



Welcome to the May 2019 Issue of The Voice

A Message from AER's Executive Director

Dear AER Members,

We hope you enjoyed the first issue of the *AER Voice*. Thank you to everyone who contacted the office staff with your compliments, thoughts, and suggestions. Please remember this is *your* newsletter and we want to hear from you!

It's "Derby" here in Louisville, as we refer to the two weeks leading up to the Kentucky Derby. We jokingly say that Louisville is the only place in the country that would host a two-week festival in honor of a two-minute race! It's a time of celebrations, parties, concerts, galas, celebrity sightings, hats, bourbon, and oh, yeah, horses! It's also a time for traditions -- the Kentucky Derby has been running each year since 1875. Families hand tickets down from generation to generation. We gather at the florist shop at a local Kroger to watch as they craft the garland of red roses that will be placed around the neck of the winning horse. People visit the track at Churchill Downs early in the morning during Derby week to watch the horses train. Recipes for mint juleps and bourbon slushies are dusted off and ingredients are purchased. Jockey silks and roses appear in the airport, where you'll know to pick up your luggage when you hear the "call to the post" at baggage claim. And there's not a dry eye to be found when everyone at the track, at a party, or in their own living room stands to join in the singing of "My Old Kentucky Home."

Those of us in the business of providing quality services and outcomes for children and adults who are blind and visually impaired have a rich history of traditions as well. We learn about Louis Braille, Helen Keller, Phil Hatlen, Alan Koenig and Abe Nemeth. We spend countless hours creating materials and planning lessons. We search out employment opportunities for our clients. We seek out others who share our interests and learn from those like-minded individuals. We create opportunities in our already overloaded days to teach the expanded core curriculum, transition skills, and how to find and make friends. We wear t-shirts with fun sayings

about braille and we explain again and again that, no, we don't know sign language, unless we are working with students and clients who are DeafBlind, in which case, of course we do!

We have other traditions as well. We go to conferences and watch webinars and listen to podcasts and read books that will make us better at what we do. We share our knowledge with our colleagues and we listen to what they know. We advocate for better funding and services and for additional professionals in our field. We support each other and learn from each other so that we can provide better opportunities for the students and clients we serve. For thirty-five years, AER has been a part of that tradition, supporting members through professional development and continuing education, networking, resources and information, and more. AER also has a solid tradition of strong member leadership and engagement. I encourage you to take a closer look at AER and think about how you can become part of that tradition. Get involved in your chapter and/or division. Present at your chapter or division conference. Learn something new in a webinar or podcast. Share what you learned with someone around you. All of these things are a part of our heritage and tradition. It's our responsibility to keep the traditions alive and to create new traditions for the generations to come. How can you be a part of honoring our current traditions and creating new ones? AER can help you create your legacy in the field. Let's talk.

Janie Blome, Executive Director, AER

A Message from AER's President...

While engaged in the field of education, I've seen an increased emphasis on mentoring new professionals and building their capabilities. Many of us can even cite a moment where we saw potential in another and encouraged them to join us in the field of blindness. We saw their interest, their capacity for engagement, and then sought them out to increase the impact of our collective work. We need people to provide positive outcomes for those we serve...and building capabilities is how we're going to get them.

AER has always been a place for me to learn on the job with significant coaching from many. I would have not assumed I was capable of being on the AERBVI Board without the encouragement from those that knew I was inexperienced, but were willing to help me succeed. I challenge us all to find an individual or two this month that has the potential for more, but may just need a nudge. Maybe they're already in our field, but have much more to offer through AER. Maybe they aren't even in our field yet, but should be.

Look for those who may be the game changer for any student or client we serve, but they just don't know it yet. We were all unaware of our path at one point, and we now have the capability to mark the path for someone else.

Emily Coleman, President, AER

News You Can Use

Read. Learn and Earn

AER now has an exclusive members-only benefit for you! Members can earn CE hours from AER simply by reading articles in the *Journal for Visual Impairment and Blindness (JVIB)* and taking a quiz. Each journal has 2 articles that allow you to earn CE hours. This provides an excellent opportunity for you to continuously gain insight and knowledge related to key issues in the field. Visit the *JVIB* site by clicking here: [JVIB Website](#). Log in, read the eligible article and take the quiz. Upon successful completion of the quiz (80% or higher), your CE certificate will be added to your membership account within 7-10 business days.

Member Spotlight

This month we are pleased to 'spotlight' two members who are AER Board members. They are working to make sure their constituents have a solid voice. AER Board members have the highest governance authority and work to ensure that AER has policies and procedures that successfully address the needs of AER members. Meet Collette Bauman and Carole Williams.

Collette Bauman – Region 3 Representative



Collette Bauman worked for the Michigan Department of Education-Low Incidence Outreach (MDE-LIO) from March 2005-December 2017. She served as the Director for statewide outreach programs and services for students who are Blind/Visually Impaired (BVI) and Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH). Prior to joining MDE-LIO, Ms. Bauman was the supervisor of the Western Wayne Program for Students who are BVI. Her career started as a teacher of students who are

BVI and Deafblind in Livonia, MI.

In her various roles, she has served as the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) Ex Officio Trustee for MI, appointed to and chaired the APH Educational Products Committee (EPAC), and also participated as a member of the Council of Schools and Services for the Blind. Collette was a member of the local MI AER Board of Directors and is currently representing Region 3 as a member of the AER Board of Directors for a second term.

She was invited to join the Board by the previous AER Executive Director, Lou Tutt. Those who know Lou understand you cannot say, “No!” Collette was actually thrilled to be invited to run

for the position. She has been a long-time member and advocate for the organization, so it was an easy decision for her. Collette is very pleased to be able to represent the members in her region and work diligently for their interests.

If asked the question, "What do you like about AER?" She would respond, "What's not to like?" AER has provided her guidance and support since 1984. As a long time member, Collette has gained a great deal of knowledge and insight into the field of visual impairment as a teacher and administrator. AER offers excellent publications and resources to enhance the knowledge base with the ultimate goal of improving outcomes for individuals who are BVI. She has attended many conferences, both locally and nationally, where she always gleaned valuable new information from presenters and colleagues. It goes without saying, the networking is invaluable. The organization's advocacy on behalf of educators in the field has been a game changer for many programs and members.

Carole Williams - Canadian Representative

I have been an AER member since 1994 and became a Certified O&M Specialist in 1995, from Mohawk College in Brantford, Ontario. My career began at the CNIB in Toronto, Ontario where I provided O&M services to clients in their homes and in the community. In 2003, I left the CNIB and started a consulting business, providing O&M services to 2 school boards in the Toronto area. I am presently contracting exclusively with the Peel District School Board, in Mississauga / Brampton Ontario, where I provide O&M services to students as well as consult on accessibility projects. I continue to work very closely with CNIB staff, in order to provide the best support and services possible to my students, as they transition into the community.



I have been involved with the Ontario AER board since 1995, serving as President, Membership Chair and Treasurer. I decided to run for the International AER Board of Directors, as the Canadian Representative, to ensure that our voices are heard and to assist in making AER membership a priority for vision professionals across Canada. As the only professional membership organization in our field, AER has provided for me, outstanding professional development and networking opportunities as well as the chance to further develop my leadership skills. I am a firm believer that the more effort and commitment you put into an organization, the more you will ultimately get out of it, both professionally and personally!

History and Memorial

AER Memory Lane: Stranded in a Blizzard - The First AER Lift

One can never predict the weather.

By Mike Bina

After a year of intense planning for the first *AER LIFT* held in Indianapolis in February 1993, every detail for the three-day Chapter President and Division Chair leadership training conference was carefully considered. The agenda, hotel, travel, speakers, and meals were all finalized—everything except, in the pre-iPhone-Weather-app era, Mother Nature.

The eighty leaders, who came from nearly every chapter and from each division, arrived in Indianapolis with no snow on the ground. As the large group left the hotel on the first night to go to a nearby restaurant for dinner, it started to slowly snow. No problem. This added to the excitement of the inaugural event. Almost 30 years later there are vivid recollections of AER colleagues from the southern states— who had never seen snow— delighting, as young children would, as the large snow flakes fell blanketing the sidewalks. Snow balls were formed and tossed. A battle ensued. Joyful laughter erupted. No doubt the local Hoosiers stood back scratching their heads wondering who these people were.

On the second day of the conference, the participants watched out the hotel windows as the gentle falling snow accelerated fiercely to a full-blown ‘white out’ blizzard—another new, but less-welcomed phenomenon. Concern grew with pending upcoming flights how everyone—now deeply snow-bound-- would get home with airlines beginning to cancel flights.

As the blizzard raged outside, *AER LIFT*— indoors— continued unabated. The Chapter Presidents and the Division Chairs used this unique opportunity to ‘drill deep’ into their respective responsibilities—extra motivated to have a reason to take the blizzard and its consequences of how they were going to get home off their worried minds.

They learned from the scheduled experts—and spontaneously from each other— successful best practices in other chapters and divisions how to run board meetings, recruit new and retain existing members, offer quality and meaningful benefits to make AER grow and thrive. Barbara McCarthy and Peggy Madera had designed a content-rich impactful program.

AER LIFT was designed as ‘grass roots’ effort in the belief, “As the chapters and divisions go—so goes AER.” Conversely, “As the chapters and divisions don’t go—neither will AER.”

Since all things happen at the local level from the ground, *AER LIFT*’s focus applied the motto “Think globally, but act locally.” The point was stressed that ‘AER is not lead by its leaders, but by its members who elect their representatives.’ Attendees were encouraged to involve more members in chapter and division activities. As more members become involved, AER would grow and be strengthened. In addition, active members are highly more likely to renew their membership.

The chapters and the divisions— AER’s foundation— was likened to a “health club” and “wellness center” where the members “flex their professional muscles,” and in the process grow, develop, and thrive with the support of their colleagues.

The first AER LIFT was successful—in spite of the blizzard— beyond high expectations. As such, the next year, the Board “institutionalized” AER LIFT as an annual budget expenditure to continue to “uplift” the chapters and divisions— and in turn, “uplift” AER, the mother ship. AER held approximately 12 annual AER LIFTs; however, due to budget restraints, the annual leadership training conference was suspended. The hope is that AER LIFT can be reinstated. Clearly, chapter and division leaders richly benefit from the three-day leadership training program provided.

By the way, everyone was able to get back home after the first AER LIFT with only a few delays. The weather and Mother Nature’s fiercest storm did not dampen the excitement of the conference or limit the learning of AER leaders.

The score AER 101 – Mother Nature 7.

What’s Happening AER

2019 Wisconsin AER: Collaborative Vision Conference

Holiday Inn Hotel & Convention Center

Steven’s Point, WI

May 9, 2019 to May 10, 2019

NorCal AER Professional Development Event 2019

Sacramento Society for the Blind

Sacramento, CA

May 15th 9:30am - 4:00pm

"Standing at the Crossroads"

W. Ross MacDonald School

Brantford, Ontario

November 14, 2019

To learn more about these and other events, click here: [Chapter Events](#)

Share Your Knowledge: Call for Papers

You are invited to share your knowledge with other vision rehabilitation providers by submitting a proposal for the **AVRT 2019 Professional Development Conference on December 5-7, 2019,**

in **Jacksonville Florida**. The Call for Papers is accessible and is located on their website, www.avrt.org. **The due date for the Call for Papers is May 10, 2019.**

This event is exclusively designed for practitioners working in the vision rehabilitation field and offers attendees the best current research and creative approaches from the field. Take advantage by earning continuing education hours for the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals (ACVREP). Also, continuing education hours can be earned from attending. Professional achievement awards as well as scholarships are also available. Please check out their website.



Pamela J. Holloway, OK, 2019 Winner of the Charlyn Allen Award. This award is given to a Rehabilitation professional who exemplifies dedication and service to the rehabilitation of persons who are blind.

Division Spotlight

Administration and Leadership Division

Now more than ever is the time to convene seasoned leaders. Now more than ever is the time to develop new and emerging leaders and administrators in our field. All chapters, organizations, and businesses need well-trained and efficient supervisors, managers, administrators, leaders and executives, to manage and guide volunteers and employees; and to administer and direct departments, schools, agencies, chapters and tasks (or sections or teams of it). No matter your role “you are a leader,” and we need you! Take this opportunity to join the Admin and Leader Workgroup. Bring your ideas, needs, and experiences and together we will work to have the best-prepared Leaders and Administrators in the field. **AER Chapter leaders are encouraged to join.** Click the link below to join and be a part of it all: [Workgroup Sign-up Form](#)

Welcome AER New Members

Join us in welcoming the following members to AER who joined in April: [New or Reconnected AER Members](#)

What's Cookin' AER

Mofongo (Puerto Rican Plantain Balls)

Adriana Mattei-Sosa shared this recipe for her mofongo, her favorite Puerto Rican dish. A staple of Puerto Rico, this fried plantain mash can be served with a simple salad or rice and beans.

YIELD: Make 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 4 green plantains
- 2 cups of canola or olive oil
- Kosher salt to taste
- 6 garlic cloves
- 2 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
- 1 pound of crisp fried pork rinds, also known as chicharron
- 1 slice of bacon, cooked
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken stock

PREPARATION

1. Peel plantains and cut into one-inch slices.
2. In a large saucepan or deep fryer, heat oil to 350 degrees. Add plantain slices in two batches and fry for 7 minutes, turning once, until lightly golden but not browned. Drain on paper towels.
3. In a large mortar or big bowl, crush garlic cloves with a pestle or the back of a spoon and sprinkle with salt. Add olive oil to the mixture and keep pounding until its well incorporated. Transfer to a small bowl.
4. In the same mortar or bowl, crush half of the fried plantain slices with half of the pork rinds, 1/2 slice of cooked bacon, and half the garlic aioli/mixture and pound or smash together. Add up to 1/2 cup chicken stock as needed, to make it moist.
5. Spoon the mixture and shape into two-inch balls. Repeat with remaining ingredients and keep in warm oven until ready to serve. Top with more crushed chicharron, or cilantro if you wish.
6. *From the kitchen of former AER Board Member, Adriana Mattei-Sosa*

Hey members, do you have a favorite recipe that you want to share? Send it to us at news@aerbvi.org!

Employment Opportunities

Looking for a new opportunity? Here are just a few of the job openings that are available.

[Outreach Itinerant/Mentorship Support Services](#)

Alamogordo, New Mexico

New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

[Teacher For The Visually Impaired](#)

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Vision Forward Organization

[Orientation & Mobility Specialist](#)

Baltimore, Maryland

The Maryland School for the Blind

Click here to learn more about these and other jobs that are available: [Job Exchange](#)

Congratulations

Great things are happening in the AER community! Congratulations to the Penn/Del AER Chapter for recruiting over 10 members during their recent conference!

The AER Voice is a monthly newsletter that serves as an information hub for members; and offers an easy and dependable way of keeping current. This electronic newsletter includes AER updates, events, special announcements, useful tidbits and so much more. If you have news, resources, information or any updates that you would like to share with the membership, please send it to AER at news@aerbvi.org. Deadline for the June issue is 5/30/2019.

