



AER Report

Vol. 33 No. 3 Fall 2016



U.S. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

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**Review of AER International
Conference 2016**

**New AER Board and
Division Leadership**

**2016 Ferrell Scholarship
Winners Announced**

Primer on Beacon Technology

...and much more!

On July 22, 2014, U.S. President Barack Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (Pub. L. 113-128); it amends the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended and reauthorized in the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Touted as a bipartisan effort to create a job-driven approach to a customer-centered workforce system, the WIOA brings focus to matching individuals with barriers to employment to jobs and training that are a good fit for them.

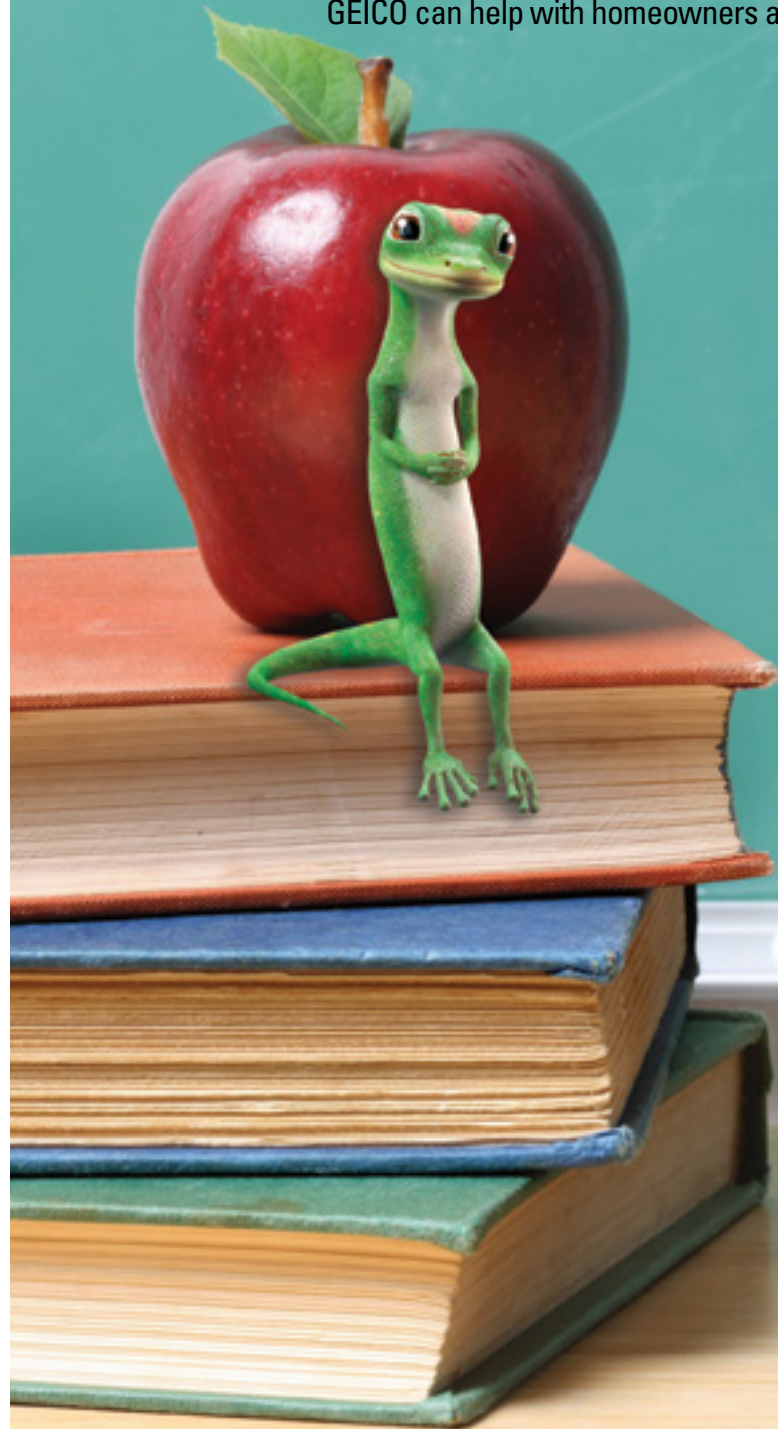
The law includes five titles, of which titles 4 and 5 apply to vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. Specifically, the five titles address:

1. Workforce development programs
2. Adult education and literacy
3. Amendments of the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933 (the law establishing a nationwide system of public employment offices)
4. Amendments of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
5. General provisions

Although the WIOA was signed in 2014 and formally enacted on July 1, 2015, the final regulations that define how the law works were not

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President's Message

by Joe Catavero, 2016-2018 AER president



My first few months serving as AER president have sped by and have been jam-packed with activity and information. I was fortunate to speak on behalf of AER at several conferences, beginning with the APH Annual Meeting in Louisville, Ky., in October. Together with Lou Tutt and Janie Blome, we presented on how AER reflected the Annual Meeting theme of "Bold. Strong. Together!"

Next on the circuit was the VisionServe Alliance meeting in San Antonio, Texas, November 2-5. I met with program directors from different private agencies to discuss some strategies AER is developing to help address key issues in our field. I believe being there, along with Lou, was received well and gave AER a committed presence.

Two days later, I was off to the AER New York State (NYS AER) Chapter Conference in Syracuse, N.Y. The NYS AER board was gracious in allowing me to speak for a while first thing Monday morning. I updated the attendees once again on items we are working on and reviewed AER's mission. It was very encouraging to see so many young people there, and I commend their commitment and willingness to make vital contributions to our field.

The next step on the journey was the AER Northeast Conference in Portland, Maine, November 16-18. I was

pleased to meet so many chapter members who are dedicated to the field and the people they serve.

At each conference, I heard good questions and suggestions from members, who viewed my being there, I believe, as an important gesture on the part of AER to show our commitment to our members. Listening to their thoughts and ideas through engaging and respectful discourse, I hope, helped ease some fears and anxieties. Hopefully the actions we take over these next several months will have a similar and dramatic effect as well.

I am honored to represent AER and look forward to what we can accomplish together over the next two years and beyond.

Sincerely,
Joe Catavero
2016-2018 AER President

AER Job Exchange

The Career Source for the Vision Community

Attention Job Seekers!

AER Job Exchange is the largest list of announcements for career opportunities in the field of blindness and visual impairment.

Bookmark the Job Exchange page at <http://jobexchange.aerbvi.org> and visit the site frequently for new listings.

Executive Director's Message



by Lou Tutt

This issue of the *AER Report* is centered on the U.S. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The rules and regulations associated with WIOA have caused much consternation among professional services providers in the field of blindness and visual impairment, particularly professionals who work with, place and counsel blind adults in the world of

work and work experience. I attended and spoke at the AER Mississippi Chapter Conference in mid-October. Right before my keynote address, the president of this chapter, Dorothy Young, delivered a passionate presentation on WIOA and the impact it could have, and is having, on the employment of persons who are blind or visually impaired.

Joe Catavero, president of AER, and I, participated in two national meetings in October/November where WIOA was the hot topic on the program agendas. The first was the Annual Meeting of the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) in Louisville, Ky. At this meeting Janie Blome, AER's president-elect and an employee with APH, scheduled a first-time 90-minute session on WIOA, presented by Neva Fairchild, AER board member and employee with the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB), and Mark Richert, also with AFB. Joe and I facilitated this presentation, which was specifically for ex officio trustees of APH who work primarily with adults who are blind or visually impaired; more than 25 people attended this joint effort by APH and AER!

In November, Joe and I went to the Fall 2016 VisionServe Alliance Meeting in San Antonio, Texas, and attended a very stimulating, interactive presentation on WIOA, and I mean stimulating! In addition to Neva, I want to extend a big thanks to Tony Candela and members of the AER Rehabilitation Counseling and Employment Division for their major contributions to AER's involvement in WIOA.

This fall, I enjoyed interacting with AER members both in person and through the wonders of technology. I attended and

spoke at the AER Northeast Chapter Conference right before Thanksgiving in South Portland, Maine, and enjoyed talking with AER members and guests at this conference, including two AER board members, Dr. Laura Bozeman, secretary, and Dr. John McMahon, board member-at-large representing AER District 4. Just before heading up to Maine, I met and spoke with members and guests at the AER Arkansas Chapter Fall Conference via Skype!! I am particularly grateful to have technology that brings us together, despite the distance. I thoroughly enjoyed my time with both groups and welcome opportunities to connect with more members.

Membership continues to be a challenge for most membership organizations, including AER, as we are still below 4,000 members. Since coming to AER as executive director five years ago, my motto remains the same: "Recruit, Retain and Regain." AER members — please join me in this important pursuit.

I am pleased to report that President Catavero and the AER Executive Committee have appointed former AER President Jim Adams as AER's official Parliamentarian for the 2016-2018 biennium!

I wish all AER members and their families the best of holidays in the remaining weeks of 2016 and a wondrous beginning to 2017!

Thank you,
Lou



Drop Lou a line

Whether you have a question, an idea, or just want to say hi, he wants to hear from you!

Email lou@aerbvi.org

Announcing Upcoming Sleep Studies in Blind Children and Teens

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with daytime sleepiness?**

Non-24-hour Sleep-Wake Disorder (Non-24) occurs primarily in individuals who are totally blind. People with Non-24 have a “body clock” that does not reset daily. This can lead to problems with sleep and/or excessive daytime sleepiness.

We are looking for parents or guardians of children and teens (0-17 yrs of age) who are legally blind. You can help researchers understand Non-24 by taking a brief phone survey. In addition, you will have the opportunity to be informed of upcoming clinical studies recruiting in your area. The investigational medication being studied for children is approved for use in adults.

Survey participants need to be parents or guardians of children who are:

- 0-17 years of age
- legally blind, and
- have sleep problems and/or daytime sleepiness

Collected information will be kept strictly confidential.

For each completed survey, a donation of \$24 will be made to organizations that support people with blindness.

If you want to participate in the survey, please call toll-free 1-844-361-2424 Monday-Friday between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM ET, or you can complete the survey online at the following website: www.non24registry.com. Thank you!

AER Board of Directors 2016–2018



The AER Board of Directors comprises professionals from across the United States and Canada and from various areas in the field of education and rehabilitation. Elected every two years, these individuals provide leadership in moving AER forward to constantly improve benefits and services to the professionals who work with people who are blind and visually impaired.

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AER Board Meeting Highlights

July and September 2016

The last meeting of the 2014-2016 AER Board of Directors was July 22, 2016, in Jacksonville, Fla., at the AER International Conference 2016. During the meeting the board took the following actions:

- Directed AER to join the Rehabilitation Counseling Coalition (no cost)
- Appointed task forces to study the shortage of vision professionals and to address issues associated with transition to Unified English Braille
- Agreed that where proposed amendments to AER Bylaws are recommended and updates to the AER Policy and Procedures Manual are recommended, there will be representatives from large division, other (small) divisions, chapter presidents and districts on these committees/task forces
- Agreed to become an external partner with the Council of

Exceptional Children, Division on Visual Impairments and Deafblindness relative to CEC/DVIDB standards

- Directed AER to seek recognition from the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) for the AER University Review program to become a formal accrediting body by July 31, 2018

The 2016-2018 Board of Directors held its first meeting September 30, 2016, via teleconference. The board took the following actions:

- Granted provisional status to the Neurological Vision Impairment Division
- Approved an O&M Division request for a task force to explore liability insurance options

AER Business Meeting Held in Jacksonville

The AER Business Meeting was held July 23, 2016, at the AER International Conference in Jacksonville, Fla. President Christy Shepard reported on the activities and accomplishments of AER over the last biennium. Jim Deremeik, AER Bylaws Committee chair, presented a number of proposed amendments to the AER bylaws for member consideration and discussion. The following amendments were accepted:

- Article II, Section 4: Membership dues to include up to three divisions at no additional charge
- Article IX, Section 1: Change in wording about voting from "majority" to "greatest number of votes"
- Article XI, Section 4.1: AER chapters should obtain liability insurance

Members adopted five resolutions, which may be viewed online at <https://aerbvi.org/about/aer-resolutions>:

- Accessing Third-Party Payment for Vision Rehabilitation Professionals and Services
- Advocacy for Appropriate Learning Media Assessments
- Autonomous and Connected Vehicles
- BANA Board Representation and Collecting Input from Membership

- Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers and Students with Visual Impairments to Teach the Expanded Core Curriculum

Other business meeting activities included

- Congratulations to Past President Jim Adams on the success of the AER International Conference 2016
- Recognition of Christy Shepard for her service as AER board president from 2014-2016
- Passing of the gavel to Joe Catavero, incoming AER board president, 2016-2018
- Induction and swearing in of 2016-2018 AER International Board of Directors



Passing of the gavel from Christy Shepard, 2014-2016 AER president, to Joe Catavero, 2016-2018 AER president

WIOA Cont. from page 1

completed until August 2016. Before finalizing the regulations, the government issued five notices of proposed rule-making (NPRMs) to solicit public comment, because the WIOA requires reporting of new data on the part of its stakeholders. Among those stakeholders are state VR agencies. Consequently, AER submitted comments (see *AER Report*, Summer 2015) to ensure the viewpoints of vision rehabilitation professionals and the people they serve would be considered.

Changes in reporting

The WIOA requires VR agencies to collect and report additional data about the people served through their agencies. “The standards and indicators used for reporting are now the same across all programs that provide employment services,” explained Neva Fairchild, AER board representative for Adult Services Divisions. “The new reporting requirements essentially hold the VR system to higher standards than before, because the indicators used to measure agency effectiveness will be the same for all people with barriers to employment, whether the barrier is because they have a disability, are a veteran, have a criminal record, need childcare, etc.”

One example of the increased standards is the new measure for employment outcome. Currently, VR agencies report as successful outcomes those individuals with disabilities who are employed at least 90 days and for whom all VR program services are complete. Under WIOA’s regulations, individuals who are closed successfully will be monitored for employment status two and four quarters after program completion (i.e., at six months and one year). “This new indicator may seem daunting,” said Fairchild, “but it encourages VR counselors to step up their game—to find good, solid job matches and accommodations for their clients. With or without this new indicator, the outcome is the same: We want people to find competitive, integrated jobs where they can be successful and stay employed. The difference is that now, we need to be even more intentional in our actions.”

One notable change to employment outcomes that particularly affects vision rehabilitation professionals is the elimination of the homemaker closure. “When this outcome was first developed, it was intended for those individuals who opted to stay home so their spouse or partner could work full-time. However, this category eventually became the ‘catchall’ for those individuals who received VR services but did not find a job outside the home,” explained Fairchild, who is also the independent living and employment specialist with the American Foundation for the Blind in Dallas. Individuals receiving VR services who already have the homemaker closure as their goal are grandfathered in, but they must complete their program early in 2017. Under WIOA, going forward individuals with disabilities who choose not to seek employment must go through independent living services to learn basic life and home-keeping skills.

Another change to outcomes is the tightened regulations on subminimum wage employment, or being placed in a sheltered workshop. The WIOA adds a new section, Section 511, to the Rehabilitation Act. It essentially requires VR agencies to provide an increased number of services before determining a youth is unable to obtain competitive, integrated employment and is therefore best served in a subminimum wage job.

Besides employment outcome indicators, another new indicator is whether or not an individual receiving VR services has achieved or is working toward a postsecondary diploma or certificate. Previously, federal regulations did not require collecting such information. “This indicator is important,” explained Fairchild, “because it means the federal government recognizes that improving a person’s circumstances through better skills and training can lead to better jobs and therefore, better chances of earning a good wage.”

Changes in transition programming

The other major changes that WIOA brings are new stipulations for transition programming for students and youth. “What’s notable here is that all states will now have transition programs for students and youth who are blind or visually impaired,” said Fairchild. “Here in Texas, we’ve had transition services for blind kids since the 1980s; however, kids with general disabilities were not eligible for transition services until age 18. Waiting till a person is 18 to begin talking about work is not the best way to prepare them for success! WIOA is striving to change that and to make transition efforts consistent across the nation.”

Under WIOA, states are required to spend 15% of their federal grant money on Pre-Employment Transition Services, or Pre-ETS, for transition-aged students, who are individuals, ages 14-21, who are still in secondary school. Pre-ETS activities fall into one of five categories: (1) job exploration counseling; (2) work-based learning experiences (e.g., internships and apprenticeships); (3) counseling on opportunities for enrollment in either comprehensive transition programs or post-secondary educational institutions; (4) workplace readiness training to develop the necessary social and independent living skills to maintain long-term employment; and (5) instruction in self-advocacy.

WIOA also requires states to spend 50% of their supported employment dollars on transition-aged youth with disabilities. Transition-aged youth are individuals, ages 14-24, who are not necessarily in school. Previously, no stipulations existed on how much states could spend on these youth, and in fact, most monies went toward services for adults. Now, the regulations will force VR agencies to look more closely at their transition-aged youth and strengthen programs and services for them.

“I see the focus on transition-aged students and youth as a step in the right direction,” said Fairchild. “We don’t want

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people with vision loss to spend the first 10 years of their adult life preparing to work. We need to prepare them earlier so the notion of work and career is part of their self-identity. The concept of work has to start early, just as it does for kids without disabilities. We start by asking them, 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' If we get these kids to think about work and that it is expected, they are more likely to think of themselves as workers and therefore, become a worker when they reach adulthood."

What the changes mean for VR professionals

The WIOA's changes will affect how agencies track their activities. For the most part, VR professionals can expect forms (RSA 911) to reflect the changes in data reporting. However, in practice Fairchild notes, "Many VR counselors are probably already doing activities encouraged by the WIOA. It's just a matter of seeing if those activities fit under the definition of Pre-ETS or, with adults, considering postsecondary education as part of their VR program." Certainly, the VR closure follow-up visits at six months and one year will require some time and effort. Said Fairchild, "It is up to each state to determine who will handle the follow-up—whether it will be a subcontractor or the VR counselor."

Ultimately, the WIOA strives to build synergy among those professionals who work to minimize barriers to employment, by creating opportunities for them to collaborate and find creative solutions for their clients. "Because VR agencies now have Pre-ETS regulations, we'll see school districts, teachers of the visually impaired, and VR agencies and transition

counselors work together to identify and plan Pre-ETS opportunities for students," said Fairchild. "Having that 15% funding stipulation opens doors for great educational experiences like paid internships. Together, we can seek new opportunities to get kids into services. Let's get them off the couch, on their feet and learning new skills."

While critics of the WIOA regulations worry that requiring states to spend 15% on transition-aged students will take away from adult services, Fairchild argues otherwise. "The emphasis on transition-aged students and youth will eventually have a profound impact on this country's young people with disabilities," she said, "because they will be given opportunities that weren't possible in the past. Even for kids in states where there were transition programs, they'll have more doors opened for them because of the dedicated funding and collaborative environment. If we are ever going to move the needle on the employment of the blind and visually impaired, this is what we need."

The old adage goes, "Change is scary," and certainly the WIOA is an intimidating change. However, it appears to be a step in the right direction. It supports VR agencies by holding them to higher standards that make them equal with other employment agencies. At the same time, it promotes students and youth with disabilities by encouraging educators and transition professionals to consider career education earlier and in more meaningful ways. "Creativity makes success happen," said Fairchild. "By bringing employment and education professionals together, the WIOA helps foster the kind of creative energy we need to help those we serve find long-term, meaningful employment."



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3 AER presidents:
Jim Adams (2012-2014),
Christy Shepard (2014-2016) and
Joe Catavero (2016-2018)

AER International Conference 2016

Connect ▶ Collaborate ▶ Achieve



photo by John Kelly



Audience at opening session of AER International Conference 2016

photo by John Kelly



Vera Jones, motivational speaker, giving the keynote at the opening session



photo by John Kelly

Attendees of AER's biennial International Conferences have long said that networking with colleagues near and far is one of the most valuable benefits of going. The recent gathering in Jacksonville, Fla., was no different! Vision professionals from around the world came to **Connect, Collaborate and Achieve**, upholding this year's conference theme. AER members connected, meeting face-to-face to collaborate on issues that are important to the field. And in the end, the profession achieved growth for both practitioners and the people they serve, as the community came together to discuss creative and cutting-edge solutions to age-old challenges.

AER wishes to thank all the professionals who came to the conference, the generous sponsors and exhibitors who supported the event, and the AER Florida Chapter and its volunteer corps who invested countless hours to ensure we had a good time, both at the conference hotel and on the town in beautiful Jacksonville. Thanks also to the conference program committee, chaired by Jim Adams, for putting together an outstanding array of presentations and workshops, and for creating regular networking opportunities for AER members to

Poster Session





photo by John Kelly

Breakout session, "Introducing the New Braille Note Taker Guide" with demo by Stephanie Herlich and Yurika Vu.



photo by John Kelly

Breakout session with Tiehan Liu on "The Recession Proof Jobs for the Blind and Visually Impaired"



photo by John Kelly

Breakout session, "Discover a French Mobility Program Based on Electronic White Cane"

exchange ideas. The breadth of topics and depth of expertise at the AER International Conference is what distinguishes this event from all other events in the vision field. Come back in 2018, when we convene in Reno, Nev., for what promises to be another stellar event!

The preconference programming included the MacFarland Seminar, which focused on pediatric ophthalmology. HumanWare presented two workshops, one on each of their lead products, Trekker Breeze and BrailleNote Touch. Both sessions were popular, and attendees enjoyed getting first-hand experience on using the technologies. AER also presented the AER LIFT workshop, which helps build leadership skills for chapter and division leaders.

The conference began with an energetic keynote by television sports reporter and motivational speaker Vera Jones. Speaking on "Exceeding the Vision," Jones recounted her experience as the mother of a son with visual impairments. Relying on her basketball and coaching skills (from her days as a Hall-of-Fame Scholar-Athlete at Syracuse University), she taught her son that he may have lost his sight but he

Continued on p. 14

MacFarland Seminar on pediatric ophthalmology



photo by Pera Yee Kee



Participant using HumanWare TrekkerBreeze at preconference workshop



Poster Session



Silent Auction

photo by John Kelly

Thank You

AER International Conference Sponsors



American Printing House for the Blind, Inc.

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photo by Petra Yee Kee



still has vision. The idea of staying true to our unique vision of what we want to accomplish rang true for everyone in the audience. It was the perfect message to rev up our enthusiasm for the days of learning and sharing ideas that lay ahead.

The conference featured a special general session on employment, which highlighted some of the recent changes introduced by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Attendees heard from AER members who are seasoned experts working in vocational rehabilitation and who shared creative, out-of-the-box thinking when it comes to employment and individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

To close the conference, attendees heard from Enrique Oliu, a popular radio broadcaster who is a graduate of the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB). Oliu delivered an inspirational



photo by John Kelly

Exhibit hall



photo by John Kelly

message on the conference theme, "Connect. Collaborate. Achieve," emphasizing how each conference attendee plays an important role in the lives of the people they serve. He also gave high praise to the teachers and staff at FSDB for helping him achieve success.

Rounding out the conference experience were hits such as the ever-popular exhibit hall, which featured exhibitors from the United States and Canada; the silent auction, which helped raise funds for AER's new website; and the well-attended poster session which showcased the innovative and exciting research happening in the field of blindness.

Finally, AER members participated in a productive general business meeting, voting on changes to the bylaws and approving several resolutions as well as welcoming the new 2016-2018 AER Board of Directors.

It's hard to believe the conference is over, but we can still feel the ripple effects of the energy and enthusiasm shared by participants over the five days. We look forward to gathering again in two years in Reno, Nev.

Enrique Oliu, keynote speaker, at the closing session



Kristine Williams and Tony Candela at the opening session



photo by John Kelly



Kay Ferrell, Kathryn Botsford and Eileen Sifferman enjoying the conference



photo by John Kelly



photo by John Kelly



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 - AER International Orientation & Mobility Conference 2013
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All sessions are eligible for credit from ACVREP

<http://aerbvi.sclivelearningcenter.com>



2016 AER award winners (pictured left to right): Joe Helm, Lauren Lieberman, Tuck Tinsley, Paul Ponchillia, Gale Watson, Cliff Olstrom and Audrey Graves. (Not pictured: Linda Lyle and John Mascia)

During the AER Awards Luncheon at the AER International Conference 2016, the association honored eight individuals and one chapter for their outstanding contributions to the field. Said 2016 AER Awards Committee Chair Kathryn Botsford, "Our profession is filled with colleagues whose work inspires, motivates and sometimes even amazes us. Recognizing our members for their dedication, commitment, service and leadership in the education, rehabilitation and employment of people with visual impairments is a way to honor and lift up our profession and the quality of all of our work."

AER extends special thanks to the 2016 AER Awards Committee for their work: Kathryn Botsford (chair), Joe Catavero, Michelle Clyne, Nathalie DeWit, Mindy Ely, Olaya Landa-Vialard, Robin Loen, Keiko Namekata and Becky Smallwood.



2016 Bauman Award recipient Tuck Tinsley with Bill Dougherty

The Mary K. Bauman Award honors an individual who has made significant and outstanding contributions to the education of children and youth who are blind or visually impaired.

Dr. Tuck Tinsley III, the 2016 Bauman Award recipient, served as president of the American Printing House for the Blind from 1989 to 2016. A North American delegate to both the World Blind Union and the International Council of Education of the Visually Impaired, Tinsley has received numerous awards, including the Council of Schools for the Blind's William H. English Leadership Award (2004), the American Council of the Blind's Robert Bray Distinguished

Service Award (2008), VisionServe Alliance's Excellence in Leadership Award (2009) and the American Foundation for the Blind's Migel Medal (2010). He has served on the boards of AER and APH and is currently on the board of the Kentucky School for the Blind Charitable Foundation (KSBCF).



2016 Shotwell Award recipient Gale Watson with Matt Hogel

The Ambrose M. Shotwell Memorial Award honors an individual who has made significant outstanding contributions to the personal adjustment or rehabilitation of adults who are blind or visually impaired.

Continued on p. 18

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Gale Watson, the 2016 Shotwell Memorial Award recipient, is national director for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Blind Rehabilitation Service (BRS). She writes and oversees the publication of blind rehabilitation policy documents and contributes to drafts of federal regulations associated with blind rehabilitation. Watson served twice as chair of the AER Low Vision Rehabilitation Division and has served four terms on the Board of ACVREP as chair, vice-chair and secretary. She has received several AER Low Vision Rehabilitation Division awards and was recognized by the Foundation Fighting Blindness with the National Community Awareness Award. She has served on the *JVIB* Editorial Advisory Board and has been a peer reviewer for numerous publications.



2016 Allen Award recipient Linda Lyle with Alicia McAninch

The Alfred Allen Award honors professionals who have spent their career in direct service to people with visual impairments. Through the extent and quality of the services that they have provided, these professionals exemplify the character, dedication, insight and sharing that epitomize the spirit of and commitment to direct service to people with visual impairments.

The 2016 recipient of the Allen Award is **Linda Lyle**, superintendent of the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. A tireless advocate for families of young children who have multiple developmental challenges, Lyle spearheaded a unique partnership between a school for the blind and a university, which has resulted in a large Vision Impairment Program, scholarships for New Mexico teachers who enroll in the program and highly qualified VI professionals in public schools who are mentored by her school's staff. She currently serves as secretary of the Council of Schools for the Blind and as president of the AER New Mexico Chapter. She is a past president of the AER Infant & Preschool Division and a participant on advisory committees for the American Printing House for the Blind.



2016 McAulay Award recipient John Mascia with BJ LeJeune

The John H. McAulay Award honors professionals who have contributed outstanding efforts and achievements leading to the placement of people with visual impairments in productive employment.

The 2016 McAulay Award recipient, **John Mascia**, became the 17th president of the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind (AIDB) on January 1, 2013. He holds a doctorate in audiology and has served as an audiologist at New York's Terence Cardinal Cooke Health Care Center and at Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults, where he also served as national director of field services. In 2005, he joined AIDB as executive director of the Gentry Facility and Regional Centers. He has received several AER Alabama Chapter awards, the Alabama Association of the Deaf Alabama Citizen Award and the Audiology Foundation of America Professional Leadership Award. Mascia is also a member and past president of Lions Club International.



2016 MacFarland Award recipient Cliff Olstrom with Pat Leader

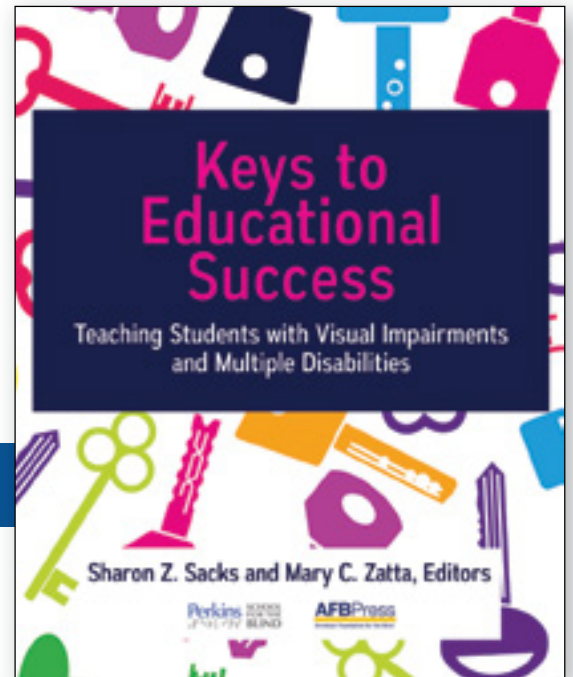
Continued on p. 21

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Awards Cont. from page 19

The *Douglas C. MacFarland Award* honors individuals who have provided leadership in the field of blindness and visual impairment and are now retired from the field. These individuals made innovative, significant or outstanding contributions to the education or rehabilitation of people who are visually impaired, through either direct service, professional organizations, research, literature and/or preparation of professionals.

Clifford Olstrom, 2016 MacFarland Award recipient, began his career in O&M at the Florida Bureau of Blind Services Rehabilitation Center and later, Hillsborough County Public Schools in Tampa, Fla. From 1971 to 2013, he served as the executive director of the Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind. An active leader in the field, he was the first president of the Florida Association of Agencies Serving the Blind in 1978-1979, president of the AER Florida Chapter in 1988-1989 and treasurer of AER from 2011 to 2016. Olstrom was the recipient of the Excellence in Leadership Award from Vision Serve Alliance in 2012 and the Irwin Schloss Advocacy Award from the American Foundation for the Blind in 2013.



2016 Bledsoe Award recipients Lauren Lieberman and Paul Ponchillia (right) with John McMahon

The *C. Warren Bledsoe Award* recognizes a particularly noteworthy piece of literature in the field of blindness.

The 2016 Bledsoe Award recipients are **Dr. Lauren Lieberman, Dr. Paul Ponchillia and Dr. Susan Ponchillia** (posthumous) for their publication, *Physical Education and Sports for People with Visual Impairments and Deafblindness: Foundations of Instruction*. Lieberman, a Distinguished Service Professor in the Kinesiology Department of The College at Brockport, State University of New York (SUNY), is founder and director of Camp Abilities, an educational sports camp for children with visual impairments. Paul Ponchillia is professor emeritus and former chair of the Department of Blindness and

Low Vision Studies at Western Michigan University. He has served on the AER board, was associate editor of *JVIB* and received the AER Bledsoe Award (with Susan Ponchillia) in 1978 and the AER Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Division Bruce McKenzie Award. Susan Ponchillia served on the faculty of the Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies at Western Michigan University for 25 years. She received numerous awards and honors for her work, including the AER C. Warren Bledsoe Award, the *JVIB* Peer Reviewer of the Year Award and the AER Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Division Bruce McKenzie Award. She succumbed to breast cancer in October 2013.



Audrey Graves, president, AER Nebraska chapter, accepts the 2016 Outstanding Chapter Award from Sally Giittinger.

The *AER Outstanding Chapter Award* honors AER chapters whose membership and service activities have been outstanding.

The **AER Nebraska Chapter** received the 2016 Outstanding Chapter Award for its focus on membership recruitment, benefits and involvement. To support positive change, the chapter built a beneficial partnership with the Nebraska Center for the Education of Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired, which serves as the school for the blind for Nebraska; provided financial incentives to members to attend state and national conferences to support professional development; and hosted successful membership drives that coincided with annual fall and spring statewide conferences and offered special incentives. Through its efforts, the chapter won the AER chapter membership campaign in 2014 by gaining the largest percentage of growth over other chapters (46%).

Awards Cont. from page 21



Mary Nelle McLennan (left) stands with Joe Helm, recipient of the inaugural Richard L. Welsh Chapter Leadership Award and Julia Brock. McLennan is the widow of Rick Welsh for whom the award is named.

*Established in 2016, the **Richard L. Welsh Chapter Leadership Award** recognizes professionals who have contributed outstanding efforts in AER chapter leadership. They demonstrate achievement as leaders who embody the qualities of honesty, common sense, good decision making, communication, commitment to the field of*

visual impairment and blindness, and respect for diverse opinions. Recipients inspire new membership and leadership in chapters and beyond, mentor new professionals in the field, and invite collaboration to promote AER membership and recruitment.

The inaugural recipient of the Welsh Chapter Leadership Award is **Joseph P. Helm, Jr.**, retired assistant commissioner from the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. In 1995 Helm was asked to administer Alabama's Business Enterprise Program (BEP), nationally known as the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Program. The program serves over 100 legally blind men and women vendors, and under Helm's leadership it doubled its sales from \$14 million to \$28 million. For 20 years, Helm served on the AER Alabama Chapter board and is the current chapter treasurer. He also represented District 5 on the AER International Board from 2008 to 2010. Helm is most proud of the assistance he received from Alabama Chapter members to support and develop the Billy Don Sims Scholarship Fund, which supports the educational interest of students desiring to work in the field of blindness for many years to come.

AER Announces 2016 Ferrell Scholarship Winners

AER is pleased to announce Natalie Martiniello, of Saint-Leonard, Quebec, and Scott Lacey, of Kalamazoo, Mich., as the recipients of the 2016 William and Dorothy Ferrell Scholarships. Each student will receive a \$1,000 scholarship toward their university tuition.

Martiniello is working on her doctorate in vision science (vision rehabilitation) at the University of Montreal in Quebec, Canada. In her application, she said, "I have chosen to pursue doctoral studies because, in the long-term, I hope to engage in further research that explores new methods and instructional strategies. I also hope to teach within a university program that prepares future rehabilitation professionals. As a clinician who is congenitally blind, I feel (and hope) that my first-hand experience and perspective will be of benefit to future professionals."

Lacey is working on his masters in vision rehabilitation therapy and rehabilitation counseling at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. He plans to work with adults and possibly elderly adults. "I have chosen this field because I have always wanted to be in a helping capacity for a professional career. I have a real passion to let individuals receive the type of training that I received when I lost my vision to pursue whatever their goals may be. Specifically, I am doing the VRT program because I like the hands-on aspect of teaching others a new skill or adaptation to something they already know. I am pursuing my masters in rehabilitation counseling because I also like the case management and psychological support that I will be able to provide."

The Ferrell Scholarships were named in honor of William and Dorothy Ferrell of Merritt Island, Fla., who in 1981 decided that they wanted to establish a scholarship fund for visually impaired students who wished to pursue careers in education or rehabilitation of persons who are blind or visually impaired. The Ferrells contributed \$1,000 to get the program started in 1981, and the AER board of directors voted to support the fund in 1984. The first Ferrell Scholarships were awarded at the 1986 AER International Conference in Chicago, at which Mr. and Mrs. Ferrell were present. Both Ferrells have since passed away—William in 2004 and Dorothy in 2012.

The Ferrell Scholarships are a wonderful tradition in AER, and we are happy to be able to continue the tradition. However, it takes money! AER members and friends are encouraged to donate to the tax-exempt fund at any time throughout the year. Send donations to AER, 1703 N. Beauregard Street, Suite 440, Alexandria, VA 22311-1744. A contribution to the Ferrell Fund makes an excellent memorial gift in honor of someone who has been a part of AER or a friend to persons who are blind and visually impaired.

Thanks go to Laura C. Brown (chair), Sheryl Brown, Kay Ratzlaff, Nancy Sanders, Martha Simmons and Jay Stitely (posthumous), the AER Scholarship Committee for 2014-2016, for their work in selecting this year's recipients.

2018

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AER

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**Association for Education and Rehabilitation
of the Blind and Visually Impaired**

AER Division Leadership 2016-2018

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cmartin@alliedinstructional.com

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Division on Aging (Div. 15)

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Itinerant Personnel (Div. 16)

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International Services and Global Issues (Div. 18)

Kevin McCormack
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Physical Activity and Recreation (Div. 19)

Matthew Mescall
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Neurological Visual Impairment (Div. 20)

Susan Sullivan (Interim)
ssullivan@aph.org

AER Division Award Recipients

The following divisions presented awards at the AER International Conference 2016 in Jacksonville, Fla. Congratulations to all the recipients!

Rehabilitation Counseling & Employment Services Division (Div. 2)

Louis Vieceli Award
Joseph A. Strechay

Multiple Disabilities & Deafblind Division (Div. 3)

Virginia Sowell Award
Catherine Nelson

Samuel Gridley Howe Award
Michelle Clyne

Low Vision Rehabilitation Division (Div. 7)

Meritorious Award for Outstanding Lifetime Contributions to Low Vision
Robert McGillivray

Outstanding Contributions to Literature and/or Research in Low Vision

Maureen Duffy

Outstanding Contributions to the Low Vision Rehabilitation Division of AER

Shireen Ali

Outstanding Contributions in Direct Services to Individuals with Low Vision

Annie Riddering

Orientation & Mobility Division (Div. 9)

Lawrence E. Blaha Memorial Award
Sandra J. Rosen

Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award

Marjorie Wood

Orientation and Mobility Citation of Excellence for Direct Service

Raychel E. Callary

Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Division (Div. 11)

Susan and Paul Ponchillia Publication Award
Maureen Duffy

Elizabeth Lennon Meritorious Achievement Award
Polly Abbott

Bruce McKenzie Award
John M. McMahan

Division on Aging (Div. 15) Lifetime Achievement Award
Paige Berry and Judy Scott

Division Docket

New AER division earns provisional approval

As chair of the Council of Divisions Chairs, I am happy to announce the approval of a new AER division with provisional status until the AER International Conference 2018 in Reno, Nev.

The new division is the Neurological Visual Impairment, which is already off to an exciting start. (See their report below.) I encourage you to join this division and become active members to help create educational materials and address this important issue.

When the AER Board of Directors meets in Reno in 2018, it will grant full status to the new division if it keeps and maintains the requirements of provisional status until that time.

On behalf of the AER Board of Directors and the AER executive director, congratulations to all the members who supported the creation of this new division.

Jill Brown
Chair, Council of Division Chairs

Rehabilitation Counseling and Employment Services (Div. 2)

At the most recent meeting of the AER Mississippi Chapter, three Rehabilitation Counseling and Employment Services Division members received awards.

Dr. Michele McDonnell received the Employment Development Award, B.J. LeJeune received the Sam Johnson President's Award and Kendra Farrow received the Katherine Stroble Blind Career Achievement Award. (For more information about these awards, see Chapter News.)

Multiple Disabilities & Deafblind (Div. 3)

The division plans to host two webinars in 2017. One will be led by Lauren Lieberman and will cover ECC in recreation and leisure for individuals with deafblindness/multiple disabilities. The other will be led by Amy Parker and will cover the OHOA modules and the NICE certification for interveners.

We awarded two division awards at the AER International Conference 2016 in Jacksonville, Fla. Michelle Clyne received the Samuel Gridley Howe Award for Outstanding Practice and Cathy Nelson received the Virginia Sowell Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Field.

Low Vision Rehabilitation (Div. 7)

The Low Vision Rehabilitation Division recognized four outstanding leaders in our field at the AER International Conference in Jacksonville, Fla., this past July. Shireen Ali received the award for Outstanding Contributions to the Low Vision Rehabilitation Division. The award for Outstanding

Contributions to Literature and/or Research in Low Vision was presented to Maureen Duffy, and the award for Outstanding Contributions for Direct Services to Individuals with Low Vision was awarded to Annie Riddering. Robert McGillivray was presented with our highest honor, the Meritorious Award for Outstanding Lifetime Contributions to Low Vision. We salute these leaders and thank them for their unyielding service to the field of low vision.

At the conference we also welcomed our new board members: Kelly Lusk, chair; Matthew Hogel, chair-elect; and Dawn Adams, secretary/treasurer. Shireen Ali continues on the board as past-chair.



Low Vision Rehabilitation Division award recipients (left to right) Annie Riddering, Robert McGillivray, and Maureen Duffy

Orientation & Mobility (Div. 9)

The O&M Division Executive Committee has appointed Susan Bradley, COMS, to replace our treasurer who resigned. Bradley is now retired with over 32 years of experience in public schools and has been a consultant for the Michigan Department of Education since 2007. We are thankful to her for agreeing to serve as the O&M Division treasurer.

Division Website

Chris Tabb, chair-elect, is working with the AER staff to update the O&M Division website to make it more user-friendly and to add information that will be useful to division members. We hope to include the following: professional development opportunities, information specific to your district/region and a number of other requests that we have had from O&M professionals.

Social Media

Our division has a Facebook page, which can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/aeromdivision/>. Be sure to look for this as we would like to share relevant information regarding the division and the profession of O&M.

Preferred Provider

The O&M Division is working on a project to determine each state's qualification requirements for O&M service provision to children or adults. These requirements are typically listed on

the state department's website or through some other official documentation. We are gathering information through the following online survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/oandmprovider>.

O&M Division Awards Ceremony

The O&M Division Awards Ceremony at the AER International Conference 2016 was well attended. Gala Brooks, the Awards Committee chair, organized the presentations of the following awards for the well-deserving recipients:

- The Orientation and Mobility Citation Of Excellence was awarded to Rachel Callary.
- The Lawrence Blaha Award was presented to Dr. Sandy Rosen.
- The Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award was presented to Marjie Wood.

We've posted the nominating letters and recipient speeches, along with pictures of the recipients at the ceremony, on the division website at: <https://aerbvi.org/about/divisions/orientation-mobility-division/awards/>.

AER International O&M Conference 2017

We have formed the Conference Committee and begun to plan the AER International O&M Conference in Pittsburgh, July 19-22, 2017. The conference committee includes Susan Langendonk (chair), Laura Bozeman, Bonnie Dodson-Burke Justin Kaiser and Chris Tabb. Abstract submissions are due January 12, 2017.

International Services and Global Issues (Div. 18)

The International Services and Global Issues Division has formally begun, as we were voted in at the AER International Conference 2016 this past summer in Jacksonville, Fla. Our membership held its first election, voting in Kevin McCormack as division chair and John Rose as treasurer/secretary. We have created a Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/>

[aerglobalissues](#) to keep members updated on division issues. We are planning a "town hall" meeting and a newsletter. Members, watch your email for more information.

Neurological Visual Impairment (Div. 20)

The Neurological Visual Impairment Division (NVID) has been granted provisional status! We are now accepting members who are interested in networking, learning and building this division to support AER members working with individuals who have experienced vision loss or impairment due to brain injury or disease at any point in their life-span.

Cerebral/Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) can occur in children who function at levels equivalent to typical peers as well as in children who have mild to severe disabilities. The degree of neurological damage and CVI depends upon the time of onset, as well as the location and intensity of the damage. It is a condition that indicates the visual systems of the brain do not consistently interpret or understand what the eyes see. Children with CVI can benefit from a combination of vision and other habilitation strategies, with research and practice methods continuing to evolve.

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) is defined as damage to the brain, which occurs after birth, and is not related to a congenital or a degenerative disease. These impairments may be temporary or permanent and cause partial or functional disability (World Health Organization, 1996). These injuries affect both vision and visual perception and may overlap with other sensory, cognitive, emotional and motor areas depending upon the nature and extent of the brain injury. Individuals with these injuries benefit from vision rehabilitation and/or a combination of vision and other rehabilitation strategies.

Please join us by becoming a member, participate in a division survey in early 2017 and gain access to the NVID website, newsletters, watercooler discussions and more!



Get Connected!

AER is social! Follow daily news from the association and interesting articles and information about the blindness field via social networking. Also, share your news and information about individuals and organizations.



Join the AER group page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/aerbvi>



Find AER on Twitter [@AERBVI](https://twitter.com/AERBVI) for tweets and retweets



Connect to AER's company page at http://www.linkedin.com/companies?trk=hb_tab_compy



Calling all orientation and mobility (O&M) specialists! The AER International O&M Conference is coming, July 19-22, 2017, in Pittsburgh, Pa.

The AER International O&M Conference 2017 offers an unsurpassed opportunity to learn and network with the best of the best! Achieving excellence in professional growth and service delivery is the aim of this conference. Here you will engage with hundreds of O&M specialists from around the world, explore critical topics in the field and be a part of conversations that will shape the future of orientation and mobility!

O&M all day, every day

Why make the trek to Pittsburgh for this exciting conference? The easy answer is, because it's O&M, all day, every day. Recalling the AER International Conference 2013 in New Orleans, La., Chris Tabb, COMS, chair-elect, AER O&M Division, said "What made the 2013 conference such a terrific event was that it offered O&M specialists, guide dog mobility instructors and others the chance to have back-to-back offerings of topics related to the field of O&M. It was all O&M, all the time—that's hard to replicate at other conferences."

O&M 360

No other conference offers the breadth and depth of O&M discussion as the AER International O&M Conference. The extensive list of topics and expertise of all who attend create opportunities to examine the profession in 360—from all angles and all approaches. Said Tabb, "Because ours is such a unique field, O&M specialists have few opportunities for professional development that maximizes our time. A conference that focuses wholly on O&M allows us to fully utilize our time away from our regular work and gain the most knowledge that is directly related to the profession. We can then take that information back and put it directly into practice." Added Justin T. Kaiser, Ph.D., COMS, TVI, chair, AER O&M Division, "I think a large conference focused only on O&M also encourages discussion of those unique and niche topics that may not get as much attention or may not make the cut for some other conferences."

O&M strength in numbers

The AER International O&M Conference is one of the largest, if not the largest, professional conference on O&M.

Kaiser recalled, "The 2013 O&M conference was significant for me because it was the largest gathering of notable O&M professionals gathered into one location. While many of these professionals are also at the AER International Conference, the O&M conference allows the program content to be much more focused directly on O&M."

Added Tabb, "The sheer numbers of O&M specialists involved in AER, combined with the planning, communication and marketing expertise of AER, lends itself to making an AER International O&M Conference one of the largest offerings available. It brings together all the regions of the United States, as well as professionals from other countries."

O&M growing the profession

Besides enhancing their professional skills, attendees also have the opportunity to guide the profession's future. "The conference provides opportunities for O&M Division members who participate in committees, working groups and so forth to meet and share information," said Tabb. "The conference is a chance for attendees to learn about the division's activities as well as a forum for members to provide input and feedback to the O&M Division and AER."

O&M to get excited for

What topics are folks most excited to explore at the conference? Several O&M members weighed in on this topic; joining Kaiser and Tabb were Laura Bozeman, Ph.D., COMS, CLVT; Bonnie Dodson-Burk, COMS, TVI; and Susan Langendonk, COMS, TVI, past chair, AER O&M Division, chair, AER International O&M Conference 2017. Here's a brief list of topics they look forward to discussing in Pittsburgh:

- Developments in technology, such as apps for smart phones, new tactile ways of relating to information (e.g., tactile map making, 3D printing, etc.)
- Updates on traffic engineering, such as new intersection designs and guidance on pedestrian access to these designs
- Research about effectiveness of teaching strategies, driver behavior in relation to skills or techniques used by travelers who

are non-visual

- Information about private practice insurance
- Information about third party reimbursement and licensure for the field
- Ways to further develop internship placement opportunities
- Early intervention techniques
- Unique programs for service delivery around the country and world
- Travel instruction for persons with disabilities other than visual impairment/blindness.
- Autonomous vehicles

O&M on the town

While you're at the conference, don't forget to explore the mighty and beautiful Pittsburgh! Said Langendonk, "I'm excited about the venue in Pittsburgh with easy access to Point State Park where the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio rivers meet. I've been told to be sure to experience the ride up the Duquesne Incline to view the city." Recently named the top food city by Zagat, Pittsburgh is sure to appeal to all palates, with many top restaurants within an easy walk of the Wyndham Grand Hotel.

O&M Conference – What are you waiting for?

Previous AER International O&M Conferences were huge hits. Said Dodson-Burk, "I attended the past two AER International O&M conferences, and I left them both feeling happy, rejuvenated and ready to incorporate what I have learned into my teaching practice."

Added Tabb, "Go; just go! I have yet to attend an AER O&M Conference that I did not come back raving about and wanting it to just keep going. I always walk away feeling that I received more than I expected, and certainly it was always well worth the time and financial cost to attend."

Nothing beats face-to-face interaction with hundreds of colleagues who share your passion and interest in the field. The exchange of ideas, the exploration of new methods, the discussion of O&M's future—it all happens at the AER International O&M Conference!



The Premier Gathering of Orientation & Mobility Professionals



It's official! Orientation & Mobility professionals from around the world will gather in Pittsburgh in July for the AER International Orientation & Mobility Conference 2017. **Like no other**, this conference will provide intentionally crafted professional development, innovative training and an excellent forum for exploring best practices! This premier event will allow you to learn the most current approaches and:

- Discover current and emerging issues facing the Orientation & Mobility field;
- Receive valuable resources that will enhance service delivery;
- Walk away with developmentally appropriate practices and critical new skills; and
- So much more...all at an affordable cost!

July 19-22, 2017
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**Association for Education and Rehabilitation
of the Blind and Visually Impaired**

Chapter News

Colorado



Barb Galgano (left) and Serena Cucco (right) at the CAER braille cleaning workshop.

The AER Colorado Chapter (CAER) is working diligently on regaining membership through a variety of purposeful professional development activities. We have focused on encouraging various segments of our membership—TVI & COMS, VRTs, VA service providers and consumers—to work cooperatively to address multiple topics of interest.

This fall, CAER offered a couple of trainings. First, we had a presentation for beginner Android Accessibility users provided by Heather Solberg with the Colorado VA. We had about 15-20 people in attendance. Solberg entertained many questions, and people were eager to learn the material. We hope to offer additional advanced trainings in the future.

Second, Trina Boyd-Pratt, who is a private TVI/COMS contractor, offered a braille cleaning workshop. Many of the 10 participants had never opened up a braille writer, and they were amazed at all the parts and how they work together to create braille. Barb Galgano, who is a TVI/COMS in Cherry Creek Schools, mentioned, “Every time we opened a new part, participants were saying ‘WOW!’” Boyd-Pratt shared, “It was fun to see people gain knowledge about how the braille writers work and to complete simple cleaning.”

We also have focused on fundraising opportunities to support our mini grants. The mini grants offer professionals, clients, students and families up to \$300 toward conference fees, purchase of specific tools, special events and so forth. Check out the CAER website for more details.

An upcoming fundraiser will be held at Spero Winery on Saturday, February 11, 2017. It is a chance to enjoy each other's company and promote services for the blind and visually impaired community.

We also began a new annual drawing for a free AER membership earlier this year. The more CAER events you participate in, the better your chances of winning! The next drawing will be at the Colorado State O&M conference in May 2017. Good luck and get those entries in!

Dakotas



Bob Smith receives the 2016 Riki Nitz Worker of the Year Award from North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind's Lanna Slaby, TVI.



Terry Nelson, recipient of the 2016 Friends of Vision Award

The AER Dakotas Chapter held its 32nd Annual Conference in Aberdeen, S.D., April 13-15, 2016. One of the featured speakers, Robbin Keating-Clark, addressed the Expanded Core Curriculum in her presentation, “What’s So SpECCial About It?” and “It’s Not a Choice, It’s a Way of Life!”

The Dakotas AER Riki Nitz AER Worker of the Year was presented to Bob Smith. Smith started working for SD Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired in 1983 and has held a variety of positions, including vocational evaluator, field rehabilitation teacher, center counselor, and orientation and

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mobility instructor. His dedication and contributions to the field made him an excellent choice for this award.

Terry Nelson received the 5th Annual AER Friends of Vision Award. Nelson is the owner of the Low Vision Store in Minnesota and has been in the low vision business for over 24 years, but his service to individuals with blindness and low vision goes beyond that to over 30 years. Terry has truly been a friend of AER and many professional service agencies and organizations.

The AER Dakotas Chapter Conference for 2017 will be held in Grand Forks, North Dakota, April 19 -21. To date, one conference speaker has been confirmed. Therese Willkomm, also known as the “MacGyver” of assistive technology, will be creating AT solutions in minutes with a Make and Take Workshop on Friday, April 21.

Illinois



Illinois chapter members at AER International Conference 2016 in Jacksonville, Fla.

The AER Illinois Chapter elected its 2016-2017 board: Douglas Anzlovar, president; Olaya Landa-Vialard, president elect; Amy Lund, past president; Stacey Kelly, secretary and Cindy Miller, treasurer. Joining them are Elizabeth Budzik, Jennifer Duncan, Dayna Grismanauskas, Allyssa A. Harpst, Lisa Meadors and Molly Pasley, members at large.

This is a busy yet exhilarating time for the AER Illinois board and conference committee! We recently met to determine the breakout sessions for our 2017 Vision Conference, with its theme, “Let the Vision Persevere.” We had an excellent response to the call for papers and are excited by the proposed topics.

We have also secured the keynote for the Friday of conference. Those of you who attended the AER International Conference 2016 in July know what a powerful speaker Vera Jones is. Her inspiring message will surely rejuvenate your passion for our field and motivate you to “Play Through the Foul.”

Join us February 16 and 17, 2017, in Naperville, Ill., for the 2017 AER Illinois Vision Conference, “Let the Vision Persevere.”

Louisiana

The AER Louisiana Chapter (LAER) sold Bergeron’s Pecans for our fall fundraiser. Thanks to Bergeron’s Pecan Farm, northwest of Baton Rouge, La., in Pointe Coupee parish, for providing whole and half pecans for the chapter to sell.

LAER will host a two-day assistive technology workshop, January 12-13, 2017, on the campus of the Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired. The workshop is geared to those working in the field of visual impairment, such as classroom and itinerant TVIs, technology professionals, interested persons in the visually impaired field, college students, and so forth. Break-out sessions will include assistive technology devices, Patterns curriculum, tips on tool use in class and hands-on demonstrations. Vendors, such as HumanWare, Apple, HIMS and Eschenbach, will be on site.

In conjunction with Louis Braille’s birthday, LAER is hosting a “Bowl for Books” event where members of the chapter will be raising money through bowling in their own town bowling alleys. Members will raise money per game, and the proceeds will be divided between the chapter and Seedlings Braille Books for Children. The actual event date will be announced later.

Finally, LAER is collaborating with APH to plan the Getting in Touch With Literacy conference in New Orleans, December 6-9, 2017, at the Hilton Riverside hotel.

Mississippi



Conference attendees at AER Mississippi’s annual conference



AER Executive Director Lou Tutt with Dorothy Young, president of MAER.



Emily Walker (left) receiving the inaugural Tyler Ramsey Outstanding Educator of the Year Award from MAER Treasurer Toni Hollingsworth.



Dorothy Young (left) presents a thank you gift to MAER President-Elect Kendra Farrow.

We received meaningful, positive feedback regarding the 2016 AER Mississippi Chapter (MAER) Annual Conference, "Growing Our Knowledge and Skills," which was held October 20-21, 2016. Lou Tutt, executive director of AER, served as our keynote speaker and so much more. He seamlessly engaged participants and made them feel welcome and valued. The conference session topics included transition, rehabilitation regulations, motivating students to travel independently, functional vision assessments, medical eye treatment updates, how to read an eye report and ethics. Not only did our membership increase through this conference, but also the current members felt encouraged.

During our conference, we presented seven MAER awards at our October 20, 2016, banquet. The award winners are:

1. Dr. Michele McDonnell, who won the Employment Opportunity Development Award. This award is given to an individual making noteworthy contributions in assisting persons who are blind to achieve their rightful place in

the working place, in the working world (unsheltered employment) and in society.

2. Toni Hollingsworth, who received the John Maxson Outstanding Service Award. This is given to a person who is or has been employed by one of the agencies serving persons who are visually impaired and who has rendered outstanding and noteworthy services.
3. Kendra Farrow, who received the Kathryn Stroble Award. This is awarded to an individual who is legally blind and who has successfully prepared for and achieved success and recognition in a professional career.
4. Patricia Brown, who was named Mississippi School for the Blind Employee of the Year.
5. B.J. LeJeune, who won the Samuel Johnson Memorial Past President's Award.
6. Emily Walker, who was awarded our first-time Tyler Ramsey Outstanding Educator of the Year Award. This annual award recognizes an education professional in any of the following categories: teacher of students with visual impairments, orientation and mobility specialist, special education teacher, paraprofessional or general education teacher who has made a significant difference in the education of a student or students with visual impairment from birth to 22 years of age.
7. David Greene, who received the VanDyke Hagan Award. This is the case worker of the year award for the vocational rehabilitation of the blind counselors or independent living services instructors.

Our student scholarship award was recently renamed the MAER Dr. Jimmy Cotten Scholarship. The amount of \$500 will be awarded to a student who is blind and who is entering college, or who has a parent who is blind. The awards committee typically receives nominations for the Dr. Jimmy Cotten scholarship. The recipient is invited to accept the award at the annual MAER Awards Banquet. We are currently taking nominations for this award.

Our president-elect, Kendra Farrow, was published in the June 2016 American Council of the Blind E-Forum. Her article, "The Transportation Challenge," can be found online at www.acb.org. As a person dealing with legal blindness, Kendra has firsthand knowledge of the challenge of transportation. She brings specialized understanding not only to her job at Mississippi State's National Research and Training Center but also to this succinct, informative article.

MAER continues to work closely with the Braille Bill Advisory Committee and the Mississippi Department of Education to establish guidelines for implementing Unified English Braille

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(UEB) in our state.

Our MAER Facebook Group has been a great tool of communication for our chapter membership. Members Adele Crudden and Anne Steverson are the co-administrators. The Facebook page serves as a meaningful way for us to share photos, announcements and news.

New Mexico

The AER New Mexico Chapter (NMAER) has been hard at work in 2016 to renew, reenergize, rebuild and recruit! We are thrilled to be building our membership base and creating a chapter that provides support and training for our amazing providers in New Mexico. Several of our members attended and presented at the AER International Conference in Jacksonville, Fla., this summer where our superintendent, Linda Lyle, received the Alfred Allen Award, honoring her career in direct service to people with visual impairments.

Looking forward to 2017, we are excited to announce our NMAER conference in February. On February 8, 2017, we will have a preconference on CVI, with Drs. Amanda Lueck and Gordon Dutton. February 9, Dr. Linda Lawrence will present on Autism and Vision, and Dr. Sandra Lewis on the Expanded Core Curriculum. February 10 will feature presentations on assistive technology and orientation and mobility. Please visit our website at www.nmaer.weebly.com for more information and registration.

Northern Rockies



The gorgeous backdrop of the AER Northern Rockies conference in Jackson, Wyo.

The AER Northern Rockies Chapter (Idaho, Montana, Wyoming) met at the Spring Mountain Lodge in the splendid mountain scenery surrounding Jackson, Wyo., for its annual conference in October. The conference kicked off with a special two-day seminar for O&M specialists learning to work with guide dogs. Other informative presenters included Frances Mary D'Andrea on Unified English Braille and Tanni Anthony

on deaf-blindness.

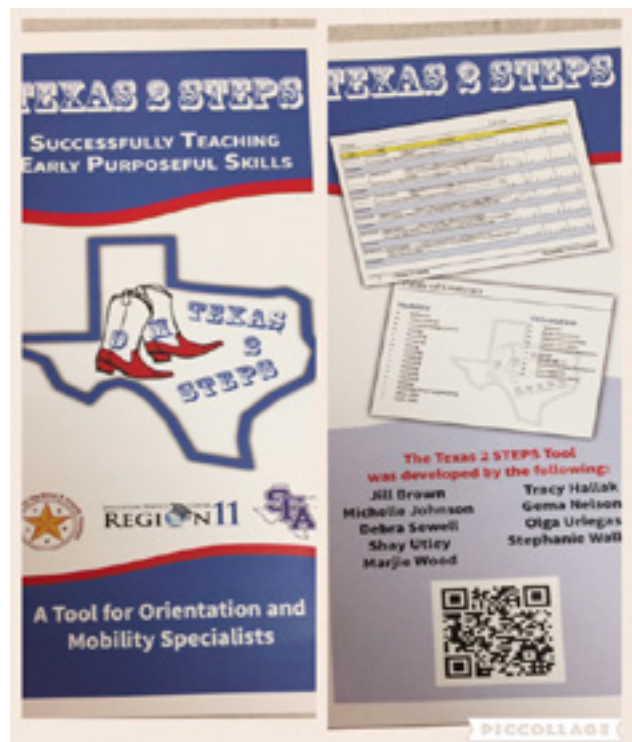
The chapter elected new officers. Because of criticism that the chapter weighs too heavily on education, two rehabilitation professionals were elected to the board including Bruce Breslauer as president-elect and Beverly Berg as secretary. Amy Tangen will assume the duties as president from out-going president Ken McCulloch. Sharon Woods was announced as the organizer of the 2017 conference, which will likely be in the Bozeman, Mont., area. She can be contacted at swoods@msdb.mt.gov.

Mark O'Brien from Missoula, Mont., has developed an excellent video on recognizing the significance of the white cane for drivers. For information on this video contact Mark at maobrien@mt.gov.

Tennessee

The AER Tennessee Chapter was honored to host Diane Wormsley on Saturday, September 17, 2016, at the Tennessee School for the Blind for a full day literacy workshop. Dr. Wormsley spent the morning talking about general literacy topics; the afternoon focused on the I-AM-ABLE approach. Event participants included TVIs from across the state, as well as students from both the Trevecca University and Vanderbilt University TVI teacher preparation programs.

Texas



Texas 2 STEPS, a new O&M evaluation and curriculum tool in development

The AER Texas Chapter (TAER) is deep in the planning stages of the TAER Conference, March 30-April 1, 2017, at the Omni Bay Front in Corpus Christi. We will be focusing

on recreation/leisure and independent living skills of the ECC. The pre-conference session will be "Make It-Take It: Making Switches Accessible." Conference planners have already sent out a call for proposals. We look forward to topics such as geocaching on the beach, beach volleyball and making technology more fun. There is much more in the works, so continue to check the website at www.txaer.org for updates.

A group of O&M professionals is in the process of writing and developing an O&M evaluation and curriculum tool for birth to 5 years of age. Texas 2 STEPS should be complete by late 2017. Please visit <http://www.slsbvitexas.org/texas2steps> for more information. We are looking for O&M professionals to pilot this tool. Please contact Debra Sewell at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired to place your name on the pilot list. Debra's email is sewelld@tsbvi.edu.

Wisconsin



(left to right) Regina Miller, Mary Wejrowski and Matt Flower were recently recognized by WAER for outstanding service.

The AER Wisconsin Chapter has had lots of activity this year! We welcomed three new board members: Trudy Stachowiak, president-elect; Micaela Smith, secretary and Kay Rhode, member at large.

We are also focusing on recruiting new members and our committee activities. Our Program Committee has been working feverishly on our second annual Collaborative Vision Conference, where we team up with teachers of the visually impaired and orientations and mobility specialists who serve in the schools to put on a statewide conference.

Julie Hapeman, who recently left the board after many years of hard work and dedication, coordinates a White Cane Day celebration for the state of Wisconsin that takes place in Milwaukee. Students can participate from any part of the state in their home communities! WAER is one of many proud sponsors of this event!

We feel so lucky to be part of a state filled with amazing individuals who give back to individuals with visual impairments, as well as the field of visual impairments. Below is a summary of honors individuals in our state have recently received:

At the Collaborative Vision Conference, WAER recognized three individuals for their outstanding service to people with visual impairments. Mary Wejrowski, COMS, was recipient of the William H. English Award for Excellence in Education. Mary, an O&M specialist in the Milwaukee Public Schools, was praised by a colleague for her "...continuous commitment to her students while offering best practices in the exceptional execution of her job. Mary is not only professional but she works very well with her co-workers and through her example encourages them to be better. She is able to work under difficult, high-pressure situations and still attain excellent rapport with others, which leads to effective results with her students."

Regina Miller and Matt Flower were the recipients of the WAER Award of Special Recognition. Regina and Matt, both environmental educators at the Milwaukee Urban Ecology Center, were nominated for their work with middle school students with visual impairments. In a letter of support to their nomination, one student wrote, "[Ms. Miller and Mr. Flower] made the periodic trips to the Urban Ecology Center far more enjoyable because of their accommodations and humor. What stands out the most, however, is that they always wanted everyone to be participating equally, and for everyone to have fun. Some instructors would just plan activities that could accommodate most blind people. Mr. Flower and Ms. Miller went beyond the minimum accommodations that were necessary, instead making sure everyone had every single one of their needs met."

Finally, Board Member at Large Arneetrice Ellerman was recognized as the Department of Human Services Employee of the Month; she also received a Discretionary Merit Compensation Award, which rewards state employees for exemplary, superior and meritorious service to the State of Wisconsin.





JVIB Concludes 110th Volume Year With Special Issue on Aging and Vision

The *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness* (JVIB), the official journal of AER, goes out with a bang this year, concluding its 110th volume year with the November-December 2016 Special Issue on Aging and Vision. Guest edited by Dr. Bernard Steinman of the University of Wyoming, with support from Dr. John Crews, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the issue is framed by an editorial that describes the current state of affairs for individuals who are older and experiencing vision loss in the United States:

Older people with vision loss report poorer health-related quality of life, they are more likely to report chronic conditions than their peers who are not visually impaired, they are more likely to fall and have injuries related to those falls, and older people with vision impairments have higher rates of mortality. Given the magnitude and complexity of the problem, this population is poorly served.

Two commentaries included as part of the issue describe what can be done to improve the lives of individuals with vision loss who are older. In "Death (and Taxes) May Be Certain. Is Vision Loss?" Dr. Alan Morse of the Lighthouse Guild in New York City takes a sobering look at the disconnect between individuals in the field of visual impairment and the health care community. He also highlights a report recently released by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM), *Making Eye Health a Population Health Imperative: A Vision for Tomorrow*, which "carefully deconstructs the barriers and facilitators to improved vision and eye health in the United States." The report asserts

Vision rehabilitation is essential to maximize independence, functioning, participation, safety, and overall quality of life of people with chronic vision impairment. Yet there are numerous barriers to high-quality and universally accessible vision rehabilitation services.

Dr. Morse describes these barriers and asserts that the report is a call to action:

Among the barriers are a lack of awareness of vision rehabilitation, a dearth of guidelines to trigger referrals, and limited research on models of rehabilitation and their effectiveness, as well as fragmented funding. The

NASEM report is a call to action, one that will only be effective if it results in action.

In a second commentary, "Aging and Vision Advocates Unite to Move the Bar for Older Persons Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired," Drs. Rebecca Sheffield and Priscilla Rogers write about the efforts of the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) to reignite a national effort centered around the goals of securing adequate funding for services, increasing the availability of professionals to provide these services, fostering collaboration across systems and providing access to low-vision devices. They invite individuals to join this initiative; more information is available online at <http://www.afb.org/aging>.

In addition to these calls for action, the Special Issue on Aging and Vision includes numerous peer-reviewed articles, reports and features that will be of interest to anyone who works with people who are older, cares for aging parents or is approaching retirement age themselves.

JVIB is published by the AFB. AER provides the journal as a member benefit. To access your JVIB member benefit, as well as earn ACVREP CEUs, click on the JVIB link on the AER website and log in with your AER membership information provided via email to members.



BANA

I asked—You answered!

Actually, I *should* say, “I asked—some of you answered – and others asked questions in return.” I’m speaking of the survey to AER members concerning the work of the Braille Authority of North America (BANA). Here’s the back story:

During AER’s business meeting at the AER International Conference 2016, the voting body passed a resolution designed to encourage more dynamic communication between AER members and BANA. To help do this, we initiated an online survey to gather AER members’ thoughts and perspectives prior to BANA’s fall 2016 meeting. Scores of members responded with suggestions, questions and even a few accolades. I sincerely appreciate the thoughtful participation!

Your responses to our October survey were robust and “all over the map” in the topics they addressed! Feedback ranged from an intense interest and investment in the work of BANA to a few born of a lack of understanding of what BANA is and what it does. I have taken each of your comments or suggestions seriously and kept them in mind during the discussions at BANA’s fall meeting.

The range and depth of AER members’ comments and questions are far too wide-ranging to address in one or even several articles, but I will do my best to respond to your thoughts and consider them in the business that BANA undertakes. Over the next months, I will share some of your observations and inquiries and provide perspectives to help clarify the work, scope and direction of BANA.

To get us started, I share one comment from an AER member who wondered, “*Now that UEB has been implemented, I am curious what BANA’s focus will be for the next few years.*”

My response: While the implementation of UEB has been an immense undertaking for BANA and all members of the braille community, BANA’s work to support the transition has been in addition to—not *instead of*—the extensive pipeline of ongoing work that BANA performs. Throughout the four years that led up to the implementation of UEB, BANA’s 20-plus all-volunteer committees continued their work developing new guidelines and refining existing ones, maintaining a dynamic website and providing answers to countless questions from users of BANA products. It has been a tough balancing act to sustain the progress of our ongoing work while also concentrating on the transition. Yet, thanks to our dedicated volunteers and despite the extra energy and hours needed to “keep all the balls in the air,” BANA has accomplished many significant achievements while also supporting the implementation of UEB.

How did we do it? It was certainly a team effort! BANA works through a corps of more than 20 active committees, made up completely of volunteers who work year-round to augment and improve the resources needed to ensure quality braille. At least 12 of these committees are technical or ad hoc committees charged with specific and extremely detailed code-related work.

The following list of BANA committees illustrates the wide array of work that BANA addresses year-round:

- Braille Formats Technical Committee
- Crafts and Hobbies Technical Committee
- Mathematics Braille Technical Committee
- Music Braille Technical Committee
- Refreshable Braille Technical Committee
- Tactile Graphics Technical Committee
- Foreign Language Task Force
- General Committee on Unified English Braille (UEB)
- Committee on Braille Signage and Labeling
- Committee on Chemistry
- Committee on Early Literacy Materials Production
- Committee on Standardized Tests

In addition to these code-specific committees, BANA moves its mission forward through general committees such as the Braille Research Committee, Publications Committee and Outreach Committee; it also has customary organizational committees such as Bylaws, Nominations and Membership.

I offer this explanation of BANA’s committee structure to illustrate that, while UEB has been a *major* focus for the past four years, it has been far from BANA’s *only* focus. Thank you to the curious AER member who wondered what BANA will focus on now that the UEB implementation is well underway. You provided a great opportunity for me to clarify the scope of BANA’s ongoing work and how we do it. The expanse of the above list of committees tells it all!

Thanks, and until next time, be well.

Mary Nelle McLennan
AER representative to BANA



Welcome New Members!

July 1 – Oct. 31, 2016

CANADA

Quebec

Isabelle Brennan
Ingrid Osswald

NEW ZEALAND

New South Wales

Leslie Braman Coen

UNITED STATES

Alabama

Issac Beavers
Taina Garcia-Acaba
Sharon McLean

Arizona

Gabe Carrejo
Lanelle Crist
Jonathan Graves
June Lin-Lee
Kristen Rex

Arkansas

Chris Jones
Chelsea Williams

California

Marc Gillard
Xenia Holland
Jennifer Williams

Colorado

John Conrad
Genevieve Francoeur-Anderson
Erin Kerr
Jamie Lugo

Connecticut

Alfonse DeLucia
Linda Frankemolle
Jonathan Gansfried

Florida

Catherine Bacik
Benjamin Bossley
Shelia Davis
Robert Lessne
Ryan Mann
Sharon McDonald
Wallace

Carolyn McGahan
Kimberly Morris
Samantha Picciano
Kaitlyn Schlehr
Marty Schultz
Jessica Tomlinson

Georgia

Kristin Wolfe

Illinois

Kevin Allison
Eleni Gaves
Mindy Long
Ellen Nicholl
Lila Papadaki

Indiana

Bianca Gerena-Perez
Jill Pangle

Iowa

Sara Larkin

Kentucky

Heather Collins
Todd Johnson
Lesley Lusher
Michael Riley
Jennifer Starks
Karen Wilson

Louisiana

Karl Hammer
Linda Louis
Shaun Wargowsky

Maine

Sherry Boothby
Johanna Connell
Sandra Lord
Nichole Poisson
Nichole Sukeforth

Maryland

Penny Reeder
Corita Stull

Massachusetts

Shelby Booth
Ashley Brow
Stalin Devadoss
Edith Dosha
Marybeth Gilchrest
Elizabeth Gribaudo
Burcu Gul
Rugian Huang
Katharine Hutchinson
Renee Lessard
Francis Odongo
Thi Thu Thanh Pham
Sydney Porter
Benita Reyes
Mariam Shenoda
Asma Shilpi
Elizabeth Simeon
Tetiana Smolina
Diasiry Talavera Ramos
Jacob Thistle
Ratchaneekorn Tongsookdee

Michigan

Charles Denaway
Denise Hickey
Paige Lloyd
Margaret Ridley
Margo Siegel

Minnesota

Jean Johnson

Mississippi

Kasey Markoski

Missouri

Vanessa Berger
Alexandria Dawson
Jessica Troester

Montana

Shannon Payne
Melinda Schott

Nevada

Kimberly Medllin

New Hampshire

Christine Beitler
Amy Bickford
Kimberly Callan
Denise Caruso
Melissa Gianino
Jennifer Morgan
Cary Silverio
Cindy Stewart
Lindsay Stratton

New Jersey

Melissa Durnan
Sara Jay
Kristen Sharpless

New Mexico

Vera Herrera
Christy Houston
Michiko Moore

New York

Daniel Aronoff
Merrie Balka
Robin Basalla
Karleen Bognaski
Giovanni Coronado
Anne Kelly
Barbara Lemen
Perry Schneider
Alexander Schultz
Julia Soleau
Shira Sosnowitz

North Carolina

Martha Grist
Tara Rider

Ohio

John Bertram
Rebecca Cornell
Rebecca Darling
Anna Katz
Angeles Seibert

Oregon

Brian Yoder

Pennsylvania

Hyesook Cho
Lori Lesante
Kimberly Palmer
Jessica Simcisko

Puerto Rico

Nadia Echeandia
Maria Gorbea

South Carolina

Amy Wilson

Tennessee

Susan Lee

Texas

Leslie Anderson
Karla Cantu
Fernando de Urioste
Mary Elliott
Melinda Ganaway
Gina Zavorka

Utah

Catherine Denney

Support AER

AER welcomes support from members during the renewal process and throughout the year. Members may select “Make a Donation” when in their AER online accounts as well as other options.

#GIVING TUESDAY

Celebrated on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving (in the U.S.) and the widely recognized shopping events Black Friday and Cyber Monday, #GivingTuesday kicks off the charitable season. Please remember AER in your donation plans for November 29, 2016.



Choose AER when you shop online at Amazon through the AmazonSmile Program. Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases. Just use the portal <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/54-1255600> when you place your Amazon order.

SHOP•COM™

Show support for AER while you save money and earn cash back through Shop.com. Go to www.shop.com/aerbvi and search for the products you love from the best stores on the web and see them side by side. Decide which price, shipping method, and delivery schedule options work best for you. When you make a purchase on www.shop.com/aerbvi, AER receives royalties and you earn up to 35% cash back on qualified purchases.

Info Bytes

A Primer on Beacons

by Chris Tabb, M.A., COMS, AER Information & Technology Division

Beacons are, for all intents and purposes, electronic versions of lighthouses. They emit a signal to all areas around them, a sort of bubble that extends as far as about 600 feet in some cases; they can also be set to extend the signal a much smaller distance. Beacons use a signal in the form of Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE). Once set, they continue sending the same message out into the environment, again and again and again—just like a lighthouse. What changes is the responsiveness of the receiving device, which might be your phone or your iPad as you walk through the mall. As your proximity to the beacon changes, your device detects how close you are to the beacon based on signal strength. The signal weakens as your distance from the beacon increases and vice versa. It is a giant game of getting warmer or colder played on a technological level. Luckily, you do not have to worry about transmission power, repeating rates, interference measurements, etc. That happens at the communication level of your device and the beacon.

This explanation is a bit of an oversimplification, especially as increasingly modern beacons and communication platforms take the stage. The difference between GPS and beacons is that GPS is aware of your location based on latitude and longitude, whereas beacon information is based on your proximity to one or more beacons. As with GPS, multiple beacons can communicate with your device and the greater the number of signals, the more accurate the information is. Programs exist that can interpret the proximity information from multiple beacons in a given space to determine your position as you move within that area.

Where are all these beacons and what do they look like?

Beacons are found in stores and malls to provide location information and to alert you to special sales on items and also in airports to help provide information that is given visually through signage, such as gate information, locations of restaurants in a food court, location of restrooms, etc. You can find beacons in office buildings, museums, baseball parks, subway terminals—just about anywhere nowadays. Beacons come in a vast array of shapes and styles. Most are intended to be small and blend in with the decor or environment. Though numerous companies make beacons, a couple of common examples are those made by Estimote (<http://estimote.com>) and Kontakt (<https://kontakt.io>).



Estimote beacons, which are about 2 inches long and 1.5 inches wide

When first brought into the consumer market, Apple iOS devices were supported by the iBeacon technology; Google has subsequently entered the arena with its Eddystone platform. The various beacon manufacturers are now producing beacons that can work with either platform or even both simultaneously. Smart devices (on either the iOS or Android platform) that are capable of receiving the BLE signal can use information from beacons via applications loaded on the device. Presently, there are companies that will host the information a smart device displays when it recognizes the signal from a beacon. Furthermore, several companies have specialized programs that are tailored to users who are blind and visually impaired. BlindSquare (blindsquare.com), ClickAndGo Maps (<http://www.clickandgomaps.com>), LowViz Guide App from Indoo.rs (<https://indoo.rs/solution/visually-impaired>) and RightHear (<http://right-hear.com>) are just a few examples.

Can any app or device use any beacon?

At the moment, no “easy” way exists for individuals to buy a beacon from their local technology store and connect it to a system that allows anyone to use it to identify a landmark. Likewise, no single app exists that would automatically let you access all the directory and landmark information shared via beacon technology. However, that may all be changing soon. Wayfindr (<https://www.wayfindr.net>) is working to introduce an open platform for developers working with apps and beacons that provides information for travelers who are blind and visually impaired. They were awarded a \$1 million grant as part of the Google Impact Challenge.

New developments happen with beacon technology all the time. This might be an area that you or your colleagues will want to keep an open ear for, or at least have your smart phones out and ready!

2016-2018 Calendar of Events

For more information about upcoming events, or to have your event listed, visit our website at www.aerbvi.org and click on "Events."

2016

November

Nov. 29: #GivingTuesday, Online — Celebrated on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving (in the U.S.) and the widely recognized shopping events Black Friday and Cyber Monday, #GivingTuesday kicks off the charitable season. Go to <https://aerbvi.org/membership/support-aer/> to make a donation.

December

Dec. 14: AER Board meeting, via phone

2017

January

Jan. 12-13: AER Louisiana Assistive Technology Workshop, Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired, Baton Rouge, LA

Jan. 27-28: AER Board meeting, via phone

February

Feb. 8-10: AER New Mexico Chapter Conference, Albuquerque Marriott, Albuquerque, NM — The theme is "Better Together." For more information, visit www.nmaer.weebly.com.

Feb. 11: AER Colorado Chapter Fundraiser, Spero Winery, Denver, CO — For more information, visit <http://co.aerbvi.org/>.

Feb. 16-17: AER Illinois Chapter Annual Vision Conference, Chicago Marriott Naperville, Naperville, IL — The theme is "Let the Vision Persevere." For more information, visit <http://il.aerbvi.org/conference.htm>.

March

Mar. 30-Apr. 1: AER Texas Chapter Annual Conference, Omni Bay Front, Corpus Christi, TX — For more information, visit <http://www.txaer.org/>.

April

Apr. 19-21: AER Dakotas Chapter Conference 2017, Grand Forks, ND — More information forthcoming.

Apr. 28-29: AER Board meeting, Bronx, NY

July

July 19-22: AER International Orientation & Mobility Conference, Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh Downtown, Pittsburgh, PA — For more information, go to <https://aerbvi.org/event/aer-om-conference-2017/>.

July 21: AER Board meeting, Pittsburgh, PA

December

Dec. 6-9: Getting in Touch with Literacy 2017, Hilton Riverside Hotel, New Orleans, LA — The AER Louisiana Chapter is working with American Printing House for the Blind to plan this conference focused on literacy in readers who are blind or visually impaired. For more information, visit <http://www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.org/>.

2018

July

July 25-29: AER International Conference 2018, Peppermill Reno, Reno, NV — Stay tuned for more details!

Names in the News:



At the October 2016 American Printing House for the Blind meeting in Louisville, Ky., AER's **Lou Tutt**, a former recipient of the Bill English Leadership Award, joined other winners for a photo. From left to right are **Bill Daugherty**, superintendent, Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired; **Bernadette Kappen**, executive director, New York Institute for Special Education; **Linda Lyle**, superintendent, New Mexico School for the Blind, 2016 recipient; **Mike Bina**, president, Maryland School for the Blind; **Betsy Forester**, daughter of Bill English; **Lou Tutt**, AER executive director, and **Marge Kaiser**, superintendent, South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.



Kay Ferrell, professor emerita, University of Northern Colorado, received the Virgil Zickel Award from the American Printing House for the Blind at its annual meeting in October 2016 in Louisville, Ky. Ferrell was honored for her role in the development of the Boehm-3, a test of basic concepts that is designed for tactile learners ages 3-5. The Zickel Award recognizes

creative and caring individuals whose ideas result in the development of innovative products designed to improve the quality of life for people who are blind and visually impaired.



Gregory Donnelly was named president of the Carroll Center in Newton, Mass. He began his tenure on August 8, 2016. Previously, Donnelly was an operational and senior executive at Massachusetts Eye and Ear (MEE). "Greg's extensive leadership and managerial experience at MEE, a non-profit organization that has partnered

closely with the Carroll Center for many years, will certainly serve us well," said Carol Covell, chair of the Carroll Center board of directors. "He is eager and well prepared to take on the challenge of leading the Carroll Center far into the future."

Dr. Donald C. Fletcher received a Distinguished Alumni Award for his work with low-vision patients from the University of Alberta Alumni Association in September 2016. Fletcher was honored for his work as an ophthalmologist, including incorporating occupational therapists in low-vision care and establishing low-vision rehabilitation clinics in the Philippines, Zimbabwe and the Americas. The Distinguished Alumni Award recognizes the truly outstanding accomplishments of living University of Alberta alumni who have earned national or international prominence as a result of their outstanding professional achievements and service to society.

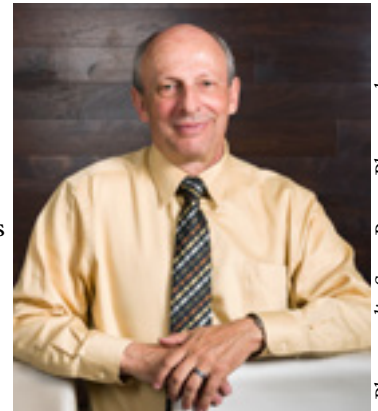


Photo credit: Steve Puppe Photography

The **National Braille Press (NBP)** announced its new trustees and corporation members in July 2016. Among NBP's new leadership are AER members **Joe Abely** and **Paul Schroeder**, who join the trustees, and **Kara Peters**, who joins the members of the corporation. Abely is former president of the Carroll Center for the Blind and has held leadership positions in the areas of finance, consumer marketing, global branding and distribution and nonprofits. Schroeder was most recently vice president of government relations for the American Foundation for the Blind and is a braille reader and senior contributing editor for *AccessWorld: Technology for Consumers with Visual Impairments*. Peters is a certified orientation and mobility specialist at the Carroll Center and an adjunct instructor at UMass Boston in the Vision Studies Program.

In July 2016, **William Wiener** became the Brenda Brodie Endowed Chair at North Carolina Central University. Wiener was previously dean of the graduate school at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro.



In Memoriam



Bill English (center) with his 2005 Hall of Fame plaque; with APH staffers Burt Boyer (left) and Will Evans (right)

William H. "Bill" English

Lifetime AER member William H. "Bill" English, age 87, passed away peacefully on August 9, 2016, at his home in Janesville/Madison, Wisc. English is survived by his loving daughter, Betsy Forester, and cherished granddaughters, Kaitlyn and Megan. His wife of 64 years, Janet, predeceased him in February 2016.

English began his career in 1952 at the Kentucky School for the Blind. He was also a teacher, coach and principal at the Ohio State School for the Blind and the Virginia School for the Blind. While at the latter, he helped to establish the vision program at the University of Virginia. In 1970 he moved to the Wisconsin School for the Visually Handicapped, where he served as superintendent until his retirement in 1994.

An extraordinary leader in the education of children with visual impairments, English was inducted into the Hall of Fame of Leaders and Legends of the Blindness Field in 2005. He also served as president of the Association for Education of the Visually Handicapped, one of AER's predecessor organizations. Among his many honors are the American Foundation for the Blind's (AFB) Migel Medal (1988) and Distinguished Access to Services Award (1989); the American Printing House for the Blind's Wings of Freedom Award (1991); AER Wisconsin's First Annual Distinguished Service Award (1988); and AER's Mary K. Bauman Award (1994). In 1991 the Council of Schools for the Blind established the William H. English Award in his honor.



Will D. Evans

Will Evans, age 80, passed away August 30, 2016, at his home in Louisville, Ky., with his loving family beside him. He is survived by his loving wife of 57 years, Barbara Parker Evans, his children Susan Evans Teaford (Chad) and Daniel Brian Evans of Bloomington, Ind., his grandchildren William Kyle and Neal Patrick Johnson, his sister Anne Brockman and brother Dan K Evans.

A lifetime AER member, Evans was legendary, both at the Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB) and later at the American Printing House for the Blind (APH), for his insight, wisdom and passion for helping people who are blind and visually impaired lead independent lives. An alumnus of KSB, Evans returned as a teacher, coach, dean of students, principal and eventually superintendent. He spent over half his life at the school. Upon retiring in 1995, he joined APH as products and services advisor. The two institutions he loved so much are connected by a driveway named in his honor, Will Evans Way.

Thank You to Our Fall 2016 Advertisers

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AER Job Exchange

The Vision Community's Most Active Job Bank



Looking for a new job? Check out what AER Job Exchange, the largest online career resource in the field, has to offer. The following is a sample of available positions from AER Corporate Members. Additional job opportunities and complete details on the following positions are available at <http://jobexchange.aerbvi.org/>.

HELP WANTED

WASHINGTON

Teacher of the Visually Impaired
Puyallup School District
Puyallup

Qualifications

- A minimum of a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university; master's degree preferred.
- Hold or be eligible for a valid Washington teaching certificate with endorsement in Special Education – Visual Impairments, preK-12.
- Ability to read and teach braille including new UEB code.
- Ability to conduct Learning Media and Functional Vision assessments.
- Knowledge of technology to enhance communication and learning.
- Ability to plan and organize work as an IEP case manager and to monitor the plan and to ensure program compliance: that required timelines are being observed; that direct services, accommodations, modifications and other services indicated on the plan are being implemented in all school settings; and that the student is benefitting from the services provided.
- Ability to design and implement appropriate instruction for students with visual impairment including blindness and other disabilities.
- Ability to follow school policies and procedures and work using a team approach.
- Job Description
 - Provide quality TVI instruction and services to eligible students in prek-12 grades.
 - Collaborate with educators and other professional staff to evaluate and develop comprehensive Individual Education Plans (IEP).

HELP WANTED

- Diligently follow all IEP goals and attend IEP meetings to ensure the successful provision of services.
- Monitor progress and amend IEP goals as needed to promote clear and open communication with teachers, school administrators and parents.
- Provide assistance to teachers and support staff within the schools who may need additional training or information to follow through with IEP recommendations.
- Provide braille instruction (UEB) and vision instructions to support other academic subjects, as needed for them to excel.
- Collaborate and work as a team with the brailist and orientation and mobility teacher.
- Other duties as assigned.

Salary: WA Teacher Scale w/ additional pay

Contact: Dr. Sunday D. Ferris

Phone: 253-435-6533; email: ferrisd@puyallup.k12.wa.us;
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The Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired is a 4,000-member group of professionals who provide education and rehabilitation services to people with visual impairments.

AER provides Orientation & Mobility Specialists, Vision Rehabilitation Therapists, Teachers of the Visually Impaired, Low Vision Therapists, and others with:

- Professional growth & development
- Career advancement
- Education enrichment
- Networking through meetings & conferences
- News & research information

Mark Your Calendar

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

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



**Association for Education and Rehabilitation
of the Blind and Visually Impaired**

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