



Welcome to the July 2019 Issue of The Voice

A Word from AER's Executive Director

Dear AER Members,

By the time you read this newsletter, AER will have moved out of the building on Beauregard Street in Alexandria. We will maintain a small office space at another location in Alexandria, but our day to day operations will be conducted through a virtual office. It's a big step for us, but one that makes good financial sense for the organization and one that will give us the ability to continue our focus on adding value to AER memberships and to move forward with new projects and ideas.

I must tip my hat to our AER staff – Angela, Nana, and Michele have done an amazing job of keeping the business of AER up and running while also sorting, packing and organizing for the move. They've done an outstanding job.

Remember when summer used to mean lazy days and down time? It seems like that doesn't happen as much these days, but I hope that this summer brings you some time to relax and refresh and be with the people you love most. AER members are some of the most dedicated professionals in our field; but don't forget to take care of yourselves while you're doing all those things you do for your students and clients.

The AER Board will be meeting at the end of July. If you have questions or issues you'd like to bring before the Board, we'd love to hear from you. Please feel free to contact me, anyone in the AER office, Board President Emily Coleman, or any of the Board members. Let's talk!

Janie Blome, Executive Director

President's Corner

I'm posing a reflective activity. Read the next paragraph and maybe keep notes as you go.

Think about a problem in our work, our field, or in your state. Now, think about why you believe it's a problem. Next, think about the students and clients this problem impacts. What are the negative effects? Finally, what are we doing to find a solution?

This is an informal, regular activity for all of us. We may hear about something happening to those we serve that seems atrocious, or recognize gaps in our knowledge and skills, or in others. As you can tell, this is step one above. This is us thinking about a problem.

We move to the next step if we are reflective. We ask ourselves, “Why don’t I have that knowledge?” or “Why isn’t that person receiving services?” We may phone a friend or chat in a hallway about this issue and why it exists. Then, if the conversation is engaging enough, we may move into the next phase. Questions turn more towards frustration as we think about the detriment to students or clients. Serious venting can happen in this phase because we all care deeply about our work and thinking about negative outcomes is upsetting.

However, the final step is the most important and often where we throw up our hands. When we ask ourselves how to make positive change, and we don’t have a solution, we may come full stop. I guarantee the caring hasn’t stopped, and the passion hasn’t stopped. Often, it’s simply because we don’t know what to do next and with what resources.

For my monthly recommendation, I suggest you do the exercise above and when you get to the final step...you make a move. Reach out to someone who can appreciate your frustration and cares about our work and comes up with a plan. If your plan only positively changes the life of one person, then you have success. When that happens, find a way to share your story, because your success will lead to another.

Emily Coleman, President

What’s New AER?

AER has a new address!

Effective July 1st, our new address is 5680 King Centre Drive, Suite 600, Alexandria, VA 22315. We have downsized in space, but not in COMMITMENT. The AER Strategic Plan calls for effective and efficient operations; and this move positions AER to better serve you and even closer to reaching each of our strategic goals.

TSBVI Online Learning Opportunities!

A FREE Nemeth online resource is now available for Pre-K through 8th-grade levels on the TSBVI Online Learning webpage! It is designed to provide easy access to support learning or reinforcing Nemeth braille code skills for families, teachers or paraeducators working with students who are braille readers.

These modules are a companion to the TSBVI publication, Nemeth at a Glance. Dr. Derrick Smith, professor at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, was the creator of this series, with sections by Janet Bean, Lead Teacher in the TSBVI Curriculum Department.

Although presented in the grade level order that symbols are typically introduced to students in school, you can dip in at any level to find specific symbols and examples.

Modules include an explanation of the symbol, relevant rules, and examples of how to use the symbol in math examples. There are multiple samples of using Nemeth within UEB contexts. Short, ungraded quizzes following each module will help document mastery of the material and provide useful feedback. Completing these optional quizzes will lead to a certification of completion.

Modules for PreK–1st grade, 2nd–3rd grade, 4th–6th grade, and 7/8 grade are already available at <https://www.tsbvi.edu/courses/course-listing#nemethdescription>. Upper-level math grades will be posted in the fall of 2019.

Digital Talking Book

In keeping with the theme of last month's Vision Serve Alliance CEO Summit of making a bigger impact, I'm pleased to tell you that we've recently converted our audio book technology to Digital Talking Book format. We aim to serve many more people now that our audio books are compatible with the talking book machines provided by the National Library Service. I'm hoping that you will help us spread the good news. A listing of our newest talking book titles can be found on our website. Please share with your staff and clients and let them know that our content is available *free of charge*.

We've been sharing the following with many of our patrons and other supporters:

"Xavier Society for the Blind is pleased to announce that our conversion to digital talking book format is now complete and we have added some popular titles on cartridge to our library! These books can be played on the talking book machines provided by the National Library Service. With an existing catalog of over 1,700 braille and audio titles, Xavier Society for the Blind provides inspirational, spiritual and religious reading materials in braille and audio to the blind and visually impaired community of faithful free of charge. One of our primary objectives is to choose new titles which will appeal to a larger audience and we hope that the combination of more appealing titles and the digital talking book format will allow us to reach many more people. Adding titles in Spanish is a key objective as well. For more information, including how to register for our materials, please visit our website xaviersocietyfortheblind.org or call us at 800-637-9193. We look forward to serving many more patrons in new and innovative ways!"

We appreciate any help you can provide. If you need any more information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Malachy Fallon

Executive Director, *Xavier Society for the Blind*

Honoring Those We Have Lost

Submitted by the 2018-2020 History and Memorial Committee

One of the most significant traditions that AER inherited from our predecessor associations was the inspirational and reverent reading of a Necrology List, which was presented at each conference of AAWB—the American Association of Workers for the Blind. For decades, AAWB respectfully read a list of members and colleagues who had died since their previous gathering. AER has continued that tradition and will again present the 2018–2020 Memorial List in the opening session of our 2020 international conference.

Constructing and maintaining these memorial lists is one of the roles of AER's History and Memorial Committee. It is a somber task, but one that inspires us with each remarkable life we learn about and document.

As in the past, AER's History and Memorial Committee depends on your assistance in identifying those in our "professional family" who have died during the 2018–2020 biennium. We maintain a database of their names and information about each individual and use that to construct the Memorial List that will be at the AER International Conference in St. Louis next July. We also maintain an archive of these biennial listings, which will be included in the AER Archives soon to be housed at the American Printing House for the Blind.

We invite you—indeed, we encourage you—to submit the names of our colleagues who have died since January 2018. If you know of colleagues who passed away during this timeframe, please submit their names using the following link: bit.ly/2018-2020Memorial

The submission form will ask you for the following information:

Your email address;

Deceased colleague's name;

The colleague's state or province of residence;

A brief statement of her or his role in the education or rehabilitation of people who are blind or visually impaired;

An obituary or a link to an obituary or tribute, if available.

With your help, we will honor our colleagues who have left us. We truly hope that we have few losses in this biennium and that the list we present at the 2020 conference will be a short one.

Thanks in advance for your help,

2018–2020 AER History and Memorial Committee

Mary Nelle McLennan, Co-Chair, Pennsylvania

Julie Hapeman, Co-Chair, Wisconsin

Gala Brooks, Illinois

Lauralyn Randles, Illinois

Lacey Long, North Dakota

Billy Brookshire, Texas

Rod Kossick, Minnesota

Member Spotlight

Amy Campbell

Amy Campbell is an Education Consultant for Visual Impairment in North Carolina and has been in the field of visual impairment for 20 years. As a Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Amy served as an itinerant teacher, Braille Reading Specialist at a residential school, preschool teacher, and assistant director at a contracting agency. When she's not diving into reading current literature and research about educating students with Visual Impairment, she enjoys writing for her blog called *The High-Heeled TVI*. Currently, Amy is Past-President for the NC Chapter of AER and also holds a seat on AER's Board of Directors as Chairperson of the Council of Chapter Presidents.



What's Happening?

Chapter Events

September 19-20, 2019

Arkansas AER Conference 2019

Four Points Sheraton, 925 S. University Ave., Little Rock

September 25-27, 2019

Sharing the Vision Conference – 2019 Florida AER Conference

Holiday Inn Resort Lake Buena Vista, 13351 State Road, Orlando

October 29-31, 2019

2019 NREAR Conference

Coeur d'Alene Resort, 115 S. 2nd St., Coeur d'Alene, ID

November 13-15, 2019

Beyond All Limits 2019 NE/AER Annual Conference

North Conway Grand Hotel, 72 Common Court, Conway, NH

To learn more about these and other events, please visit: <https://aerbvi.org/event/>

Division Event(s)

Virtual Educational Session: Visual Symptoms in Parkinson's Disease

When: July 18 at 12pm Central

Earn CE Hour(s)

Registration Required. To participate, please use the following conference call information:

Conference Call-In Number: 866-605-3851

Guest Code: 1925461#

Open to AER Members. **Registration is required in order to earn CE hour(s).** Click here to register: [Registration Form](#)

Info You Can Use: Chapter Spotlight

The Arkansas chapter of AER will be hosting their annual conference on September 19-20, 2019. Please join as they explore "What's New on the Scene in 2019." We are excited to be joined by Marty Schultz, the creator of Blindfold Games and ObjectiveEd, as well as, Algebra by Hand's Michael Eiseman. They're looking forward to the opportunity to learn, network, and grow together with you! Be sure and check for updates on their website arkansasaer.org/conference and Facebook page facebook.com/arkansasaer/!

Welcome AER New Members!

Join us in welcoming the following members to AER who joined in the month of June: [New AER Members](#)

What's Cookin' AER?

SHRIMP TACOS

Medium raw shrimp, no tails
Jerk seasoning
Ripe Avocado
Corn Tortillas

Salsa:

Small can crushed pineapple
Chopped fresh mango

Red Onion, chopped
Cilantro (optional)

Brianna's Cilantro Lime Dressing

Sauté shrimp with seasoning until pink and no longer translucent. Combine all ingredients for salsa. Add cooked shrimp to tortillas and top with salsa. Drizzle with Lime dressing and serve.



Image: tacos

Submitted by AER Member
Pepper Watson, *member since 2018*

Employment Opportunities

Looking for a new opportunity! Check out these employment opportunities that are available for you! Here are some of the exciting jobs that are available:

Teacher of the Visually Impaired

07/01/2019 | Vancouver, WA

Principal General Academic

06/21/2019 | Baltimore, Maryland

Teacher of the Visually Impaired

06/21/2019 | Newton, MA

O&M Specialist

05/21/2019 | Rochester Hills, MI

To learn more about these and other jobs that are available, please visit: [Job Exchange](#)

Way to Go!

On Saturday, June 22, fifty students competed in the finals of the national Braille Challenge, hosted by Braille Institute in Los Angeles. AER congratulates all of the students who competed and especially those who placed in the top three in their respective categories. AER Executive Director Janie Blome was the emcee for the awards banquet and President Emily Coleman presented a parent workshop on the newly created Bill of Rights for All Students with Visual Impairments. AER Secretary Sergio Oliva, Braille Institute's Director of National Programs and Services coordinated the event.

Over 1000 students competed in regional events across the country and in Canada. Many of our AER members and chapters supported these events. Thanks to everyone who made the regional events and the finals happen for these amazing students.

A full list of the 2019 winners will be available on the Braille Challenge website:

<https://www.brailleinstitute.org/braille-challenge>



Call for “Making a Difference” Success Stories

We are looking for your stories about the ways you've used a variety of AER professional benefits and services to solve a problem or improve a client outcome. Have you implemented a technique you learned about at an AER conference? Has a student or client developed new skills

from a resource you learned about in an AER publication? Have you used an AER white paper to reinforce best practices? If so, we need to hear from you.

Interested members should complete the form by July 11, 2019: [Making a Difference Form](#). From those, we'll identify five members who represent a cross-section of newer and veteran members, various parts of the country, and a variety of b/vi professions. Each selected participant will be invited to take part in a half-hour one-on-one phone interview conducted by our campaign consultant in July.

AER plans to share these insights as part of a strategic membership campaign anticipated to launch through your chapter leadership, in our upcoming annual report and for other projects and activities. To learn more, please send an email to aer@aerbvi.org.

Updates!

On Friday June 28th and Monday July 1st, 2019, AER experienced problems with its email domain. This prevented all incoming emails from being properly delivered. Regrettably, if you sent an email during this time, it was not received by AER's staff; and we ask that you please resend the email.

The AER office will be closed July 4, 2019.

Save The Date!

AER International Conference 2020- St. Louis, Missouri



Plans are underway for the AER International Conference 2020. Conference Program Chair Joe Catavero promises to provide a full learning experience complete with deep dive discussions, value-added general sessions and top-rated breakout sessions. So, mark your calendars today for July 22-26, 2020 and join your colleagues at the Gateway Arch in the grand St. Louis!

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 August issue is 7/27/2019.



5680 King Centre Drive | Suite 600 | Alexandria | VA | 22315 | 703-671-4500 | 877-492-2708 toll free | 703-671-6391 fax
| aer@aerbvi.org
[Click here to unsubscribe](#)