

The AER Voice



Welcome to the November 2022 Issue of AER The Voice

Volume 4, Issue 11

A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

October was a very busy month for AER. Task Force and Committee formation, chapter conferences and hurricane relief in Florida.

During the business meeting at the 2022 AER International Conference in St. Louis, a resolution was presented and approved recommending the creation of a task force with the purpose to develop an interdisciplinary consensus to promote vision rehabilitation therapy. The AER Board of Directors has appointed Olaya Landa-Vialard, Board President, Dan Norris, Chair of Division 11 Vision Rehabilitation Therapy, and Anisio Correia, Resolution Author, as co-chairs of this Task Force. If interested in serving on this task force, please email me or Olaya.

The AER office staff has been in the process of contacting members who have volunteered to serve on one of the AER Board Committees. Formation of the committees is taking longer than expected. If you volunteered, but have not heard from the office, have no fear, we will be in touch.

October has also seen multiple chapter conferences, from the Northern Rockies AER in Montana to the Northeast AER in Massachusetts and five places in between. I had the opportunity to speak at the Indiana, Ohio and Northern Rockies conferences, and enjoyed a great time sharing my vision for AER. Thank you again for the invitation! I appreciate everyone, member, and nonmember, who shared their ideas for growth of the association and professions, improvements to membership benefits and concerns over issues facing professionals in the field. I have a list that will be evaluated as we begin a strategic planning process for AER in 2023. I'll share more about that in the next issue of the Voice.

I want to personally thank the Florida AER chapter for their action and leadership in AER's hurricane relief efforts. A list of needs is detailed in this issue of the Voice. Please give and assist where you and/or your organization is able. There are so many ways to be involved with AER on the state, national, and international level. Email me to get connected.

Lee Sonnenberg, Executive Director, AER
lee@aerbvi.org

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Fall is in full swing, and leaves are changing, temperatures are dropping, and the time is going to change, literally! It's that time of the year again to fall back an hour on Sunday, November 6, 2022. Time may fall back an hour, but AER is continuing to move forward! As I did last month, I will do again this month and that is send well wishes to all who are celebrating a holiday or special day this month. Follow this link for U.S. holidays <https://www.calendarr.com/united-states/calendar-november-2022/> and this link: <https://www.wincalendar.com/Calendar->

[Canada/November-2022](#) for Canadian holidays to see what is being recognized and celebrated this November.

If you haven't done so, be sure to check out AER's e-learning offerings. There are great topics and trainings there just waiting for you! Please remember our members who have been affected by recent storms and give what you can. The storms are gone but the need remains. [Donate to the Lighthouse Vision Loss Education Center](#) or [Donate to the Lighthouse of Southwest Florida](#)

Committees are being formed so stay tuned for announcements about who your Chairs are so you can start to reach out to them with your comments and ideas. As always, feel free to reach out to me at olandavi@gmail.com with any comments, concerns, or suggestions.

Happy November!

Olaya Landa-Vialard, President, AERBVI
olvialard@aph.org

NEWS YOU CAN USE

A New Voice in the Neighborhood

In my city neighborhood, I wake each morning to the sounds of birds, motorcycles, garbage trucks, barking dogs, and voices of neighbors greeting one another. Some sounds are more pleasant than others, but each is a reminder of the diversity of our community.

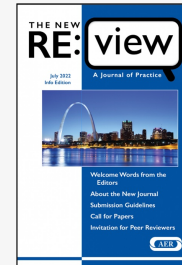
The word "diverse" encompasses a visual world that includes clothing, scenery, houses, skin and hair color, works of art, or symbols of personal beliefs. However, human diversity goes far beyond the visual environment.

The title of our newsletter, **The Voice**, is a reminder that ideas are often transmitted in non-visual ways, including sounds. My online dictionary lists 26 definitions for "voice", ranging from a spoken utterance to abstract idioms like "speaking with one voice". For people with visual impairments and those who work with them, having a voice in professional decisions is essential in creating and maintaining communities.

AER is pleased to introduce a new option for communicating about our diverse professional interests. Members regularly receive the **Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness**, which keeps them informed about the latest research and academic developments. Now a second journal, **The New RE:view**, will focus on the interests of readers who work directly with people who are blind or have low vision.

The premiere issue begins with Dr. Mike Bina's reprise of historical literature, **Our Proud Past is Prologue**. The debut issue includes original and diverse articles on a variety of subjects. Topics include professional accreditation, birth control methods for people with visual impairments, history of orientation and mobility, a classic article on practical living skills, and a book review of the story of a well-known leader in O&M.

To find out how you can share your knowledge and skills by becoming an author, visit the AER website at <https://aerbvi.org/resources/publications/the-new-review/>. The journal provides a new opportunity to make your voice heard in our professional community. Become one of the first to publish your original ideas in **The New RE:view** and to learn from the experiences of others.



Contributed by Jane N. Erin,
AER member and Assistant Executive Editor, The New RE:view

AER Accreditation Volunteer Opportunities

Accreditation symbolizes an organization or higher education program's sustained commitment to self-monitoring and continuous quality improvement.

The process provides the valuable experience of self-review to the organization or higher education program, and to support the program's pursuit of excellence and innovative responses to the needs of professionals and individuals who are blind or visually impaired in a constantly changing world. Ultimately, people who are blind or visually impaired benefit as they can be assured their goals of personal dignity and independence will be facilitated by best practices and ethical conduct.

The AER Accreditation Council is charged with oversight of all aspects of the Accreditation Program. Council members review the implementation of the program, all decisions regarding accreditation, and also commit to the ongoing pursuit of excellence and innovative practices within the AER program itself.

1. The Chair of the AER Accreditation Council, Lee Sonnenberg, announces a call for nominations to fill one opening on the Council:

Representative of Consumer Organization. This position is filled by a person from a non-profit organization of the blind with primary purpose of advocacy, raising public awareness, and promotion of opportunity and improved lives of people who are blind/visually impaired.

For Council Member Application and Job Description:

[Job Description—Council Member Application Form](#)

2. The Chair of the Organizations and Schools Accreditation Commission, Paul Olson, announces a call for nominations to fill two (2) openings.
Representative of an Accredited Organization. This position is usually filled by a person who is either an administrator or provider of direct services at a non-profit organization providing direct services to people who are blind/visually impaired.
Field-Related Professional. This position is filled by a professional who has experience working in an Organization or in a School for the Blind, either in administration or direct service. This person may be retired or working in another capacity at this time.

OSAC usually meets monthly via zoom, with each meeting lasting 1 hour.

For OSAC Member Application and Job Description:

[Job Description—OSAC Member Application Form--OSAC](#)

For more information, see the link to the AERAC Policy and Procedures Manual on the website: (<https://aerbvi.org/the-national-accreditation-council/>).

**Contributed by Elly DuPre,
AER member and Program Manager, AER Accreditation**

Florida Agencies for the Blind and Low Vision Need Your Help

The impact of Hurricane Ian in Southwest Florida has been widespread. While clean-up and rebuilding has begun, we cannot forget our smaller communities who still very much need our support, including those who are blind, visually impaired, deaf-blind and disabled. Roads in these areas are far from safe to travel for pedestrians with visual impairments. Bus systems are not fully operational making basic needs harder than ever to meet.

The Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired Florida Chapter seeks your help in supporting two Southwest Florida agencies for the blind and low vision and their clients who have been heavily impacted by Hurricane Ian. [Florida Agencies Serving the Blind](#) has helped to survey the needs of these two organizations.

You can send donated items to the addresses below, drop them off in person or

make monetary donations using the links for each agency below. ***For monetary donations, please, be sure to specify: "AER Hurricane Ian Support" in your donation purpose so that money can be allocated to relief efforts.***

Specialty items that are currently needed in:

- Baby formula
- Diapers (all sizes) and wipes
- Tactile toys and books (children and babies)
- Stimulation toys for infants
- Solar shields for glasses

Other Items Being Collected:

- Canned, non-perishable food
- Water, sports drinks
- Kids snacks, juice
- Plastic cutlery
- Cleaning supplies, trash bags
- Office supplies
- Hygiene and bath products
- Feminine products
- Wet wipes
- Toilet paper, paper towels, paper plates
- Blankets
- Pet food

Gift cards:

- Amazon
- Publix
- Walmart
- Uber
- Lyft
- Instacart
- Shipt

Please send your donated items to one of the following addresses:

Lisa Howard
Lighthouse Vision Loss Education Center
7318 N Tamiami Trail
Sarasota, FL 34243

[Donate to the Lighthouse Vision Loss Education Center](#)

Dotty St. Amand
Lighthouse of Southwest Florida
35 West Mariana Avenue
North Ft. Myers, FL 33903

[Donate to the Lighthouse of Southwest Florida](#)

OIB-TAC November Update

New OIB-TAC Course

Our new course, **[Beyond Acuity: Addressing Functional Aspects of Lack of Depth Perception and Visual Field Deficits](#)**, is now available. Learn to detect functional difficulties caused by visual field deficits, a lack of depth perception, and other visual skills deficits. Help your client to understand and practice environmental adaptations, visual skills training, and integration of other senses in their daily living. The course is available on the OIB-TAC **[Continuing Education](#)** page and offers 1 hour of ACVREP or NBPCB credit. For questions about this and other NRTC courses, visit our **[Frequently Asked Questions](#)** page.

Join us for our November webinar - Improving Physical and Emotional Health Through Self-Care

Session Date: Friday, November 18, 2022 - 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm CST

Description: Self-care has become a trendy concept with a surge in research supporting the many benefits. Mainstream healthcare providers are promoting self-

care practices as a path to improve physical and mental health of their patients. People living with blindness and visual impairments have higher rates of chronic health conditions like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and depression, all of which are negatively impacted by high stress levels and positively impacted by healthy lifestyle changes incorporating better self-care. We will explore five important domains of self-care: healthy eating, physical activity, restorative sleep, stress management, and social connection, providing tips and resources to help you get started on a self-care journey to greater wellness. Professionals will learn ways to promote a healthy lifestyle and support self-care goals of their consumers as well as ways to nurture their own mind, body, and spirit.

Presenter: Audrey Demmitt, R.N., B.S.N.

Registration: [Click here to register!](#)

**Contributed by Jennifer Ottowitz,
AER member and OIB-TAC Older Blind Specialist**

CAOMS Annual Conference

The California Association of Orientation and Mobility Specialists (CAOMS) annual statewide conference on December 3, 2022, will be at the beautiful Renaissance Marriot Hotel in Long Beach, California.

“Looking Back, Looking Forward (Focused on Transition) 2022” is this year’s conference theme. The focus will be on lessons learned and new practices applied during the transitional phases of O&M instruction through the pandemic.

[Download Registration Form Here](#)

<https://caoms.org>

**Contributed by Nicholas Casias,
AER member and AER Board of Director Member**

Public Comments Sought by U.S. Access Board

Consumers and service providers have an opportunity to submit comments to the U.S. Access Board in reference to self-service transaction machines (SSTM). They are a common feature in places of public accommodation, government offices, and other buildings and facilities, enabling consumers to conduct a range of transactions and functions.

The U.S. Access Board has published an **advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPRM)** to initiate the process to supplement guidelines for buildings and facilities included in both the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Architectural Barriers Act. Consumers and service providers are invited to comment on the planning method to update the ADA Accessibility Guidelines and the ABA Accessibility Guidelines. Public input is also requested in relation to accessibility of various types of SSTMs (electronic self-service kiosks and touchscreens), their use and design, and locations.

Comments are due by November 21,2022

For more information: <https://www.access-board.gov/news/2022/09/27/u-s-access-board-seeks-public-comment-on-accessibility-guidelines-for-self-service-transaction-machines/>

or

<https://www.regulations.gov/docket/ATBCB-2022-0004>

**Contributed by JoAnne Chalom,
AER member and Past-Chair, O&M Division**

Help us make Smart Mobility

Funded by the US Department of Education, Soterix Medical Inc. partnered with the nonprofit Safe Toddlers, Inc. to develop a "smart" pediatric belt cane and Smart Mobility App. The Smart Belt will use motion tracking and machine learning to assess mobility skills of toddlers who are blind or mobility visually impaired. The app interprets the motion tracking data to suggest lessons from the Safe Toddlers' belt cane curriculum.

To develop the machine learning algorithm, we need to collect motion data from blind or mobility visually impaired children walking with their belt canes. To begin, we will provide, at no cost, a custom-sized pediatric belt cane and curriculum to each participant. We will then invite the participants to one or more "data collection" event(s) hosted at your facility. At each event we will provide refreshments, fun activities for the children, pediatric belt cane and curriculum support for the families, and ask each child to walk while wearing the smart motion tracking device connected to their belt cane (with their preferred adult for appropriate supervision and assistance).

To be selected as a site, we need at least 5 to 10 children who are blind or mobility visually impaired (ages 12-59 months who will have worn belt canes for one month) to attend the one-day data collection event. For this event, we will need access to space at your facility that offers unobstructed walking (e.g., gym).

We are offering financial compensation to the facility and the parents/educators who participate in our one-day events.

Contact:

Mr. Yishai Valter, MS
R&D Engineer, Soterix Medical Inc.
yvalter@soterixmedical.com
www.soterixmedical.com

Dr. Grace Ambrose-Zaken, COMS
President and CEO, Safe Toddlers, Inc.
grace@safetoddles.org
www.safetoddles.org

Contributed by Dr. Grace Ambrose-Zaken, AER member

The First Janet Barlow Collaboration Initiative

Janet was a dedicated Orientation and Mobility Specialist committed to improving accessibility standards for pedestrians who are blind or who have low vision (people who are vision disabled). She devoted many hours to the education of Orientation and Mobility Specialists and was committed to improving communications between the transportation engineering profession and the orientation and mobility profession.

The goal of the Janet Barlow Collaboration Initiative is for practitioners in each discipline to learn from one another both in a structured indoor setting as well as physically out on the street. The Barlow Initiative will be held December 13, 2022, in Tampa, Florida in conjunction with the Southeastern Orientation and Mobility Association (SOMA) conference. The last day of SOMA will be a workshop continuing Janet's vision of creating cross training opportunities for both transportation engineering professionals and orientation and mobility professionals, and to provide opportunities for networking across professions.

The day will begin with Janet's "first engineer," John Hibbard, talking with O&M specialists about intersection timing, actuation and more. While that is happening the traffic engineers will be learning what it's like to travel without sight or limited sight, using blindfolds, long canes and/or low vision simulators. For the second half of the morning, one o engineer will be paired up with four to five O&M specialists and head outside to assigned intersections that present challenges

for vision disabled pedestrians. Both engineers and O&Mers will have the opportunity to make crossings at the intersection with simulated blindness or low vision. The goal here is to learn from each other regarding what is needed at the intersection for accessibility and what is needed from a designing/engineering perspective.

After lunch, John Hibbard will talk with O&Mers about what engineers have to consider when they are requested to make accommodations such as installing an APS. During this time, the engineers will learn about new treatments that can be used strategically to increase safety and wayfinding for vision disabled pedestrians, such as beaconing APS and tactile direction indicators to help vision disabled pedestrians locate hard-to-find crosswalks and establish alignment to cross where existing cues are not adequate. The second half of the afternoon will bring engineers and O&Mers back together to brainstorm jointly about how travel could be made safer and wayfinding easier at the intersections they visited in the morning.

The Barlow Initiative was formed in honor of Janet Barlow who passed away in 2021 and is made possible by the Barlow Legacy Fund which is maintained by the Orientation and Mobility Specialist Association (OMSA).

For additional information regarding the Barlow Collaboration Initiative Day at the SOMA conference and to register follow this link:

<https://somaconference.org/Barlow.html>.

Registration is limited but there are still spaces available for both Traffic Engineers and Orientation and Mobility Specialists, Guide Dog Mobility Instructors and Travel Instructors.

For more information you can contact Beezy Bentzen, bbentzen@accessforblind.org or Jennifer Graham, jgraham@accessforblind.org

Contributed by Jennifer Graham, AER member

Perkins E-Learning

AER members receive a 20% discount on the total cost of Perkins self-paced tutorials. Each provides an opportunity to enhance your knowledge, skills and abilities, and job performance! AER members only may use the voucher code 20aer20 to take advantage of this member benefit and earn CE hours. Click here to get started: [Perkins Discounts](#)

Instructions: Select the tutorial. Add to your cart and when checking out enter code 20AER20 in the Voucher Box. Enter re-calculate and the discount will appear.

On the next screen, sign in (if you already have an account with Perkins Learning Center or Register if you do not yet have a Perkins Learning Center account.

On the final page, enter your AER member number in the Phone Number field. Your AER member number will be verified. If you encounter any problems or have any questions, please email perkins.elearning@perkins.org.

MEMBER BENEFIT SPOTLIGHT

Let's keep the conversations going with the AER Member Listserv!

As an AER member, you have access to information sharing and communication with our network by participating in the AER Listservs! AER hosts a general discussion listserv, as well as many special interest groups. Please visit us at <https://aerbvi.org/resources/aer-listservs/> to sign up for one or as many that pique your interest! (AER login is required to access).

CHAPTER NEWS

Penn-Del AER

Save the Date! 2023 Penn-Del AER Chapter Conference

We are happy to announce that our annual conference will be an in-person event April 19 – 21, 2023. Our nationally respected conference offers a wide range of opportunities for professionals in the field of education and rehabilitation of individuals with visual impairments. It provides experiences to enhance one's skill set, time to share expertise and experiences, and opportunities to network with professionals in the field.

When: April 19 – 21, 2023

Where: Best Western Premier Central Hotel and Conference Center in Harrisburg, PA

Format: Full in-person event

Coming Soon: The Call for Presentations for sessions, posters and exhibitors will be distributed by the end of September

Join us! We invite you to submit a call for presentations, call for poster, and/or register to be an exhibitor. Accept this opportunity to share your knowledge and expertise of innovative programs, creative techniques, employment strategies, research results or design in any area of our field.

[Learn more about the Call for Concurrent Session and Poster Presenters here .](#)

Alabama AER

Annual Training Conference, The Journey Makes ONE

November 16-18, 2022

[Click here to learn more about the 39th Annual Training Conference, The Journey Makes ONE!"](#)

Where: Lakepoint State Park, 104 Lakepoint Drive, Eufaula, AL

Georgia AER

Georgia AER Conference 2023, Together at the Beach!

When: March 23-24, 2023

Where: Hotel Tybee, Tybee Island, GA

[Click here for more information and to register!](#)

Texas AER

Pathways and Perspectives, March 23-25, 2023

Don't miss TAER 2023, featuring renowned artist [John Bramblitt](#) as the keynote speaker!

Please stay current and watch for more conference details on the TAER website at <http://www.txaer.org/> and our TAER Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/TxAER/>.

For questions related to the conference, email: webmaster@txaer.org

WELCOME TO THE NEWEST AER MEMBERS!

Join us in welcoming the newest members, who [joined AER in October 2022](#). We are glad to have you!

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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

[Braille Specialist](#)

The Maryland School for the Blind, Baltimore, Maryland

[Teachers of the Visually Impaired](#)

The Maryland School for the Blind, Baltimore, Maryland

[Orientation & Mobility Specialists](#)

The Maryland School for the Blind, Baltimore, Maryland

[Orientation and Mobility Specialist](#)

The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc., Seattle, Washington

Check out these jobs and more by visiting the [Job Exchange](#).

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 them to AER at news@aerbvi.org.

The deadline for the submissions is the 25th of each month.



[Visit our website](#)

AERBVI | 5680 King Centre Dr., Ste 600, Alexandria, VA 22315

[Unsubscribe aer@aerbvi.org](#)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by news@aerbvi.org powered by



Try email marketing for free today!