



Welcome to the November 2019 Issue of The Voice

A Word from AER's Executive Director

Dear AER Members,

Here we are in November, the time of falling leaves, pumpkin spice everything, and the season of thanksgiving. I've been thinking a lot about gratitude lately and reflecting on how to live with conscious gratitude in a busy, chaotic and sometimes hard world. Remembering all that I have to be thankful is a way for me to stay grounded and positive. One of the things I am most thankful for is the privilege of being AER's Executive Director for the last ten months.

I am thankful to be a part of our field and our profession. It's a privilege to represent our field and I'm thankful for opportunities to work with dedicated, caring professionals determined to make a difference in the lives of their students and clients. I see and hear examples of your passion and commitment every day and I am grateful for the chance to work with our members, partners, and allies to impact the future of our profession and of children and adults who are blind and visually impaired. Sometimes that passion and dedication leads us to disagreements and dissatisfaction, and I'm grateful for those challenges as well, because they help us to understand, grow and learn!

I am thankful for you, our AER members and supporters. As I've gotten to know more of our members, to visit chapter conferences, to work with our Board and committee members, I've been reminded over and over of how much our members care about the work they do and about our professions. I've seen first-hand the work that's done, by volunteers, to provide outstanding professional development, to create conferences that are educational and informative (and fun!), to recruit new professionals in to our field, to build up our profession and to make AER a better professional organization. Your willingness to serve your profession and your professional organization makes us all better.

I am thankful for the opportunity to represent each and every one of you on behalf of AER and to promote AER with others in our field, in related fields, and with those who know nothing about our profession. I am so proud of the work you do and the work that AER is doing. I am grateful every day to be a part of that work.

I am thankful also to work with the rest of the AER staff. I know how hard they work on AER's behalf; and I know the dreams they have for our association. It's a joy to dream and build with them; and I know that good things are in AER's future.

What makes you thankful? Let's talk!

Janie Blome, Executive Director, AER

President's Corner

When I initially joined AER, it was to be connected with professionals in our field so I could ask questions or attend events tailored to meet my needs. I knew networking was a crucial component, but I didn't realize it could lead to friendships, that could lead to more networking, to more friendships. Do you see the pattern?

While attending the American Printing House Annual Meeting and the Council of School and Services for the Blind Leadership Institute in October, I was reminded of this cyclical pattern that culminates in national partnerships and innovation. Although they weren't AER events, they were packed with AER members that are seriously invested in our work and take every opportunity to connect with like-minded professionals.

I ran for President of AER alongside our current Secretary, Sergio Oliva with Braille Institute. Our friendship was formed after networking at a conference, and that led to us getting seats on the AER Board, which has led to deeper and more meaningful conversations about our work. There was a recent story from Good Morning America (GMA) online about the shortage of Braille teachers. I was only interviewed because Sergio shared my name. He wanted GMA to collaborate with me and content giants like Dr. Cay Holbrook and Kateri Gullifor and create a meaningful story. A story that could lead to desperately needed national attention for our students learning braille. (Click here to view the GMA interview: [GMA Interview Link](#))

So, you never know who you'll meet by actively participating in our work and in AER. The next member you chat with may be the answer to your question or the electricity to your next big idea. I recommend you don't let those opportunities pass you by.

Emily Coleman, President, AERBVI

What's New AER

The AER International Conference 2020 will feature a new "Symposium Day," and will be open to all conference attendees. This is a conference day devoted to full and half day presentations that will give participants an opportunity to more fully explore topics and issues. The workshops will be interactive and offer a chance for participants to engage with presenters and each other- key drivers for peak learning. Workshops will be for a general audience or more specifically designed for a professional group (i.e. O&M specialists, TVIs, VRTs, LVTs, Technology professionals, Administrators, and so forth). Taking place Thursday 7/23, this symposium day will be followed by three full days of breakout sessions...giving conference attendees a wholistic conference experience!

AER Board of Directors Member Spotlight



John W. McAllister is a native of St. Louis, MO (Kinloch & Ferguson respectfully). For fourteen years, he provided orientation and mobility services at the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. He joined the UALR faculty in 2015. In addition to serving on the AER Board of Directors, he serves on the board for the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired and Arkansas School for the Deaf and the AER Higher Education Accreditation Commission. Also, he is the District 2 director for the AER O&M division. John W. McAllister has a B. A. (Psychology, 1994) from Philander Smith College, M. A. (Orientation and Mobility, 2001) from UALR, M. A. (College Student Affairs, 2007) from UALR and an Ed. D. in Higher Education (Administration, 2014) from the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville...GO HOGS!!! He is married to Griselda McAllister and is the proud father of six children.

He is a proud member of Omega Psi Phi fraternity-- initiated in the Pi Sigma Chapter (Philander Smith College) in the Spring of 1990. John W. McAllister is strongly committed to the education and rehabilitation field. He works each day to ensure that individuals who are blind or has low vision will be able to reach their goals and have success by making sure that UALR has a top rated personnel preparation program that produces professionals who can provide high quality services.

What's Happening?

AER Power Ups! Session -- "Function Vision Evaluations"

Tuesday November 19th 8:00-9:30PM EST.

The Itinerant Division invites you to the virtual session "Function Vision Evaluations." Registration details and more information will follow. Please mark your calendar to attend. The session will be held via Zoom and is open to AER members.

Still Time to Increase Your Chances to Win!

There's no place like AER! And now more than ever before is the time to be a part of our community. We are seeking to increase membership and increase our voice; and we're asking you to serve as an AER Champion to help. As a Champion, ask your co-workers and peers to join AER. For each person who joins and adds your name as the person who made the recommendation, your name will be entered to win a \$500 Visa gift card. It's just that easy!

To get started, open the Campaign Toolkit – there you'll find helpful tips and tools to make it easy. Check out the AER membership guidebook and share the benefits with your co-workers and peers. *Together, we'll strengthen our voice and more than ever before reach greater heights.* Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Angela Smith at angela@aerbvi.org.

[Campaign Toolkit - Word](#)

[Campaign Toolkit - PDF](#)

[Membership Guidebook - Word](#)

[Membership Guidebook - PDF](#)

Welcome AER New Members!

These are exciting times! Join us in welcoming the following members to our community of excellence. These colleagues joined in October. Read fully the list and feel free to personally welcome them to AER! **New AER Members**

What's Cookin' AER

Just in time for holiday baking! “Mary Ola’s Pecan Pie”

Filling:

3 eggs, beaten slightly	¾ cup sugar
½ cup dark Karo syrup	¼ tsp salt
½ cup light Karo syrup	2 tsp vanilla
1 TBSP butter, melted	

Other ingredients:

¾ cup pecan pieces
Unbaked deep pie shell

Beat eggs slightly. Add syrup, sugar, cornstarch, salt and vanilla. Beat thoroughly. **Refrigerate for 24 hours to allow egg whites to absorb and to improve flavor.**

Spread ¾ cup (or more!) of pecans in the bottom of the pie shell. Pour in the filling and bake at 325 degrees for 45 to 50 minutes. Knife inserted just off center should come out clean when

done. You may want to cover the edges of the pie after about 30 minutes to avoid overly brown edges.

You have to plan ahead to make this pie, but it's worth it. It's a Thanksgiving tradition in our family.

If you want to make two pies, use 4 eggs, 1 cup sugar, 2 TBSP butter and 1½ cups of pecans.

Submitted by AER Executive Director and Member Janie Blome

Employment Opportunities

Looking for a new job? Employment opportunities are available for you! Here are some of the exciting jobs that are available:

Registered Nurse

Alamogordo, NM

New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

TVI/COMS/Braille Transcriptionist Positions

Southeast and Midwest Service Territories

Invision Services

Orientation and Mobility Specialist

Daytona Beach, FL

Conklin Center for the Blind

For more jobs that are available, please visit: [Job Exchange](#)

Way to Go!

Congratulations Northern California AER for all you did to make it happen! AB-947 was signed by Governor Newsom. The new law adds Sections 56353 and 56354 to Chapter 778 of California Education Code: **“Visually Impaired Pupils: Expanded Core Curriculum.”** Effective January 1, 2020: school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools will be “authorized” to “consider elements of the Expanded Core Curriculum” when developing IEPs for students with visual impairment. The bill was developed by the ad hoc FAPE Committee of the California Association of Orientation & Mobility Specialists (CAOMS) in collaboration with the Legislative Committee of the California Council of the Blind (CCB).

Amazing and Wow! The Arizona AER chapter provides “Member Grants” to assist individuals who work in specific professional support capacities or who are enrolled in full-time university programs related to providing services to children or adults with visual impairments to join AER.

AER Colorado Chapter is encouraging membership and member engagement by giving away a free AER membership each year. Each time a person attends an event, their name is entered into a “pot” to win a free AER membership. The drawing is held in May. Way to go AER Colorado!

News You Can Use

Veterans Day – Honoring all who have served!

The AER office will be closed Monday, November 11th in observance of Veterans Day. AER gives thanks to those veterans who fought for our freedom.

Thanksgiving 2019

The AER office will be closed November 28th and 29th in observance of Thanksgiving.

Division Highlights

“Children with CVI...”

Written by Stephanie Duesing and submitted by the AER Neurological Visual Impairment division. Click here to read: [Children with CVI Article](#)

Chapter Events

Chapter conferences provide a great opportunity to connect with your peers and to gain approaches, information and techniques that can advance your knowledge, skills and abilities.

Transition and O&M: A Path to Independence, SC AER

November 7-9, 2019

Beach Cove Resort, North Myrtle Beach, North Myrtle Beach, SC

Practices for Professionalism, AZ AER Fall Conference

November 7-8, 2019

Hotel Tucson City Center, Tucson, AZ

Beyond All Limits, NE AER Annual Conference

November 13-15, 2019

North Conway Grand Hotel, North Conway, NH

Ways To Work Day, Ontario AER

November 21, 2019

W. Ross MacDonald School, Brantford, Ontario

For more information about these and other upcoming chapter conferences and events, please visit: [Conference and Events Information](#)

Save the Date: July 22-26, 2020 St. Louis, MO Union Station Hotel

Themed "Gateway to Community," the AER International Conference 2020 is sure to be AER's best conference ever! We want a conference that reflects your needs and interests. Are there topics that you want to have covered during the AER International Conference 2020? Is there something that you would like to learn more about during the conference? Click "[Topics & Interests](#)" and tell us your needs and every effort will be made to have it covered! [Topics & Interests](#)

To learn more, send an email to conference@aerbvi.org



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 December issue is 11/25/2019.

