

AVASWC, AVASWM, AVASW - History
By Paul Burton, MSW



The following is a history of the Association of VA Social Workers, and its prior names and configurations.

1979

At this time in the VA there was no e-mail, no FORUM, no Outlook, and no computers or DHCP/VISTA. The PC had not been invented yet (not until 1981). Approval by the Director and/or Chief, MAS was required to send a fax. There were telephones. FTS (Federal Telecommunication System), a national telephone system for federal agencies, was the dominant method of system wide communication. The VA was the Veterans Administration, a freestanding federal agency that reported to Congress and the President. The term “VA Headquarters” (HQ) did not exist. In 1979 it was called VA Central Office (VACO). VA facilities were termed VAH (VA Hospital), or VAOPC (VA Outpatient Clinic). VA hospitals were in the process of being renamed VA Medical Centers (VAMC). There were VA Medical Districts, loosely organized offices with limited authority that monitored budgets, transferred funds, and aspired to achieve some consistency between the VA facilities in the District. Each district had a Director, who was also a director of a VA facility in the district. The District Director position was a collateral assignment. There were no healthcare systems, networks, etc., as we know them today.

July - At a VA District 25 Social Work Chiefs meeting at the Brentwood VAH there was a discussion on the need, feasibility, and purpose of a professional association for social work chiefs. The name “Association of VA Social Work Chiefs (AVASWC)” was agreed upon. Paul Burton was elected Chairperson, AVASWC Committee, and agreed to poll the VA social work chiefs to determine interest. Subsequent activity originated from Paul Burton’s home. The District 25 social work chiefs became the “Formation Committee”, or steering committee. They were:

- Paul Burton - Sepulveda (Chair)
- Dorothy Geary - Long Beach
- John Fulton - Brentwood
- Charles Roberts - Wadsworth
- Harold Dixon - San Diego
- Lee King - Los Angeles OPC
- Steve Petty - Loma Linda

Paul Burton’s wife, Roxanne, organized a mailing list from a variety of documents and typed each social work chief’s address on 3 x 5 cards. The technology was primitive by today’s standards. Announcements, membership forms, and newsletters were produced with a typewriter. Mailed documents were addressed with a typewriter, or addresses were handwritten.

September - An announcement and a dues notice form were mailed to all 171 social work chiefs. Interest in forming an association was expressed by filling out the form and sending one’s dues. The dues were arbitrarily set at \$10.00 per year to pay for printing, copying, and mailing expenses.

The first person to join was Hector Negron, Chief, Social Work Service, San Juan, Puerto Rico. Dues were promptly received from 75 social work chiefs. There was nationwide support for, and debate about, the association. However, some adamantly opposed it. They made phone calls and wrote letters to Paul Burton, and to VA Central Office staff, expressing concern that an independent association would circumvent the line of authority in the VA. Paul Burton responded by saying that was the idea. The issue was debated on two or three social work hotline calls (conference calls). Central Office staff, including Carlton Enquist, Director, and Dave Anderson, Deputy Director, Social Work Service, supported the association in principle, but believed it would be a conflict of interest for Central Office social work staff to join. However, Dave Anderson, reversed his initial position and joined the association, surprising many (including Carlton Enquist). Some of the social work chiefs who had opposed forming an association then joined.

October - On 10-9-79 the first association newsletter was mailed (before there was officially an association), with a form to nominate officers and another membership form to join the association.

November - 10 more dues forms and checks were received with nominations for officers, bringing the membership to 85. There were members in each of the 25 VA Medical Districts and in 40 states plus Puerto Rico.

1980

January - The second newsletter was dated 1/12/80. It was mailed with a ballot to elect officers and an "interim treasurers report" which showed the expenses to date in forming the Association. No one had been nominated for Secretary or Treasurer, so the newsletter called for nominations for those positions.

March - The third newsletter was mailed 3/30/80. The first officers were announced and began their term of office. They were:

- President - Paul Burton (Sepulveda, CA)
- Vice President/President Elect - Shirley Courson (Baltimore, MD)
- Newsletter Editor - Dorothy Geary (Long Beach, CA)

The call for nominations for Treasurer and Secretary in the January newsletter generated several nominated candidates and several write-in candidates. A ballot for Secretary and Treasurer was mailed with the March newsletter.

April - Joe Armstrong (Coatesville, PA) was elected Secretary and Jean Richardson (Lyons, NJ) was elected Treasurer. That completed the slate of elected officers.

June 1980 – John Fulton, a member of the original steering committee, was selected to succeed Carlton Enquist as the Director, Social Work Service, VACO. Dave Anderson, who believed he should be Director, appealed John's selection, delaying John's appointment about one year. John remained a member throughout his tenure as VA Social Work Director, and often called on the Association to support current issues in the VA.

July 1980 – Paul Burton visited the IRS office in Van Nuys, CA, to find out about establishing AVASWC as a non-profit, tax exempt, organization. The IRS advised that the Charter & By-Laws had to be renamed "Constitution" to qualify AVASWC as a non-profit, tax exempt, organization. The by-laws were promptly renamed "Constitution & By-Laws". That was satisfactory to the IRS and Paul was told the organization could declare itself a non-profit, tax exempt, organization.

Although the by-laws called for an election in August 1980, none was held. The housekeeping chores in setting up the new association took precedence. It became clear that a nominating committee was needed to find potential elected officers from among the membership.

1981

In the absence of an election in August 1980, the original elected officers continued to serve. They were:

- President – Paul Burton (Sepulveda)
- Vice President, President Elect – Shirley Courson (Baltimore)
- Newsletter Editor – Dorothy Geary (Long Beach)
- Secretary – Joe Armstrong (Coatesville)
- Treasurer – Jean Richardson (Lyons)

1982

Shirley Courson became President in August 1982. She called for an immediate election to get the Association back on the schedule outlined in the By-Laws. Some changes were made in the offices of the executive committee. The Secretary & Treasurer position were combined. These changes were approved by the membership in the same election that elected new officers.

November - Officers elected:

- Vice President/President Elect - Lee King (Cleveland, OH)
- Secretary/Treasurer - Jean Richardson (Lyons, NJ)
- Newsletter Editor - Paul Burton (Sepulveda, CA)

1983

President – Shirley Courson
Vice President – Lee King
Secretary/Treasurer – Jean Richardson
Newsletter Editor – Paul Burton

1984

President - Lee King (Cleveland, OH) (from the Vice President office)

New officers elected:

Vice President/President Elect - Roger Maddigan (Buffalo, NY)
Treasurer - James Moffitt (Providence, RI)
Newsletter Editor - Carole Babb (Huntington, WV)
Chairperson, Nominations - Stanley Remer (Kansas City, MO)

It was proposed to change the tour of office to two years, and to add the position of Past President to the Executive Committee. Lee King, President, felt that one year was too short and created lack of continuity in the elected leadership. He also wanted to change his tour from 10/1/84 through 9/30/85 to 1/1/85 through 12/31/85

1985

There was much activity, re-writing the Constitution & Bylaws, debate about the terms of office, etc.

February – Just as new officers were becoming knowledgeable and effective after the first few months of their terms a new election was held. Two-year terms were thought to be more effective in achieving continuity and stability of the elected officers. Lee King, President, proposed a change in the by-laws. An election was held (ballots mailed) and the membership voted to change the by-laws. The elected officers would thereafter serve two-year terms. The terms remained from October 1st to September 30th. The position of Past President was added to the officers/executive committee. The office of President became a six-year commitment, two years as Vice President/President Elect, two years as President, and two years as Past President.

1986

During this period of change, no election of officers was held. The previously elected officers continued to serve. Lee King initiated several conference calls. There was debate about whether the FTS phone system should be used by the Association. The debate occurred on conference calls using the FTS phone system. The executive committee decided ultimately to continue using the VA phone system for Association conference calls.

1987

President – Roger Maddigan (Buffalo, NY)

Officers elected

Vice-President/President Elect – Helen Kapiloff (Houston, TX)
Newsletter Editor – Dan Downey (Wilkes-Barre, PA)
Treasurer -?
Secretary -?
Nominations Chair -?

1988

The previously elected officers continued to serve. There was little activity

1989

September 1989 – At a national VA social work chiefs' meeting at the Federal Mining Academy, Beckley, West Virginia, Helen Kapiloff approached Paul Burton and asked, "Whatever happened to that social work chiefs' association"? Paul replied, "I don't know, I haven't heard much about it lately". Helen asked, "Well, who is responsible"? Paul replied, "You're the President". After Helen recovered from her surprise, and regained her memory, she asked Paul Burton to be the Newsletter Editor. She asked Jerry Satterwhite to be the Nominations Chair. Jerry and Helen found people to be candidates for office. This all occurred in about 30 minutes.

November - An election was held. Jerry Satterwhite agreed to collect the ballots.

Officers elected:

President – Claude Roebuck (Gainesville, FL)
Vice President/President Elect – Kenneth Cooley (Little Rock, AK)
Treasurer - Troleta Moody (Clarksburg, WV)
Newsletter Editor - Paul Burton (Sepulveda, CA)
Chair, Nominating Committee – Jean Richardson (East Orange, NJ)

In addition to the candidates listed on the ballot, there were 17 write-in candidates for various positions. Their names were retained by Jean Richardson as possible candidates for future elections. Also on the ballot – A proposal to establish an association of VA social workers (majority voted “no”), and an item to send the Newsletter to all SW Chiefs, both members and non-members (majority “no”).

1990

President – Claude Roebuck (Gainesville, FL)
Vice President/President Elect – Kenneth Cooley (Little Rock, AK)
Secretary/Treasurer - Troleta Moody (Clarksburg, WV)
Newsletter Editor - Paul Burton (Sepulveda, CA)

1991

President – Kenneth Cooley (Little Rock, AK)
Vice President/President Elect – Jerry Satterwhite (Birmingham, AL)
Newsletter Editor – Paul Burton (Sepulveda, CA)
Treasurer -?

1992

President – Kenneth Cooley (Little Rock, AK)
Vice President/President Elect – Jerry Satterwhite (Birmingham, AL)
Newsletter Editor – Paul Burton (Sepulveda, CA)
Treasurer -?

1993

President – Jerry Satterwhite (Birmingham, AL)
Vice President/President Elect – Paul Burton (Sepulveda, CA)
Past President – Kenneth Cooley (Little Rock, AK)
Treasurer – Suzanne Demong (San Diego, CA)
Newsletter Editor – Terry Harbert (Topeka, KS)

During his first year as President, Jerry, while attending a meeting in DC, went to Capitol Hill to present interests on behalf of VA social workers to be included in the Hybrid Title 38 series. He visited with staffers from Senator John D. Rockefeller and Daniel K. Inouye’s offices. This was the first attempt to connect with members of Congress to present issues of interest and concern to the Association.

In September 1993, a conference of VA social work chiefs was held at San Antonio, Texas. During the conference, there was a meeting of the Association. The majority present voted to change the name of the Association from the Association of VA Social Work Chiefs to the Association of VA Social Work Managers (AVASWM). The VA was being reorganized (Dr. Kizer’s Prescription for Change), and many facilities were abolishing or restructuring chief’s positions. The title “Chief” no longer applied to several of the members, although they remained in managerial positions.

1994

President – Jerry Satterwhite (Birmingham, AL)
Vice President/President Elect – Paul Burton (Sepulveda, CA)
Past President – Kenneth Cooley (Little Rock, AK)
Treasurer – Suzanne Demong (San Diego, CA)
Newsletter Editor – Terry Harbert (Topeka, KS)

Suzanne Demong, Treasurer, learned the IRS rules for non-profit organizations had changed. She began the paperwork, completing a nine page form, to establish AVASWM as a non-profit under the new rules. The IRS wanted proof of the organization's existence and history. Newsletters, ballots, correspondence, the original Constitution & By-Laws, a letter from Paul Burton describing the beginnings and history of the Association, a copy of a letter to Paul Burton from Dave Anderson, Deputy Director, VACO Social Work Service, offering congratulations on the formation of AVASWC, and a financial accounting for the years 1991 through 1993, were collected and submitted to the IRS.

June 3, 1994 – John Fulton, Director, Social Work Service, retired. Thereafter a series of acting directors (or no directors) were responsible for social work leadership.

1995

President – Paul Burton (Sepulveda)
President Elect – Tom McGahan (Sheridan, WY)
Past President – Jerry Satterwhite (Birmingham)
Treasurer – Suzanne Demong (San Diego)
Newsletter Editor – Terry Harbert (Topeka)

In a letter dated May 17, 1995, from the District Director, IRS, to Suzanne Demong the Association was formally notified that it was classified as a non-profit, tax exempt, organization under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code. The specific Internal Revenue Code section under 501(a) that applies to AVASW is 501(c)(6) for membership organizations. Occasional reports to the IRS have been required, and have been completed by the Treasurer, since then.

1996

President – Paul Burton (Sepulveda)
President Elect – Tom McGahan (Sheridan, WY)
Past President – Jerry Satterwhite (Birmingham)
Treasurer – Suzanne Demong (San Diego)
Newsletter Editor – Terry Harbert (Topeka, KS)
Due to workload pressures, Terry Harbert resigned as Newsletter Editor. Mike Juvenal volunteered to take the editorship and was subsequently elected Newsletter Editor

1997

President – Tom McGahan (Sheridan, WY)
President Elect – Jill Manske (Albuquerque, NM)
Past President – Paul Burton (Sepulveda, CA)
Newsletter Editor – Mike Juvenal (Iowa City, IA)
Treasurer – Suzanne Demong (San Diego, CA)
Secretary – Judy Arnold (Leavenworth, KS)
Chair, Nominations – Joseph Pugliese, (Cheyenne, WY)

Through private experts/consultants an AVASW web page was constructed, named - vasocialworkers.org.

1998

President – Tom McGahan (Sheridan, WY)
President Elect – Jill Manske (Albuquerque, NM)
Past President – Paul Burton (Sepulveda, CA)
Newsletter Editor – Mike Juvenal (Iowa City, IA)
Treasurer – Suzanne Demong (San Diego, CA)
Secretary – Judy Arnold (Leavenworth, KS)
Chair, Nominations – Joseph Pugliese, (Cheyenne, WY)

Development of the web page led to the need for a logo. A contest was held with a cash prize for the designer of a logo approved by the Executive Committee. John Forest, social worker at the Washington DC VA developed (or found) the circle/ribbon concept. Judy Arnold, Leavenworth, KS, came up with the "The Human Touch in Healthcare". Danny Coker (Medical Media, Birmingham) put it all together in its present

form in a media file that could be transported and used for merchandise. John Forest and Judy Arnold shared the cash prize for designing the Association logo. The logo was then adopted by VACO Social Work Service and was used on the VA Social Work Service website.

1999

President – Jill Manske (Albuquerque, NM)
President Elect – Larry Peterson (Durham, NC)
Treasurer – Suzanne Demong (San Diego, CA)
Newsletter Editor – Mike Juvenal (Iowa City, IA)
Secretary – Charles Clancy (Louisville, KY)
Chair, Nominations - Joseph Pugliese (Cheyenne, WY)
Past President – Tom McGahan (Sheridan, WY)

September – VA Social Work Chiefs Conference, Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada. An open meeting of the Association was held. In addition to the reports by the officers, there was discussion about the Association's role in pushing for a GS-12 clinical social worker position. Paul Burton gave a report on efforts that started in 1991/1992, shortly after licensure for VA social workers became required by Federal Law. In short, OPM said it was possible with existing classification standards and it was up to the agency. The agency, VA Personnel Svc., said it was not possible because of the classification standards, which were obsolete (published in 1967).

2000 – During January, Jerry Satterwhite and President Elect Judith Talbert went to Washington to both meet with VA officials, and educate Congress on behalf of the Association. Unfortunately, the "Blizzard of 2000" hit the DC area, Central Office was closed down, and they were stranded at Sandy Brake's house. Fortunately, Dave Dempsey, NASW, was able to track them down and arranged a meeting with Congressman Rodriquez, TX. He had recently introduced legislation to create a Nation Center for Social Work Research. It was agreed the Association would attempt to get co-sponsors for the legislation.

Jill Manske resigned as President when she was selected Director, Social Work Svc., VA HQ, effective 8/13/00. Larry Peterson, Vice President/President Elect, assumed office as President. Mike Juvenal, Newsletter Editor, announced his retirement as of 9/30/00. Joe Pugliese, Nominations, resigned the Nominations Chair.

Due to the promotion of Jill Manske, and the retirement and resignation of some officers, an election was held at the AVASWM open meeting on 9/13/00 at the VA SW Mgrs. Conference, Frontier Hotel, Las Vegas, NV. A new Vice-President/President Elect, Nominations Chair, and Newsletter Editor were elected. The officers, previously and newly elected, were:

Larry Peterson (Durham, NC) – President (from Vice President/President Elect)

Officers elected were:

Judith Talbert (Columbus, OH) - Vice President/President Elect - elected 9/13/00

Charles Clancy (Louisville, KY) - Secretary

Susan Barfoot (Montgomery, AL) - Treasurer

Paul Burton (Sepulveda, CA) - Newsletter Editor - elected 9/13/00

Debbie Jackson (Washington, DC) - Newsletter Co-Editor (Debbie Jackson expressed interest in being co-editor and was appointed by the President and Newsletter Editor 9/13/00.)

Maureen Shafer (Memphis, TN) - Nominations - elected 9/13/00

Jerry Satterwhite (Birmingham, AL) - Congressional Liaison - a recent addition to the Executive Committee, proposed by the President, Jill Manske, approved by the Executive Committee.

The members present also voted to change the Constitution/By-Laws of the Association and open membership to any VA social worker, a significant change in the membership of the Association. The association was renamed the Association of VA Social Workers (AVASW). These changes required revision of the Constitution/Bylaws of the organization. Maureen Shafer and Judith Talbert agreed to form a sub-committee to revise the Constitution/Bylaws.

2001

January – Newsletter mailed

April – Newsletter mailed, with revised January newsletter, ballot for bylaws changes, and ballot for election of three Association members to the Social Work Leadership Council (an advisory consultation group to the Director, Social Work Service).

Jill Manske, Director, Social Work Service, invited the Association to select three representatives to serve on the Social Work Leadership Council (SWLC). The Social Work Leadership Council (SWLC) was developed by Jill Manske in her new role as Director, Social Work Svc. It was composed of the chairs of the standing social work committees, the President of the Association, and three Association members at large. The Congressional Liaison addition to the SWLC as also added to the Executive Committee of the Association. The Association President also serves on the SWLC at the invitation of Jill Manske. The Executive Committee decided the best way to select member representatives was to have them elected by the membership. It was further decided that the SWLC representatives would be voting members of the Executive Committee as they would be voting members of the SWLC. The bylaws were changed in this election to reflect that decision.

The AVASW members elected to the VA Social Work Leadership Council were:

Paul Burton (Greater Los Angeles/Sepulveda)
Terry Harbert (Eastern Kansas/Topeka)
Suzanne Demong (San Diego)

September – Association meeting at Bolger Center, Potomac, MD

President – Larry Peterson (Durham, NC)
Vice President/President Elect – Judith Talbert (Columbus, OH)
Secretary - Charles Clancy (Louisville, KY)
Treasurer - Susan Barfoot (Montgomery, AL) - Treasurer
Newsletter Editor - Paul Burton (Sepulveda, CA)
Newsletter Co-Editor - Debbie Jackson (Washington, DC)
Chair, Nominations - Maureen Shafer (Memphis, TN)
Congressional Liaison – Jerry Satterwhite (Birmingham, AL)

Judy Arnold was elected Secretary at the Association meeting.

After the Association meeting, President Larry Peterson and Congressional Liaison Jerry Satterwhite spent the day in Central Office visiting with the Undersecretary for Health as well as representatives from Mental Health, Rehabilitation, Extended Care, Primary Care, and the Director of Social Work. During their visits, they explained the purpose and makeup of the Association and expressed support for the Social Work Professional Practice Directive.

2002

President – Larry Peterson (Durham, NC)
Vice President/President Elect – Judith Talbert (Columbus, OH)
Secretary – Judy Arnold (Leavenworth, KS)
Treasurer - Susan Barfoot (Montgomery, AL) - Treasurer
Newsletter Editor - Paul Burton (Sepulveda, CA)
Newsletter Co-Editor - Debbie Jackson (Washington, DC)
Chair, Nominations - Maureen Shafer (Memphis, TN)
Congressional Liaison – Jerry Satterwhite (Birmingham, AL)

An election was held at the national VA social work conference, Bolger Center, Potomac, MD, September 26, 2002, and included ballots mailed with a special edition of the Newsletter in August, 2002.

President – Judith Talbert (Columbus, OH) from Vice President/President Elect
Past President – Larry Peterson (Durham, NC)

The new officers elected were:

Vice President/President Elect – Lena Richardson (Augusta, GA)
Secretary – Judy Arnold (Eastern Kansas/Leavenworth)
Newsletter Editor – Rocco Bagala (Seattle, WA)
Newsletter Co-Editor – Debbie Jackson (Washington, DC)
Treasurer – Susan Barfoot (Central Alabama Healthcare/Montgomery)
Congressional Liaison – Jerry Satterwhite (Birmingham, AL)
Nominations Chair – Maureen Shafer (Memphis, TN)

In November 2002, Susan Barfoot, Treasurer, announced she could no longer continue to serve as Association Treasurer due to excessive workload demands. In December 2002, Judith Talbert, President, appointed Paul Burton (Greater Los Angeles/Sepulveda) as interim Treasurer to complete the remainder of Susan Barfoot's term. The transfer of duties and funds began in January 2003.

2003

President – Judith Talbert, President (from Vice President/President Elect)
Vice President/President Elect – Lena Richardson (Augusta, GA)
Secretary – Judy Arnold (Eastern Kansas/Leavenworth)
Newsletter Editor – Rocco Bagala (Seattle, WA)
Newsletter Co-Editor – Debbie Jackson (Washington, DC)
Treasurer (interim) – Paul Burton (Greater Los Angeles/Sepulveda)
Congressional Liaison – Jerry Satterwhite (Birmingham, AL)
Nominations Chair – Maureen Shafer (Memphis, TN)
Past President – Larry Peterson (Durham, NC)

March 11 & 12, 2003, Judith Talbert and Jerry Satterwhite once again traveled to DC to educate Congress about VA social work issues, meeting with staffers from the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Health Sub Committees, as well as Senators from their respective states (Ohio and Alabama). A primary purpose of the visits was to seek legislative support for social workers inclusion in Hybrid Title 38.

- They day after they left, staffers from the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, chaired by Senator Arlen Specter (R-Penn) called VACO for information about Hybrid Title 38. This permitted VACO to communicate directly with Congress. Previous proposals for Hybrid Title 38 had been impounded in the Office of Management & Budget and never made it for review by any congressional committee.
- 5-23-03 - Senator Arlen Specter (R-Penn) Chair, Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, introduced Senate Bill 1156, which proposed to move social work (and other professions) from the Title 5 personnel system to Hybrid Title 38. The details were to be implemented at the discretion of the Secretary.
- The bill passed the Senate and House, and was signed into law by President Bush on 12-6-03, becoming Public Law 108-170, Veterans Health Care, Capital Asset and Business Improvement Act of 2003. A task force was immediately assembled in VACO to begin implementing the law. In the final form 18 occupations or professions were included.
- SB 1156 was initiated and supported by the Association of VA Social Workers. This will change significantly, and positively, the personnel management for social work in the VA

The terms of the Social Work Leadership Council members elected by the Association expired in June 2003. A special election was held to elect new representatives, to re-elect the Secretary whose term was to expire in September 2003, and to elect a Treasurer (Susan Barfoot's term would have also expired in September 2003 and Paul Burton's interim term expired accordingly).

Officers Elected were:

Secretary - Judy Arnold (Eastern Kansas/Leavenworth)
Treasurer - Paul Burton (Greater Los Angeles/Sepulveda)

Leadership Council Representatives elected were:

John Glynn (Murfreesboro, TN - 2 yrs)
William McKinney (Augusta, GA -2yrs)
Lawrence Strauss (Hampton, VA -1yr)

Debbie Jackson, Newsletter Co-Editor, left the VA for another position on 4-18-03

AVASW donated \$3000 to Operation Uplink, operated by the VFW. In collaboration with the VFW the money was used to purchase phone time for the 850 VA employees who were in various reserve and National Guard units that were activated and sent to Iraq.

2004

New officers whose term started 7-1-04

President - Lena Richardson (from Vice President/President Elect)
Vice President/President Elect – Douglas Mitchell (Phoenix, AZ)
Past President – Judith Talbert (Columbus, OH)

AVASW representative to the Social Work Leadership Council, term started 7-1-04

Cody Frasure (Mountain Home, TN)

Officers whose terms continue

Secretary – Judy Arnold (Eastern Kansas/Leavenworth)
Newsletter Editor – Rocco Bagala (Seattle, WA)
Treasurer – Paul Burton (Greater Los Angeles/Sepulveda)
Congressional Liaison – Jerry Satterwhite (Birmingham, AL)
Nominations Chair – William Lanning (Hot Springs, SD)

2005

An election was held in June, 2005. A new secretary (Miguel Ortega) and new member representatives on the Social Work Leadership Council (Sandra Dunn and Sheila Womack) were elected.

The officers are:

President – Lena Richardson (Augusta, GA)
Vice President/President Elect – Douglas Mitchell (Phoenix, AZ)
Secretary – Miguel Ortega (Houston, TX)
Treasurer – Paul Burton (Los Angeles, CA)
Newsletter Editor – Rocco Bagala (Seattle, WA)
Past President – Judith Talbert (Columbus, OH)
Nominations Chair – William Lanning (Hot Springs, SD)
Congressional Liaison – Jerry Satterwhite (Birmingham, AL)

Leadership council representatives are:

Cody Frasure (Mountain Home, TN)
Sandra Dunn (Bay Pines, FL)
Sheila Womack (Salisbury, NC)

2006

An election was held in May to elect the President Elect/Vice President, Treasurer, Nominations Chair, and Member at Large to the SWLC (2 year term). The new officers will assume office July 1st. The results were: Cody Frasure, Pres. Elect; William McKinney, Treasurer; Judy Arnold, Nominations; and Paul Burton, SWLC representative.

The Constitution/Bylaws were also revised to confirm the membership of the Congressional Liaison and the Website Manager as ex-officio (non-voting) members of the AVASW Executive Committee.

Effective July 1, 2006, the officers are:

President – Douglas Mitchell (Phoenix, AZ) from Vice President/President Elect
Vice President/President Elect – Cody Frasure (Mountain Home, TN)
Past President – Lena Richardson (August, GA)
Secretary – Miguel Ortega (Houston, TX)

Treasurer – IW McKinney (Augusta, GA)
Newsletter Editor – Rocco Bagala (Puget Sound HCS – Seattle)
Nominations Chair – Judy Arnold (Eastern Kansas-Leavenworth, KS)
Congressional Liaison – Jerry Satterwhite (Birmingham, AL) - appointed
Website Manager – Kate Buike (Puget Sound-Seattle, WA) - appointed

Social Work Leadership council representatives are:

Sandra Dunn (Bay Pines, FL)
Sheila Womack (Salisbury, NC)
Paul Burton (Los Angeles, CA)

2007

Sheila Womack became Chair, Social Work Education Committee. In that position she would be a member of the VACO Social Work Leadership Council (SWLC). This would potentially conflict with, or obscure, her SWLC membership as an elected representative of AVASW. Therefore, with deliberation by the Executive Committee, Ms. Womack resigned as AVASW representative on the SWLC. The runner up in the last election, Sheldon Schelling, was appointed by the Executive Committee to replace Ms. Womack as AVASW representative to the SWLC.

Effective January 1, 2007, the officers are:

President – Douglas Mitchell (Phoenix, AZ) from Vice President/President Elect
Vice President/President Elect – Cody Frasure (Mountain Home, TN)
Past President – Lena Richardson (August, GA)
Secretary – Miguel Ortega (Houston, TX)
Treasurer – IW McKinney (Augusta, GA)
Newsletter Editor – Rocco Bagala (Puget Sound HCS – Seattle)
Nominations Chair – Judy Arnold (Eastern Kansas-Leavenworth, KS)
Congressional Liaison – Jerry Satterwhite (Birmingham, AL) - appointed
Website Manager – Kate Buike (Puget Sound-Seattle, WA) - appointed

Social Work Leadership Council representatives are:

Sandra Dunn (Bay Pines, FL)
Paul Burton (Los Angeles, CA)
Sheldon Schelling (Big Springs, TX)

Due to Jill Manske's public relations efforts and description of AVASW at national social work conferences (USSW & NASW) she received inquiries about how to start a social work association. One inquiry was from Lt. Cmdr. Carol Jones, MSW, BCD, a naval officer stationed at Bethesda Naval Hospital and another from Ms. Nelson, MSW, a social worker employed by HSS. Both inquiries were forwarded to Paul Burton, as one of the founders of AVASW. Ms. Jones was interested in forming an Association of Military Social Workers and Ms. Nelson was exploring the feasibility of forming an Association of Federal Social Workers. E-mails were exchanged between Paul Burton and the inquirers from the Navy and HSS. Unlike the VA, neither the military nor HSS had a centralized register or list of social workers or social work leaders, making communication with potential members of either a military or a federal social work association difficult. The Navy had no centralized social work authority. Apparently no social work associations resulted from the inquiries.

May 17, 2007 - Doug Mitchell, President, testified before the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs at the confirmation hearing for Dr. Michael Kussman, candidate for VA Undersecretary for Health. This is the first time the Association has been asked to participate in the confirmation of a top VA official. It was the result of Jill Manske, Director, Social Work Svc., VACO, listing the Association, and Doug, as references to the Senate regarding Dr. Kussman's confirmation. The Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs staff members then contacted Doug Mitchell requesting him to testify. He agreed.

Dr. Kussman was Acting Undersecretary since 8-12-06 and Deputy Undersecretary since 5-29-05. He came to the VA from the Army where he retired as a Brigadier General. He supported efforts to make the transition from military to civilian life more effective, particularly with transfers from military medical to VA medical programs. He was endorsed by the Association. May 30, 2007 – Dr. Kussman is confirmed and officially appointed Undersecretary for Health.

5-30-07 – Jill Manske, MSW, LISW, Director, Social Work Service, VACO, retired after 32 years of government service. Her retirement was announced shortly before she left and was a surprise to many. Ms. Manske distinguished herself and social work during her tenure in VACO. She was a past President of AVASW and supporter of AVASW as Director, Social Work Service.

June 2007 – elections of new officers are held. Rocco Bagala and William Lanning are elected AVASW representatives to the SWLC. Isreal Jones is elected Newsletter Editor. Galen Britain is elected Secretary. A change in location of the website occurs and Kate Buike agrees to become the website manager (webmaster). The Executive Committee thought it to be an important position and decided the webmaster should be included on the Executive Committee. Sheldon Schelling resigned from the VA and Sandra Dunn's term as AVASW representative on the SWLC expired. Rocco Bagala and Paul Burton are elected to replace them as AVASW representatives on the SWLC.

Effective 7-1-07, the officers are:

- President – Douglas Mitchell (Phoenix, AZ) from Vice President/President Elect
- President - Cody Frasure assumed the presidency when Doug Mitchell resigned.
- Vice President/President Elect – Cody Frasure (Mountain Home, TN)
- Past President – Lena Richardson (August, GA)
- Secretary – Galen Britain (Black Hills HCS – Hot Springs, SD)
- Treasurer – IW McKinney (Augusta, GA)
- Newsletter Editor – Isreal Jones (Biloxi, MS)
- Nominations Chair – Judy Arnold (Eastern Kansas-Leavenworth, KS)
- Congressional Liaison – Jerry Satterwhite (Birmingham, AL) - appointed
- Website Manager – Kate Buike (Puget Sound-Seattle, WA) - appointed

Social Work Leadership Council representatives are:

- William Lanning (Black Hills HCS – Fort Meade, SD) (7/07 – 6/09 term)
- Paul Burton (Los Angeles, CA) (7/06 – 6/08 term)
- Rocco Bagala (Puget Sound HCS – Seattle) (7/07 – 6/09 term)

7/13/07 – Doug Mitchell is appointed Chair, VA Social Work Leadership Council, and resigns as President, AVASW, to accept the SWLC Chair. Cody Frasure becomes President, also effective 7/13/07. Doug Mitchell becomes Past President. Sandra Dunn is appointed Vice President/President Elect in August 2007.

2008

- President – Cody Frasure (Mountain Home, TN) (from Vice President)
- Vice President/President Elect – Sandra Dunn (Bay Pines, FL)
- Vice President/President Elect – Judy Arnold was elected to replace Sandra Dunn.
- Past President – Doug Mitchell (Phoenix, AZ)
- Secretary – Galen Britain (Black Hills HCS – Hot Springs, SD)
- Treasurer – IW McKinney (Augusta, GA)
- Newsletter Editor – Jana O'Leary (Central Texas - Temple)
- Nominations Chair – Judy Arnold (Eastern Kansas-Leavenworth)
- Congressional Liaison – Jerry Satterwhite (Birmingham, AL) - appointed
- Website Manager – Kate Buike (Puget Sound-Seattle, WA) – appointed

Social Work Leadership Council representatives are:

- William Lanning (Black Hills HCS – Fort Meade, SD) (7/07 – 6/09 term)
- Paul Burton (Los Angeles, CA) (7/06 – 6/08 term)
- Rocco Bagala (Puget Sound HCS – Seattle) (7/07 – 6/09 term)

Israel Jones, due to workload pressures, resigned as Newsletter editor. Cody Frasure, President, nominated Jana O'Leary to become interim Newsletter Editor, which was approved by the Executive Committee in the Spring 2008. Due to workload pressures, Sandra Dunn resigned as Vice President. Judy Arnold was elected to replace her.

A major reorganization occurred in VACO, starting in 2007, with the formation of a new Strategic Health Group called the Office of Care Coordination and Social Work. Kristin Day, former Deputy Director, Social Work Service was appointed Chief Consultant for the new Health Group. Carol Sheets was selected as the Director, Social Work Service, and will report to Kristin. Kristin determined the Social Work Leadership Council (SWLC) had become too large and unwieldy. The three AVASW elected members at large on the SWLC will likely be eliminated, but the AVASW President will remain on the SWLC.

2009

The composition of the Executive Committee changed to reflect changes in VACO and the evolution of AVASW. The three AVASW representatives to the Social Work Leadership Council (SWLC) are dropped as the SWLC was downsized. The AVASW President remains a member of the VACO SWLC. Three member-at-large positions were added. These changes were in response to recommendations from members to expand the representation on the Executive Committee.

Sandra Dunn, President Elect, declined to accept the President office. Judy Arnold had been elected Vice President/President Elect. Judy Arnold became President after Sandra Dunn declined the position, which left a vacancy in the Vice President position. Miguel Ortega was nominated to fill that position. An election in October 2009 resulted in the following:

President – Judy Arnold, VA Eastern HCS (from Vice President)

President Elect – Miguel Ortega, Houston, TX

Past President – Cody Frasure, Mountain Home, TN

Secretary – Galen Britain, Hot Springs, SD

Treasurer – IW McKinney, Augusta, GA

Nominations – Douglas Mitchell, Phoenix, AZ

Newsletter Editor – Jana O'Leary, Temple, TX

Congressional Liaison – Jerry Satterwhite, Birmingham, AL

Members at Large – (Leader) Rocco Bagala, Seattle, WA
(Staff) Darlene Contadino, Cincinnati, OH
(Retired) Paul Burton, Los Angeles, CA

Web Master – Barbara Fretwell, Palm Beach Gardens, FL

Barbara Fretwell assumed responsibility as Web Master in March. She made some alterations and enhancements to the AVASW website.

The Executive Committee voted to send \$1000 to the Fisher House program. The Executive Committee also voted to change the business year of the Association to the calendar year, from Jan 1st to Dec 31st.

2010

A check for \$1000.00 was sent to the Fisher House foundation 1-15-10 by IW McKinney, Treasurer. A nice thank you letter was received.

The Executive Committee explored and adopted methods for automating and updating membership records. IW McKinney, Treasurer, contacted active members for whom no e-mail address was listed in the membership records. Barbara Fretwell, Web Master, investigated various companies and various means of using the AVASW website as the focal point for maintaining membership records. Her successful efforts allow people to join or renew memberships on line using credit card payments. The prior method of mailing dues payment checks to the Treasurer still exists. However, members are encouraged to use the automated system. Paul Burton, Member At Large, sent e-mail messages and letters to former members advising them of the changes and inviting them to re-join AVASW.