



Orientation and Mobility Division Update

www.aerbvi.org/OandM

Winter 2016

Volume 20 Number 3

From the Chair

Happy New Year to all the O&M Division members. As I begin this last portion of my term as Chair, I look back at what a unique experience this has been for me. I've had the opportunity to meet and connect with leaders in the field of O&M, work on projects that will change and, hopefully improve, the field and support the members of the O&M Division. I feel privileged to have had this opportunity and thank all of you for your support and help.

Here is a summary of O&M Division activities since the last newsletter:

The Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Planning and Initiatives hosted two Watercolor sessions in November to share progress on its charges of:

1. Engage constituents in brainstorming for the development of a strategic plan and potential division initiatives,
2. Identify real and perceived strengths and weaknesses of the division's leadership, activities and initiatives,
3. Conduct a member/constituent survey for strategic planning,
4. Formulate short- and long-term division goals and initiatives with estimated dates for accomplishment,
5. Report to the division membership at the AER International O&M Conference 2017 in Pittsburgh, PA.

Several proposals have been submitted for roundtable discussions at the 2016 AERI Conference in Jacksonville, FL

- The O&M Division Environmental Access Committee presented a hugely successful webinar on Challenging Intersections with over 100 people registering. The webinar and ACVREP CEs were provided free to AER members and is available for purchase on the AER Knowledge Center.
- A number of members of the EAC attended the Transportation Research Board. See the article in this edition of the newsletter (p. 6-7) for details on their activities.
- The Awards Committee chaired by Gala Brooks is accepting nominations (see p. 3-5) for the O&M Division Awards as is the Nominations Committee (see p.2) co-chaired by Eileen Sifferman and Meg Robertson.
- As Chair of the O&M Division, I have been a member of a Task Force charged with recommending guidelines for certification of international applicants.
- The ad hoc committee on OT/PT/O&M Scope of Practice has tabled work on a position paper for the time being.
- The O&M Division will have a vendor table at the SOMA Conference in Chattanooga, TN in March and I will participate in a "hot topic" roundtable discussion on Physical Therapists and O&M.

As always, the O&M Division leadership wants to hear from you. Questions, comments, ideas and complaints!

Susan Langendonk, Chair
susanlangendonk@gmail.com
517-281-7864

It Is Time to Step Up to the Plate and Serve - Make a Difference -

The AER O&M Division Nominating and Election Committee is seeking nominations for the following positions on the Division Executive Committee for the 2016-2018 term. (See position responsibilities at end of article)

- Chair, a commitment of four years
Special nomination and election due to the resignation of the Chair-Elect.
- Chair-Elect, a commitment of six years.
- Secretary, a commitment of two years.
- Treasurer, a commitment of two years.
- District Director, a commitment of two years, representing the District in which they reside.
- Nominating and Election Committee Members (five members), commitment of two years.

Anyone wishing to nominate a colleague please seek their approval before submitting their name to the committee. You can also nominate yourself.

Deadline for submitting nominations was February 1, 2016.

Please contact Eileen Siffermann Co-Chair, eiensiffermann@comcast.net for a Nomination Application.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact any member of the O&M Division Nominating and Elections Committee.

Meg Robertson, Co-Chair, mobilitymeg@aol.com

Mary Ball-Swartwout, maryswartwout@gmail.com

Mickey Damelio, mdamelio@fsu.edu

Erica Ihrke, Eihrke@leaderdog.org

Position descriptions excerpted from the O&M Division Policy and Procedure Manual. Click this link for more information: <http://tinyurl.com/jlfv7f9>



We're Seeking Award Nominees!

The Orientation and Mobility Division Awards Committee invites you to tell us about a fellow O&M'er who deserves to receive one of our esteemed awards. Please consider submitting a letter nominating a deserving colleague for the Blaha, the Kronick or the O&M Citation of Excellence. Review the criteria listed below to determine the best fit for your distinguished colleague. The award presentation will be held at the 2016 AER International Conference July 20-24 in Jacksonville, Florida. Don't let this be the year that someone you know could have, or should have, been honored but you did not get around to submitting that letter!!!

Awards Committee members include:

Susan Langendonk (ex-officio), Kevin Hollinger, Bryan Gerritsen, Brenda Naimy, Joe MacDonell, Justin Kaiser, Gala S. Brooks, Chair.

Nominations for the awards and letters of support may be submitted at any time. The deadline for submissions is April 30, 2016. Submissions should be sent to Gala Brooks at brooks6242@sbcglobal.net. Due to a travel commitment of the committee chair, nominations received between 1/1/16-4/30/16 will not be acknowledged until May 1, 2016. While traveling, I will have limited e-mail access but will be available to answer questions.

Award recipients will be notified and announced by June 1, 2016.

Should any Division member have questions or comments regarding the awards, the presentations or the celebration, please contact Gala Brooks at brooks6242@sbcglobal.net

- The Awards -

Lawrence E. Blaha Memorial Award

Lawrence E. Blaha Memorial Award is given every two years.

Selection Criteria:

- a. The individual must have at least ten years experience in the field of blindness and must have distinguished himself or herself in activities related to orientation and mobility such as:
 - * contributed to the body of knowledge/literature
 - * excelled in a leadership manner in the provision of O&M services
 - * recruited or otherwise impacted on the decision of a large number of individuals to enter the field of orientation and mobility,
 - * served in a "mentor capacity" to a significant number of O&M professionals.
- b. The achievements being recognized must have had a significant impact upon the field of orientation and mobility.
- c. The individual must be an O&M Division member and be a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist unless retired or out of the field (administration).
- d. Nominations and letters of support shall be made by members of the O&M Division with a letter of up to two pages in length. The number of letters submitted shall not influence the decision one way or the other.

History:

The Lawrence E. Blaha Award was initiated in 1968 to honor people who have shown exemplary behavior in the field of O&M, made outstanding contributions to the profession, and shown dedication to serving people with visual impairments. It is the highest honor that the O&M Division can bestow. Each recipient of this award is the Guardian of Sir Francis Campbell's Cane until it is passed along to the next award recipient. The handle of the cane was used by Sir Francis Campbell, and can be seen in a photograph of him that is displayed in The C. Warren Bledsoe Orientation and Mobility Archives.

Blaha Award History, continued...

This award was named in honor of Lawrence Blaha who was a pioneer in the field of O&M. He is remembered for his wit, athletic abilities, philosophy, technical skill and his high standards. He was an educator whose ideas are remembered and continued through this award. In 1948, he began his career working with people with visual impairments at the Central Blind Rehabilitation Center for Visually Impaired and Blinded Veterans, VA Hospital, Hines Illinois. He was one of a group of six individuals chosen for training to become the original O&M specialists at Hines. In 1961, he joined the faculty of Western Michigan University; from 1964 until his sudden death, he was Director of the O&M program at California State College, Los Angeles. The first Lawrence E. Blaha Award was given to him posthumously in 1968.

Sir Francis Campbell, whose cane handle is passed along to award recipients, was an American expatriate who was knighted by King Edward VII. Campbell was born in Tennessee and accidentally blinded before he was six. He was educated at the Tennessee State Institute for the Blind and at the University of Tennessee. Campbell taught music at the Perkins School for the Blind. At Perkins, he was involved in early efforts to teach orientation and mobility.

Past recipients of the Lawrence E. Blaha Award:

1968 Lawrence E. Blaha, posthumously

1969 Dr. Richard E. Hoover, MD

1972 W.G. Debetaz

1973 Stanley Suterko

1975 Russell C. Williams

1977 Donald Blasch

1979 John D. Malamazian

1981 John R. Eichorn, Ed.D.

1983 Leicester W. Farmer

1984 C. Warren Bledsoe

1986 Walter G. Olenek

1988 Richard L. Welsh

1990 Hugo Vigoroso

1992 Everett "Butch" Hill

1994 Berdell "Pete" Wurzburger

1996 William Wiener

1998 Bruce B. Blasch

2000 Gala Saber Brooks

2002 Billie Louis Bentzen

2004 Dona Sauerburger

2006 Steve LaGrow

2008 Janet Barlow

2010 Eileen Siffermann

2012 Richard Long

2014 George Zimmerman

Fork in the Road Vision Rehabilitation Services, LLC



Low Vision Simulators

For teaching families and professionals:

Our simulators demonstrate a reasonably accurate picture of different types and levels of vision impairments. Wearing the simulators and attempting to do everyday tasks can quickly show fully sighted persons the impact of low vision. Simulated impairments includes macular degeneration, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, cataracts, RP, hemianopsia and more.



For additional product details

www.LowVisionSimulators.com

LowVisionSimulators@Gmail.com

608-233-3464 voice/fax



The Orientation and Mobility Citation of Excellence for Direct Service

Orientation and Mobility Citation of Excellence for Direct Service is given only when a worthy nominee has been nominated.

Selection Criteria:

- a. The individual must be in direct service the year preceding the AER International Conference teaching orientation and mobility to either children or adults for a period of 5-10 years.
- b. The individual must be an O&M Division member and be a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

History:

The Orientation and Mobility Citation of Excellence for Direct Service was established in 1985 to present "to a younger member of the profession, to encourage O&M specialists whose current excellent teaching records already foreshadow promising careers in our profession" (1996-97 Division newsletter). It continues to be awarded to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions to the profession during the first ten years of their career in O&M and to encourage these individuals to continue their promising careers in our profession.

Past Recipients of the Orientation and Mobility Citation of Excellence for Direct Service:

- 1986 Peggy Madera, Judy Davidhizar-Holmes
- 1988 Joani Levy Myers
- 1990 Judy Hayes
- 1992 Bonnie Dodson-Burk, Darick Wright
- 1994 Carol Otten, Colleen Calhoon
- 1996 Sharon O'Mara Maida
- 1998 Mary Konigsfeld-Wejrowski
- 2000 James Scott Crawford
- 2002 John E. Clare
- 2004 Julie Hapeman
- 2008 Danene Fast
- 2006 None
- 2010 Marcia Vickroy
- 2012 Shannon Cuniak
- 2014 No Nominees

The Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award

The Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award is given only when a worthy nominee has been nominated.

Selection Criteria:

- a. The individual must have had at least ten years experience in the field of blindness with the majority of professional career in direct service teaching O&M to people who are visually impaired; and have demonstrated distinguished service by doing one or more of the following;
 - * extend beyond the usual job requirements by using talents and expertise to enhance the field of O&M
 - * initiate innovative or unique programs
 - * serve as a mentor to other O&M specialists
 - * present at local, regional, or international conferences
 - * publish work in a professional journal
- b. The individual must have been a longstanding member of the O&M Division (majority of career) and be a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist unless retired or out of the field (administration).
- c. The individual must exemplify the standards outlined in the O&M Code of Ethics.

The establishment of this award is fitting tribute to Sandy Kronick and to all the countless other O&M specialists who forego promotions or higher paying career changes in order to continue doing what they know and love best, namely teach Orientation and Mobility. The award will be given only when a worthy recipient is determined.

Past Recipients of the Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award:

- 1994 Sandy Kronick, posthumously
- 1996 Kathleen Newman
- 1998 Richard Russo
- 2000 Lukas Franck
- 2002 William P. McCloskey
- 2004 Vince Fazzi
- 2006 Laura Park-Leach
- 2008 None
- 2010 Pat Zeinstra
- 2012 Gene Bourquin
- 2014 Lea Ann Myer, Tom Rotunno

~ Making Headway ~
Environmental Access Committee
at the Transportation Research Board Meeting

by JoAnne Chalom,COMS,Ed.S. and Janet Barlow,COMS

Several members of the Environmental Access Committee attended the 95th Annual Transportation Research Board Meeting from January 10, 2016-January 14, 2016. Members in attendance for some or all of the week included Janet Barlow, Billie Louise "Beezy" Bentzen, Gene Bourquin, Meg Robertson, Dona Sauerburger, JoAnne Chalom, and Lukas Franck.

Our successes came in many forms from discussions with researchers at poster sessions to witnessing attendees ask questions and demonstrate concern for pedestrians with visual impairments. Here are some highlights:

- Having EAC members as official committee members on four TRB committees now: Roundabouts, Pedestrians, Accessible Transportation and Mobility, and Work Zone Traffic Control.
- Finding out that presenting two workshops last year led to the potential funding of a research project on pedestrians, particularly pedestrians with disabilities, and bicycles at Diverging Diamond Interchanges and other alternative intersections.
- Seeing the fruits of our many years of advocating when someone who is not in our field asked a question showing her concern for pedestrians who are blind.
- Realizing that automated vehicles that provide door to door service may be available in ten to fifteen years. This will provide many positive options and will impact wayfinding for pedestrians who are blind.
- Having a TRB committee chair turn to one of our members to ask for ideas for additional research on pedestrians who are blind or who have low vision.
- Creating potential opportunities to discuss with a state-wide pedestrian and bicycle coalition the need for research that includes challenges encountered by pedestrians who are blind.
- Facilitating and maintaining a positive relationship with transportation professionals while addressing transportation challenges of individuals who have low vision or total blindness.
- Addressing challenges when complete streets include bicycle lanes that are parallel to sidewalks without an indication that the terrain changes function. Suggesting that treatments, such as detectable warning surfaces or guidance surfaces, be installed on the pedestrian shared space to distinguish the sidewalk from the bike lane.
- Seeing presentations about new guide on protected bike lanes and a new transit that have many innovative designs that can calm traffic, but have some features that may be problematic for blind pedestrians.
- Discussing an application that can be used to help identify and address the need to make sidewalks ADA compliant with the presenters at a poster session.
- Getting a heads-up that driverless vehicles are a reality and the focus of attention by the engineering community, so we can take advantage of the opportunity to get involved from the ground up to make sure that the implications for blind people are addressed. We plan to bring this up and have a RoundTable discussion to generate ideas at the Southeastern O&M Association conference in March and share it with the O&M Division members for further consideration.
- When the Senior Mobility Options Joint Subcommittee was planning a brainstorming summit this year to address the need for alternative mobility resources for older folks who have to give up driving, having one of the Subcommittee members suggest that the O&M and travel instructor professions should be represented in the discussion.

And a report on one of the presentations - Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons

by Gene Bourquin DHA, COMS

With changing technologies and evolving traffic geometry, we're faced with many challenges as O&M specialists. Sometimes the research presentations at a conferences like the TRB present developments that are not positive for travelers who are blind or visually impaired. But sometimes the news is good, such as the results of a recent study of Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons (PHB). You may have heard then called HAWK. These traffic control devices allow pedestrian to cross, stopping vehicular traffic only as needed and only when activated by a pedestrian. The signal is 'dark' most of the time. The rationale is that pedestrians can have a safer right-of-way with a signal at places where traffic engineers want to constantly keep cars moving and would not 'warrant' or install a typical pedestrian signal. Uncontrolled crosswalks, such as mid-block crossings, channelized turn lanes, and perhaps even roundabout entrances and exits are potential locations where pedestrians who are blind would have difficulties, can be made facile with the addition of a PHB with an accessible pedestrian signal (APS).

The study looked at 78 hours of video from two cities and included 1,979 pedestrians. When a PHB is installed there is a 69% reduction in crashes. The TRB presentation found that drivers stop for pedestrians 96% off the time, the same as a typical signal. There had been some concerns in the past that drivers might be confused at the PHB, but the research reported this to be unfounded. Most pedestrians used the pedestrian button when they arrived at the crosswalk.

And thanks!!

The EAC appreciates the support of the Division for our attendance. We think we are making a difference in bringing issues to the attention of transportation professionals. The above is just a quick snapshot of several long days of endless meetings, conversations, and explanations of orientation and mobility in DC with 13000 traffic professionals. Thanks also to Polara Engineering for support of our travel, and Lois Thibault and Jacques Peters for providing a place for us to stay in DC.

from UALR

Dr. Bill Jacobson is retiring in May after 38 years as a faculty member and coordinator of the O&M Program. Dr. Jacobson and his wife, Bonnie, are retiring to Tucson, Arizona, shortly thereafter. Dr. Jacobson can still be reached at his university email address: WHJacobson@UALR.edu. Currently Dr. Jacobson is working as the founding director of a new school within the UALR College of Education and Health Professions, entitled, The School of Counseling, Human Performance and Rehabilitation. The new school has 28 faculty members and over 500 students.

Dr. John McAllister, a 2002 graduate of the UALR O&M program, is the new O&M faculty member and program coordinator. Dr. McAllister taught O&M at the Arkansas School for the Blind since his graduation from the program, and received his Doctorate in Education in Higher Education from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. He can be reached at: JWMcAllister@UALR.edu.

The UALR O&M Program has 53 active O&M students in its hybrid online O&M program and is looking forward to 22 students coming this summer for the annual Summer O&M Institute.

Northeast AER Conference Report

Northeast AER had a fabulous conference at Cape Cod back in November (2015). The conference had many awesome O&M sessions, including a VERY passionate and interactive session(it's been on many conference circuits nationally) posed by the O&M board, which sought to get O&Mers viewpoint on where we are and where we want to be in the near (and distant) future. The room was busting with energy and ideas...O&Mers are passionate (no surprise!) and when asked, had lots to say! Great energy and involvement was noted! Looking forward to moving this passion forward!

Kathy Clarrage, District 4 Director

Trekker® Breeze +



More Accurate for More Informed Travel



- Significantly improved GPS acquisition time
- Higher quality GPS signal
- Improved GPS accuracy
- Greatly improved performance in urban areas

The Trekker Breeze+ is the next generation of HumanWare's popular Trekker Breeze navigation system. The Breeze+ uses the latest in GPS technology to provide you with the fastest, most accurate travel information when you need it.

1 800 722-3393 | www.humanware.com

Humanware™
see things. differently.

- Tributes to C. Ward Bond -

from Jeff Moyer

C. Ward Bond passed away shortly after midnight, November 29, 2015. Ward died of congestive heart failure, at an acute care facility, where he had been taken recently. He was moved from his apartment when fluids needed to be drawn from his lungs to allow for easier breathing.

Ward appreciated phone calls from many of you over the last months of his life. Ward often said that his years as President of Talking Signs were the most satisfying of his life and that the circle of friends whom he met during that time were among the finest people he had ever met. Ward never dreamed small dreams. Had it not been for

Congressional gridlock and the 5 year delay of the Highway Bill, Talking Signs would have been installed throughout Washington D.C. - making it the first accessible city for people with visual disabilities and other print reading disabilities in the world.

from Dona Sauerburger:

Ward was a loving, dedicated, determined pioneer. I can't remember exactly where or when I first met him, but it was after I realized what a powerful tool Talking Signs was and could be. It would be awesome for a blind person to be able to walk into an unfamiliar place and "look" around just like sighted people do and see what's there and in which direction it is! Folks who tried it in places where they had traveled daily made remarks like "gee, I didn't realize there is a water fountain over there!" Anyway, I digress...

Tribute, continued

Ward was forward-thinking and fiercely determined to do what is necessary to make this paradigm shift happen. I remember accompanying him with others such as Mary Jane Owen, Jeff Moyer and Oral Miller to the halls of our Congress numerous times to convince them to fund a pilot program to install Talking Signs throughout the metro DC area and transit system (I gasped like an excited schoolgirl when Eleanor Holmes Norton herself came out of the back of her office to greet us!). Ward realized that all the Talking Signs systems that had been installed throughout the world were in limited areas -- novelty installations to see what it might be like. What was needed to demonstrate its effectiveness was a system-wide installation, and he thought the DC area would be the best location. If this was done, you could know that wherever you go in the DC area as a blind person,

you can “look” around and see what’s there, stand on any corner and know which way to “aim” to the other side of the street, see where the escalators are that lead to the Green Line in the Metro and where to stand on the platform to wait for the train, etc. Some of the features of Talking Signs have been achieved with new GPS capabilities, and I’m confident that some day we’ll have technologies that can enable people who are blind or deaf-blind to do what Talking Signs could provide, and more. But Talking Signs was a vision of what could be, and it let us dream. Ward had that vision and was determined to make it happen. He filled me with hope, and was an inspiration for having a dream and taking on the challenges with warmth and humor, and never giving up. I could do no better than to follow his example, and keep my head high and filled with resolve as he did. Ward, I salute you and thank you for all that you’ve done.



Division Executive Committee

CHAIR: Susan Langendonk
EMAIL: susanlangendonk@gmail.com

PAST CHAIR: Kevin Hollinger
EMAIL: kevin.hollinger@fhsdschools.org

CHAIR ELECT: Vacant
EMAIL:

SECRETARY: Justin Kaiser
EMAIL: jkaiser@uscupstate.edu

TREASURER: Stephanie Chmielinski
EMAIL: stephchm20@gmail.com

DISTRICT 1: Mark Carter
EMAIL: mcarter@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us
(Alaska, Alberta, Arizona, British Columbia, Colorado, Hawaii, New Mexico, California, Nevada, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Northwest Territories, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Yukon Territories.)

DISTRICT 2: Sherry Holder
EMAIL: sholder@osb.k12.ok.us
(Arkansas, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Manitoba, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Saskatchewan, Texas.)

DISTRICT 3: Sarah Arch
EMAIL: sarch@leaderdog.org
(Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ontario and Wisconsin.)

DISTRICT 4: Kathy Clarrage
EMAIL: kcclarrage@gmail.com
(Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, New Hampshire, New York, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Rhode Island, Vermont)

DISTRICT 5: JoAnne Chalom
EMAIL: jchalom@infocusmobility.com
(Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Puerto Rico, Tennessee)

DISTRICT 6: Audrey Dannenberg
EMAIL: audrey.dannenberg@gmail.com
(Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virgin Islands, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington D.C.)

Visit the O&M website for a list of Committees:
<http://oandm.aerbvi.org/committees.htm>



Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired
1703 N. Beauregard St., Suite 440 ■ Alexandria, VA 22311-1744
aer@aerbvi.org ■ www.aerbvi.org ■ <http://oandm.aerbvi.org>