



President's Message

William Tubilleja

The summer is upon us and while many of you are preparing for vacation, others are getting ready for Summer Camps with students and clients alike. As another school year ends, it seems appropriate to review the past year.

I'd like to review the recent NC Conference on Visual Impairment and Blindness. The conference this year was another success. It was well-attended with participants from all over the state taking advantage of the great variety of vendors and sessions ranging from Braille Music Code, presented by the Governor Morehead School's Rick Coates, to SAVVY and WOW Summer Programming presented by the Division of Services for the Blind's (DSB) David Arthur, to Working with Paraprofessionals in the Public School Setting presented by NCCU professor, Dr. Beth Harris. Other interesting and notable sessions took place. Of course, the highlight of the conference was the keynote speech given by Captain Ivan Castro. What an inspiring story!

I've mentioned it before, but the annual conference is a great time to reacquaint with friends and colleagues from around the state and to share the opportunity to learn new things related to our field. If you missed coming to the conference this year, please attend next Spring.



During the conference the NC Chapter of AER held its annual business meeting. I want to take this opportunity to thank Julie Kagy who

completed her term as an at-large Board Member. Julie has participated on the Board for 4 years and her contributions are appreciated. New at-large Board Members include Henry Widmer, TVI, Wilson County, and Patricia Sykes, Low Vision Therapist, DSB, Raleigh. Welcome, Henry and Patricia, and I look forward to working with you as wonderful additions to our Board.

Susan Purdy, NCAER Treasurer, announced that she will step down from her role on the Board. Susan has been a committed AER member and has served as an at-large Board Member and Treasurer, displaying passion and diligence in her work. Susan will be busy adding to her teaching credentials and looking forward to teaching at the early childhood level. Susan, best of luck !

Susan will assist in the transition of our future Treasurer, Adam Woodrum, current at-large Board Member and math teacher at The Governor Morehead School. While it may be early to think about, next year's business meeting will include the election and installation of new officers for the Board. The positions include President-Elect, Treasurer, Secretary, and two at-large Board members. Forms for nominations will be presented to membership prior to the annual business meeting. Please consider participating on the Board. Our state chapter and its collaboration with the annual conference can only be as strong as its membership is willing to participate and contribute their experience and expertise.

I certainly hope everyone has a fun-filled and relaxing summer. You've earned it !

2011 NCCVIB Awards

Gary Ray was presented with the 2011 Rachel Rawls Award. One of the many criterion for nomination and selection for

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this award include “A person whose unique achievements have benefited NC citizens who are visually impaired.” Gary certainly exemplified this during his work at the NC Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped as its Volunteer Outreach Coordinator and currently as a volunteer who chairs many consumer groups and governmental boards related to the needs of the visually impaired. It must be noted during the announcement of Gary as winner of this honor, he was rather speechless. If you know Gary at all, you realize that this is a rare event!

Even though we caught you in a moment characterized by a loss of words, we are proud of you, Gary, and all that you do for our field.



Deborah Deere was presented with the 2011 NCAER Student Scholarship Award. This award is given out to the outstanding student who has exemplified scholarship and professionalism in the field of blindness and visual impairment during her studies. Deborah graduated from Western Carolina University with a degree in Nursing. Along the way, Deborah became interested in the field of vision impairment and teaching. She enrolled in NCCU VITP (Vision Impairment Training Program) in 2009. Deborah graduated this past spring and will be bringing her newly minted expertise to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools as a TVI. Best wishes !

Recognition of AER Membership Longevity

25 Years: Laura Ann Park-Leach

20 Years: Donna Lynn Greep, Sharon Ann Smith

15 Years: Sarah J. Schwartz, Shawn Elizabeth Hatfield

5 Years: Barbara Walsh Lewis, Jennifer Shull, Patricia Sykes, Debbie Jackson, Dion B. Ousley, Marion C. DuBow, Jennifer Simmons, Jo H. Pierce

Raising Cane Update

The first Raising Cane 5K was a success! By March 26th, Raising Cane had 76 registered runners, 94 registered walkers, 30 volunteers, 12 business/association sponsors, 28 private donors, and 6 vendors. This was a great turnout for an event's first year. A race event manager told the Raising Cane Committee that typically first year events do well when they have 75 participants registered.

Raising Cane is working to become its own non-profit organization that will encourage athleticism within the visually impaired community. Our goal is to host athletic events or workshops for people with visual impairments throughout North Carolina, with the culminating event being the Raising Cane 5K run. Next year Raising Cane will have a blindfold challenge event in which sighted people will run the 5K race course under blindfold with a guide runner. Raising Cane is also reaching out to athletes with visual impairments from all around the United States and inviting them to participate in the 2012 Raising Cane 5K event.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time and effort in helping make the 2011 Raising Cane 5K Race a possibility and a success!

Raising Cane Sponsors

We all would be remiss in our duties if we did not thank the following supporters of the inaugural 2011 Raising Cane 5K.

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Thank you SO much to these organizations for their kindness and generosity:

- Ameresco (energy efficiency and renewal energy solutions for facilities throughout North America)
- Cayce (designs, installs, services plumbing, heating, and air conditioning systems)
- Earth Fare (the healthy supermarket)
- Family Eye Care of Apex (LASIK surgery and low vision services around the state)
- Fleet Feet of Raleigh (sportswear and running shoes)
- Friends of the NC Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (providing print media to people with disabilities in various forms, including Braille, large print, digital recordings)
- GMS Alumni Association (graduates of the Governor Morehead School for the Blind)
- LC Industries (providing meaningful employment for people who are blind and the largest employer of people who are blind in the US)
- NC Council of the Blind
- NCAER
- Raleigh Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities
- Whole Foods Market

Thanks ! Special thanks to Ford's Produce for their contribution of fruit for us to enjoy, and to Business Enterprises for their contribution of sodas and snacks. We appreciate the continued support of these two agencies. They have been with us for many years, and we thank them for their loyalty !

NEW TO NC— THE BELL PROGRAM

For the first time this summer, the *Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning* (BELL) Program will be offered in North Carolina.

The BELL Program was adopted by the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) several years ago and is being offered through a cooperative effort between the NFB and the NC Braille Literacy Council.

The target group for this year's program is students from five to twelve years old. They might be students beginning to learn Braille, who primarily read print but might benefit from learning Braille, or who are reading Braille but below grade level.

The Program is a day program; therefore, students will need to live within commuting distance to Raleigh. Some assistance may be provided with transportation if needed.

Instruction will be provided by one Teacher of the Visually Impaired from NC and one from NFB. A number of volunteers will also assist with activities. While Braille is the focus of the two-week program, many activities and some field trips will be offered, incorporating Braille into each activity.

DATES: Monday – Friday; July 11 – 22

TIMES: Tentative times from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

LOCATION: Haywood Building, Governor Morehead School Campus

If you have students who might benefit from this program, please contact either Debbie Jackson (dcj1115@bellsouth.net) (919-219-2677 (cell)) or Gary Ray (ghray@chartern.net), 828-505-0299.

New Website for Disabled Travelers

People with visual handicaps can now plan their trips while exploring a broad range of travel opportunities at <http://www.i-can-travel.com>. The site is designed to serve a huge and growing American market. According to the most recent US Census Bureau figures, 51.2 million people report some level of disability, and for 32.5 million of them the disability is considered severe. This number will only rise as the US population ages. "There's a common belief that people with disabilities can't do very much," says one

traveler with multiple sclerosis, “but we know that’s simply not true.” The site was created to promote creative thinking, expand travel options, and to help folks live as free from disabilities as possible.

All site visitors will receive up-to-date information about all aspects of traveling with disabilities, including a directory of resources. Members will discover exciting ways to enjoy the world and will share their own experiences and knowledge to help others make travels easier and more meaningful. An ebook on mini-vacations is also available on the site.

Color Vision Affected by Thyroid

Researchers have discovered that the pigments which allow the eye to detect color are controlled by the thyroid gland.

Carried out at the Max Planck Institute for Brain Research in Frankfurt, Germany, the study revealed how color sensitivity is not fixed, as previously believed, but is controlled throughout life by thyroid hormones.

Martin Glosmann, from the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, which was also involved in the research, said: "In addition to their importance for basic retinal research, our findings may also have clinical relevance."

He explained that those suffering from thyroid hormone deficiency, which can be caused by a lack of iodine in the diet, must also experience an alteration in their color vision.

Implantable Telescope Approved

US health officials have approved a first-of-its-kind technology to counter a leading cause of blindness in older adults — a tiny telescope implanted inside the eye.

The Implantable Miniature Telescope aims to help in the end stages of incurable age-related macular degeneration, a creeping loss of central vision that blocks reading, watching TV, eventually even recognizing faces.

The idea: Surgically insert the Implantable Miniature Telescope into one eye for better central vision, while leaving the other eye alone to provide peripheral vision. The brain must fuse two views into a single image, and the Food and Drug Administration warned that patients need post-surgery rehabilitation to make it work.

There's little to help such advanced patients today aside from difficult-to-use handheld or glasses-mounted telescopes, while the new implanted telescope — smaller than a pea — can improve quality of life for the right candidate, said Dr. Malvina Eydelman, FDA's ophthalmic devices chief.

But it's only for a subset of the nearly 2 million Americans with advanced macular degeneration, Eydelman added: those 75 and older, with a certain degree of vision loss, who also need a cataract removed. In fact, the FDA took the highly unusual step of requiring that patients and their surgeons sign a detailed "acceptance of risk agreement" before surgery, acknowledging potential side effects — including corneal damage and worsened vision — and the need for lots of testing to determine who's a candidate.

In a 219-patient study, the FDA said 90 percent of telescope recipients had their vision improve by at least two lines on an eye chart, and three-quarters went from severe to moderate vision impairment.

2011 Summer Institute

The NC Department of Public Instruction is offering two institutes of interest to VI teachers. In Asheville, July 14 – 15, Dr. Christine Roman-Lantzy will present *Cortical Visual Impairment: Functional Implications and Intervention Strategies*. CVI is now the leading cause of blindness in the western world. This presentation is intended to provide a foundation in understanding CVI, academic and functional implications of this form of vision loss, research-based practices on how to meet the needs of students with CVI, and

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modifications and adaptations that can be made in the classroom to best meet these students' needs. This session will provide 1.2 CEUs, and run from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. on the campus of Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College – Enka Campus, Candler. Cost is \$40.

At UNC-Greensboro, July 25 – 26, Lucia Hasty will present on Creating and Instructing with Tactile Graphics. For many years a teacher and administrator in special education, including Colorado's state instructional materials center for students with vision disabilities. Lucia serves on the BANA/Canadian Braille Authority Joint Committee on Tactile Graphics. She is co-author of the new Braille code for tactile graphics and numerous technical articles on the topic. From basic geometric shapes to complex maps illustrating the spatial footprint of an airline terminal, visually impaired students are presented with concepts that must be accessed tactually to gain understanding commensurate to their sighted peers. Participants will learn critical components of a good tactile graphic, student strategies for accessing tactile graphics, current best practice standards, hands-on experience utilizing simple to complex production methods. The session provides 1.2 CEU credits, running from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. The session is at UNC Greensboro, Elliott Center. Registration is \$50.

Check the DPI website for additional information or contact Heather Brooks, hbrooks@dpi.state.nc.us for the CVI workshop information and Claire Hakin, chakin@dpi.state.nc.us for information on the tactile graphics workshop.

Preparing a Child for an Eye Exam

Although it is late in the school year, it isn't too early to plan a student's trips to the ophthalmologist or low vision specialist.

A visit to the eye doctor can be frustrating for a child with a disability (and for everyone involved!) To ensure a

productive appointment with minimal stress, planning begins well before the visit.

Try some of these suggestions:

- Prepare questions and observations in advance of the visit
- Trial the child with the test (if possible) before the visit
- Take toys/objects that the child responds to positively
- Take ALL glasses, sunglasses, optical devices with you, as well as educational and other medical records, including medication information
- If the child is fearful of doctor's offices, visit in a separate session to familiarize the kiddo to the setting
- Be sure everyone understands ALL instructions before leaving the doctor's office. If glasses or other optical devices are prescribed, determine what activities for which they are worn, times they should NOT be worn, and if there is an adjustment period

A little preparation can save a lot of time and tears !

Sharing Resources

Just a reminder that if you have modified textbooks in your LEA that you will not be needing, how about sharing those resources with other LEAs? We often have books no longer on the adopted list that sit and gather dust when students in other LEAs could benefit. Send your announcements to the VI List Serv so that we can help our kids across the state. Thanks ! And please return those on the adoption list so that others can use them.

Prodigy Diabetes Care, LLC

Prodigy Diabetes Care, LLC, a high tech engineering and design company in Charlotte has developed Prodigy, an innovative line of accessible blood glucose monitoring system and reintroduced a

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simple method to fill insulin syringes. Diabetic retinopathy has been recognized as the leading cause of new blindness in Americans under the age of seventy-four. In addition, diabetes is associated with several other visual impairments, e.g., cataracts, glaucoma, retinal vascular occlusive disease, and age-related macular degeneration.

With these conditions in mind and a focus on the needs of the blind and low vision diabetic, Prodigy developed the Prodigy Autocode, Prodigy Voice, and Prodigy Count-a-dose. Autocode is an audible, multilingual meter that requires no coding. Voice is fully audible from set-up to testing, has raised imprinted buttons for easy navigations, a repeat button to replay last message/test result. Count-a-dose provides easy and accurate method of filling syringes by measuring one unit of insulin at a time. The meter's packaging features Braille labels, and the color and fonts are designed to be clearly visible to those with vision impairments.

Calendar of Events

August 12 – 14, 2011: AER Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Division, Boston Park Plaza, Boston MA

October 28 – 30, 2011: AER Information and Technology Division, Crowne Plaza City Centre, Cleveland OH
<http://www.aerbvi.org/2011regionalconf/>

October 13 – 15, 2011: 143rd Annual APH Meeting, Louisville, KY

October 31 – November 1, 2011: 61st Annual Conference on Exceptional Children (NCDPI), Greensboro NC
<http://dpi.state.nc.us/ec>

Summer Cautions

Now that summer is here, remember the following tips:

- ALWAYS wear sunglasses and make sure that these protect you from 99 – 100% UVA/UVB rays. Consider wrap-around styles as they provide better protection
- If you're doing lawn work such as pruning, hedging, or mowing, wear safety glass made of shatter-resistant polycarbonate material
- If you participate in summer sports, don't forget protective eyewear. A baseball is just the right size to cause orbital fractures, corneal abrasions, bleeding within the eye, or retinal detachment
- If you've had LASIK refractive surgery be especially careful to prevent injuries which may cause the flap created during surgery to shift
- If you swim, wear swimming goggles to protect yourself from waterborne bacteria and swimming pool chemicals. And do NOT wear your contact lenses while swimming!

Something to Think About....

- Do you know why a car's windshield is so large and the rear view mirror is so small? Because our PAST is not as important as our FUTURE. So, look ahead and move on.
- A blind person asked St. Anthony: "Can there be anything worse than losing your eyesight?" St. Anthony replied, "Yes. Losing your vision."