



June, 2010

President's Message

William Tubilleja

It is a great pleasure to write to the membership of the NC Chapter of AER as your new President. I have been honored to serve on the Board for 4 years and I hope I bring experience and understanding to the position. Of course, that experience comes by working with some outstanding professionals in our field who also have served and continue to serve on the Board. As the former President Elect, I also had the opportunity to work as the Chair of the NCCVIB planning committee. Not only did that experience help me develop as a leader and organizer, but it also allowed me to work with many other professionals in our field who give their time and energy to contribute by presenting their own expertise to us as a field. It is opportunities like these that have helped me grow as a professional. I want to talk about opportunity—my vision for the next 2 years for NCAER and how each member can contribute to the Chapter and to your own professional growth.

As your Chapter President, I want to better ensure that members can participate in the function of its Board, if they so choose. I would like to do this by making dates, times, and locations of Board meetings available in advance so that members can attend. I would like members to contribute ideas on what they want from their Chapter through email, phone calls, or attendance at meetings. I would like to set up at least one social activity for Chapter members to get together informally, share ideas, and just catch up. The TVIs in the western part of the state get together at a designated restaurant at least one time a year to network, exchange information, and socialize. I think this is a possible model for setting up such a social activity for our members. This activity doesn't have to be in Raleigh and can include a guest speaker.

A continual goal for the Chapter President is to increase membership. Currently, our membership roster includes 104 members. I

have reviewed the list, and there are many VI professionals with whom I am acquainted that are not on our roster. Of course, the obvious question is "why"? While there are many answers to that question, they will need to be addressed, if we seek to increase membership in our Chapter.

I want to take 1 or 2 of our member's ideas and make it happen by the end of my term. It is my hope that our Chapter's Board will receive many ideas from its membership on what and how NCAER can do---do more of or simply do differently.

AER Lift 2010

This year's AER-Lift Leadership Conference was held in Little Rock, Arkansas, the site of this summer's AER International Conference. While it was a chance to preview the city where the International Conference will be held, AER-Lift was also a great opportunity to meet fellow Chapter Board members from all over the country.

AER-Lift is essentially the event that allows new Chapter and Division leaders to understand not only the role of AER but also the role of the participants as leaders of their respective Chapter/Division. It is an opportunity for participants to learn about the expectations of the position they hold and how AER can assist us in our efforts.

This year was a little different than the leadership conference held two years ago in Texas. Not only did we discuss leadership and organizational expectations, but also two main topics were introduced in a town hall forum. The first topic discussed was related to professional standards and the relationship between AERE and ACVREP. For many years, there has been concern that ACVREP has not been "user friendly" to its certification holders and has created obstacles for professionals seeking certification or renewal. AER is in conversation with ACVREP relaying the concern its own members have with the ACVREP process and is committed to working with ACVREP to resolve the issues. AER will keep its members updated on the resolution of this issue. The second topic discussed was Braille standards on a national level. More specifically, the NFB attempts to nationalize Braille competency standards for teachers who teach Braille. The concern is that teaching those standards are

being created by an advocacy organization who is attempting to get these standards in place at the state level through legislation. In addition, these standards carry with it a strong emphasis on an associated NFB code of ethics. Another concern is, of course, that the data used to create such standards is not being shared and the validity of the standards is thus questionable. The role of a Teacher of the Visually Impaired or dually certified Orientation and Mobility Instructor is greater than simply teaching Braille. The standards set forth by NFB seem more appropriate for a nationally certified Brailist and not a professional in the field of teaching visually impaired students. The further concern is that these same standards become nationalized, further complicating the professions' ability to increase numbers. AER has created a task force to study the issue of setting standards for Braille competency for TVIs and those who teach Braille. AER will notify its membership as more information becomes available.

Little Rock and AER-Lift played great hosts to all participants. If you plan on attending the AER International Conference, be prepared to have a great time as you learn a little, play a little, and hopefully take back your experiences to your colleagues.

Welcome new (and returning) Board members

At our annual Board meeting, we held nominations and elections and the following folks are YOUR AER voices.

William Tubilleja (President): William Tubilleja received his bachelors in psychology and masters of Early Childhood Special Education at the University of Nevada—Las Vegas. He received TVI credentialing through University of Arizona and an Assistive Technology certification from East Carolina University. He has worked as a TVI for 8 years in Nevada and NC. He has worked for GMS Outreach and K-12 for the past 6 years and currently works as the Low Vision Coordinator for the school and the state. He has been on the NC Chapter of AER as an at-large Board member, President-Elect, and current President as well as serving on the NCCVIB planning committee as a committee member and chairperson during the past 5 years. He also serves on the NC Braille Literacy Council as Co-Chair, the NC-APVI (parent association for VI

students) as a Board member, the Consumer Advocacy and Advisory Council; as a Board member, the Braille Challenge Committee as a coordinator, and as an assistant coach for the Governor Morehead School goalball, wrestling, and track teams. Most importantly, he is married with 2 great kids who keep him active and grounded. He can be reached at william.tubilleja@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-715-4257.

Dan Simmons (President Elect) Greetings, fellow AER members! I am honored having been chosen as president-elect; I will do my best to serve you. I earned my BS in Secondary Education, History and Political Science at Wright State University in Dayton, OH. I taught social studies and coached baseball in an inner-city high school in Dayton before moving to North Carolina in 2005. I worked in the landscaping industry for two years and then taught part of the 2006-2007 school year in Wake County Schools. In February 2007 I accepted the high school social studies teaching position at GMS, and I feel that I've found my niche working with this student population. I will be pursuing a graduate degree in orientation and mobility, and certifications in Assistive Technology and TVI. Please feel free to contact me with your questions, comments, and concerns to daniel.r.simmons@gmail.com

Claire Hakin (Secretary): Claire provides orientation and mobility instruction at The Governor Morehead School. She also teaches with Short-Term and serves as part of the O & M screening team that GMS has developed, which assists LEAs in screening their students with visual impairment for possible O & M needs.

Susan Purdy (Treasurer): Susan Hudson Purdy received her undergraduate degree from George Peabody College in Nashville and a masters degree from the University of North Colorado. She spent 2 years teaching severely/profoundly handicapped deaf-blind student at a state hospital in Indiana and 3 years teaching deaf-blind children at the Louisiana School for the Deaf. She helped write the initial grant for the Preschool for the Visually Impaired at UNC-Chapel Hill and was the first teacher/administrator. She has 3 children and was a stay at home/home-school mom for 10 years. She works as a contract TVI in Person

County. She has been the TVI and brailist there for the past 15 years, with areas of certification in elementary education, visual impairments, severe/profound, and mentally handicapped.

Kathy Davis (Past President): Kathy currently serves as OutReach Director and principal at The Governor Morehead School for the Blind. She began her career in vision as a brailist and then moved to an itinerant position with Wake County Public Schools. She has taught with Wake County and Peoria (AZ) schools as both itinerant and resource teacher.

Janet Barlow (Member, 2010-2012): Janet M. Barlow is a certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist and worked from 1977 to 2001 at the Center for the Visually Impaired in Atlanta, first as an orientation and mobility specialist, then as a Manager of Rehabilitation Services. Since 2001 she has worked with Accessible Design for the Blind on various research projects and took over as President of ADB two years ago. She is currently involved in research on street crossings, with a National Eye Institute project, *Blind Pedestrians' Access to Complex Intersections*, and two National Cooperative Highway Research Program Projects, one on roundabout access and modifications to provide access, and another that developed guidelines for accessible pedestrian signals. Janet is chair of the Environmental Access Committee of the Orientation and Mobility Division of the AER and had served in many different positions with Georgia AER over the years. She and her husband Doug are delighted to have relocated to Asheville in 2006, particularly because their granddaughters live there. You can contact Janet by email at jmbarlow@accessforblind.org or cell phone (770)317-0611.

Adam Woodrum (Member, 2010-2012): Adam is from Angier, NC, and lives in Raleigh with his wife, dog, and two cats. He worked for 4 years with students in a group home while completing a BS in math and math education from NCSU. In 2007, he joined the GMS as a middle school math teacher. He works with students at GMS ranging from late elementary to early high school teaching mathematics and skills needed to access mathematics in a variety of media. He is excited about VI education especially as it relates to academic and functional math skills.

He is currently completing coursework from NCCU in pursuit of TVI licensure. When not working, Adam swims, cycles, and participates in trail running.

Julie Kagy (Member, 2009-2011): Julie is the VI/AT consultant for the NC Department of Public Instruction.

Dana Fox (Member, 2009-2011): Dana Fox is on her second run as a teacher with the Governor Morehead Preschool program. For the past five years she has taught in the 2 and 3 year old classrooms and itinerantly in Wake County for children birth to age five. Previously, she worked for three years out of the preschool's Greenville office. In between working at the preschool Dana enjoyed working on curriculum development and research with the Early Intervention Training Center for Infants and Toddlers With Visual Impairments at UNC-CH. Dana serves on the Board for the NC Chapter of NAPVI and finds the parent support part of her job most rewarding. Dana spends her free time being the favorite cool aunt and traveling.

Rachel Rawls Award Winner

Congratulations to our 2010 Rachel Rawls award winner—Lisa Swink. Lisa is a former teacher with both the Governor Morehead Preschool and GMS OutReach programs, as well as a former itinerant teacher of the visually impaired with Lincoln County (NC) schools. Lisa has a wealth of experience working with students with visual impairments and other exceptionalities. While she was an exceptional teacher, she also exemplified professionalism and support of her peers. She began a TVI meeting in the Lincoln County area which was open to TVIs across the state to attend. When nominated for the award, the recurring theme resonated Lisa's commitment to her students and to her profession. A deserving recipient, especially to those of us fortunate enough to know her and to have worked with her!

Wilmington Low Vision Clinic: It was a spectacular day at the beach! GMS OutReach, under the direction of Low Vision Coordinator William Tubilleja and Low Vision Optometrist Dr. Elana Scheiner, held a Low Vision clinic in Wilmington on April 12 and 13. It was an opportunity to meet and greet other TVIs in the

field: June Guyton, Billie LeTendre, Mirella Timms, as well as have kids receive low vision examinations to determine appropriate low vision devices.

Tactile Colors??? Think about it. What would “red” feel like? What about orange? Blue? Check out the website below for information on a creative project.

www.tactilecolor.com or
<http://uas.osu.edu/eshibition/tactilecolor>

Thanks to Dan Simmons for this information!

Technology Bill of Rights

Please study HR 4533, the Technology Bill of Rights for the Blind Act of 2010. This bill is to provide for a study and report on access by blind consumers to certain electronic devices and to provide for the establishment of a minimum nonvisual access standards for such devices and for the establishment of an office within the Department of Commerce to enforce such standards.

We often teach our students that technology is the “great leveler”—that with it, the disparities between sighted and visually impaired are significantly lessened. However, with the advent of so many new technologies, e.g., touch screens, visual displays, on-screen menus, not to mention the old-fashioned knobs on televisions, stereos, washers, technology often fails our students and consumers in the worst way. Finally Congress has noticed that while technology can be very good, it can be very difficult for visually impaired individuals to manage.

So take time to read the bill and respond accordingly.

Position Statement

After much consideration and deliberation the AER Board developed the following position statement in rebuttal to the draft proposal by the Office of Education Services regarding the fate of residential schools for the blind and the deaf. That position can be found on the website. Additionally, the Board has posted a second position statement regarding the proposed budget as it pertains to The Governor Morehead School K-12 Instructional Program, Residential Life Program, Outreach Program, and Governor Morehead Preschool. Please

check www.ncaer.net for information on the proposals.

SAVE THE DATE !!!

April 8 – 9, 2011

NCCVIB

“Learn from the Past...

Work for the Future”

While the conference will have a vocational theme, additional strands will address orientation and mobility, preschool, vocational considerations, and rehabilitation.

And, last but not least, some things to think about...

The reason a dog has so many friends is that he wags his tail instead of his tongue....Anonymous

Don't accept your dog's admiration as conclusive evidence that you are wonderful....Ann Landers

We give dogs time we can spare, space we can spare, and love we can spare. And in return, dogs give us their all. It's the best deal man has ever made....M. Acklam