



# AERODYNAMICS

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## NOW BOARDING

### Happy Anniversary!

By Sara Bennett, Editor

This, the December 2016, issue of AERODYNAMICS, marks the one-year anniversary of AER's relaunch of its newsletter for Canadian members. Based on the first four issues, it's clear that this country's professionals in the field of education and rehabilitation of the blind and visually impaired have much to offer and many reasons to be proud. Congratulations on your activities and achievements!

AERODYNAMICS is for you. Not only is it a venue for information and resource sharing, but also for highlighting and celebrating Canadians' contributions to the field. It has been my honour and privilege to be in communication with many of you as Editor. You make this newsletter possible. Keep sending in your comments, ideas and items for publication. All feedback is welcome. Let's make 2017 another year to remember!

Email me at <mailto:saralb@sympatico.ca>.

## BUSINESS CLASS

### Act Now: Two AER Education Discounts End December 31

Have you checked out the educational session recordings from the AER International Conference 2016 yet? Until December 31, 2016, AER members receive an exclusive discount for the CE Access Pass. AER members can purchase the CE Access Pass for \$200 (U.S.). This provides an excellent opportunity to grow your knowledge, skills and abilities, and earn continuing education hours at times most convenient for you. Over 50 sessions are

available. Visit <http://aerbvi.sclivelearningcenter.com/index.aspx?PID=10658> today!

Plus, when Canadians join AER or renew their membership by December 31, 2016, AER is proud to offer a voucher (a \$55 U.S. value) for one free session on the AER Knowledge Center. Once you join or renew at the AER Store, <http://aerbvistore.corecommerce.com>, the AER office will send you a voucher code. If you have questions, email [aer@aerbvi.org](mailto:aer@aerbvi.org).

To redeem your voucher:

- Go to the AER Knowledge Center at <http://aerbvi.sclivelearningcenter.com>.
- Log in or create an account.
- Hover over “My Account” and click “Redeem Voucher” (if you haven’t logged in, you will be prompted to do so at this time).
- Enter the code and click “Redeem Voucher” – once it is accepted, click “View Content”.
- Select the black icon for “AERBVI – Complimentary Session”. – Important: your browser must allow pop-ups to move forward to the next step.
- Select exactly one session to redeem – this session will be added to your “My Content” library.

## Branching into the Future at the 2016 NE/AER Conference

From November 16-18, 2016, more than 200 conference attendees gathered at the Portland Marriott at Sable Oaks in South Portland, Maine, for this year’s Northeast AER Chapter (which includes Quebec and the Maritimes) meeting. The theme of the Conference was “Rooted in Transition: Branching into the Future” and featured a keynote address titled “Creating the Can Do Spirit” by Jim Elliott of Diveheart, a non-profit organization that provides SCUBA diving lessons for people of all abilities. It was only fitting then that pre-conference and concurrent workshops focused on a wide range of client types and ways to enhance the skill sets of clients and professionals alike, not to mention a selection of sessions dedicated to the future of our profession. What’s more, Canadians were among the presenters.

On November 16, attendees gained valuable knowledge and learned new techniques in the two pre-conference workshops, “The Emotional Side of Diabetes” and “Strategies for Tactile Communication with Students Who Are Deaf-Blind, or Blind with Additional Disabilities.” Throughout the conference, attendees were treated to practical concurrent sessions like “Dog Guide Mobility: What O&M Specialists Need to Know”, “Tips for Teaching Technology”, “Google Maps for Itinerants” and “Introduction to Eccentric Viewing Training for the Busy CVRT.” Two intriguing workshops were “The Playground as the Perfect Place for Parents to Reinforce Early O&M Skills” and “A Walk in the Woods with Your Eyes Closed: Helping Children Learn About the Natural World through Sound.”

Canadian presentations included “Improving the Orientation, Navigation and Problem Solving Skills of Internet Users with Visual Impairments” by the University of Montreal’s Natalie Martiniello and the MAB-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre’s Isabelle Brennan and Michele Reed;

### Calendar of Events

January 12, 2017 – Call for Papers Deadline for AER International Orientation & Mobility Conference

March 2-4, 2017 – Joint AFB Leadership and Virginia AER Conference, Arlington, Virginia USA

March 25-26, 2017 – Canadian Interdisciplinary Vision Rehabilitation Conference, Waterloo, Ontario

April 26-28 – Penn-Del AER Conference, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania USA

July 19-22, 2017 – AER International Orientation & Mobility Conference, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania USA

July 25-29, 2018 – AER International Conference, Reno, Nevada USA

“New Professional Master’s Program in Visual Impairment at the School of Optometry, University of Montreal” by Adjunct Professor Anne Jarry; “How to be Attractive: Recruitment” by Hana Boxerman, NE/AER Board Representative for Quebec and the Maritimes, along with Dan Norris and Catherine Summ; and “The Effects of Group Rehabilitation on Depression in Individuals with Low Vision” by Hana Boxerman.

To close the conference, AER President Joe Catavero and Executive Director Lou Tutt talked about AER and NE/AER “branching into the future.” Speaking of which, next year’s NE/AER Conference will take place in Burlington, Vermont. You can monitor its planning by checking for updates on the NE/AER Conference website, <http://neaeer.umb.edu/?page=conference>.

## **Update: The Inaugural Canadian Interdisciplinary Vision Rehab Conference 2017**



Anne Riddering and Walter Wittich

As reported in the September issue of AERODYNAMICS, the first-ever Canadian Interdisciplinary Vision Rehabilitation Conference will take place during the weekend of March 25-26, 2017, at the School of Optometry and Vision Science at the University of Waterloo, Ontario. Registration is now open, with early bird registration ending December 15, 2016.

It promises to be an informative event. Three prestigious speakers will deliver keynote addresses: Dr. Walter Wittich, an Assistant Professor at the University of Montreal’s School of Optometry; Dr. Joan Stelmack, Director, Low Vision Service, Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary, University of Illinois; and AER member Anne Riddering, Director of Rehabilitation Services, Henry Ford Health System’s Vision Rehabilitation and Research Center of Michigan.

Over the weekend, conference delegates will attend sessions like “Impact of Low Vision on Patients’ Lives” and “Importance of Vision Rehabilitation & Impact on Quality of Life.” Seminars such as “Eye Structure, Visual Pathways & Functional Impact of Some Common Disorders”, “Vision and Falls”, “Vision and Driving”, “Acquired Brain Injuries: Impact, Assessment and Management” and “Technology in the Classroom: From JK Through Post-Secondary Education” will also be on tap, as will workshops on the fitting and training of field enhancement devices.

For the full schedule, speaker/presenter bios and registration information, visit <https://uwaterloo.ca/sight-enhancement/canadian-interdisciplinary-vision-rehabilitation-conference#main>.

## **ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES**

### **Zoom In & Redefine-Seniors Sensory Loss Partnership**

By Susan Manahan, Director of Development & Communications, Deaf-Blind Ontario Services

The Zoom In & Redefine-Seniors’ Sensory Loss Partnership originated when several community-based organizations identified an unmet need, and began exploring the feasibility of providing professional services, consultation, referrals, training, education and activities for seniors with

combined hearing and vision loss and/or for the organizations that work with them. Partners include CNIB-Deaf-Blind Services, Canadian Helen Keller Centre, and Deaf-Blind Ontario Services.

The Zoom In & Redefine Partnership is being launched at a crucial time. The number of seniors is projected to double by 2030, with vision loss in that population expected to reach pandemic proportions. Combine this with the prevalence of hearing loss in seniors (90% of seniors over the age of 80), and it's clear that proactive strategies are needed. Seniors with vision and hearing loss, as well as those who assist them, will need support--support that the Zoom In & Redefine Partnership can offer.

Each of the partner agencies has expertise in dual sensory loss and holds a strong belief that every person has the right to live an inclusive life. The purpose of the partnership is to redefine how society views seniors with combined hearing and vision loss. Although vision and hearing loss are part of the aging process, the idea that nothing can be done about it is a regrettable, long-held belief. The "smile and nod" reply that many seniors are known for often results in isolation, depression and misunderstanding.

Simple solutions are available. The Partnership is exploring opportunities to build awareness and developing training to provide support to seniors with combined hearing and vision loss, as well as their families or caregivers. Its person-centred, holistic service model will encompass a modern approach to communication, technical aids, housing, rehabilitation, peer support, social inclusion and advocacy resources. This approach will honour each senior's dignity, choice, self-determination and individuality, which enhances quality of life and quality of care.

With a fresh approach to working with seniors who have hearing and vision loss, isolation and depression can be replaced with social inclusion and contentment.

For more information, visit [Deaf-Blind Ontario Services](#) or [Zoom In & Redefine](#).

## FLIGHT PATHS

### Adjusting to Non-24

Do any of your clients regularly postpone or cancel appointments? Perhaps they're particularly listless or inattentive during lessons? Routinely neglect to complete homework assignments? While many factors could be in play including age, depression, general lack of motivation or family support, cognitive or learning disabilities etc., it's also possible they might be suffering from non-24-hour sleep-wake disorder, a chronic circadian rhythm disorder primarily affecting the totally blind.

What can you do? Try these strategies.

- Ask your client about their sleep patterns. Do they go to sleep and wake up at approximately the same time each day? Do they frequently nap during the day, either accidentally or intentionally? You could even ask such



questions as part of an initial assessment before lessons begin.

- Be as flexible with scheduling lessons as possible. It might be necessary to change appointment times from week to week, shorten lessons but increase their frequency, or increase repetition and breaks within lessons. Call ahead to ensure that clients can still make an appointment.
- Weather permitting, optimize alertness by opening a window to let in fresh air or uncover windows to let in sunshine. Since most clients with non-24 will be totally blind, neither glare nor photophobia should be a problem. And, while totally blind clients won't be perked up by seeing sunshine, feeling the warmth of sunshine might help.
- Optimize alertness by eliminating distractions whenever possible, such as closing the door to a room where the lesson is to take place or closing a window to reduce ambient noise.
- Adapt the amount of homework to the limitations of clients. Try calling ahead of a lesson to ask if clients are having any difficulty with homework or if it has been completed.

## PILOTS & PROJECTS

### Canadian Study Finds Kids Developing Myopia Sooner

University of Waterloo and CNIB researchers have found that kids are developing nearsightedness at younger ages than previous generations. The 2013-2015 pilot study, "Myopia Prevalence in Canadian School Children," assessed the eye health of 166 students, ages 6-8 and 11-13, at Waterloo Region schools. In the younger group, 6% were found to be nearsighted; in the older group, that number was 28.9%. In addition, 34% of students with myopia were not using glasses or any other form of correction.



Deborah Jones

Deborah Jones, study co-lead investigator and clinical professor at Waterloo's School of Optometry, says that usually kids develop myopia around ages 11-13, but now it's starting sooner. Studies around the world confirm the trend—all this according to a November 14, 2016, Toronto Star report.

Keith Gordon, CNIB vice president of research and project developer with the study, says children's eyesight could deteriorate for a longer period of time than ever before, with myopia theorized to progress until age 21. "I've heard this referred to as a myopia epidemic," he says.

Parents of students also filled out a questionnaire detailing the amount of time their children spent outdoors, their activities (such as computer and video games), and vision-related family history. Results showed that if one parent has myopia, the child is 2.5 times more likely to also get myopia. But the risk of the child developing nearsightedness was 14.3% lower with one hour spent outside per week. Other studies also bear this out.

Although the Canadian study found no direct link between "screen time" and myopia, Dr. Barry Thienes, president of the Canadian Association of Optometrists, recommends parents limit their kids' screen time to 15-20 minutes per hour and that children get regular eye exams.

[Click here to read the Toronto Star article.](#)

# COAST TO COAST

## Canada's Consultations: Accessibility Legislation & Poverty Reduction Strategy

As reported in the September 2016 issue of AERODYNAMICS, Canada's Federal Government is holding consultations with stakeholders to inform proposed accessibility legislation for persons with disabilities. These cross-country online and in-person consultations will continue through February 2017. For more details, visit <http://www.canada.ca/accessible-canada>.

The Federal Government will also hold consultations with Canadians about a proposed poverty reduction strategy. Low income levels affect many groups in the nation, including women, single-parent households, immigrants, visible minorities, indigenous peoples, seniors and those with disabilities. For the news release, visit <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1132059>. For the discussion paper, click the appropriate link in the "Latest Activities" list [here](#).

These are great opportunities for Canadians with disabilities, their families and the professionals who work with them to contribute to planned disability- and poverty-related policy.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Canada's Ratification Brings Marrakesh Treaty into Effect

On September 30, 2016, the Marrakesh Treaty came into force, three months after Canada became the key 20th nation to ratify it.

The Marrakesh Treaty, adopted on June 27, 2013, at a conference organized by the World Intellectual Property Organization in Marrakesh, Morocco, aims to facilitate access to published works for people with print disabilities, including the blind and visually impaired, by allowing the conversion of printed materials into accessible formats and the sharing of those accessible formats across borders. To come into effect, the Treaty required ratification by 20 countries. The first 20 nations to ratify were India, El Salvador, United Arab Emirates, Mali, Uruguay, Paraguay, Singapore, Argentina, Mexico, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, Australia, Brazil, Peru, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Israel, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala and Canada.

For further details, visit [the WIPO](#) and [Canadian Government](#) websites.

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