



Welcome to the February 2020 Issue of The Voice

AER Gears Up for New Leadership

Our members are our priority. AER continues to work steadfastly to meet our 2017-2020 strategic goals. Since 2017, we have made significant strides, but we know there's lots more to be done. Your AER Board of Directors is committed to ensuring that we have a strong and vibrant professional association. Here is where we need your help.

Janie Blome's tenure with AER ended February 3, 2020. We wish her the best in future endeavors. We have begun working diligently to identify a full-time replacement and will want input from you.

The board-led transition team, working with a search firm, will develop a position profile that best reflects our growing needs. New to our executive search efforts will be a Member Panel that will provide input during the process. Please watch your email for additional details and an opportunity to volunteer.

In the meantime, AER will name an interim Executive Director – transitioning responsibilities from outgoing Executive Director, Janie Blome. Together with you, AER will reach new heights, strengthen our global presence, increase member services and offerings, be a valued voice for our professions; and be forever guided by our core values...*compassion, independence, integrity and diversity.*

Should you have any questions, please send an email to aer@aerbvi.org.

AER Board of Directors

President's Corner

My community, the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, recently held a cheerleading, wrestling, and performing arts event for schools for the blind in our region. I watched over 100 teenagers with visual impairment independently navigate a new environment, make new friends, and achieve greater heights. It was awesome.

What I also observed were numerous educators outside of the spotlight; staff from each school who had dedicated their work to these students and were able to witness their success. We know what it takes for a child to feel empowered and independent and any of us could imagine the progression of IEP goals leading up to this point in their lives. The staff on hand all weekend should feel proud of their contributions to our field.

At AER, we also have staff that work outside of the spotlight most of the time, and “on the mats” when we have an event. It’s easy to forget the behind the scenes action at AER and we’re appreciative of all those current, past, and future employees. They support us, so that we can support students and clients, and ultimately do better work.

By acknowledging the work of professionals, I’m not taking away from the success of the students. I’m simply reminding us all that when you’re amongst the clients and students in your community, don’t forget to look at the sidelines. There is success there, too.

Emily Coleman, *President*, AERBVI

In Memoriam

Dr. Rona A. Shaw



March 19, 1947 – January 5, 2020

On January 5, 2020, the field lost a tireless advocate for children and educators, Dr. Rona A. Shaw. Rona was the Director of Graduate Programs in Education and the Teacher Education Program for Teachers of Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired at Dominican College for more than 35 years. She worked to promote university training and professional standards for vision education professionals in her graduate and undergraduate programs.

Rona was an author, researcher and scholar. She had written several books that have been published through the American Foundation for the Blind and she has presented numerous

articles and grants on topics including functional vision assessments, low vision utilization, preparation of Vision Rehabilitation Teachers and Orientation & Mobility Specialists, paraprofessional education, braille literacy and children with multiple disabilities. Rona was also the 2011 recipient of The Council for Exceptional Children, Division on Visual Impairments and Distinguished Service Award.

Rona had numerous affiliations with professional organizations and schools; both at the local and national level. Although too numerous to mention, she served at various levels as consultant, auditor, and member of the board of directors within many agencies, including AER.

Rona leaves a true legacy. She loved the field and developing new teachers. She was a mentor, teacher and advocate who approached every situation with a keen eye, kind heart and sheer grace. There were no limits to her vision. May we keep Rona's husband Rex and children Emily and Lauren in our hearts and prayers.

A fund in Rona's name is being established to support the continuation of the Graduate Program for Teachers of Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired. Donations can be made to "Dominican College – TVI Program" and sent to:

Dominican College
Teacher Education Division
c/o Yvette Vasquez-Blitzer
470 Western Highway
Orangeburg, NY 10962

Dr. Kathleen Heubner, Dr. Kay Ferrell, Yvette Blitzer, Joanne Russotti & John Kelly

History and Memorial Committee

Submitted by the 2018-2020 History and Memorial Committee

Honoring Those We Have Lost

One of the most significant traditions that AER inherited from our predecessor associations was the inspirational and reverent reading of a Memorial 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 continues that tradition and will present the 2018–2020 Memorial List in the opening session of our 2020 International Conference in St. Louis, MO.

Constructing and maintaining these memorial lists 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 encourage you to report 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/AER2018-2020Memorial.

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.

These names have been submitted for AER's 2018–2020 Memorial List:

Clifford Alexander, Tennessee
Burt Boyer, Kentucky
Matthew Caldwell, Texas
Tommy Craig, Texas
Liz DePiero, Pennsylvania
Dr. Eleanor Faye, New York
Dr. Randall Harley, Tennessee
Dr. Deborah Hatton, Tennessee and North Carolina
Willis "Nick" Hazzard, Maine
Don Maccabe, Texas
Dr. Rona Shaw, New Jersey
Dick L. Siefert, AR
Dr. Susan Spungin, New York

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
Billy Brookshire, Texas
Rod Kossick, Minnesota

AER Member Spotlight

Meet Faye Miller, AER member since 2007



Faye Miller is a member of the Oklahoma Chapter of AER and has been a teacher at the Oklahoma School for the Blind (OSB) since 1999. She taught a variety of middle school subjects and now teaches orientation and mobility. She earned her master's from Northeastern State University in Special Education with an emphasis in visual impairment. Faye completed her COMS certification program at Salus University in Pennsylvania. She is a National Board-Certified Teacher and a National Library Services Certified Braille Transcriber. Faye is the Regional Coordinator for Oklahoma Regional Braille Challenge and Oklahoma Regional Cane Quest, both national programs of the Braille Institute. Faye lives in Haskell with her husband, Robert, who is also a teacher at OSB, and who keeps her up-to-date on

the latest ways to use assistive technology with her students.

Meet New Member Leslie Thatcher, EdM, AER Member since October 2019



Leslie Thatcher is the founding Director of College Success@Perkins, (Perkins School for the Blind) a new, nine month transition program launched in the Fall of 2018, for college bound, visually impaired high school graduates, to work and develop their academic and blindness skills, to prepare for independence and success in a college environment. Leslie brings more than 25 years of experience in college and independent school education to College Success@Perkins.

Her professional and leadership experience includes admissions, academic skill development, program development, college counseling, student life and residential parenting at several independent schools in New England. Additionally, she served as Associate Dean of Admission for Lewis & Clark College, in Portland, Oregon. Leslie consults with college-bound young adults as an independent educational consultant and executive functioning coach. Leslie is deeply committed to supporting the growth of students, empowering them to reach their full potential.

Leslie has a master's in education with a focus on adolescent development and higher education administration from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a B.A. in History, and Secondary Education Certification in Social Sciences, from Lewis & Clark College. She is a member of NACAC, IECA, NEACAC, AER and AHEAD.

Welcome AER New Members who Joined in January!

Join us in welcoming the newest members, who joined AER in January 2020. We are so glad to have you! [New AER Members](#)

News You Can Use

AER Board of Directors – AER is Seeking Nominations!

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2020-2022 AER Board of Directors. If you are interested in nominating an AER member or self-nominating for President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, Canadian Representative, or a District Representative, please send an email to aer@aerbvi.org for more information.

AER Awards: Call for Nominations

It's that time of year again! We are pleased to announce that the 2020 Call for Award Nominees is now open! Every biennium, AER recognizes individuals in education, rehabilitation, and employment services – and we need your help in celebrating the dedication and commitment of the people in our field and our Chapters.

The submission deadline for all awards is **April 1, 2020**. To be eligible for consideration, all nominations must be submitted before the stated deadline. Specific criteria are noted on each individual nomination form. Please visit <https://aerbvi.org/professional-development/aer-awards/>.

AER Scholarships

Attention Students: AER is now accepting applications for the William and Dorothy Ferrell Scholarship. This educational scholarship is for **individuals continuing their education in the field of providing services to the blind and visually impaired**. The William and Dorothy Ferrell Scholarship is awarded every other year in even years to two selected applicants who are legally blind and are studying for a career in the field of services to persons who are blind or visually impaired. Deadline for submitting the applications and accompanying documentation is April 30, 2020 and scholarship recipients will be notified on or around May 31, 2020. The two winners will be announced at the AER International Conference 2020, July 22-26, in St. Louis, MO. To learn more, please visit <https://aerbvi.org/resources/aer-scholarships/>

Accessing the *Journal for Visual Impairment and Blindness*

Did you know that AER members have full access to the JVIB (current issue and archived issues)? Take a moment and login and discover the Journal! As an added plus, each issue contains up to

two articles in which you can read, take a quiz, and earn valuable CEs! If you are having trouble logging into the Journal, please follow the steps in the instructions (link) below (in either Word or PDF formats).

[JVIB Login Steps – Word](#)

[JVIB Login Steps – PDF](#)

Member Profile Updates

If you need to update your membership information and need assistance, please send an email to michele@aerbvi.org or contact her via telephone at (703) 671-5875.

Employment Opportunities

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

Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist

Rochester Hills, MI

Leader Dogs for the Blind

Vision Rehabilitation Instructor

Phoenix, AZ

Foundation for Blind Children

Superintendent of the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Aberdeen, SC

South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

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

What's Cookin' AER

With so many people following the keto diet, we thought it would be great to offer you a low carb option for this month's recipe. This meal, Mustardy Meatball and Cauliflower Gratin With Gruyere, serves four and will take approximately one hour to prepare.

Mustardy Meatball and Cauliflower Gratin with Gruyere

1 head cauliflower (about 2 pounds), trimmed and broken into bite-size florets
Kosher salt
1 pound ground beef, preferably 80/20
3 tablespoons Dijon mustard
Freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon everyday olive oil
2 cups heavy cream
3 cups grated Gruyère or aged white cheddar

1. Heat the oven to 450 degrees. Place four 2-cup gratin dishes on a foil-lined baking sheet.

2. Bring 1 cup water to a simmer in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the cauliflower, season with salt and cover the skillet. Cook until the cauliflower florets are just tender enough to be pierced with the tip of a knife, about 2 minutes. Uncover and continue cooking until the water evaporates and the cauliflower is fully tender, 4 to 5 minutes more. Divide the cauliflower among the prepared gratin dishes.

3. In a medium bowl, break apart the ground beef with your fingers into pieces about the size of a dime. Dollop the mustard over the beef, then season liberally with salt and pepper. Use your fingers to gently toss the beef until it's well-coated with the seasonings. Roll walnut-size pieces of beef into about 32 balls (1¼-inch-diameter) and divide them among the gratin dishes, resting them on the cauliflower.

4. Pour ½ cup cream over the meatballs and cauliflower in each dish, season with salt and pepper, then top each with ¾ cup grated cheese. Bake until the meatballs are cooked through and the cheese is golden brown and bubbling on top, about 30 minutes. Serve while warm.

Macros (per serving):

Fat: 94.2 g

Carbs: 5.6 g

Protein: 47.4 g

Division Information

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Division

Scholarships

The O&M Division sponsors an annual scholarship competition for students enrolled in AER accredited O&M programs. The scholarship recognizes the vital contributions of the late Donald Blasch to the profession of O&M during his long tenure at Western Michigan University. **The**

application process opens February 1, 2020 for the 2020 Donald Blasch Scholarship. To learn more, click here: [Scholarship Application](#)

Division Awards

Don't forget to nominate your stand-out colleagues for one of our esteemed awards! The Orientation and Mobility Division Awards Committee invites to submit a letter nominating a deserving colleague for the **Lawrence E. Blaha Memorial Award**, the **O&M Citation of Excellence for Direct Service**, or the **Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award**. Go to bit.ly/aeromawards to review the criteria and determine the best fit for your distinguished colleague. The award presentation will be held at the 2020 AER International Conference July 22-26 in St. Louis, MO!

Nominations for the awards and letters of support should be submitted by April 30, 2020. Submissions should be sent to Nick Leon at nickleon86@gmail.com. Award recipients will be notified and announced by June 1, 2020.

Awards Committee members currently include Justin Kaiser, Christopher Tabb, Gala Brooks, Ana Leffel and Nick Leon, Chair. Please email nickleon86@gmail.com if you're interested in joining the committee or have any questions and comments.

Psychosocial Division

The Psychosocial Division is working to provide resources and professional development that reflect your needs and meet your expectations. Please take a moment and complete the Division Survey to help us to better meet your needs. **Survey closes: 2/28/2020**

Click here to access the survey: [Division Survey](#)

Chapter Events

Wow! Check out the AER chapter conferences that are scheduled. Chapter conferences provide a valuable opportunity to network, gain new information, acquire new resources and so much more.

[Illinois AER Conference: 2020 Vision: Your Dedication in Focus](#)

February 13-14, 2020

Chicago Marriott, Naperville, IL

[Alaska AER Conference: Climbing Higher to Serve Alaskans](#)

February 20-21, 2020

Division for Vocational Rehabilitation Job Corp Center, Anchorage, AK

[“Technology” Georgia AER Conference 2020](#)

March 16-17, 2020

RT Jones Memorial Library, Canton, GA

[Virginia AER 2020 Conference](#)

March 30-April 1, 2020

DoubleTree Hilton, Charlottesville, VA

[Michigan AER Conference 2020](#)

April 23-24, 2020

The Marriott at Laurel Park, Livonia, MI

[Wisconsin AER, Collaborative Vision 2020](#)

May 7-8, 2020

More details soon!

Visit <https://aerbvi.org/event/> for more information about these and other upcoming chapter conferences and events.

AER International Conference 2020 Information

Registration is now open! The AER International Conference will be the best conference ever! Conference registration includes Symposium Day sessions on Thursday, daily educational breakout sessions Friday-Sunday, and so much more...Register today to attend the AER International Conference 2020! You can [register online by clicking here](#), or download the [registration form](#).

Have questions...want to learn more? Review the Conference Summary, Q&A, Conference Contacts and More: [Conference Summary](#)

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 March issue is 2/26/2020.



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