



## **AER Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT) Division**

<http://vrt.aerbvi.org>

**VRT News**  
**Winter, 2016**

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### **MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR** **Ian Shadrick, CVRT, CRC**

Greetings,

I hope that the New Year is off to a wonderful start for each and every one of you. I also hope you were able to enjoy the holiday season, not to mention a bit of time to rejuvenate and recharge. 2016 promises to be an exciting new year as we look toward the upcoming international conference in Florida this summer. Please be watching for more details both from the division and the international office.

We want to thank those of you who were able to attend the 2015 conference on Vision Loss in Older Adults and Veterans held in Norfolk, VA November 4-6. We would also like to thank all of you who served on committees or as presenters for the conference. Below are a few of the highlights from the conference and an overall wrap-up (provided via Greg Goodrich conference chair).

The conference was attended by 144 individuals and offered an outstanding program of over 50 presentation, exhibitors, posters, and keynote speakers (including the division's own BJ LeJeune). The conference had a number of VRT specific or related presentations, with a high division showing in the presenter pool. The conference provided valuable information and continuing education credits to attendees. Unfortunately limitations on travel funding by state and federal agencies contributed to the low turnout.

As we look forward to new beginnings for the year, I hope that you will consider taking an active role in the division, whether that be running for an officer position, working on a committee, serving as a peer reviewer for the upcoming conference, or contributing your talents in yet another way.

With that in mind, I would encourage anyone who may be interested in one of these areas to please step forward, and should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me. We have some exciting events planned for the division throughout the year, including the international conference; and we welcome your involvement and hope to hear from you! I would also encourage everyone to reach out to those in the field or who may be new to the field that are not division members, and talk to them about the advantages of joining.

I wish each of you the very best, and a healthy, happy, and prosperous New Year!  
Warmest regards,

Ian Shadrick M.A., M.A., CVRT, CRC  
VRT Division Chair

### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

- February 26, 2016 Deadline for nominations for Division officers
- March, 15, 2016 Deadline for articles for next issue of VRT News-send articles to Jennifer Ottowitz  
[jennifer@hadley.edu](mailto:jennifer@hadley.edu)
- April 1, 2016 Deadline for nominations for Division awards
- April 11-17, 2016 VRT Appreciation Week-Please note that the dates have changed from June to April to help celebrate the birthdate of Annie Sullivan. Stay tuned for future communications regarding this week of celebration.
- July 20-24, 2016 AER International Conference, Jacksonville FL

For more information visit  
<http://aerbvi.org/>

### **Books Delivered to Your Door Bob Kozel, CVRT, CLVT, COMS**

Imagine if someone from the Library of Congress rang your doorbell and personally delivering a Talking Book to your home. Impossible? Maybe today, but it was a service that once existed.

The Reading Room for the Blind located at the Library of Congress came into existence with the expansion of the Library of Congress in 1897. In that era the Library of Congress loaned tactual books to the greater DC area. Other libraries around the country also loaned tactual books. A blind individual in Philadelphia would borrow books from the Philadelphia Public Library. There were lending libraries throughout the country.

In 1913 Congress directed American Printing House, APH, to provide embossed books to lending libraries. At this time there were multiple tactual systems being use. The two main types were Braille and New York Point. In 1931 Congress provided a separate appropriation for a Lending Library – today’s National Library Service, NLS, operated by the Library of Congress.

When we think of Talking Books and other products from NLS, we think about books delivered by mail. In 1904 Congress initiated Free Matter for the Blind (see below) to assist lending libraries in sending tactual books to blind users and the return of these books. This was the first of the Free Matter laws enacted. There were expansions and updates to the law throughout the intervening years. One of these expansions included the coverage of Bibles to be sent by non-governmental agencies. In 1970 the Free Matter Law was updated to the law that most of us are familiar with, covering oversize correspondence, Talking Books, etc. There have been tweaks to the rules in the intervening years. This material is not really sent for free. The Post Office is tasked with estimating the cost of Free Matter and billing Congress for reimbursement. This is done yearly.

Mail has not been the only method of delivering books from the Library of Congress. In the January 1908 edition of Outlook for the Blind page 139-140, Ms. Etta Josselyn Giffin, Assistant-In-Charge, submitted an article entitled “Reading Room for the Blind, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.”

Ms. Giffin provides details of the services provided. She included the description of transcribers working for pay creating books in New York Point and Braille. One of unique services provided by the Reading Room was the door to door delivery and retrieval of transcribed books by Library messengers in the D.C. area. Talk about service!!!

A brief history of Free Matter for the Blind is included below, it is reformatted and is an excerpt, the original source (and full document) is the Federal Registry at the following website:

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2002-07-08/html/02-16908.htm>

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Congress established the free matter privilege in 1904 to provide reading materials for the blind when sent by public institutions and public libraries as a loan and when returned by the blind readers to those institutions (Ch. 1612, 33 Stat. 313, Public Law No. 171). In 1931, the National-Books-for-the-Blind program was established under the auspices of the Library of Congress to provide books for use by adult residents of the United States, “including the several States, Territories, insular possessions, and the District of Columbia.” (Ch. 400, 46 Stat. 1487, Public Law No. 787). The Library of Congress issued standards for making arrangements for circulation of books (using the free matter privilege) to and from blind users through libraries designated as local or regional centers.

In 1966, Congress expanded the National Books-for-the-Blind program to include other physically handicapped persons (Public Law 89-522, 2 U.S.C. 135a and 135b). Congress expanded the program to meet the reading needs of physically handicapped persons who cannot read or use conventional printed books because of impaired eyesight or other factors that make these persons physically unable to manipulate these materials. Certification by competent authority of individuals for eligibility to participate in the program was (and remains today) pursuant to regulations prescribed by the Library of Congress. From this time on, the program became known as the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (see 36 CFR 701.10).

Consistent with the intent of Congress embodied in the Act that created the Library of Congress National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, the Postal Reorganization Act (39 U.S.C. 3403(a)(1)) expanded the free matter privilege to include mail for the use of the blind or other persons who cannot use or read conventionally printed material because of a physical impairment. The persons must be certified by competent authority in accordance with the regulations established by the Library of Congress. Under the current law, Congress reimburses the Postal Service for free matter mailings (39 U.S.C. 2401(c)). Accordingly, the Postal Service is clarifying its eligibility standards for the free matter privilege to incorporate, as closely as practicable, the standards devised by the Library of Congress for establishing eligibility and certification for participation in the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (see 36 CFR. 701.10).

## **VRT Division Awards--Seeking Nominations**

At the Biennial International Conference, the Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT) Division presents the following awards: The Bruce McKenzie Award for lifetime achievement; The Elizabeth Lennon Award for Meritorious Achievement; The Alice Raftary Rising Star Award to recognize talented teachers who are new to their careers; and the Susan & Paul Ponchillia Publication Award for VRT division members who have written and published work regarding topics related to vision rehabilitation therapy.

### **\*The Bruce McKenzie Award for Lifetime Achievement**

#### **Purpose:**

The Bruce McKenzie award is a biennial award established by the VRT Division to honor Bruce McKenzie for his pioneering leadership in the field of rehabilitation teaching (vision rehabilitation therapy). It is the Division's highest award, presented to an exemplary individual for outstanding contributions to the field of rehabilitation teaching and independent living services. It is the Division's Lifetime Achievement Award.

**Criteria:**

- A nominee shall be an active or retired vision rehabilitation therapist/vision rehabilitation therapy supervisor.
- A nominee must have 10 years or more of service in the field of vision rehabilitation therapy.
- A nominee shall have exceptional leadership qualities.
- The uniqueness of a nominee's contribution to the field shall be given due consideration.
- A nominee's contribution shall have been national or international in scope.
- A nominee shall be a member of the Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Division.

**Past Bruce McKenzie Award Recipients:**

**1984** Linda Olson, AZ  
**1986** Scott Oliver, NY  
**1988** Julia Richardson, AL  
**1990** Susan Ponchillia, MI; Paul Ponchillia, MI  
**1992** David Search, MI  
**1994** Patricia Bussen Smith, AR  
**1996** Nancy Paskin, NY  
**1998** Don Golembiewski, WI; Anne Yeadon, NY  
**2000** Lynda Jones, FL  
**2002** Maureen Duffy, PA  
**2004** Barbara Hunt, IL; Lisa-Anne Mowerson, PA  
**2006** Margaret E. Cleary, MA  
**2008** Alvin Roberts, IL  
**2010** **B.J. LeJeune, MS**  
**2012** **Lenore Dillon, AL**  
**2014** **George Abbott, IL**

**\*The Elizabeth Lennon Award for Meritorious Achievement**

This award was named for Elizabeth Lennon in 2006 to recognize her dedication and pioneering work in preparing university professionals and supporting community programs for seniors and people with disabilities.

**Purpose:**

The award shall be presented to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the profession of Vision Rehabilitation Therapy, Rehabilitation Teaching, general rehabilitation, or community affairs. Such contributions may be in the form of published materials, presentations, leadership experiences, or work history.

**Criteria:**

- A nominee shall be active in or retired from the field of vision rehabilitation therapy.

- A nominee should demonstrate outstanding professionalism and service to the rehabilitation field.
- The uniqueness of a nominee's contribution to the field shall be given due consideration.
- A nominee shall be a member of AER.

**Past Certificate of Recognition/Meritorious Achievement Award Recipients:**

**1984** Patricia Bussen Smith; William Farrell; Thomas Hansen; Michael Nelipovich; Paul Ponchillia; Alvin Roberts

**1986** Juliet Bindt Esterly; Sherrie Raymond; Ruth Kaarlela (special award)

**1988** Beatrice David; Dolores Fricke; Judy Matsuoka; David Search

**1990** Michelle Frazier; Lynne Luxton; Ramona Sangalli; JoAnn Search

**1992** Patty Arnold; Lenore Dillon; Michael Nelipovich

**1994** Nancy Paskin

**1996** Cheryl Richesin

**1998** Pamela Cory; Maureen Duffy; Gretchen Good

**2000** Antonina Adamowicz-Hummel

**2002** Barbara Hunt; Diane Weiss

**2004** Debra Solko-McKay

**2006** Jennifer Ottowitz

**2008** Roberta McCall

**2010** Susan Dalton; Patricia Smith

2012 Marybeth Harrison

2014 John McMahan

**\*The Alice Raftary Rising Star Award**

This award was named for Alice Raftary in 2006 due to her mentoring and support of many new professionals to this field and her years of creative and dedicated work. She is a Living Legend and her story can be found in the APH Hall of Fame.

**Purpose:**

The award shall be presented to an individual who demonstrates potential for exceptional leadership and is expected to provide a unique and lasting contribution to the field of Vision Rehabilitation Therapy.

**Criteria:**

- A nominee shall be an ACREVP-certified vision rehabilitation therapist.
- A nominee should have no more than three years of VRT professional service.
- A nominee should demonstrate outstanding professionalism and service to the field.

- A nominee shall be a member of the VRT Division

### **Past Rising Star Award Recipients:**

**2006** Sarah Heinrich  
2008 Bernadette Anderson  
**2010 Ian Shadrick**  
2012 Cammy Moraros  
2014 Joe Jorgenson

### **\*The Susan and Paul Ponchillia VRT Publication Award**

This award was established in 2008 to honor VRT Division members who have written and published for the benefit of the field and the enhancement of our knowledge base.

#### **Purpose:**

The VRT Division is offering a Publication Award to recognize a VRT Division member whose publication contributes highly to the field of Vision Rehabilitation Therapy. Submissions may include, but are not limited to, journal articles, books, chapters of books, and development of or significant contributions to websites. This award carries a \$250 honorarium to further encourage VRT Division members to write and publish.

#### **Criteria:**

Author(s) must be a member(s) of the VRT Division.  
The publication should be within the current biennium (July 2014—June2016)  
The publication submitted should contribute to the rehabilitation field and enhance our knowledge base.

### **Past VRT Publication Award Recipients:**

**2008** Debra Solko-McKay  
**2010** Vision Aware  
2012 Margaret Cleary  
2014 John McMahon; Kristy Swallow

### **Nominating Procedures:**

- All nominations should include biographical information, education and training, employment history, leadership qualities, contributions, achievements and professional memberships.
- All nominations must be submitted and seconded in writing.
- If possible, a copy of the nominee's curriculum vitae should be included.

### **Nominating Procedure for Publications Award:**

- Nominations may be submitted by the author or by another member of the Division.

- A copy of the publication must be submitted to the Awards Committee. Only publications costing over \$25 will be returned, please indicate as such with your submission.
- If possible, a copy of the author's curriculum vitae should be included.
- The Division Awards Committee shall select the award recipient and the division of the honorarium, if necessary.
- Cover letter must include: Author's name and Contact Information; Nominator's name and contact information (if different than author); A Brief Summary of the Publication (no more than 2 paragraphs) of the significance of the publication; Publication date(s)/ Website date(s); and Publication title and credits.

Please send all nominations to Susan Dalton by April 1, 2016. Send nominations to dalton.transvision@gmail.com

or mail to

Susan Dalton  
20009 Rte. 176

**Marengo, IL 60152**

### **Nominations for VRT Division Officers: We Need Your Help**

This is the time of year when we begin planning for the future of the VRT Division. We are seeking nominations to become an officer of the Division. Three offices need to be filled for our next biennial 2016-2018.

#### **\*Chair**

Due to the current vacancy in the Chair-elect position, we are seeking someone to fill the position of Chair for the 2016-2018 term. The role of the Chair includes presiding over all VRT Division Board and business meetings as well as appointing Division committee members, working with all Division committees to develop goals and a work plan for the biennial, serving on the Council of Division Chairpersons and serving as Chair of the marketing committee. After the two-year term, the Chair will assume the two-year role of Past Chair along with the responsibilities outlined for this position in the Division's Policies & Procedures Manual.

#### **\*Chair-Elect:**

This person will serve the Division in various aspects of leadership over 6 years.

For the first 2 years the Chairperson-Elect shall perform the duties of Chairperson in case of the Chairperson's absence or inability to serve, serves on the Council of Division Chairpersons and chairs the Division Program Committee, Awards Committee and In-service Committee.

In the next 2 years, the Chairperson-Elect becomes the Chair of the Division.

For the final 2 years, they will be the Past-Chair.

A person who is the Chair-elect must be a voting member in good standing of the VRT



Division and AER.

\*Secretary-Treasurer:

The Secretary-Treasurer position is a 2-year term position.

The Secretary-Treasurer shall keep minutes of Division business meetings, maintain official records and policies, maintain a current membership list, and manage Division finances in accordance with procedures hereinafter set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws or otherwise mandated by AER, and perform all other duties incidental to the Office of Secretary-Treasurer.

A person who is the Secretary-Treasurer must be a voting member in good standing of the VRT Division and AER.

**WE NEED to find strong leadership to help guide us in our efforts over the next few years. PLEASE CONSIDER SHARING your energy, enthusiasm, dedication and leadership skills with us.**

Nominate yourself or a worthy colleague. Please speak to them first and receive their permission before nominating them.

Please send the name of the nominee, their contact information, the position for which you are nominating them and your contact information as the nominator to Jennifer Ottowitz at  
jennifer@hadley.edu

Nominations should be submitted no later than February 26, 2016. Please also contact Jennifer with any questions you may have.

### **Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Division Board**

Contact information

Chair: Ian Shadrack, CVRT, CRC

E-mail: [ianshadrick@hadley.edu](mailto:ianshadrick@hadley.edu)

Secretary/Treasurer: Susan Dalton, CVRT

Email: [dalton.transvision@gmail.com](mailto:dalton.transvision@gmail.com)

Past Chair: Jennifer Ottowitz, CVRT

Newsletter Editor

E-mail: [jennifer@hadley.edu](mailto:jennifer@hadley.edu)

Please let me know of any questions, concerns, corrections, or comments that you have regarding the VRT newsletter. I also welcome any articles or

ideas for articles that you may have. Best wishes for a new year filled with much happiness, good fortune and many exciting opportunities!