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## From the Driver's Seat

Despite the weather, spring is on the way. Trees are budding, birds are returning, and now is the busiest part of our jobs. Trying to get materials for state testing, IEP meetings and getting summer information out to families keeps us on our toes.

This is also our biennium year in which AER will have its international conference. This year it will be held in Jacksonville, Florida, from July 20-24, 2016. There are many exciting presentations coming. Our profession is growing and changing. Come and be a part of it. This is also the time of year we begin to think about growing our division by adding new officers. It has been such fun being part of a great group of people. I have learned much from attending the AER board meetings and from what you all have had to say. We are the second largest division (behind Orientation and Mobility). Please consider running for office to continue this vibrant division. We will be having a face-to-face division business meeting while at Jacksonville. I would love to see you there. Watch for our meeting time to be posted in the conference schedule.

Y'all take care of yourselves,  
Jill

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## **The Dr. Is In** **By Dr. Erick A. Hartman OD**

Between August 14 and September 10, 2015, I had the amazing opportunity to serve with LDS Charities (the 'humanitarian department' of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, the Mormons), on board US Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort, as an

NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) volunteer. The Navy's mission to countries of the Caribbean, Central and Northern South America lasted six months, and I had the privilege of serving for four weeks in the Dominican Republic and Honduras. I later learned that I was the only volunteer optometrist on the entire mission!

Four active duty Navy Optometrists served the entire mission, although one was part of the hospital administration team and did not see much 'action' out in the onshore clinics.

The USNS Comfort is a 950 ft converted oil tanker. It is a companion ship, and nearly identical, to the USNS Mercy (which happens to be in dry-dock down in Portland getting repairs and refitting for its next mission to Southeast Asia.) When we signed up, we were told, "This is not a cruise!" And, boy were they right! As an example, from my sleeping berth to the breakfast table in the chow hall I climbed 81 steps every morning! (There is only one elevator on the ship, used to bring pre-selected patients on board for surgery).

A typical clinic day started with my alarm set as early as 5:00 am! After getting dressed and climbing those 81 stairs, I had breakfast, and 'mustered' with others going ashore, for roll call, and then waited until the tender was ready to board. In both ports, we were anchored out far enough where a 15 minute boat ride was required to get to shore.

In each country the Navy set up two medical sites. One relatively close to our landing dock, the other a 20-40 minute bus ride to more remote areas. Local military personnel were assigned as armed guards on each bus ride! And occasionally an armed military escort also led and/or followed our buses. Once all of us reached a



clinic site, we (volunteers and Navy personnel) met together for a morning briefing. We learned which medical specialties were with us that day, for potential referral resources. A partial list of medical specialists available at each screening site included physicians of many specialties, dentists, dental techs, audiologists, physical therapists,



pharmacists, nurses, optometrists, radiology techs, nurse practitioners, etc. There was even a small contingency of veterinary techs that performed immunizations and minor procedures on local farm animals and pets. Surgeons and their support staff stayed on board to provide surgical services for people they had pre-screened on the first day each clinic was set up.

The optometry clinics were always in high demand. At the end of my time on board, I was told that the number of patients I personally attended to was 610. As I recall, the total number of patients seen during the entire naval mission neared 22,000!

A seemingly never-ending stream of patients came to the eye clinics! They were in line long before we arrived in the morning, (some sharing that they had arrived the previous night!), and many had to be turned away near the end of each day, when it was time to close down and return to the ship! I felt guilty taking lunch breaks, because the demand was so high!

I have to say that my first day of clinic, in the Dominican Republic, was depressing! I do not speak Spanish, so needed to rely on an interpreter (which slowed me down). We were very limited in what we could do, or provide for each patient. The Navy supplied us with hundreds of pre-made eyeglasses (like you see on the rack at the drugstore or supermarket) for nearsighted and farsighted



prescriptions. I was taught quickly by the chief naval optometrist, that our goal was not necessarily to help people see 20/20, but instead to help them see 20/'better'. If they left our clinics seeing better than when they walked in, we felt successful!



What the Navy did not know was that they were getting a low vision specialist in me! As we encountered many, many people who had cataracts, but who could not afford, or did not have the opportunity for surgery, I used my low vision skills to help them at least read better. In each clinic I attended, we quickly ran out of +10, +12, and higher, reading glasses!

One of the most common complaints was, "Quiero leer mi Biblia!" (I want to read

my Bible!) Those high powered reading glasses went fast when I heard that! A memorable moment was when an elderly woman with significant cataracts had just that wish, that she would be able to read her Bible again. When I put the appropriate lens in front of her, she looked at the reading card and I heard, "PERFECTO!" I saw a huge smile cross her face. I knew I was in the right place, doing some good for the world!

Clinic days usually ended at 4:00pm, so that we could clean up the clinic site and get back to the ship before dark. Darkness arrives early in the tropics! Once arriving there, getting cleaned up, having dinner, doing a little journal writing, then preparing for the next day, and bed was about all we had time for!

I had an opportunity in each country to participate in a "COMREL" activity, (Navy speak for community relations). This was an opportunity for Navy personnel to spread goodwill by doing community service. In the Dominican Republic, I helped with a baseball clinic with students from a local elementary school at the San Diego Padres' beautiful training camp compound.

Young men, ages 16 - 22, are recruited from all over the country to live there for 10 months out of the year. They get a top-notch education, and 10% of them make it to the major leagues in the United States. In Honduras we visited a special needs school where we played games with the kids. Two wheelchairs were donated to the school along with many pairs of 'Croc' style shoes.

This mission project was an awesome time in my life to serve others, by helping them see a little better, and also to reflect on the bounty and blessings in my own life!



**Itinerant teachers of students with visual impairments: JVIB needs your expertise!**

The *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness* welcomes the participation of practicing professionals in developing the literature of your field. As the Associate Editor for Practice, I am seeking ways to publish more articles that appeal to teachers of students of visual impairment. As itinerant teachers, you spend much of your time on the road, and several weeks may pass before you see another professional in visual impairment. However, many of your ideas and strategies could be valuable to colleagues who are far away.

There are two ways you can help in the publication of experiences that would be of interest to other itinerant teachers.

**1. Serve as a peer reviewer for *Practice Perspectives* and *Practice Reports*:** Each new article that is submitted must be read by two people who are practicing professionals. As a peer reviewer, you would receive an email from me with the title of the article that has been submitted—you will not know who the author is. You will also be asked to answer seven questions about the article, including one that asks whether you think it is a worthwhile article for professionals. I will use your comments and those of another professional to make a decision about how the article can be improved and whether it should be published. I try not to ask peer reviewers to review more than once a year.

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN OCCASIONALLY SERVING AS A PEER REVIEWER, please email me at [jerin@u.arizona.edu](mailto:jerin@u.arizona.edu) . Let me know your name and your areas of special expertise (e.g., students with multiple disabilities, braille, music, social skills). I will add your name to the list of reviewers so that I can contact you if I receive an article that requires your special expertise.**

**2. Become a practice author:** If you have a teaching strategy that worked or a unique idea for instruction, please consider writing a practice article. We have had some authors who are itinerant teachers in the past, and we would like to receive more articles about itinerant

experiences. Have you developed a unique way of communicating with team members, a strategy for teaching a daily living skill that the classroom team implemented consistently, or a motivating approach to teach some braille to classmates of a braille-reading student? Original solutions to day-to-day problems may be helpful to others, and they may be even more effective if you can involve a classroom teacher or paraprofessional as a co-author.

Here are several links that will help you develop an article.

Examples of past articles:

<http://www.afb.org/info/publications/jvib/practice-perspectives/125>

Tips for developing articles:

<http://www.afb.org/info/publications/jvib/for-jvib-authors/guidelines-for-new-jvib-authors/1235>

Guidelines for contributors:

<http://www.afb.org/info/publications/jvib/for-jvib-authors/guidelines-for-contributors/1235> This section describes the requirements for different articles.

*Practice Perspectives* are about strategies for instruction, and they should include a specific description of what you did and what evidence of success you had. They are from 500-2000 words long.

*Practice Reports* may include data or systematic, focused investigation of a topic. They may be 1,000 to 2,500 words in length.

**If you'd like to volunteer as a peer reviewer**, please email me at [jerin@u.arizona.edu](mailto:jerin@u.arizona.edu) and let me know your areas of expertise and your email address. **If you want to become an author** and have an idea for an article, please email me at [jerin@u.arizona.edu](mailto:jerin@u.arizona.edu) and tell me about your idea. I am glad to give feedback by phone or email while you are preparing your article. Your experiences and ideas can enrich the educational experiences of students who live thousands of miles away!

Jane N. Erin, PhD  
Associate Editor for Practice  
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[jerin@u.arizona.edu](mailto:jerin@u.arizona.edu)



Itinerant Personnel Division Needs **YOU**  
We are looking for people to run for the  
following offices:

**Chair-Elect  
Secretary**

If you are interested, please send a  
short bio to:  
[Jillbrown1@mac.com](mailto:Jillbrown1@mac.com)

### **Tech Bytes:**

The MVKC's...Most Valuable Key Commands  
Kina Blackburn

As Teachers of the Visually Impaired, we all know how important technology has become for our students. The variety of technology available to our students has dramatically increased in the last few years. We are all trying to learn new technology and how to incorporate it in the classroom. However, with all of the other demands of the job, it has become quite difficult to know the ins and outs of all of that technology. The good news is we still have our faithful Key Commands to navigate PC's. There have been some minor changes, but for the most part our basic key commands have remained the same. Below is a list of some of my favorites that my students also use all of the time! Remember, some of this will even work with a Mac, just use the command key instead of the control key.

1. ALT + Tab – Switches between open windows...by far my favorite key command.
2. Windows + M – Takes you to your desktop
3. Alt + F4 – Closes the window
4. Control + S – Don't forget to do this before you Alt + F4, this will save your work!
5. Control + O – Opens in almost any program, you can even use this when surfing the web to open a specific website.
6. Formatting Controls are always helpful in Microsoft :

- a. Control + b – Bold
  - b. Control + u – Underline
  - c. Control + i – Italic
  - d. Control + [ - Decreases font size
  - e. Control + ] – Increases font size
  - f. Control + e – Centers alignment
  - g. Control + l – Left alignment
  - h. Control + r – right alignment
  - i. Tab – Indent
  - j. Control + D – Opens the font, size, type, etc., for formatting changes
7. Tab and Shift keys move you through many programs. Tab moves you forward and shift + tab moves you backwards. This is awesome for email, Internet, forms or controlling the format on a list in Word.
  8. Home – Takes you to the beginning of a line and control + home takes you to the top of a document
  9. End – End takes you to the end of a line or control + end will take you to the end of the document.
  10. Control + → - Moves you word by word forward through the document
  11. Control + ← - Moves you word by word backwards through the document
  12. High Contrast – To change your computer to high contrast Alt + Shift + Print Screen is quick and easy.
  13. Alt + Shift + d – automatically inserts the date, you can choose how you'd like it displayed
  14. Control + a – Selects all in the document
  15. Control + c – Copies whatever is selected
  16. Control + v – Pastes from the clipboard what was copied
  17. Control + p - Prints your work
  18. Control + f - Opens the find box in many programs
  19. Control + y – When you want to redo the last action performed
  20. And just remember if you or your student presses the wrong key you can always “UNDO” with Control + z



## Cool "Sitings"



For those who enjoy surfing the Internet, the following websites are interesting to visit. This is not an endorsement, just places I have visited or like to frequent. Please e-mail me with fun places you have found so that I can share with everyone at: [eleagan@gmail.com](mailto:eleagan@gmail.com)

1. <https://aerbvi.org> AERBVI's website is now up and running. It is totally accessible for non-visual users. Look for the Itinerant Personnel Division's website for upcoming events and future newsletters.
2. <http://www.livebinders.com/welcome/home> This website displays public "eportfolios" of information. In the search box type in "visual impairment" to see many resources at your fingertips.
3. <http://www.abilitynetwork.org/links.html> This website is from Missouri early intervention has various links for educators and families to navigate the world of special education

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## An App a Day Keeps the Lessons Strong

Many in the field are using **iPads** when working with students. These apps are a few that have come to my attention from listservs, coworkers, or presentations. If you know of some apps you'd like to share, please email me at [eleagan@gmail.com](mailto:eleagan@gmail.com)

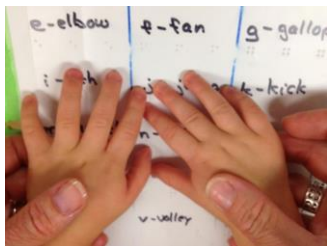


1. **Mebop**: There are several versions of this app featuring black background with bright colored shapes. You can control the amount displayed. There are sounds to correlate to touch. Nice for kids with CVI. There are some "lite" versions available. Cost is \$4.99 each or \$10.97 for a bundle.
2. **First Focus**: a High contrast app using colors black, yellow and white to promote visual attention. Cost \$1.99
3. **Learning to Read with Byron – Visual Tracking**: This app helps children to visually search for letters within words. There is a free version. Full version is \$1.99
4. **Letter Cross Tracking**: This app works with visual tracking skills, visual discrimination skills and spatial relationship skills. Initial app is free with an in-app purchase offered
5. **Ebenezer School for the Blind and Visually Impaired**: There are several apps designed for students with low vision to work on matching same, finding the one

that is different and finding a target amongst a complex background. Apps are free.

### **GITWL Showcase Session**

Below is an excerpt from the final showcase presentation by Anna Swenson at the Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference in Albuquerque, NM, in November, 2015. The first part of the presentation, entitled "Our Teacher-Student Partnerships: A Literary Celebration," focused on the character traits of teachers of students with visual impairments.



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Have you ever wondered what goes through people's minds when they meet us for the first time and ask about our work?

Well, the answer is right here – on the back of this T-shirt designed by Sheila Amato that I picked up at a conference years ago.

#### **Top Ten Things Said to Professionals Who Work with Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired**

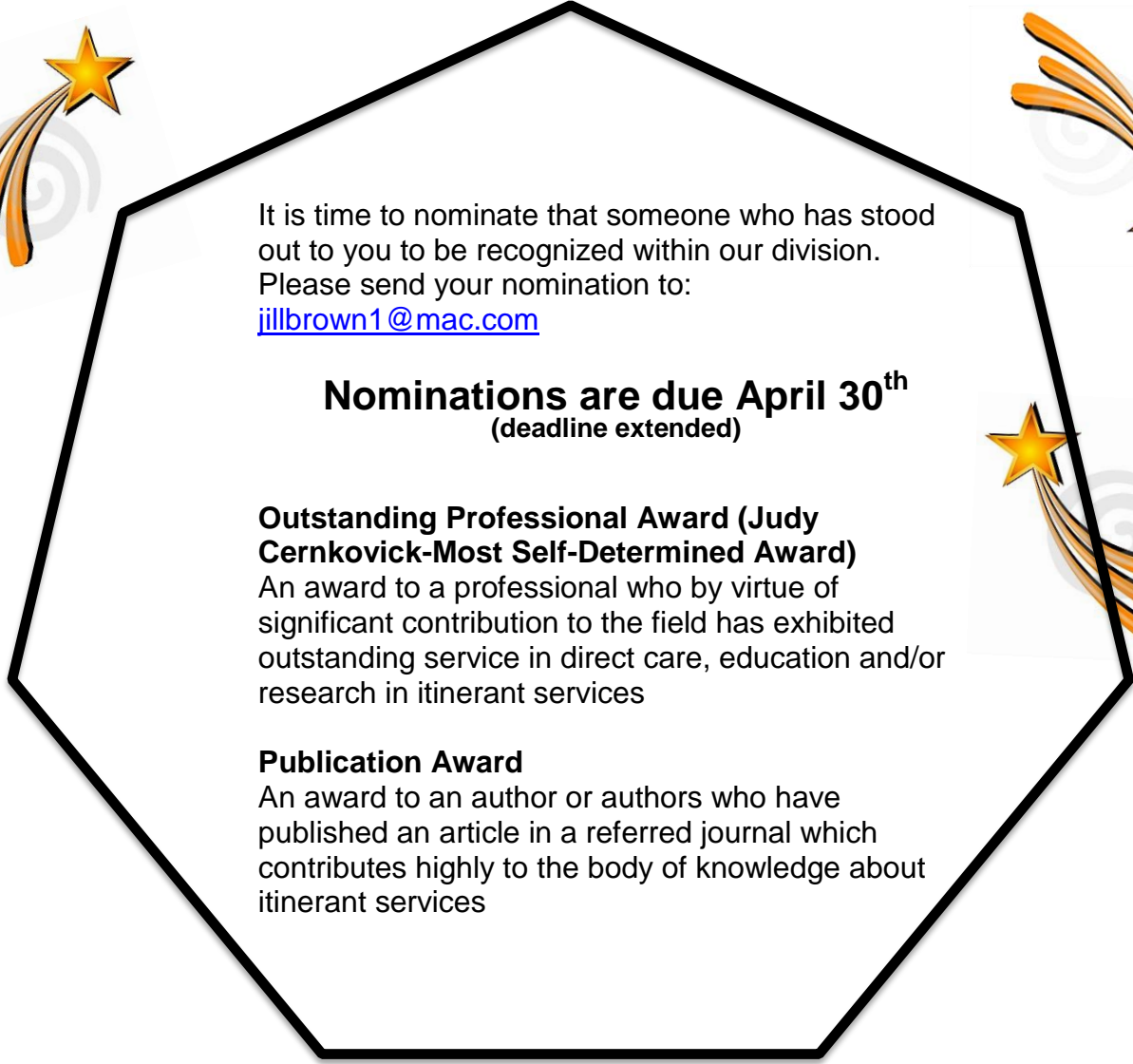
10. I don't understand how those little dots could say anything; they just look like bumps to me.
9. I forgot to give this to you, but we need it in braille today.
8. How does the dog know when to cross the street?
7. The Miracle Worker always makes me cry.
6. What would he or she like to have?
5. You have *how many* students? – AND a teaching assistant, too!
4. My worst fear is of going blind.
3. It must be sooo rewarding!
2. Do you know sign language?
1. You must be so patient!

The bottom line is that few people have any idea of what we do. The joy of a conference like this one is that we all speak the same language – we're all "insiders." We don't have to explain ourselves to anyone or deal with misconceptions. We can ask others for advice on teaching a specific concept or dealing with a challenging situation and get right to the heart of the matter. It's a comfortable, therapeutic, and reaffirming place to be.

So, in an ideal world, what would we like others to understand about us? Since this is a literacy conference, let's begin with a discussion of some of our most important character traits.

- First, we are **versatile and flexible**. We work with students of all ages and abilities and with the full spectrum of vision loss. At 9:00 we're using a lightbox with a preschooler who has CVI and multiple disabilities and two hours later we're teaching braille chemistry symbols to a high school student. We walk into class with a lesson all ready to go, and discover that the students are doing a special lesson on computer programming – quick, put those lesson plans on hold, scramble, and adapt the new content, all in a few minutes' time ... We can do it!
- We are **great communicators**, interacting with a dizzying array of other people during the day: classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, OTs, PTs, Speech and Language therapists, music, art, & PE teachers, guidance counselors & librarians, O&M specialists, psychologists, social workers, principals, classmates, & families – multiplied by the number of schools we serve, if we are itinerants. It's like juggling dozens of balls in the air – and, heaven help us if we miss one and it rolls into a corner! We are adept at dealing with a wide variety of personalities using tact, diplomacy, and empathy as we advocate for the needs of our students.
- We are **outside-of-the-box thinkers**. We pride ourselves on our ability to make any subject or activity accessible to our students. At the last international AER conference, I went to an interesting presentation by Dr. Lilian Rankel and Marilyn Winograd on teaching science concepts to elementary-aged students. Need a hands-on model of the digestive system to illustrate the process of peristalses? They suggest a plastic bag, a mashed-up ripe banana, and the footless leg of a nylon stocking – and I leave the rest to your imagination.
- We are **consumers, collectors, and scavengers** of anything artsy/craftsy: Wikki-Stix, puffy paint, Velcro, textured packing materials, adhesive foam and felt, graphic art tape, ribbon and lace, snippets of fur, and toilet paper rolls. We are patrons of Michaels, the Oriental Trading Company, and dollar stores across the continent. Occasionally, we even raid trash cans for the perfect scrap to adapt a masterpiece.
- We are people **"on the move."**
  - Those of us who live the itinerant life may drive for miles every day; some of us even take a plane to see our students. Has this happened to you? You drive over an hour to see a student ... only to walk into the classroom and discover that the child is absent.

- We are also speed walkers, porters, and weight lifters. We are "bag ladies" or "bag men"; we own a rolling cart and a raincoat with a hood because there's no free hand to carry an umbrella. We walk miles every day ... from the farthest space in the parking lot to the office to the child's classroom to the room where we work ... Oops! There's unexpected testing in that room today. Let's tour the building, braille, computer, and bags in hand, student in tow, and find an empty space, any empty space to work. And, when we finally find a deserted corner? It's time to pack up and go back to class!
- We are **organizers**.
  - If we're itinerants, our car is our office with room for very little else. How often, when we're going out with a non-teaching friend, do we say, "Do you mind if we take YOUR car?"
  - Organizing our teaching materials is also often a challenge. There's a serious mismatch between the cartloads of equipment and materials we bring into a building and the two shelves the classroom teacher has allotted us in her crowded classroom. People can't believe how much STUFF we have for one student. Getting everything to fit in tight spaces is like completing a jigsaw puzzle.
  - And, did I say puzzle? We work miracles as we schedule every student on our caseload for his or her IEP time, not to mention factoring in consultation, material prep, testing, functional vision/learning media assessments, IEP meetings, and potential traffic jams. Who needs Lumosity to keep their minds sharp when they have an itinerant caseload to schedule?
- And, finally, we are **sharers**. In fact, we are privileged to be part of a field that values sharing and collaboration. Perhaps it's because those of us who work with children who are blind or visually impaired are so few and far between, but there seems to be a special incentive to support and learn from each other.



It is time to nominate that someone who has stood out to you to be recognized within our division. Please send your nomination to:

[jillbrown1@mac.com](mailto:jillbrown1@mac.com)

**Nominations are due April 30<sup>th</sup>**  
(deadline extended)

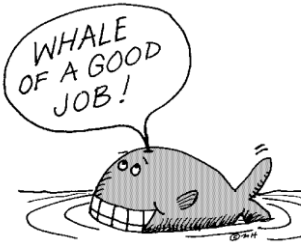
**Outstanding Professional Award (Judy Cernkovich-Most Self-Determined Award)**

An award to a professional who by virtue of significant contribution to the field has exhibited outstanding service in direct care, education and/or research in itinerant services

**Publication Award**

An award to an author or authors who have published an article in a referred journal which contributes highly to the body of knowledge about itinerant services





### **Quips and Quotes:**

Successes out in the Field

Here is where you can share your small (and big) successes. We would love to know your achievements. We know how hard we work just to get our students and teachers on board, so now let's hear from you.

### **A Few of My Favorite Things:**

Here people can contribute ways to stay organized. As itinerants, we are a unique population in that we have an office but work out of our cars. If you have something to share, please send your ideas/thoughts to Liz. Thank you to those who sent in their thoughts.



From Christopher Tabb:

- LiveBinders (<http://www.livebinder.com>) is a great way to have collections of information available for teachers, parents, and administrators without have to bring it all in the car.
- MacBook Air from Apple; light weight, fast, and capable
- Brenthaven Velo backpack (<http://www.brenthaven.com/products/velo-bike-laptop-backpack>), keeps laptop safe, place for all the gadgets, easier on the back and more balanced than a satchel, and expands for those CBI outings with more to carry.
- iPhone, and the apps; finally trimmed it down to only 469 apps : )
- Anker Power Core ([http://www.amazon.com/Anker-PowerCore-15000mAh-Flashlight-Protection/dp/B010N8YM2U/ref=sr\\_1\\_26?ie=UTF8&qid=1457022099&sr=8-26&keywords=anker+powercore%5C](http://www.amazon.com/Anker-PowerCore-15000mAh-Flashlight-Protection/dp/B010N8YM2U/ref=sr_1_26?ie=UTF8&qid=1457022099&sr=8-26&keywords=anker+powercore%5C)) keeps devices charged and even has enough power to jump start your car and comes with the connections to do so
- Apple Watch, no need to look at the map, the watch will tap your wrist to tell you when to turn; it has different vibrations for left and right turns. Also nice to make a quick glance at the wrist to see if you need to take a call or respond to a text rather than having to pull the phone out every

time.

- Magna Cart ([http://www.amazon.com/Magna-Personal-Capacity-Aluminum-Folding/dp/B000HVVSU/ref=sr\\_1\\_10?ie=UTF8&qid=1457022265&sr=8-10&keywords=folding+cart](http://www.amazon.com/Magna-Personal-Capacity-Aluminum-Folding/dp/B000HVVSU/ref=sr_1_10?ie=UTF8&qid=1457022265&sr=8-10&keywords=folding+cart)) and bungee cords can make toting large amounts of materials a breeze.

From Tamara Greenwood:

- I use data sheets specifically for the goals and objectives that I write in the IEP. Many items are documented by checklist, especially when documenting arousal state profiles for children with complex needs. Many strategy books come with data collection tools in the back of the book. TVIs can simply copy the data collection tool and use it. I also recommend sending the parent an interview prior to administering tests. This gives the parent an opportunity to feel like a contributor to the IEP.



## Who's Who in the Itinerant Personnel Division

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Secretary-Treasurer	Kathy Michielsen	Kathycmichielsen@gmail.com



The Driving Force  
Itinerant Personnel Division

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Opinions expressed reflect those of the authors only.

### Future Issues:

Fall 2016: Articles due by August 15, 2016

Winter 2016: Articles due by November 15, 2016

Spring 2017: Articles due by February 15, 2017