



October 2020  
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## Welcome to the October 2020 issue of The AER Voice

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### AER's Autumn Community Reunions

#### **Announcing AER's Autumn Community Reunions! Three Dates to Remember; Three Reasons to Come**

This Fall, AER is inviting everyone in our community, AER members, family and friends, colleagues from every discipline and every organizational affiliation, consumers, parents, and anyone at all who helps to make up the mosaic of our community, to be a part of our field-wide Community Reunions. Come celebrate the triumphs and achievements of some of our community's most accomplished leaders. Come learn something new about the most critical issues in the education and adult services arenas and how you can help. And come make your voice heard to help all of us chart the course of our community's future, our field's vibrancy, and AER's place in it.

#### **Three Dates to Remember:**

Thursday Evening, October 22, 7pm Eastern

Tuesday Evening, November 10, 7pm Eastern

Monday Evening, November 30, 7pm Eastern

#### **What's It All About?**

On Thursday evening, October 22, and Tuesday evening, November 10, AER is inviting all in our community to join us in an interactive dialogue exploring how our field can most effectively wrestle with the challenges and grasp the opportunities ahead. All are welcome to participate in these discussions as we consider how to best position AER to both lead and support our work together.

#### **Special Gala Evening:**

In addition to the October 22 and November 10 forums, all are welcome and encouraged to join us on the Monday evening following Thanksgiving, November 30, for a special celebration honoring the 2020 AER awards recipients and to help us show our thanks and deepest appreciation to the

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individuals and organizations who are leading by exemplary excellence.

### **Who Is Invited?**

All are welcome to each of AER's Autumn Community Reunions. At this time, there is no need to register or RSVP -- more details on that will come later. There is no charge to attend any or all of the three events. Additionally, you are welcome to share this "save the date" announcement with your networks. While we know all AER members will want to attend, we are offering these events to our entire community as a way to both maximize the strength we can derive from each other and to most effectively map strategies to promote our mutual mission.

### **Three Reasons to Come:**

Celebrate and congratulate colleagues whose careers, contributions and character have truly set the standard. Earn continuing education credit for taking part in informative panoramic survey of our field's present and prospective strategies to meet the unique needs of children, working-age adults and older people who are blind or visually impaired. Help position AER to be a more effective and responsive voice for AER members, our colleagues and our collaborators.

### **What Happens Next?**

Stay tuned for more details about these opportunities for all of us to come together. In the meantime, please keep AER's Autumn Community Reunions in mind. You're welcome to join us for all three events, or just one, or as your busy schedules and lives may allow. Each event will be conducted in real time but also recorded for those who may not be free to join us live.

We are so looking forward to seeing each of you at AER's Autumn Community Reunions! Again, be on the lookout for additional particulars very soon. In the meantime, direct any questions you may have to [aer@aerbvi.org](mailto:aer@aerbvi.org).

**Mark Richert**, *Interim Executive Director, AER*

## **President's Corner**

Happy Fall Y'all!

I hope that you are experiencing the season change with as much enthusiasm as I am. Even in Texas, there's a bit of a chill in the air and although back-to-school this year has certainly been different for most, there's something about settling back into a routine that feels good. My wish for you, as October leads us toward Thanksgiving, is that you will encounter hopeful hearts and

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kindness in people or places that are surprising. Reflecting on these positive traits is one contribution you can make to our world that is never wasted or unwelcome.

Mahatma Gandhi is attributed with saying, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” Although the sentiment is the same, Gandhi in fact said: “If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him... We need not wait to see what others do.” I challenge you to thoughtfully consider how you can make small changes that will tend to change the world around you in big ways.

Have you ever wondered, “What is it that AER does?” or “Who are these people on the AER Board, anyway?” They are members of AER, just like you, who got involved, said “Yes” to a role in leadership at the Chapter or Division level, and eventually were asked to run for a position to serve all AER members at the International level. Over the next few months, you will learn about the AER Board of Directors in *The Voice*. Our desire is for you to see us as individual members elected to serve you in the best way we can. If you have ideas to share, opinions to relate or issues to address, work your way through those in leadership positions so your voice is heard. You have two opportunities coming up in the next few weeks at the Community Reunions. And we want you to share the invitation with anyone and everyone who has a stake in what AER and its thousands of members do. Your colleagues and constituents, their families and other professionals who work with them, in other words, all who care about the well-being and success of people who are blind or visually impaired of all ages, are invited. Please spread the word!

AER is, like many other entities on this planet, in the process of reinventing how we do things. Your needs are changing, AER wants to hear how. Our business model has transitioned from a central office to work from home, you need to know why and how this affects you, your chapter, your work, your world. Please mark your calendar for all three events and help us celebrate our AER Award Recipients and talk about the future while learning something new and receiving CEU credit.

I’ll see you there!

**Neva Fairchild, *President, AERBVI***

## **APH Annual Meeting**

**AER and CEC to collaborate at upcoming APH Annual Meeting**

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The American Printing House (APH) is holding their 152nd Annual Meeting, Better Together, virtually, on October 7-9, 2020. It is open to all and free! Registration closes on Friday, October 2 at 11:59, so hurry and – [register now!](#)

AER's Interim Executive Director will be co-leading the session on Wednesday, October 7 at 10:00 am, titled **How To Be Better Together**. This session will acquaint attendees with the mission and objectives of the two leading professional associations in the vision loss community. Ways the organizations can work together to serve this community will be discussed. The goals of each organization are going to be reviewed. Participants will learn how to become more involved in their professional associations as we all collaborate to address the most critical national issues and needs facing children, adults, and older people who are blind and visually impaired. APH is offering 2.5 CE hours for this session.

## AER Board Member Spotlight

We previously provided you with the roster of the newly elected Board of Director, and we thought you would also be interested in learning more about them. Each month, we will spotlight a few of our Board members in The Voice. Today, we want to introduce you to a few of our District Representatives.



### **Kathryn D Botsford, District 1 Representative**

Hi, I am Kathryn D Botsford, Ph.D., your 2020-2022 District 1 Representative. I have been an active AER member since 1997 serving on Chapter boards in Washington, Colorado, and most recently Oregon (where I am currently chapter president). I am an ACVREP certified COMS and a National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certified teacher for children with visual impairments. In my day job, I am the Executive Director of Vision Education Research, an organization that promotes evidence-based practices in the assessment and education of children with vision loss. I am also an adjunct instructor for Dominican College and San Francisco State University as well as a University Supervisor for Texas Tech University. I am looking forward to representing the western states on our AER Board this biennium. Please reach out and let me know if you have questions or topics you'd like me to bring up with the AER Board of Directors.

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**Rebecca Sheffield, District 6 Representative**

I first entered the field of education for students with visual impairments as a TVI in Texas. I earned a Ph.D. in Special Education at Texas Tech University through the National Leadership Consortium in Sensory Disabilities. My research interests center on the national and international implications of listening to people with visual impairments of all ages to study the extent to which policies, programs, and services actually improve quality of life. From 2014-2018, I served as AFB's Senior Policy Researcher, overseeing demographics and research, and supporting AFB's policy initiatives in Washington, D.C. For the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years, I was the Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments for the St. Thomas-St. John District, providing essential services to diverse students in an under-resourced, challenging environment. I have been an AER member for ten years, have attended and presented at numerous state and national conferences, and serve as Chair of AER's resolutions committee. Additionally, since earning my Ph.D., I have been an online instructor for personnel preparation programs (George Mason, Texas, Tech, and Portland State), and I am currently enrolled in an O&M certification program through Portland State.

I live in northern Virginia with my husband, Mark, and three cats. When I'm not researching, teaching, or studying, I enjoy traveling, hiking, volunteering, and quilting.



**Derrick Smith, District 5 Representative**

My name is Dr. Derrick Smith and I am an associate professor and Associate Dean of the College of Education at the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH). I began my teaching career after completing my B.S. in mathematics at Faulkner University as a secondary mathematics teacher at the Alabama School for the Blind. During my time there, I earned a M.A.Ed. in Special Education-Visual Impairments and became a National Library of Congress Certified Braille Transcriptionist. I was awarded the National Center for Leadership in visual Impairments (NCLVI) fellowship and completed my doctorate at Texas Tech University. While there, I also became a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist. After graduating from Texas Tech in May 2008, I returned to my home state as an assistant professor of special education at UAH. During my tenure at UAH, I have focused primarily on research related to STEM education for students with visual impairments. Along with my duties as a researcher and administrator at UAH, I also manage our M.Ed. in Differentiated Instruction – Visual Impairments program. This program is the only TVI program in Alabama and serves the entire state. I have worked on various

research grants funded by the National Science Foundation and currently have a U.S. Department of Education (OSEP) Personnel Prep grant (H325K190055). I have been an active member of AER since 2001 when I was awarded a student membership by the Alabama AER. I served as a Director for the ALAER from 2018-2020 and have been a member of multiple International AER committees. My goal as the District 5 Representative is to be a voice for the states I represent, encourage better communication within the organization, and continue to support the efforts of the organization to be a leader in the field.

## News You Can Use

### AER's Fall Learning Series Webinars

**More dates added!** The webinars listed below are a benefit available only to AER members. If your membership has lapsed, consider renewing now so that you can take advantage of these awesome opportunities. Click here to renew: <https://aerbvi.org/membership/applications-renewal/> or email us at [aer@aerbvi.org](mailto:aer@aerbvi.org) to confirm the status of your membership.

#### **Creating and Sharing Successfully Accessible Presentations**

**Nell (she, her, hers), CPACC, Accessibility & Meetings Coordinator, American Anthropological Association**

**Date:** Tuesday, **October 6, 2020**

**Time:** 2:00-3:00 pm Eastern time

**Cost:** Free for AER Members

**Registration:** [https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0qdOGvrj0pGtcC\\_DFHPTaQh-bsj5Bntu7Q](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0qdOGvrj0pGtcC_DFHPTaQh-bsj5Bntu7Q)

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

When preparing a presentation, it is important to create and present as accessibly as possible so that all audience members may meaningfully engage with your content. Join our presenter Nell (she, her, hers), CPACC, Accessibility & Meetings Coordinator, American Anthropological Association to learn more about the [American Anthropological Association's Presentation Guidelines for Success & Accessibility](#), for both in-person and [virtual](#) presentations, and what steps you can take to make sure your presentations support a variety of access needs, such as visual, auditory, and physical. Nell will take session attendees through best practices and the resources available on the AAA's website, as well as answer any and all questions or comments you may have!

#### **Digital Accessibility Basics Using Microsoft Word**

**Rachael Sessler Trinkowsky**

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**Date:** Wednesday, **October 14, 2020**

**Time:** 3:00-4:30 pm Eastern time

**Cost:** Free for AER Members

**Registration:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUscO-grDsiGdx0prYl1uTVBcZMLMsqltN>

**CEU:** 1.5 hour professional development credit, ACVREP-certified

Come join us to learn the essentials for creating accessible documents using Microsoft Word, which can then be converted into other formats, such as .PDF, web content, and more. This is a virtual BYOT (bring your own technology) session presented by Rachael Sessler Trinkowsky. We will have hands on exercises to develop an accessible document with various elements, including text, images, headings, and links. We will discuss recommended strategies for converting to an accessible .PDF, as well as resources for further exploration and services to assist with developing accessible digital content.

### **Inclusion in Physical Education**

**Lauren Lieberman**

**Date:** Thursday, **October 15, 2020**

**Time:** 6:00-7:00 pm Eastern time

**Cost:** Free for AER Members

**Registration:** [https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAscOCppjosE9AT\\_w7cjZTZsOBwR1XKCnde](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAscOCppjosE9AT_w7cjZTZsOBwR1XKCnde)

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

Children with visual impairments, blindness, and multiple disabilities are often left out of physical education due to lack of knowledge of the physical education teacher and vision specialists. Most professional preparation programs in physical education do not include information about visual impairment or practical opportunities with this population. This session, presented by Lauren Lieberman, will share evidence-based practices that support the inclusion of children with visual impairments and those with additional disabilities. In addition, many resources will be provided including books, videos, tip sheets, websites, programs and more!

Keep up with our entire calendar of online events here: <https://aerbvi.org/professional-development/conferences/>

## **Special Offer for AER Members: Virtual Executive Leadership Conference!**

That's right! Registration for the Virtual Executive Leadership Conference is open. Join us **November 1-5, 2020** for the #VSAELC. More than just another virtual conference, the ELC is

a **social networking conference** to connect leaders from around the blindness and low vision field together for a shared mission.

Thanks to a special partnership between VisionServe Alliance and AER to further development opportunities for emerging leaders, VSA is offering a special registration rate of \$75 (regularly \$195) to active individual AER members who are not yet members of VSA to attend this year's virtual conference. Enter promo code: **AERIND1** when you purchase a **General Registration** ticket.

Register now: <https://vsaelc.dryfta.com/index.php>

## Other Learning Opportunities for You

### Putting the “Om” Back in O&M 1-Day Workshop

The California Association of Orientation and Mobility Specialists is hosting a 1-day workshop on Sat. **October 3rd** with 5.5 ACVREP CEUs available.

Saturday October 3rd, 2020, 10 AM - 5:30 PM PST

Register by Oct 2nd at: <https://forms.gle/7NJ3bsB1UHCj7icB7>

**Details:** This 'Putting the Om Back in O&M' 1-Day Workshop, organized and hosted by the Northern Chapter of the California Association of Orientation and Mobility Specialists (N-CAOMS), will consist of several webinars focused on wellness and stress management for O&M practitioners and their students. We have several presenters lined up with topics including Labyrinths, Coping with Uncertainty, and even Wine(!) and will offer 5 webinars with up to 5.5 ACVREP CEUs to attendees. Find additional details for this workshop, as well as information on additional N-CAOMS events and on-demand webinars

at: <https://sites.google.com/view/ncaomsmembership/upcoming-events-webinars>

CEUs: Up to 5.5 ACVREP CEUs will be provided. Number of CEUs provided will be contingent upon verified attendance for each session.

**Cost:** This workshop will be available for FREE for current CAOMS Members, and at \$50 for non-CAOMS Members. Please see the schedule below for a summary of details:

#### **Webinar #1**

*Labyrinths: A Tool for Mobility and Transformation*

10 AM - 11 AM PST

#### **Webinar #2**

*Improvise, Adapt & Overcome: Coping with Uncertainty*

11:15 - 12:15 PM PST

#### **Webinar #3**

*Prevent Burnout and Find Your Work-Life Balance*

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1:10 PM - 2:15 PM PST

**Webinar #4**

*Being Mindful of the Fun Stuff*

2:30 PM - 3:30 PM PST

**Webinar #5**

*Sightless Sipping: Sensing Wine Without Eyesight*

3:45 PM - 5:15 PM PST

## Chapter Updates

Many of our chapters have scheduled their virtual conferences – and you do not want to miss them! Read on to learn more and to register.

### **Mississippi AER 2020 Fall Virtual Conference – Beyond Vision Loss: Partnerships for Successful Transition Toward Autonomy**

**October 8 – 10, 2020**

Registration Fees (Deadline: October 2): AER Members: \$30 / Non-AER Members: \$40

(Free to students and veterans who have visual impairments; their families and vendors)

Click here to Register: [https://usmuw.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3WbG89cOyxRHotT](https://usmuw.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3WbG89cOyxRHotT)

Click here to [download the Conference Flyer/Brochure](#)

### **2020 Dakotas AER Virtual Conference 20/20 – Focusing on our Future**

**October 14, 2020**

Registration and conference information will be emailed and will also be available

at <https://sdsbvi.org/> and <https://www.facebook.com/DakotasAER>.

Applications are in process for ACVREP & university credit from NSU

Questions? Contact Amy Scepaniak, Tevan Fischbach, or Jane Mundschenk at 605-626-2580 or toll free at 1-888-275-3814.

### **IN-AER Fall Conference 2020**

**October 26-27, 2020**

Earn FREE CEUs

Indiana AER has teamed up with PASS and ISBVI to present this year's conference 100% virtually and for free. You can register for the virtual conference by following the links that say “register now” on the IN-AER website, [www.in-aer.net](http://www.in-aer.net)

October 26th session time: 8:30am - 4:30pm

October 27th session time: 8:30am - 1:15pm

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\*\*Presentations will be recorded for future playback with closed captioning. However, it will be available two to four weeks after the conference to ensure proper editing.

Registration Questions? Contact Jennifer Mesanovic at (812) 237-8115 or email [Jennifer.Mesanovic@indstate.edu](mailto:Jennifer.Mesanovic@indstate.edu)

### **Michigan AER – Save The Date!**

AER Michigan will hold our 2021 conference on April 22-23, 2021

### **NEAER Conference - Mystical Connections 2021**

The 2020 conference has been moved to **November 3-5, 2021**.

“Mystical Connections will be held at the Hilton in beautiful Mystic, CT. The committee has some exciting activities planned as well as informative sessions. If you are interested in submitting a session proposal, we are accepting proposals until Spring 2021. The Call for Papers can be found at: <https://www.nercve.org/ne/aer-2020-conference>.

**The AER Arizona chapter** has been putting on weekly webinars, which are open to everyone. Be on the look-out for the emails, which provide you with details and registration information.

## **Welcome AER New Members who joined in September**

Join us in welcoming the newest members, who joined AER in September 2020. We are so glad to have you! Click here to review the list of the [new AER members](#).

### **AER New Member Spotlight**



#### **Welcome new AER member, Donna Carpenter!**

Dr. Donna Carpenter is the State Coordinator for the Kentucky Deafblind Project. Donna worked as the technical assistance coordinator for the KDBP from 2006-2017 before assuming the State Coordinator Role in January 2017. Donna is a certified teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Elementary Certified Teacher, Montessori Early Childhood Certified with her doctorate in Educational Leadership. She signs fluently in American Sign Language (ASL) Donna has taught at both UK and NKU as an adjunct instructor for early childhood special education. She has been a presenter at

the CHARGE international Conference, DeafBlind International, the GFPD 2019 Conference as well as local state conferences. She was recently published in CEC with Jennifer Grisham-Brown, about the coaching model the Project uses. Her doctoral dissertation looked at using photos of children who are deafblind – selected by their families and put into a short digital movie to change teacher perception. Donna’s parents had cerebral palsy, which greatly influenced her choices to work with children, families, and professionals in the field of special education. She is very interested in how we present our children to other professionals and how to create a positive mindset using photo stories from families. She loves her job!

## 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:

### **Accessibility Manager**

Seattle, Washington

The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.

### **Teacher of the Visually Impaired**

Ogden & Morgan, Utah

Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind

### **Orientation and Mobility Specialist**

Rochester Hills, Michigan

Leader Dogs for the Blind

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

## What's Cookin' AER

It is officially Fall! Time to think about relaxing Sundays at home staying warm, maybe watching some Football. Give this amazing Slow Cooked Sunday Sauce a try. You will not regret it.

### **Ingredients**

- 2 jars (45 oz each) Italian Classics Grandma's Pomodoro Sauce
  - 1 pkg (about 1 1/2 lbs) Wegmans Boneless Country Ribs
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- 1 pkg (about 1 1/4 lbs) Italian Classics Hot Italian Pork Sausage
- 1 pkg (about 1 lb) Wegmans Ready-to-Cook Entree Size Meatballs
- 1/2 cup water

#### **Directions**

Add 1 jar sauce to 6-8 qt slow cooker. Place ribs, sausage, and meatballs on top of sauce; cover with remaining jar of sauce. Rinse empty jars with water; add liquid to slow cooker.

Cover; cook on HIGH 6 hours or LOW 8 hours. Transfer meat to serving platter; cut into servable pieces. Transfer sauce to serving bowl.

Chef tips: For deeper flavor, sear meat before placing in slow cooker. Garnish with Italian Classics Grated Parmigiano Reggiano.

*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](mailto:news@aerbvi.org). Deadline for the November issue is 11/20/2020.*

