

AER Orientation and Mobility Division Biennial Business Meeting

July 20, 2022

St. Louis, Missouri

**Call to Order**

JoAnne Chalom called the meeting to order at 8:09 AM.Chris Tabb agreed to act as Parliamentarian, and Maggie Winn agreed to act as timekeeper and take notes.

**Approval of Meeting Agenda**

Nora Griffin-Shirley moved for approval of the agenda, seconded by Amy Scepaniak. The motion passed.

**Approval of August 2020 Business Meeting Minutes**

Nora Griffin Shirley moved to approve the 2020 minutes, seconded by Robert Alminana. The motion passed.

**Announcements**

* Nora Griffin-Shirley announced an added faculty position opening at Texas Tech University.
* Chris Tabb: Registration is now open for SWOMA (November),SOMA (December)
* JoAnne Chalom: AER O&M Division Ponchos will be available at the division table
* Eileen Sifferman announced that the International Mobility Conference (IMC) will be May, 2023 in Warsaw, Poland

**Presentation of Newcomer-Hill award**

JoAnne Chalom presented the Newcomer-Hill Award to Raychel Callary. The recipient of the Newcomer Hill Service Award is selected by the outgoing Division Chair in recognition of major contributions to the Division during the previous two years. This award was initiated in 1992 by Bruce Blasch, who was then Division Chair. It is named after two past Division Chairs, James Newcomer (1985-88) and Everett “Butch” Hill (1988-90), who served the Division with commitment and dedication and were exemplary models of professionalism for all orientation and mobility specialists.

JoAnne was presented with an outgoing Chair gift of a certificate and gift card. Raychel led the meeting from this point.

**Consent Agenda**

Meg Robertson moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Chris Tabb. The motion passed.

**INSTALLATION OF NEW OFFICERS**

Officers

Raychel Callary (Chair)

Maggie Winn (Chair-Elect)

JoAnne Chalom (Past-Chair)

Valery Kircher (Secretary)

Megann Brousard (Treasurer)

District Directors

Angela Leavens (District 1)

Shay Utley (District 2)

Jennifer Duncan (District 3)

Eric Shaw (District 4)

Kevin McCormack (District 5)

Tessa McCarthy (District 6)

**OLD BUSINESS**

Additions to Policies and Procedures Manual (PPM)

1. The addition of a student representative was approved at the last AER board meeting.

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE**

1. Shall serve as a nonvoting member of the Division Executive Committee.

2. Shall be currently enrolled in a University Personnel Prep program.

3. Shall serve a term of one-year and shall be appointed.

4. Shall be a member of AER O&M Division in good standing.

5. Shall be a resource for students in Orientation and Mobility Programs who have concerns or questions.

1. TERM OF OFFICE

The term of office for all officers and District Directors shall be two (2) years with the exception of the Student Representative and shall commence at the end of the Division business meeting held at the AER International biennial conference or on August 1st of the biennial year should a conference not be held.

3. Qualifications were changed for the Orientation and Mobility Citation of Excellence for Direct Service award and the Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award, adding National Orientation and Mobility Certification (NOMC). Language now states “that a recipient must be an Orientation and Mobility Division member and be a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) or National Orientation and Mobility Certification (NOMC).”

1. The Janet Barlow Environmental Access Service Award was added

**Selection Criteria:**

1. The individual must have at least three years’ experience in the field of orientation and mobility, with major attention being given to increasing accessibility to the built environment for people with low vision,blindness, and deafblindness.  Examples of “Major attention to increasing accessibility to the built environment” include, but are not limited to, the following

1. Fluency in both orientation and mobility and traffic engineering terminology and concepts, with the ability to bring together orientation and mobility specialists, urban planners, and traffic engineers in the form of workshops, webinars, and other presentations.
2. Ability to advocate for environmental access to the built environment for pedestrians with visual impairments and blindness.
3. Demonstrated ability to pursue research to increase access to the built environment for individuals with visual impairments.
4. Serving as a mentor to other orientation and mobility specialists with an interest in environmental access and the built environment.
5. Bridging communication between orientation and mobility specialists and traffic engineers by presenting at local, regional, or international conferences in the area of environmental access to the built environment.
6. Professional publications in the area of environmental access to the built environment.

History:

The Janet Barlow Environmental Access Service Award was established in 2021 to recognize professionals who demonstrate distinguished service in orientation and mobility through a long-term commitment to environmental access. The award was named for Janet Barlow because of her lifelong commitment and dedication to the field, her steadfast, practical, and strategic methods to address research needs, advocacy for greater accessibility to the built environment, and education of orientation and mobility specialists and transportation professionals such as traffic engineers and urban planners on issues relevant to both professional areas.

Janet worked as an orientation and mobility specialist, manager, and advocate in Georgia at the Atlanta Area Services for the Blind, now known as the Center for the Visually Impaired. Her practical experience prepared her well for her next career, researching techniques to make the built environment more accessible to pedestrians with vision loss. At the time of her passing in August 2021, Janet was President of Accessible Design for the Blind (ADB), a small research organization started by Dr. Beezy Bentzen. Under Janet’s leadership, ADB became well-recognized for human factors research related to environmental access.  Major topics that Janet investigated include accessible pedestrian signals, roundabouts, and tactile walking surface indicators such as detectable warnings and guidance surfaces. In 2017, together with Diane Fazzi, COMS, Ph.D. she wrote *Orientation and Mobility Techniques: A Guide for the Practitioner*, a manual for the teaching of O&M, now used as a textbook in university programs preparing O&M specialists. Janet was also the original author of two chapters in *Foundations of Orientation and Mobility*, 3rd ed., the authoritative textbook on the theory, research, and practice of O&M, “Environmental Accessibility for Students with Vision Loss”, and “Teaching Travel at Complex Intersections.”  She authored many papers and was a sought-after speaker at conferences and workshops.

The first Janet Barlow Environmental Access Service Award was awarded to her posthumously and presented to her family at the 2022 AER International Conference in St Louis, Missouri. Janet Barlow was chosen as the first recipient of this award because of her lifelong dedication to the field of  orientation and mobility and active involvement with numerous professional activities and committees while maintaining a special focus on building mutual understanding between orientation and mobility specialists, traffic engineers, and urban planners.

The establishment of this award is fitting tribute to Janet Barlow and to all the countless other orientation and mobility specialists who forego higher paying careers in order to continue doing what they know and love best, including creating mutual understanding and respect between orientation and mobility specialists, urban planners, and traffic engineers. The award will be given only when a worthy recipient is determined.

Past Recipients of the Janet Barlow Environmental Access Service Award:

2022 Janet Barlow, posthumously

1. The following was added:

**E. SPECIAL ELECTIONS**

1.Should special elections need to be held, the voting period shall be fifteen business days and will end at 11:59 PM ET on the fifteenth day.

1. Adjustments were made to the Blasch scholarship timeline and funding procedure.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. New and revised position papers were addressed. Discussion took place about interest in an Orientation and Mobility Assistants paper, or if there may be a different forum to address OMAs. Chris Tabb moved for the creation of a “position paper on O&M Assistants and Role Release”, seconded by Marjorie Wood. The motion passed.
2. The O&M Division Strategic Plan revision is underway. A draft will be provided to the membership by 8/10/2022 or a timeline must be established within 60 days and shared publicly for the creation of a new strategic plan that involves feedback from the division membership. A breakout session on the Strategic Plan is scheduled for 9:30 AM Saturday.
3. Mark Richert spoke about *The* *New RE:view.* This is a practitioner-focused journal provided as an AER member benefit. There are multiple presentations on *The New RE:view (TNR)* throughout the conference and there is a pamphlet in the conference bag. Bill Wiener arrived at this point. He stated that the first issue will be released in the beginning of September. There are seven associate editors. It will come out twice a year; eventually they would like it to be quarterly and are hoping for a lot of submissions. Practitioner oriented -- what practices have worked, what practices are promising. Practice reports will be included.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

O&M Division 2020-2022

Executive Board and District Directions

Officers

JoAnne Chalom (Chair)

Raychel Callary (Chair-Elect)

Chris Tabb (Past-Chair)

Jennifer Duncan (Secretary)

Robert Alminana (Treasurer)

District Directors

Loana Mason (District 1)

John McAllister (District 2)

Margaret Winn (District 3)

Claudia Libis (District 4)

Amanda Stolz (District 5)

Valery Kircher (District 6)

Committee Chairs

Archives Committee-Rod Kossick

Awards Committee-Nicholas Leon

Communications/Media-Newsletter- Meg Robertson

Environmental Access Committee Chair - Meg Robertson

Finance Committee-Treasurer- Robert Alminana

Membership Committee-Chair –Jennifer Duncan

Nominating and Elections Committee- Mark Carter

Professional Issues Committee- Raychel Callary

Program Committee- Raychel Callary

Strategic Plan- JoAnne Chalom

Website- Christopher Tabb

O&M Division 2022-2024

Executive Board and District Directions

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Nominating and Elections Committee - Mark Carter

Professional Issues Committee - Raychel Callary

Program Committee - Raychel Callary

Scholarship Committee (Donald Blasch) - Maggie Winn

**O&M DIVISION BUSINESS MEETING**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**July 21, 2022**

Committee Reports

**Finance Committee-Treasurer’s Report**

**Robert Alminana**

Since January 14, 2021, the expense items have been the Donald Blasch Scholarships for a total of $2,000. The motion passed at the AER Board meeting of 4/9/2021, so the two scholarships will be funded. All divisions must now submit a request for funding for each item they would like funded. It must be approved by the Board members of AER. Divisions now have Requests for Funding instead of anticipated budgets.

**Strategic Plan Committee Report 2020-2022**

**JoAnne Chalom**

Below is a summative report that addresses work toward reaching the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan during 2020-2022.

Increase communication between division leaders and members to allow for direct feedback concerning their professional needs and to raise awareness of division activities.

* Over the past two years eight editions of the O&M Newsletter have been written and sent to O&M Division members.
* The AER O&M Outpost has been maintained by an O&M Division member along with Member Resources and archives in Google Drive.
* Forty eblasts were sent to O&M Division members, although some were reminders for elections and position papers.
* The AER O&M Division Twitter account has three hundred and twenty-nine following and three hundred and ninety-four followers.
* The AER O&M Division Facebook page has One thousand, two hundred and fifty-eight followers.

Emphasize and promote information on best practices and useful tools for O&M professionals

* The O&M Division membership and AER Board have approved four new position papers.
  + Orientation and Mobility Specialist’s Role in Low Vision Driving (Oct. 1, 2021)
  + Orientation & Mobility Assessments for Students in Education and Life Skills Settings (Nov 5, 2021)
  + Use of Visual Occlusion in Orientation & Mobility Instruction. (March 4, 2022)
  + Remote Instruction for Orientation and Mobility (April 18, 2022)
* Four position papers have been revised and approved by the O&M Division membership and AER Board.
  + *Teaching Orientation & Mobility Through Individual and Group Lessons*. (Oct 1, 2021)
  + *Teaching Street Crossings at Streets and Lanes Where There is No Traffic Control*. (Oct 1, 2021)
  + *Orientation & Mobility in Natural Environments* (Nov 5, 2021)
  + *University Trained Orientation & Mobility Specialists* (Nov 5, 2021)
  + *Teaching Street Crossings at Signalized Intersections* (Jan 7, 2022)
* The comment period ended on June 8, 2022, for one more position paper. The team will review comments for *Orientation and Mobility Specialist Roles, Responsibilities, and Qualifications*.
* *O&M Specialists and the Provision of Travel Instruction to Individuals with Nonvisual Disabilities* is out for comment. When the comment period ends at the beginning of August the team will review those comments and provide a revised draft to the membership for a vote.
* One position paper is in the process of being developed addressing the O&M’s Role in Support Canes.

Provide and promote professional development opportunities for O&M professionals

* Over the past two years, at least sixteen eLearning webinars focusing on orientation and mobility have been recorded and posted for AER members to access.
* In preparation for the upcoming AERI conference in St. Louis. over seventy submissions were reviewed, twice, by O&M Division members.
* Over twenty presentations focusing on orientation and mobility are included in the program for the AERI conference in St. Louis.
* A symposium day was developed to focus on environmental access and building bridges between professionals in parallel fields. Created a Barlow Day Symposium focusing on creating a bridge between O&M and transportation traffic engineering.
* Sessions related to Orientation and Mobility and the Environmental Access Committee have been presented by O&M Division members at IAER, NEAER, and SOMA.

Develop partnerships with other groups and organizations with an interest in promoting the O&M profession.

* + Ongoing collaboration with Orientation and Mobility Specialists Association (OMSA).
  + Ongoing collaboration with Transportation Research Board (TRB) Standing Committee members.
  + Collaboration with ACVREP through Subject Matter Experts (SME) and other avenues.
  + Ongoing collaboration as panel members for Transit Cooperative Research  Program (TCRP).

Educate non-O&M professionals (e.g., school administrators, Occupational Therapists) about the role and profession of the O&M specialist.

* Solicited OT and PT to be members of position papers teams.
* Provided available resources to support the Environmental Access Committee members in attending appropriate transportation organization meetings and advocating through associated committees
* Ongoing advocacy through membership on standing committees and  as friends of the committee.
* Ongoing advocacy as members of Transportation Cooperative Research Project panels.

Increased communication between the division and other groups and organizations

* Committee members reviewed a total of 23 applicants for the Donald Blasch Scholarship for 2021 and 2022
* Two recipients were selected in 2021, and two in 2022

**Environmental Access Committee Report**

**Meg Robertson**

The Environmental Access Committee is made up of members from around the US who have expressed interest in working on the committee. The goal of the committee is to help Division members in considering and responding to environmental access issues. We are ready to answer your questions and have responded to many requests over the past two years. You can email us at OandMEAC@gmail.com. Please let us know what you would like us to do and how we can be more helpful to those of you in the field.

Our committee and the field of O&M experienced an enormous loss, when Janet Barlow unexpectedly died in August 2021. Due to her leadership, we continue to honor her contribution to the field, connecting us with traffic engineers, planners and vendors who impact environmental access. Our first Janet Barlow Symposium takes place at the 2022 AER Conference.

Some EAC members, with the support of AER O&M division, Polara Enterprises, and have attended the Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board (TRB) in 2021 and 2022 to continue to raise issues related to travel by pedestrians who are blind or who have low vision and the innovations taking place in the transportation field.

Some of the activities in the past two years:

* The EAC Committee has organized the 1st Janet Barlow Symposium at the 2022 AER Conference. Many members of the EAC are also presenting at the conference.
* One of the last impacts that Janet had was to write up comments from the EAC to update the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).
* Members continue to provide assistance in response to questions from AER members about accessibility requirements for work zones/construction zones. Note that yellow tape and sawhorses are not acceptable as pedestrian barricades under Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).
* EAC members provided resources to obtain the audible devices for notification in construction zones.
* EAC members provided information and resources on APS installation and looked at plans and provided suggestions to the local O&M specialist about how to answer questions from the traffic engineer and designer.
* EAC members have presented on topics such as designing equitable infrastructures and other topics related to accessibility in the built environment.
* EAC members are members of the TRB Committees on Pedestrians, Work Zones, Multimodal Transit Operations, and Accessible Transportation and Mobility.
* EAC members are panelists on two National Cooperative Highway Research Projects overseeing research that will make recommendations on some traffic engineering designs that may impact individuals who are blind or who have low vision.
* Successful advocacy: due to Janet Barlow, and Gene Bourquin working with the Disability Rights Advocates’ (which represented the plaintiffs) on a lawsuit against the City of New York, regarding the lack of access to street crossings in not having accessible pedestrian signals. In December 2021, the Federal District 2 court judge, ruled that New York City (NYC DOT) had indeed violated the Americans with Disabilities Act, and that the Department of Transportation had not provided “meaningful access to those intersections and the pedestrian grid, in violation of the ADA”.

We always urge you to get involved in your local communities. There are a lot of new intersection designs being developed and proposed to give better access or safety for motorists or bicyclists. In particular, we are seeing a lot of protected bicycle lanes and floating bus stops. There are not clear guidelines for these new types of facilities and we all may need to brainstorm more and look at the designs to come up with good suggestions. Some designs that EAC members have seen have the potential to negatively impact the travel of individuals who are blind or who have low vision. Most intersection projects have a public meeting requirement and bringing up accessibility concerns early in the project can make a big difference in the final result. Don’t get intimidated. You may not be the expert on the intersection design, but you are the expert on how individuals who are blind travel and you can help make these designs better.

Your EAC is here to help you so contact us if you need some suggestions.

Meg Robertson, Chair of the EAC

**Archives Committee**

**Rod Kossick**

The Archives committee did not meet in 2020. Looking for information that may be helpful for the archives. Mike Hudson at APH will take more archive info. We need to be “archive activists”.

**Nominating and Elections Committee**

**Mark Carter**

Our committee put together a slate of nominees to fill district Director positions and leadership positions within the AER O&M division. Committee members Kim Zebehazy, Laura Park-Leach, Jill Brown and Kirstin Peahl met several times between November 2021 and April 2022. Joanne did an excellent job of guiding and supporting us as well as Raychel Callary and Chris Tabb. Elections led to the following results.

Margaret Winn (chair-elect)

Valery Kircher (secretary)

Megann Brousard (treasurer)

Angela Leavens (District 1)

Shay Utley (District 2)

Jennifer Duncan (District 3)

Eric Shaw (District 4)

Kevin McCormack (District 5)

Tessa McCarthy (District 6)

**Donald Blasch Scholarship**

**Margaret Winn**

AER’s O&M Division presents an annual scholarship competition for students enrolled in AER accredited O&M programs. The scholarship recognizes the vital contributions of the late Donald Blasch to the profession of O&M during his long tenure at Western Michigan University.

Individuals selected for the scholarship receive an unrestricted award of $1,000.00. Two scholarships are awarded each year (depending on availability of funds).

2021 there were 15 fully completed applications and 2 winners selected.

Tina Johnson, Portland State University

Lindsey Thompson, University of Pittsburgh

2022 there were 8 fully completed applications and 2 winners selected.

Annalee Folsom, Texas Tech University

Jill Peterson, Portland State University

Special thank you to Susan Langendonk, 2021 Blasch Scholarship Chair and

additionally to the team of judges who dedicated their time to making their selections.

Sincerely,

Margaret Winn

Chair, Blasch Scholarship Committee

**Website**

**Christopher Tabb**

Facebook now has over 1,200 followers

Twitter now has 393 followers

We share information for state chapters, those looking to advertise position openings, other professional groups (e.g. OMSA), articles of interest, research projects looking for participants, etc.

We have also continued to provide the newsletter electronically.

**Newsletter**

**Meg Robertson**

Since the last Orientation and Mobility Business Meeting, 6 editions of the newsletter have been emailed to the Division membership. Meg Robertson took over as newsletter editor from Susan Langendonk during the Fall of 2021.  Thanks to Susan for all her past work on the newsletter and all who have contributed to the Newsletter content.

We would like to get feedback from the membership on the continued usefulness of continuing a quarterly newsletter.  Please contact the Newsletter editor with your comments.

Is the newsletter still considered relevant to members or would more frequent blast emails or Facebook posts be preferred?

Respectfully submitted,

Meg Robertson COMS

Newsletter Editor

**Awards Committee**

**Nick Leon**

The O&M Awards reception will be at 6:15PM on Saturday.

This year, the O&M Awards Committee bestowed the following awards:

● The Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award to Susan Lagendonk

● The Janet Barlow Environmental Access Service Award to Janet Barlow,

posthumously (to be accepted by the Barlow family)

● The Lawrence E. Blaha Memorial Award to Dr. Laura Bozeman

Thank you to all members of the committee for the always challenging selection

process. In the coming year, the committee will work to create a more comprehensive

guide for future chairs outlining the awards ceremony preparations. Additionally, the

committee will be exploring an alternative to the presentation of the Sir Francis

Campbell Cane, which is now housed in the APH Museum for preservation purposes.

**Professional Issues Committee**

**Raychel Callary**

**AER O&M Division Position Paper 2020-2022 Revisions**

Writing teams were solicited over the past two years to revise position papers and to create new papers based on requests from division members. Drafts were sent to the membership for comment, comments were provided to the writing teams, and revised drafts were presented to the membership for a vote. Papers approved by the membership were presented to the AER board for a vote.

**Currently receiving comments:**

**New: Orientation and Mobility Specialists and the Provision of Travel Instruction to Individuals with Nonvisual Disabilities**

John Ford, colleagues

Provided to membership 6/28/22

**Revised: Orientation and Mobility Specialist Roles, Responsibilities, and Qualifications**

Jill Brown, Nick Casias, Kevin Hollinger, Brenda Naimy, Margaret Winn, Paul Olsen (consult)

Comments sent to team 6/29/22

**New: Remote Instruction for Orientation and Mobility (O&M)**

Bob Kozel, Amy Parker, Dona Sauerburger, Chris Tabb

Approved by O&M division **85% Yes 15% No**

**AER Board approval-unanimous 4/8/22**

**Revised: Use of Visual Occlusion in Orientation and Mobility Instruction**

Nora Griffin-Shirley, Laura Bozeman

Approved by O&M division members: 95% Yes  5% No

Passed by  AER Board March 4, 2022

**Revised: Teaching Street Crossing at Signalized Intersections**

Janet Barlow

Taken up by Gene Bourquin, Lukas Franck, Dona Sauerburger, Rob Wall-Emerson

Approved by O&M division members: 100% Yes

Passed by AER Board January 7, 2022

**Revised: University Personnel Preparation of Orientation and Mobility Specialists**

Dawn Anderson, Justin Kaiser, Bill Penrod

Approved by O&M division: 94.83% Yes 5.17% No

Passed by AER Board Nov. 5, 2021

**New: The Orientation and Mobility Specialist's Role in low vision driving**

Michael Byington, Anne Corn, Chuck Huss, Chris Tabb

Approved by O&M division: 94% Yes 6% No

Passed by AER Board Oct. 1, 2021

**Revised: Orientation and Mobility in Natural Environments**

Dona Sauerburger, George Zimmerman

Approved by O&M division: 96% Yes 4% No

Passed by AER Board Nov. 5, 2021

**New: Orientation & Mobility Assessments for Students in Education and Life Skills Settings**

Shannon Darst, Chris Tabb

Approved by O&M division: 98% Yes 2% No

Passed by AER Board Nov. 5, 2021

**Revised: Teaching street crossing at streets and lanes where there is no traffic control**

Dona Sauerburger, Rob Wall Emerson

Approved by O&M division: 96% Yes   4% No

Passed by AER Board Oct. 1, 2021

**Revised: Teaching O&M Through Individual and Group Lessons**

Judy Koch-Smith, Julie Hapeman, Amy Parker

Approved by O&M division: 96% Yes  4% No

Passed by AER Board Oct. 1, 2021

**Draft In Progress:**

**New: The Orientation and Mobility Specialist's Role in Support Canes (working title)**

Ryan Peterson (lead), Melanie Bush, Scott Crawford, Annie Riddering, Rajiv Pannikar (consult), Sandy Rosen (consult)

**On Hold:**

**New: Orientation and Mobility Assistants**

Waiting for Remote Instruction paper, ACVREP survey

For questions, please contact Raychel Callary: raychelcallary@gmail.com