



President's Message

By Gary Ray

I can certainly tell you one thing—I love being retired! I love every part of it except for not having any money. We love our house up here in Asheville and want all of our buddies to come visit. We are not kidding—we have a great guest room.

I am having a hard time letting go of Raleigh, however. You know, it seems you can take the boy out of Raleigh, but it is much harder to take Raleigh out of the boy. I am averaging getting back to Raleigh about every month. I see my friends, go to meetings, and generally revel in the Triangle state of mind I had for almost 40 years. I am noticing that it is getting nicer to come back home to Asheville, so I expect I will eventually be from Asheville, but for now, when someone asks where I am from, Ra starts out of my mouth and I finish up with Asheville, so I guess I am from Rasheville for now!

The 2008 Superconference will be here before we all know it. The dates are April 24, 25, and 26. Please note that this is a little later this year. You can get more info at our website at www.ncaer.net.

The Registration and Vendor Fees for the Superconference have gone up this coming year. We have also begun tightening our belts in other ways, too. We lost our entire financial cushion at the 2007 event so we have to mind our money carefully to stay in the black. We have asked our sponsors to increase their

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support and most have stepped forward to keep the Superconference viable and strong.

We are accepting nominations for the 2008 Rachel Rawls award. You will find the nomination form and information elsewhere in this newsletter and on the NCAER website at www.ncaer.net. This is the highest award the NC AER offers each year so we hope folks will review the criteria for the award and start making nominations.

We will be having our annual NCAER meeting on Friday, April 25th after the sessions have finished. All NCAER members are encouraged to attend this meeting. We will be electing new officers at this meeting. We will need a new President Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and 2 Board members. There is always a place for anyone who wants to serve. I have appointed Sandy DeLuca as our nominating chair. You can reach Sandy by email at sdeluca538@earthlink.net. If you are interested in serving, get in touch and offer your services.

I must say a word here about our outgoing Treasurer, Nancy Massengill. Nancy has been Treasurer as long as many of us can remember. She is a critical part of the operations of NCAER and it will be very hard to replace her, but we will find someone and move forward. When I was first approached to be President almost three years ago, I made Nancy promise to stay until the end of my term. So, she and I are leaving together. She will certainly be missed, but I refuse to think of an NCAER without her. I hope she will stay involved. If she leaves for good, much of our history goes with her, so I

hope folks will join me in calling for her to stay involved.

I want to talk about the study mandated by the NC Legislature. The Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Public Instruction have been mandated to study the whole system for the education of children with disabilities in North Carolina. This includes the kids in the public schools and in the residential schools, too. I believe NCAER should have a voice in this study and I will carry that voice to the table during the process. Folks who have input for me on the matter can get hold of me and share their feelings and thoughts. This is a very important study because these kids are our future and how we educate them is critical. I have been very pleased that both departments are interested in hearing from the various stakeholders in our industry. We have concerns, but we have a voice and we will be heard.

I sure hope all of you have a great holiday season and a very prosperous New Year.

The Expanded Core Curriculum

Dion B. Ousley

The Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) represents a group of disability-specific skills needed by students with visual impairments. These skills include compensatory or functional academic skills, including communication modes, orientation and mobility, social interaction skills, independent living skills, recreation and leisure skills, career education, use of assistive technology, visual efficiency skills, and self-determination. Students with visual impairments need the ECC in addition to the core academic curriculum (general education). Teachers use the ECC for assessing students, planning individual goals and providing instruction.

Governor Morehead School (GMS) for the Blind planned to integrate this component more

effectively. The former principal, Keri Lohmeier, and a team of teachers dedicated their time to bring this to fruition.

At GMS we provide four, one week sessions each school year for the standard course of study high school students emphasizing one area of the expanded core curriculum. If successful, the ECC will be expanded to the remainder of the student body. We ran our first ECC week with the main focus on Compensatory or Functional Academic Skills and Communication Modes. We briefly covered Orientation and Mobility, Technology, Independent Living, Visual Efficiency and Socialization Skills.

We planned a series of activities to help the students successfully begin the school year. The team targeted developing good study and organizational skills through student-led discussions. On the first day we assigned students their lockers and gave them the opportunity to personalize these lockers using a wide variety of tactile materials which aids the students in identifying their lockers and was “just plain fun” for the students. Over several days we gave students time to practice signing their names and writing their names using the slate and stylus.

For those attending Broughton High School for part of the day, we conducted a tour of the site to ensure safe campus travel. The tour gave the orientation and mobility team time to chance to assess individual students attending this school. To spark student interest in continuing their education, students visited Wake Technical Community College (WTCC). Disability services and the admissions office presented information informing students of the education tracks available, the types of classes provided, and ways WTCC facilitates individual student learning. A campus wide tour showcased their facility.

To enhance socialization and orientation and mobility concepts, students worked in teams on a campus-wide scavenger hunt at GMS. Led by a

staff member, the teams solved riddles made up by staff, planned, executed routes, and collected evidence as specified in the riddle. The teams thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

The group of students then planned, estimated costs, and worked as a team to prepare for a cookout. We gave these same teams a grocery list and asked them to estimate the cost of items; the group collectively estimated the total cost of the purchase made. The most exciting part was cooking and eating what was purchased!

Students learned more about their vision loss and coping with this out in the community. GMS's low vision specialist led discussion groups as a means to help students gain a better understanding of each individual's vision loss. As a way to show students that a vision loss does not have to be debilitating, a movie about Eric Weihenmayer, the first blind man to climb to the top of Mount Everest, was shown and then discussed. We were also privileged to have a guest speaker visit our school. Tucker Dupree, an internationally ranked swimmer who recently has suffered from vision loss, gave a compelling speech about his experiences. He has not let his vision impairment stop him from accomplishing the goals he has established for himself in life. He is currently training for placement on the USA's swim team for the 2008 Paralympics. The round table discussion the students had with him were enlightening and thought provoking.

At the end of the week, students evaluated the first Expanded Core Curriculum session. The overall comments were quite encouraging. Evaluation results indicated they most enjoyed hearing Tucker's presentation of how he has overcome the adversity in his life, as well as the movie about Eric Weihenmayer and his individual accomplishments.

Governor Morehead Students Exhibit Works at NC Museum of Art

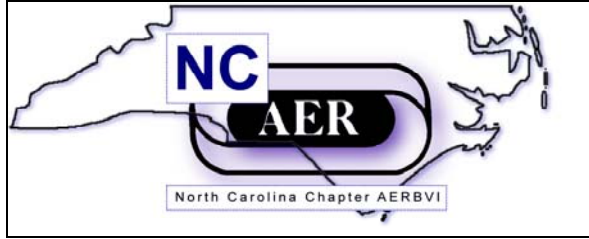
Works of art by students at the Governor Morehead School for the Blind will be featured in the Education Wing Gallery of the North Carolina Museum of Art from December, 2007 through April, 2008. In addition to the artwork, information on the teaching methods and learning styles of the visually impaired is shared through photographs and text. All text accompanying the exhibit is in braille. This exhibit allows visitors to understand how students who are blind and visually impaired use all information available to them to create works of art. By highlighting the special challenges which face blind and visually impaired student artists, visitors to the gallery can gain an appreciation of the artwork presented. Located on Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh at the NC Museum of Art, the gallery is open Tuesday through Thursday and Saturday from 9am to 5pm; Friday 9am to 9pm, and Sunday from 10am to 5pm.

Art Beyond Sight

Photography at GMS—YES! From 1992 to 1997 photographer Tony Deifell came to our school and sponsored a photography club with the students. Now he has published a book that tells all about the club! Using his methods as a model, we plan to have another club this year. BUT FIRST we have to raise money for cameras.

Help the new club—BUY A BOOK!

Support our students by purchasing Tony Deifell's book, *Seeing Beyond Sight* for \$25.95. Proceeds go toward purchasing new digital cameras for students' use. Send a check made out to GMS Foundation by student or mail, 303 Ashe Ave, Raleigh, 27707, and tell me if you wish the book to be sent home with your child or mailed home. Contact Alice Zincone, alice.zincone@ncmail.net, for additional details.



Gary H. Ray
President
18 Sandon Drive
Asheville, NC 28804
(828) 505-0338

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2008 Rachel Rawls Award

Nomination Form

Nominations should be submitted by April 1, 2008, to Gary Ray, either electronically or in print. The email address is ggray@mindspring.com. The mailing address is 18 Sandon Drive, Asheville, NC 28804.

The Rachel Rawls Award was established by the NCAER in 1989 to honor Dr. Rawls and to recognize achievement in the field of work with the blind and visually impaired.

The Ground Rules:

- The person making the nomination must be a member of NCAER.
- The person being nominated does not have to be an NCAER member.
- Current NCAER Board members are NOT eligible for nomination.
- The Board of the NCAER grants the Rawls Award.
- The NCAER Board need not give the Rawls Award every year.
- Only one Rawls Award may be given each year.
- Each nomination must be made using the form provided and must be accompanied by at least two (2) letters of support from persons who have personal knowledge of the nominee and his/her achievement. Each letter of support must contain contact information for the author.

Award criteria

- A person whose unique achievements have benefited North Carolina citizens who are visually impaired
- A person whose achievements have exceeded the expectations of their particular job description
- A person who has been innovative in the field of education, rehabilitation or human services
- A person who has had an impact on the field that extends beyond current or former job placement
- A person who has positively altered attitudes toward visual impairment or the manner in which services are delivered to individuals who are visually impaired

- A person who has demonstrated extensive collaborations with other disciplines or organizations working with people who are visually impaired (including but not limited to the NCAER, Lions Clubs in North Carolina, the Division of Services for the Blind, the Governor Morehead School, the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, the NC Council of the Blind, the National Federation of the Blind of NC) in order to enhance the overall quality of life for individuals who are visually impaired

2008 Rachel Rawls Award Nomination

Name of Person Nominating:

(MUST BE AN NCAER MEMBER)

Address, including City, State, and Zip:

Phone number, including Area Code:

Email:

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Name of Nominee:

Address, including City, State, and Zip:

Phone number, including Area Code:

Email:

Please explain why this person should receive the 2008 Award. Pay particular attention to the criteria given above. Feel free to use additional pages for your answer.