



Welcome to the June 2002 Issue of the Voice

A Word from AER's Interim Executive Director

AER Steps Up to the Professional Development Challenge

So I know just about all of you are well aware that we made the tough decision to reschedule this July's much-anticipated Biennial International Conference. What I don't think most of you have heard as yet is how AER is redirecting our disappointment in not seeing each other this Summer into action to step up AER's professional development and continuing education offerings for our members and our community.

I want to publicly thank the AER Board of Directors for their partnership in just very recently approving significant and comprehensive changes to this year's operating budget to allow us to aggressively conserve our resources during these uncertain days while making critical investments in AER's future by investing in you. For a long time now, AER has made recordings of past conference sessions available via our website. What we have not done is to make this library of resources as robust, thorough, accessible, and cost-effective as we can. I know you know that doing so does not come with certain costs and a need to consider how to better deploy our staff and information technology assets. I think we have always known what has needed to be done, but maybe we all "needed" was a two-by-four on the head that this wild season represents to get us going. But rather than simply being reactive, I am excited about how we're beginning to mobilize to build out an AER-branded professional development platform that we can all be proud of that isn't just yet one more virtual conference.

Having been a part of the AER and wider vision loss community for as long as I have, I know I should not have been surprised by this. But when we reached out to folks who submitted session proposals for this Summer's now-postponed show, more than 100 submitters wrote back with enthusiasm for the opportunity to work with AER to conduct their sessions remotely. In coordination with AER's Continuing Education Committee, ably chaired by Kay

Ratzlaff, we have begun the hard work of pulling together what we hope is a rich array of content for you. And if you're saying to yourself as you read this, "Hey, I'd like to work with them, too!", then by all means, drop me a note at mark@aerbvi.org. But what we have decided to do is to let session presenters who are proficient at recording content to get started while we work with those who might need some technical help. We want to be sure that we are not letting a brilliant presenter's expertise go to waste simply because they're not as expert with all this 21st century tech as they are in their professional discipline. And as session recordings come in, and we work with others to produce such content, we'll also be getting going on making the necessary improvements to our online presence and platform to be ready to make it all easy for you to use and efficient for us to maintain. How cool would it be to be able to browse from a catalog of potentially hundreds of high-quality lectures, lessons, interactive and fun presentations, and on and on while being able to affordably access just the content you want and to conveniently obtain continuing education credit. And yep, we are also thinking through how to not just slap up pre-recorded content but to make as much live and truly interactive offerings as available as possible. If we do this right, the possibilities are as big as our dreams.

But we cannot do this without you. Your membership dues are perhaps more critical than ever before; if you are a current member, thank you so much! If you'd like to be, we sure need to hear from you; just drop a note to memberservices@aerbvi.org. The commitment you have from your elected, volunteer, and staff leaders is that we'll continue to work as hard as we can to stretch your membership dollar while providing you with best-in-class professional development and other benefits. But I don't know about you; these days have made me aware more than ever that time is our most precious resource. Of course, we are appreciative of your membership commitment. However, you can tangibly enhance the caliber of your professional association and your community by considering contributing your own content to this effort. Even if you do not have a clue how to pull it off, we will help you make it happen. Your colleagues need to know what you know and to learn from your experience.

I hope to have more to say very soon about how we are reworking how we do what we do both in terms of our human and our digital resources. But please know that we are moving forward with fun plans for our future together. Our goal is to raise the curtain by Labor Day if possible, but never fear; we will be finding ways to connect with you between now and then. Just know that we've got your back. Stay tuned!

Mark Richert, *Interim Executive Director*, AER

President's Corner

The end of May is the culmination of achievement for students everywhere. As I write this, we just finished our virtual graduation at TSBVI. It wasn't what any of us expected or planned when we embarked upon this year, but here we are, and resiliency is shining through.

The media is currently inundated with stories about high school seniors, but there are other students to consider. AER's student members need recognition, too. Many of you are finishing up graduate, undergraduate, or doctoral degrees within programs focused in the field of blindness and visual impairment. Of all the graduates in the world, I might be the most thankful for you.

Our field has had a professional shortage probably since its inception, and we are grateful for your dedication and commitment to youth and adults. You've worked hard learning Braille, cane skills, and other areas of the expanded core curriculum. You are now prepared to increase independence for many. You've accomplished your goals! So, it's time for your next mission.

You are now tasked with going out and inspiring others to participate in our work. Recruitment is a critical role in our field, and being fresh out of school, you have the best perspective. Keep an eye out for bright stars like yourself. Watch for those who educate without judgement and encourage without enabling. We need more people like that...people just like you.

Emily Coleman, *President*, AERBVI

News You Can Use

AER's 2020 William and Dorothy Ferrell Scholarship Winners!

AER is proud to announce the winners of the 2020 AER William and Dorothy Ferrell Scholarship. After carefully reviewing all entries, the AER Scholarship Committee decided on two individuals that clearly met and exceeded the criteria:

Bradley Blair

Victor Marques

Congratulations to both winners, and great job to everyone who applied.

BREAKING NEWS!! Brand New AER Scholarship (available to grad students)

AER is proud to announce a new scholarship for grad student applicants studying for a career in the field of Orientation & Mobility or Teachers of the Visually Impaired. The three \$2,000 scholarship winners will be announced in the Fall of 2020.

*Deadline for submitting applications is **August 31, 2020**, and scholarship recipients will be notified on or around October 2020.*

Refer to the application for eligibility criteria. The deadline for consideration of the 2020 Scholarship is August 31, 2020. All application materials must be submitted to the AER office no later than August 31. [Download the application by clicking here.](#)

Spring Briefing from BANA

BANA's Spring Board Meeting Being Held via Remote Sessions

BANA—the Braille Authority of North America—normally holds two face-to-face meetings each year with teleconference meeting in the intervening months. However, as with so many other events, the three-day spring board meeting that was scheduled to be held March 19-21, 2020, was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, the BANA Board is conducting its spring business agenda through semi-monthly ZOOM sessions throughout the spring and early summer. Plans and arrangements for BANA's fall meeting, scheduled for early November, are still in flux and will unfold as we know more about health and safety circumstances.

BANA Publishes Provisional Guidance for Transcribing Mathematics in UEB

In a new publication—*Provisional Guidance for Transcribing Mathematics in Unified English Braille (UEB)*—BANA presents provisional guidance for use in UEB transcription that involves mathematics. The purpose of this document is to provide additional clarification and practical suggestions for the transcription of "technical" materials (i.e., mathematics and science) transcribed using UEB.

These guidelines, intended for use in the US and Canada, supplement the rules and guidance presented in the international publications *Rules of Unified English Braille, 2013* (RUEB) and *Unified English Braille Guidelines for Technical Material, 2014* (GTM) authorized by the International Council on English Braille (ICEB).

This guidance publication is available free of charge on the BANA website at <http://www.brailleauthority.org/ueb.html#guide>.

BANA invites feedback from users of the practices presented in this provisional document. You can send your comments or questions by clicking on the following link: [Send a message to BANA](#).

An Addendum Is Added to Braille Formats

The Braille Authority of North America (BANA) has approved and posted an addendum to *Braille Formats: Principles of Print-to-Braille Transcription, 2016*. This addendum brings the language related to copyright law in sections 2.3.1. and 2.3.6e in alignment with the current US Copyright Act that was changed due to the Marrakesh Treaty. The addendum was approved by the BANA Board during its winter teleconference on January 23, 2020 and is available on the BANA website as PDF, BRF, and BRF for downloading. This practice is effectively immediately.

For more information and resources, visit the BANA website: www.brailleauthority.org.

Extend a warm welcome to the newly elected AER Board members

AER would like to congratulate the following members for being elected to serve on our Board of Directors. We are excited to welcome these exceptional leaders to AER. Their terms will begin on August 1, 2020.

President-Elect:	Olaya Landa-Vialard
Treasurer:	Kristi Probst
Secretary:	Janice Moran
District 1 Rep:	Kathryn Botsford
District 2 Rep:	Amy Scepaniak
District 3 Rep:	Lauralyn Randles
District 4 Rep:	Kelli Jarosz
District 5 Rep:	Derrick Smith
District 6 Rep:	Rebecca Sheffield
District Canada Rep:	Laurie Watson

Keep Calm and Braille On!

Since 2000, the Braille Challenge has been a celebration promoting braille literacy, advocacy, friendship, partnership and festivities. This year, due to the COVID-19 situation, our tradition

of a 2-day event consisting of Friday welcome activities, Saturday contests, and an awards ceremony at the University of Southern California will look a little different. Despite these changes, we aim to capture the essence of a traditional Braille Challenge Finals experience with a remote program, continuing our aim of promoting braille literacy across North America.

Finalists and families will not be coming to Los Angeles for the Braille Challenge experience this year. Instead, the experience is coming to them! This year's event will start with a virtual video announcement of all the Finalists. Finalists will complete their remote Braille Challenge testing at a location determined by each finalist's family, their TVI and/or Regional Braille Challenge coordinator(s). Braille Institute staff will coordinate a privately proctored test which will then be sent back to Braille Institute for scoring. Braille Challenge Finals festivities will begin with the 'Friday Welcome Activities' consisting of a swag bag, goodies, annual yearbook, tactile portrait, engaging activity kits, and other items! On Saturday, winners will be announced at a live virtual awards ceremony and prizes will be sent accordingly.

www.braillechallenge.org

Perkins E-Learning (AER Member Discount)

AER members receive a 20% discount on the total cost of Perkins self-paced tutorials. Each provide an opportunity to enhance your knowledge, skills and abilities and job performance! You must use a voucher code to take advantage of this member benefit and earn CE hours. Log into the members-only pages of our website and get started by [clicking here](#).

Accessing the *Journal for Visual Impairment and Blindness*

Do you know that AER members have full access to JVIB issues? Take a moment, login and discover the Journal! As an added plus, each issue contains up to two articles that you can read, take a quiz, and earn valuable CE hours! Below are instructions for accessing the journal. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact michele@aerbvi.org.

[JVIB Login Steps – Word](#)

[JVIB Login Steps – PDF](#)

Stay current! Member Profile Updates

If you have changes to your membership profile information, you can update the information (i.e. email, postal address, telephone numbers, etc.) online via your member account. 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.

Chapter Updates

Pennsylvania-Delaware AER Chapter

**Building Resilience:
Leading and Learning Our Way
through 2020 and Beyond**

Submitted by Penn-Del AER Chapter's Leadership Development Committee

Like everyone in our country, we in Pennsylvania and Delaware have been confronted by the unsettling loss of “NORMAL” and by every surreal part of this time we are living. We have all been managing our “day jobs” from home; setting up and sharing work space with spouses and partners; creating cyber classrooms and class times for our own children; performing the entertainment functions of a cruise director; and—frankly—just trying to stay afloat...

Also like you, we've been disheartened at the cancellation of events and opportunities that were significant to us. Our Penn-Del community is deeply disappointed that it was necessary to cancel our 2020 conference in April and our annual Leadership Development Event that was scheduled to precede it. Those cancellations were big losses for us professionally and personally. However, on the flip side, we did not cancel our commitment to provide professional development opportunities for our members and colleagues, and out of our disappointment grew a new venture for us—a three-part webinar series.

As we began to build the leadership development series, we listened to our members, to our coworkers—*and to each other*—as we have struggled through this Corona virus experience. Listening, we realized that part of being a professional is keeping ourselves healthy and strong so we can remain present for our work and those we serve.

It became clear that the consequences of COVID-19 have threatened that essential health and strength. We recognized that resilience and self-sustaining practices have become more essential and that they are learnable tools that can help us move forward with courage and insight. With that as our north star, we stepped out of our usual “lane” and chose “Building Resilience” as the topic for our leadership series. Next, we shifted into high gear! Aided by the invaluable partnership of Kevin O'Connor, who was scheduled to present our face-to-face event in April, we crafted a three-part webinar series focusing on resilience and wellbeing in this limbo-like time.

These hour-long ZOOM webinar events are offered free of charge and have been designed as conversations between attendees and three outstanding thought-leaders, all focusing on how we as professionals can sustain the wellbeing of ourselves and others as we adapt to new uncertainties.

The kickoff session on May 19 featured Kevin O'Connor as our guest presenter. Vince McVeigh, co-host along with Rebecca Renshaw, interviewed Kevin then opened the conversation for exchanges with the nearly 200 attendees.

Kevin O'Connor will serve as our "Ring Master" for the two remaining broadcasts, which will follow a similar format with a conversational tone and even more time for interaction and exchange with those attending via ZOOM.

The next two events in our free series are:

Session 2: June 3, 2020, 4:00 pm EDT with Dr. Amy J. Armstrong, CRC

Session 3: June 17, 2020, 4:00 pm EDT with Fr. Jim Warnke

Complete information about Penn-Del AER's free webinar series on "Building Resilience" and is available on our website at www.penn-delaer.org. Registration is open, and we hope you will join us!

Arizona AER Chapter

The poster features a teal background with white and orange text. At the top, the title "Tactile Cues for Blind/VI Children and Youth with Additional Disabilities" is written in white. Below the title, it says "Presented by Megan Mogan with the Arizona Deafblind Project" in smaller white text. To the right is a portrait of Megan Mogan, a woman with short brown hair wearing a black and white top. Below the portrait is an orange banner with a white computer monitor icon and the text "Webinar June 3rd 12pm PST 3pm EST". At the bottom, there is a small white box with black text: "The workshop is \$20 and you can register through the Zoom link in the text below. Questions or challenges with registration? Please email Jenny Wheeler at jennifer.wheeler@asdb.az.gov". In the bottom right corner is the AER logo, which is a circular emblem with a torch and the letters "AER" below it.

On June 3, 2020, Megan Mogan, speech/language pathologist and deafblind specialist with The Arizona Deafblind Project, will present a live webinar on "**Tactile Cues for Blind/VI Children and Youth with Additional Disabilities.**"

Details include:

Date: June 3, 2020

Time: 12:00-1:00 Arizona time (12:00 Pacific/1:00 Mountain/2:00 Central/3:00

Eastern)

Cost: \$20

Registration: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_K58wru7hQ8-ad2Jfmqm64w

CEU: 1-hour professional development credit, ACVREP-certified

Welcome AER New Members who Joined in May

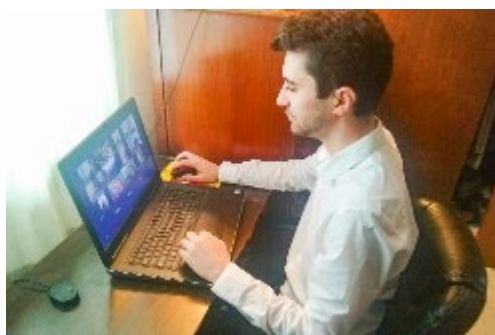
Join us in welcoming the newest members, who joined AER in May 2020. We are so glad to have you! [New AER Members](#)

AER Heroes



A Message About Virtual Services in Westchester and the Lower Hudson Valley:

During these uncertain times, VISIONS remains committed to serving the needs of participants who are blind and visually impaired, living in Westchester and nearby counties.



Our success with remote programming is thanks, in large part to our team of dedicated staff, including VISIONS Job Developer, former participant, and Westchester native Giuseppe Esposito (pictured above facilitating a Workforce workshop over Zoom.) VISIONS staff has been flexible in the way they teach and have adapted quickly to new technology and

instruction methods in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

AER New Member Spotlight

Meet New Member Anna Ackley, Member since January 2020



My name is Anna Ackley, and I am a Teacher of the Visually Impaired for the Wilson School District in West Lawn, PA. I graduated from Kutztown University in December 2014 with a degree in Elementary Education PreK-4 and a dual degree in Special Education with a focus in Teaching students who are blind or visually Impaired. I am the Regional Coordinator for the Pennsylvania Regional Braille Challenge. I continue to advocate for the visually impaired community by hosting braille events and selling White Cane Day awareness t-shirts.

Meet New Member Jereme Vanden Heuvel, Member since February 2020

Jereme Vanden Heuvel is a new vocational rehabilitation counselor with the Michigan Labor and Economic Opportunity's Bureau of Services for Blind Persons. He has worked previously as the Site Director of an outdoor education facility for youth who are blind / visually impaired located in West Michigan called Camp Tuhsmebeta (Touch-Smell-Hear-Taste). With prior educational background in recreational therapy and social work, he is currently enrolled in Mississippi State University's Vision Specialist for Vocational Rehabilitation graduate certificate program. It is a privilege to be a new member of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Employment Opportunities

Check out the new positions that are available in the field. Here are some exciting jobs that are posted via the AER Job Exchange:

Teacher for the Visually Impaired

Alamogordo, NM

New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Teacher of the Visually Impaired

Portland & Calais, Maine

Catholic Charities Maine Education Services for Blind and Visually Impaired Children

Principal

Bronx, NY

New York Institute for Special Education

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

What's Cookin' AER

Warm weather calls for fresh flavors, seasonal fruits, and veggies. This amazing recipe for Guacamole will shock and amaze you!

Ina Garten's Fresh Guacamole

Ingredients

- 4 ripe Haas avocados
- 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice (1 lemon)
- 8 dashes hot pepper sauce
- ½ cup small-diced red onion (1 small onion)
- 1 large garlic clove, minced
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 medium tomato, seeded, and small-diced

Directions

- Cut the avocados in ½, remove the pits, and scoop the flesh out of their shells into a large bowl. (I use my hands.)
- Immediately add the lemon juice, hot pepper sauce, onion, garlic, salt, and pepper and toss well.
- Using a sharp knife, slice through the avocados in the bowl until they are finely diced. Add the tomatoes.
- Mix well and taste for salt and pepper.

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, recipes or any updates that you would like to share with the

membership, please send it to AER at news@aerbvi.org. Deadline for the July issue is 6/26/2020.



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