

President Sailor, President Brodeur, Executive Director Saddler, Director Weston and Duffy, EATA Board, District and state officers, friends and honored guests. I feel like a cow, walking in tall grass, I am utterly tickled.

Seriously I am truly honored to be here with all of you, I would have never imagined this opportunity, as I am somewhat of a transplant from out west to the east.

Breaking into the crowd is sometimes difficult when you are not born there, this was not the case with the EATA. The closeness of the people in this Athletic Training Professional Association is like none other I have seen...and I have seen almost all of them. There is richness in EATA history as the EATA was the first professional association for ATs. I thank you for giving me this honor.

My experience in volunteerism began some 19 or 20 years ago when I was wet behind the ears and asked John Davis, Tim Sensor and Steve Bair if there was something I could do for the district. I expected to be helping behind the scenes with registration...perhaps stuffing the bags like the ones

you all got this weekend. That is when John said “we should have him run for District Secretary.” That’s how it happens, and the rest is of course history now but how grateful I am for their willingness to give me a shot...albeit from a definitive sense of desperation and blind faith.

These events are usually packed full of thank yous, and are boring as heck for the people in the room that don’t know the people I am about to mention. That said, perhaps those of you that don’t know them, should get to know this list of individuals...I promise they will make you a better AT and perhaps a better person. I would like to thank my fellow staff ATs and students at Clarion. Mike Chesterfield and Kristen Curreri ran the show at Clarion during my service as President of the NATA. They never skipped a beat and I could never have pulled it off without them. More on those guys later. Other thank yous go to the national, state and district officers I have worked with over the years. Joe Iezzi, Steve Bair, Tim Sensor, John Davis, Bob Ward, Jen Brodeur, Paul Ulucci, Larry Cooper, Tim Weston, George

Roberts, Tim Neal, Phil Donely, Denise Fandle, Mark Laursen, Doug Casa, Eve Becker-Doyle, Chuck Kimmel, David Saddler, Scott Sailor and yes...even AJ, and countless national, state and district officers and staff that have shaped me as a professional. Without their mentorship and the mentorship of too many others to mention, I would not be standing here today. Others of note are Charlie Thompson and Michael Goldenberg. When the three of us were district officers together we had what I validated through intense evidence based research, was the most diverse religious executive committee ever in the NATA. A Mormon, a Catholic and a Jew working hard for district 2. Kinda sounds like a “guy walks into a bar” joke doesn’t it. Mike and I, and others have often said that the best thing that ever happened to District 2, the EATA and the NATA was that I beat Mike in the election for District Secretary in 1997. Upon hearing that I had won, I immediately called Mike and asked that he become our district Webmaster. He was the first of its kind. What he has accomplished for those entities

from his talent with the web, and his meticulous leadership is well documented. I value Mike and Charlie's friendship and service very much.

As I contemplated the content for this address, I struggled a bit to find new material. I had the honor of addressing the membership in the past numerous times. So I felt that because of my previous service, it would be expected that I come up with some new message of eternal truth that would fill the heart of every AT and guest in the room. That is a tall order for anyone in this position particularly for me as I struggled for new material. So I will begin by quoting this from Gloria Steinem's book titled "Revolution from Within; A book on self esteem" she writes "I worship dead men for their strength forgetting my own." That might sound somewhat funny or disrespectful as the man we honor with this address is no longer with us...but here he is. We need to think more of ourselves and the contributions we are capable of providing. I believe that within every man and woman in this room and yes the entire profession; there

exists a spark, an existence of light that is either fanned into a consuming flame, or that is let burn out due to disappointment, entitlement, inaction, and in most cases, destructive terminal apathy. We have to think better of ourselves than that. From Shakespeare's famous play Hamlet we hear these defining words "What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a God -- the beauty of the world." Pinky Newel was the definition of action for this profession and I am confident that were he still with us, he would be working just as hard for the fire that burned in his chest as he did throughout his accomplished life. Now I want to tell you a story. Go figure! This story is about a young man named Nick. Nick was a wrestler at Clarion University and came to us in 2014 with bilateral post surgical shoulders. Initially I thought "you are kidding me, why did we EVER bring this kid to Clarion to be a Division 1 Wrestler." Nonetheless he was an accomplished wrestler

and was a committed young student athlete. Nick had that spark...He was in our AT facility EVERY day. He never missed his rehab. He was a polite and respectful young man that was a joy to work with and our students jumped at the chance to work with him, as did the full time staff. Nick made you feel good about your work as he continually thanked you for helping him. He was a young man that I would have approved introducing to one of my three daughters...I assure you there aren't a whole lot of people out there that has made that criteria. This spark that lived in him was fanned by him, he was committed to what was important to him. Like Nick, the people that I mentioned earlier are also committed to doing something about the profession they love. They too have acknowledged that spark and have worked hard to make this profession and this association better. I use them as an example because they are an easy target...most are here with us tonight. My question is what is the spark in you? Is it your profession? Is it some other interest either in or out of the profession? Is

it a local or national charity, the Special Olympics, the Boston Marathon and the list goes on and on? Both of my fellow ATs at Clarion are involved in things outside of the profession that actually promotes the profession. Mike is the President of the volunteer fire company in Clarion and is an experienced firefighter. Kristen donates her time out of the office at the local animal shelter. I promise you that every firefighter and staff member of those institutions understand exactly what an AT is, what we do and the importance of the health care services we can provide.

Notice that I used the term health care services...not techniques. K-tape is a technique, Gavalon is a technique, cupping is a technique, stim and ice is a couple of modalities, and individually they are not health care. Stim and ice and untra-sound on everyone that comes in the door is not health care. If that is all we are doing just to do “something”, we are not now nor will we ever provide the health care we are capable of providing. The reason we do these things is because our patients are experiencing pain or

dysfunction. It is the identification of that dysfunction that should dictate our plan of health care not the newest technique we see during the Olympics. We have seen more progress in the fields of medicine in the last 80 years than in the previous history of the world...why do we act as if those advances don't apply to us. I guess that little rant may be more appropriate for another time, but I hope you understand how it applies to us, and the point of this address.

Back to my wrestler Nick. Tragically Nick was killed in a vehicle accident on his way back to Clarion from Pittsburgh. He had spent a long weekend home with his family and was returning to school. It was a tragic day for all of us at Clarion. We had counselors for the wrestling team and staff to help the grieving process. However there was a group of people at Clarion that didn't get counseling...not that we needed it though because Athletic Trainers are a tough bunch that had rehabs to do, practices and games to work, paperwork, etc. We went on in the life of college athletics. One day I received a call from a man by the name of David

Middlemas. Dave is from New Jersey and I knew of him but had not worked with him or even associated with him at all. He asked how things were at Clarion and the Presidency and we chatted for a few minutes. I actually thought he was going to ask about... or yell at me about something regarding the NATA... but I was wrong. He mentioned that he had heard that we had a wrestler that was killed in a vehicle accident and asked how we were doing. I was a little taken aback because as I said I didn't really know Dave...I said fine and that we are going on with the things that the other 460 athletes needed etc. He then said, "no...how are YOU doing." We then spent the next better part of an hour talking about Nick and how I and we as a staff should move forward regarding that loss. I was grateful for his call and it was a short time later that I found out he was trained in peer-to-peer crisis management and was actually calling me as someone that perhaps could actually help someone in our situation. David has that spark and fanned it into a flame. He worked hard to be trained to be able to help others...Not

just ATs but people in crisis. As I looked into this further, I found out that this had been going on in New Jersey and in District 4 for quite sometime. ATs supporting ATs in crisis! Nobody understands the language and situation of our jobs like ATs. It was at that time that I felt that these services...ATs helping other ATs in this capacity, was something that the NATA may want to look at and perhaps be involved in both financially and in committee support. I was fortunate to be President of the NATA at that time so one of the last things I did as President was to ask the Board of Directors to approve moving forward with investigating this concept to see if we could do something about it. That magnificent Board of Directors approved moving forward and it has developed into something that I believe will be a member benefit that will be critically important for the individual AT and particularly one of our own in crisis. Rachael Oats is our NATA AED, and Katie Scott is our AT in residence at the NATA office. These two ladies have taken the board approval to move forward, and have turned it

into a program that has been supported financially by the NATA. This program as most of you know is called ATs Care and will consist of a District based committee of experts...ATs that are trained to be trainers in crisis management that will subsequently train ATs in the districts and states to be peer to peer support for ATs that are in crisis. The official roll out was last summer in Baltimore. The ATs care committee meets for the first time at the end of the month, and is center to my story about Nick.

My message is that we can do something about our professional lives before something like what happened to my wrestler occurs. Those of you that are leaders in this association...fan the spark that is already in you...find something that is useful to the professional association and act on it. Those of you that are not leaders...be one...find a way to put yourself in a position to do some good for others like you. Find a life experience in your professional or personal life and act. Put your phones down and act...Instagram and snap chat will be there when you return.

Wes Mallicone at Shippensburg had a liver transplant and even though at that time he was not in a leadership position professionally, he became involved at a high level in organ donor initiatives. His work is particularly important to me because as you know, I had a kidney transplant. The excuse that you don't have any time to do anything extra is, in my opinion, an excuse for the disease of apathy. You can't make a difference in the hall or in the bar...you have to get in the room. Brazilian lyricist and novelist Paulo Coelho said: "The world is changed by your example, not by your opinion."

Now back to my wrestler. Last summer before I had to give a presentation at the PATS meeting, I had been trying to fax a contract to the academic affairs department at CALU. Out in western PA when fax machines don't work, we still use the Pony Express and I was about ready to call for the horse and rider. Fax wasn't going through, there was the holiday weekend, fax wasn't going through, then on Wednesday of that week, the day I was to leave for the PATS meeting, the

fax went through and I received a confirmation email from Kathy Gavazzi at CALU academic affairs. I thought nothing of it and sent a “thank you so much” email back. I then received another email from her that read: Did you know my son Nick. I never put the two together. I answered her and described for her the good that would come from her son’s unfortunate passing and that I was going to speak of it during the meeting that week and now...subsequently this evening. Her and my email exchange on Wednesday morning was a validation for me regarding this new program and the importance of fanning the spark within us all. Our profession will only progress if we do all we can to make that happen. Don’t make the apathetic mistake of thinking that others will do it for you because you don’t have time. Or that you can’t provide the health care that you should because you don’t have time. Explore, dig deep, put yourself out there, don’t give up, never quit, find something you are passionate about, something that makes you tick, and put yourself in a position that will allow you to do something

for the profession, your place of work, or just something good that will enlighten or enrich the lives of others.

I appreciate you indulging me during this important evening.

I apologize if I have left anyone out of my thank yous. If that is the case, please forgive me. Again I am honored and truly grateful for this opportunity. Thank you so much and good evening.