



## **AER Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT) Division**

<http://vrt.aerbvi.org>

**VRT News**

**Summer, 2016**

### **Table of contents:**

- 1. Message from the Chair--Ian Shadrick CVRT, CRC**
- 2. Mark your Calendars**
3. Congratulations to the 2016-2018 VRT Division Officers--Jennifer Ottowitz, CVRT
4. Mrs. Macy's New Glasses--**Bob Kozel, CVRT, CLVT, COMS**
5. It's Time to Fly--Jennifer Ottowitz, CVRT
6. VRT Board Contact Information

### **MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR** **Ian Shadrick, CVRT, CRC**

Greetings,

I hope you are enjoying the start of summer. With this new season begins a new season for the VRT Division as well; as I am writing my final message as Chair of the division. I want to take this opportunity to thank my fellow board members, without whom the past biennial would not have been nearly as successful. These members, Jennifer Ottowitz, Susan Dalton, and Cammy Moraros brought experience, leadership, and hard work to the board. I would also like to thank you, the membership, for your continued membership and dedication to the field of vision rehabilitation therapy. As we near the beginning of the new biennial, I would draw your attention to the upcoming International Conference being held in Jacksonville, FL July 20-24. We hope you will join us for what promises to be an excellent conference, with many great sessions. Additionally, please be sure to join us for the VRT Division Awards and Business meeting held as a luncheon Thursday July 21 at Noon. Please join us as we share important division business and that the opportunity to recognize our deserving award winners.

It has been my pleasure to serve as Chair of the Division, and I thank you for the opportunity. I also look forward to working with our incoming board members, and would like to take an opportunity to thank them for agreeing to serve the division. I look forward to seeing everyone in July in Jacksonville.

Best regards,  
Ian Shadrick

Ian Shadrick M.A., M.A, CVRT, CRC

## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

- July 21, 2016--VRT Division Awards Luncheon and Business Meeting 12:00-1:30 pm, Jacksonville, FL; Check your AER conference program for exact room location
- July 20-24, 2016 AER International Conference, Jacksonville, FL For more information visit

<http://aerbvi.org/>

- September 15, 2016 Deadline for articles for next issue of VRT News-send articles to Ian Shadrick  
ianshadrick@hadley.edu

## **Congratulations to the 2016-2018 VRT Division Officers Jennifer Ottowitz, CVRT**

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the 2016-2018 VRT Division officers. I look forward to their energy, enthusiasm, dedication and leadership as we enter the next two years. Their thoughtfulness, insight and wisdom will help guide us as we continue to educate and advocate for the value and worth of the field of vision rehabilitation therapy as well as the many issues which impact our work with clients and their families.

**Chair William Boules**  
**Chair-elect Amber Mooney**  
**Secretary/Treasurer Dr. Elizabeth Chamberlain**  
**Immediate Past Chair Ian Shadrick**

**You will learn more about each of them in upcoming VRT Division newsletters.**

## **Mrs. Macy's New Glasses** **Bob Kozel, CVRT, CLVT, COMS**

Mrs. Macy was about to get new glasses. She had found that she could no longer read print. This was a terrible inconvenience for a teacher. Her vision had never been normal, but with age it had continued to decline. The glasses were not ordinary glasses, they were cutting edge technology to address her low vision and represented the latest advancement in the field.

One pair would help here with distance and one pair with near work. Her response was:

“You may be as enthusiastic as you please for me endorsing your telescopic lenses – I never knew there was so much in the world to see.”

Her reaction was actually captured in a publication of the day (Outlook for the Blind, March, 1926, page 54). Mrs. Macy was no ordinary teacher, she in fact was the most famous Teacher of the Blind in the world. And, her star pupil was the most famous blind person in the world. Mrs. Macy’s full name was Anne Sullivan Macy. And her pupil was Helen Keller. Ninety years ago advancing technology in optics allowed for relatively lightweight carrier mounted small telescopes for near and far work. Anne Sullivan using this product was noteworthy and probably looked on as a very positive endorsement of this emerging technology.

It would be logical to assume that the field would immediately take to devices that maximized and enhanced the use of residual vision of the blind. Yet this is not what happened.

Why? Why not the breakthrough in the 1920’s? There was the impending Depression. Funding for low vision aids would be hard to come by given the challenges the country faced. Also, there was baseball.

In 1924, the same year that Anne Sullivan actually received the glasses, Rogers Hornsby had arguably the greatest offensive year in Baseball history. In 1922 Hornsby hit 401 with 42 homeruns, the only time that a batter has hit over 400 with 40 homeruns. In 1923 he tailed off to hitting “just” 384. However, in 1924 he rebounded to hit 424, the highest batting average ever posted in modern (live ball) Baseball. In 23 seasons his all time batting average was 358, second on the all-time list behind Ty Cobb.

Rogers Hornsby was national hero, possibly as well known in that era as Babe Ruth. He was known for his exceptional vision and the things he did to protect it. Hornsby refused to go to dimly lit movie houses, or read in dim light. He feared any strain on his vision would diminish it. Today we would consider him to be poorly informed, superstitious or quirky, but in that era his thoughts became associated with the concept of Sight Saving. Even though there was no actual proof that using your vision in some way would diminish it.

The concept of maximizing residual vision would have to wait almost 4 more decades. Then, a groundbreaking article entitled “Increased Visual Behavior in Low Vision Children” was published, and Natalie Barraga would forever change our field and become the most famous Teacher of the Blind in the world.

Her 1964 article can be found at: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED014166.pdf>

Note: There is a two part article on telescopic lenses in Outlook, entitled Telescopic Lenses and Magnifiers as Aids to Poor Vision, December, 1925 and March, 1926.

## **It's Time to Fly Jennifer Ottowitz, CVRT**

For the past four years I have had the honor, privilege and pleasure to serve as an officer within the VRT Division as well as serving for the past two years as the editor of the VRT Division newsletter. I have learned so much and greatly appreciate all the support and encouragement from my fellow officers and division members. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the past leaders of the VRT Division for their guidance and mentoring.

I am proud of the many VRTs who have submitted articles to the newsletter, presented at the AER International and other conferences, those who were involved with the planning of the Vision Loss in Older Adults & Veterans conference in Norfolk in 2015, those who nominated colleagues for VRT Division awards to recognize their excellence and contributions, those who stepped up to take on leadership roles within the division and all of you for continuing your commitment to your clients, their families, and to the profession itself.

However, there is always more work to be done. I am reminded of a story which is very meaningful to me. To paraphrase:  
Five crows sat on a fence. One of the birds flies away. The other birds decide to fly away, too. How many crows are left sitting on the fence?

The answer is four. The other birds just "decided" to fly.

I am always impressed with the intense passion of those in our field. Whether it is related to advocating for greater resources and services for those we serve or educating other professionals (including other vision professionals) about the important role a vision rehabilitation therapist plays on the rehabilitation team, we have lively discussions about what needs to be done. It also takes action and follow-through to make change happen. Each of you can make a significant contribution by not just "deciding" but actually flying from the fence. As we begin the new biennium, I encourage all of you to pledge to take action then follow through with that pledge. It is easy to talk about what needs to or should be done, but it takes each of us to work toward getting it done. I know your new VRT Division officers are looking forward to working with you and will do what they can to help you take action. They will also need you to act to carry out the business of the division and to address the concerns of its members. So get fueled up and ready—it's time to fly!

Thank you for this amazing opportunity. I wish you all the best .

**Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Division Board**

Contact information

Chair: Ian Shadrick, CVRT, CRC

E-mail: [ianshadrick@hadley.edu](mailto:ianshadrick@hadley.edu)

Secretary/Treasurer: Susan Dalton, CVRT

Email: [dalton.transvision@gmail.com](mailto:dalton.transvision@gmail.com)

Past Chair: Jennifer Ottowitz, CVRT

Newsletter Editor

E-mail: [jennifer@hadley.edu](mailto:jennifer@hadley.edu)

Please let Ian know of any questions, concerns, corrections, or comments that you have regarding the VRT newsletter. We also welcome any articles or ideas for articles that you may have. Thank you again for all that you do as a VRT!!!