Secretary – Deb McNabb, Recording Secretary – Jean Dohanyos, Treasurer – Paul Jacokes, At-Large Members – Jon Ferrier, Helen Hartford, Erin Magley, Mark Sherbow, and Arthur Spears.

Calling all frustrated writers and publishers...

If you have always wanted to be published, or you have ideas for articles or suggestions regarding what you would like to see in *RAMblin' On...*

please contact Deborah McNabb at:

deborah.mcnabb@kentcounty.org

Publication Deadlines:

Ramblin' On will be published in December, March, June and September of each year. Deadlines for submission of articles are:

December 1, March 1, June 1 and September 1

Do you have an amusing or silly war story to share?

Please help! I need referee war stories to include in the next issue of *RAMblin' On*. If you have a war story to share, please e-mail it to

deborah.mcnabb@kentcounty.org

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Mark D. Sherbow
Barbara Kelly
Helen Hartford

Membership Committee

Erin Magley

Wages and Benefits Committee

Deborah L. McNabb, Chairperson
Kathleen Oemke

Annual Conference Committee

Jean L. Dohanyos, Chairperson
Mark D. Sherbow
Arthur Spears

Scholarship Committee

Arthur Spears, Chairperson
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State Bar Family Law Section Co-Liaisons

Barbara Kelly
Jon T. Ferrier

Technology Committee

Paul Jacokes, Chairperson

Awards Committee

Kathleen Oemke, Chairperson
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SCAO Liaison

Kathryne O'Grady

