

AER Division 7 Newsletter, July 2016

Time flies and two years have passed very quickly. It has been a busy and interesting time with a variety of challenges that kept me on my toes. I have very much enjoyed volunteering my time with AER Division 7 and feel very privileged to have served as Chair. The role has given me many opportunities to pull my resources together to contribute back to the community a lot of what I have gained from it. Thank you for all your support. I would encourage everyone to try volunteering. It is one of those things that keeps on giving and it is truly rewarding. I will now be rotating into the role of Past Chair and will continue volunteering for Division 7. Congratulations to Dr Kelly Lusk who will rotate from Chair Elect to take over as Chair of Division 7. Kelly is well known in the AER community and I know you will support her in leading Division 7. I thank Kim Zebehazy and Tessa McCarthy for their work as Secretary/Treasurer and Past Chair respectively and wish you well in your future endeavours. Congratulations and welcome to Dawn Adams as Secretary/Treasurer and Matthew Hogel as Chair Elect. Please continue reading for details on these appointments and Division 7 Awards.

1. Division 7 Awards – Bryan Gerritsen/Shireen Ali

During the 2016 International AER Conference in Johnsonville, Florida, awards were presented during the division's Awards Reception. Congratulations to awards recipients as follows

1.1 Meritorious Award for Outstanding Lifetime Contributions to Low Vision was presented to:

Robert (Bob) McGillivray, CLVT

Bob began work with the famous Carroll Center for the Blind in Boston, Massachusetts in 1970. For 46 years, he has helped persons with visual impairments at the Carroll Center to function more optimally by helping them with appropriate low vision devices, the latest technology, and by providing his skilful training. In 1978, he also became a consultant for the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, offering technology assessments and low vision care 2 days a week there, for persons served by their agency. He continues today at both centers, and has a reputation throughout the country for being one of the most skilled low vision therapists and a most caring provider in the field. He is often sought after to do presentations on low vision care, and is well known for his expertise in adaptive technology for persons with low vision. I have done many presentations with Bob over the years at AER International Conferences on "What's New in Low Vision?", and there is no one in the field who is better prepared to know that topic and to present on it in a knowledgeable and enthralling way. Bob lifts those around him— clients, family members, fellow professionals,

and all whom he touches. He is truly a deserving candidate for this prestigious Meritorious Award for Lifetime Contributions to Low Vision.

For many years, Bob produced and disseminated a publication entitled, "Aids and Appliances for the Blind." Each month he featured low vision devices ranging from simple non-optical aids to the latest high tech adaptive devices for visually impaired persons in the workplace or their home. I first became aware of Bob through this newsletter that he did, and which influenced not just clients and their families, but colleagues throughout the country. Bob also became known as the "go-to" expert in doing evaluations and making appropriate recommendations for low vision devices, adaptive technology, lighting, and contrast at work sites for persons who are visually impaired. Professionals became aware of his expertise, and Bob has been asked to speak and present on this topic at many conferences. His work and contributions with computer access for the blind and visually impaired, CCTV's, digital magnifiers, speech devices, and the myriad of other electronic devices and adaptive equipment is unequalled in our field

1.2 Award of Outstanding Contributions to Literature and/or Research in Low Vision was presented to:

Maureen Duffy

Maureen has been one of the key writers and contributors for VisionAware since its inception, which is perhaps the leading and most widely read media for persons with low vision. VisionAware is a partnership between the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) and Reader's Digest, and is intended for both visually impaired persons, their families, and for professionals in the field of low vision. It serves as a resource, a reporting of current research, and a source of hope and help. Maureen is the key writer and contributor to VisionAware, and also a main editor. She reminds me of Greg Goodrich (former recipient of this award for "Outstanding Contributions to Literature and/or Research") and Aries Arditi, in that she peruses research and countless articles in the field of low vision on a daily basis. Goodrich and Arditi have catalogued this for decades, and made them available online or in hard copy. Maureen, on the other hand, gleans pearls from the latest research, and writes phenomenal articles on www.VisionAware.org in a manner that can be easily understood and used by visually impaired persons and their families who may have little background, yet also be impactful and sufficiently in depth to be greatly beneficial to professionals in the field. She has a marvelous talent of doing a masterful job of reaching both audiences at the same time in the same article, and she does it week after week. Some recipients of this award have been given this honor for producing a single book or a single work. Maureen churns out tremendous contributions week after week, year after year. I feel that she is a tremendous candidate for this award for "Outstanding Contributions to Literature and/or Research in Low Vision."

To see some of her work, click onto www.VisionAware.org to read an article or follow a blog. However, she should also be recognized for her contributions to the *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness* (JVIB). She has been an Assistant Editor for JVIB for the last 3 editors, covering almost two decades. Her skill, her contributions, and her long hours in this voluntary position should not go unnoticed.

1.3 Award of Outstanding Contributions to the Low Vision Rehabilitation Division (#7) of AER was presented to: Shireen Ali

Shireen holds a Master of Business Administration in Project Management, and Post Graduate qualifications in Rehabilitation(Low Vision). She has worked in the field of low vision and blindness for nearly 30 years. Shireen is not only teaching people with vision impairment and blindness; she also has strong interests in curriculum and professional development, supervised Massey University Rehabilitation Practicum students and is currently teaching hands-on functional vision assessments to 5th year Optometry Students from Auckland University. Shireen has managed a Team of Rehabilitation Instructors and went on to manage a department importing and distributing adaptive equipment. Shireen's passion for her work has taken her to the Island Kingdom of Tonga, as a volunteer Rehabilitation Consultant, along with, Fatima Akehurst, a colleague, teaching Daily Living Skills alongside functional low vision assessments, and Blindness Awareness and Prevention. Shireen and Fatima helped set up the first Blind Association in Tonga. Shireen has worked as a Technical Teacher in Fiji, developing curriculum and training students, enabling them to find jobs when they left school. Shireen's last project has been delivering a programme on Diabetes Awareness and Prevention, in collaboration with Diabetes NZ and Fatima Akehurst, to Pacific people at risk. She continues to develop her knowledge and connections with the people of the Pacific.

Shireen stepped forward to help our division when few or no others would. And she has done so in a most notable and noble way. She has been true to her duties and office, in creating and dispensing Division newsletters. She has asked for input from members, and done a division survey to help determine needs and direction of the division. She has maintained key functions like division awards and a call for nominations of officers. And unlike any of her predecessors over the last 30 years, she has done so from another continent—our first Division Chair not from the United States. So hooray for our division, and deep thanks to Shireen.

With very little background in the workings of Division 7 leadership, Shireen has somehow figured out how to fulfil her duties and to do a great job of it. This has not been a silent two years. Instead, we have had active leadership and a helpful division Chair. It is symbolic that New Zealand is one day ahead of us in North America, and Shireen has tried to stay one step ahead of us in leading our division the past 2 years. Thank you, Shireen.

1.4 Award of Outstanding Contributions for Direct Services to Individuals with Low Vision was presented to:

Annie Riddering

Annie Riddering is both a certified Low Vision Therapist (CLVT), Occupational Therapist (OTR/L), and a certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS). She is the Director of Rehabilitation at the Henry Ford Center for Vision Rehabilitation and Research in Michigan, and has served with Lylas

Mogk, M.D. and her staff there for many years. She has provided model low vision services for countless patients with visual impairments. She has lectured with Dr. Mogk on various aspects of low vision services. Annie has also presented at AER International Conferences on topics such as eccentric viewing training and other aspects of low vision care.

Annie served in the Division 7 leadership for many years. She was the Secretary/Treasurer, she produced the Division 7 Newsletter, and digitalized, compiled, and helped archive decades of Division 7 Newsletters for our members.

Annie is in the process of completing her doctorate degree, while maintaining her clinic schedule with Dr. Mogk and her many other commitments.

2. Thanks and Farewell to.....

Secretary/Treasurer, Kim Zebehazy and Past Chair, Tessa McCarthy. Thank you Kim for all your help with managing Division 7 Budget over the last two years. Thank you Tessa for your services as Chair, and Past Chair, over the last 4 years. We wish Kim and Tessa all the best for their future endeavours. We thank Kelly Lusk for the work she did as Chair-Elect. Kelly will now be taking over as Chair of Division 7.

Congratulations and Welcome to.....

1.2 Kelly Lusk as Chair of Division 7

Kelly Lusk received her Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph.D. degrees from Vanderbilt University. Her bachelor's is in French and Secondary Education, and her master's and Ph.D. are in Special Education, with an emphasis in teaching children with visual impairments. She is also a Certified Low Vision Therapist (CLVT). Dr. Lusk is the Director of Education and Research for the Cincinnati Children's Vision Rehabilitation Program at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in the Division of Pediatric Ophthalmology, and an assistant professor in the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Cincinnati - College of Medicine. She is also adjunct faculty at The Ohio State University and the University of Kentucky, where she teaches courses in literary braille, Nemeth braille, and abacus. Dr. Lusk serves on multiple professional committees and advisory boards, and has successfully testified as an expert witness in helping to provide appropriate special education services for a child with a visual impairment. Dr. Lusk has had her research published in various journals, and has presented extensively on topics including pediatric low vision, optical devices, and dual media (print and braille). She has previously worked as a French teacher, early interventionist, and an itinerant teacher of students with visual impairments (both in a public school system and with a statewide program providing pediatric clinical low vision services). Dr. Lusk lives with her husband, Todd, and two daughters, Claire and Anne-Marie, in Florence, Kentucky.

1.3 Matthew Hogel - Chair Elect

Currently works at the VA as a Blind Rehab Outpatient Specialist and provides O&M, CLVT, VRT, and Assistive Tech services to veterans who are blind and visually impaired. Matt has EdS in Special Ed/Vision Studies and my ACVREP certifications in low vision and orientation and mobility- CLVT and COMS. Matt recently was trained by SecondSight for the Argus II post-op low vision therapy and by CentraSight for the telescope implant pre and post-op low vision therapy. Historically Matt has worked at schools for the blind, non-profits & private agencies, and for the VA. Matt understands the varying low vision and developmental needs from birth to death and is proficient with both adult learning theories versus student learning and IEP goals and requirements. Matt has been trained, and has credentials, as a CARF surveyor and surveys a number of low vision programs a year for their accreditations with CARF. With AER international Matt has worked on a number of projects related to licensure and Medicaid reimbursement for services.

1.4 Dawn Adams – Secretary/Treasurer

For the past ten years to present Dawn has been an Education Specialist for Region 8 Education Service Center in Pittsburg, TX. In this capacity Dawn is responsible for providing training and technical assistance to teachers of the visually impaired and O&M Specialists in the region.

Dawn also have oversight of a program budget comprised of state and federal funds. Previously, Dawn worked as a TVI and COMS serving a wide range of children with visual impairments.

From 2005-2008 Dawn served on the Board of Directors for the Texas Chapter of AER in the roles of President-Elect, President, and Past President.

Low Vision is of primary interest to Dawn because she has low vision. It has literally been her lifework both personally and professionally to learn as much as she could about this field and to provide low vision services and training to those in her spheres of influence.

Shireen Ali

Past Chair

Division 7

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