

Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired



Orientation and Mobility Division Update

Fall 2018

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From the Chair

Hello Orientation and Mobility Division,

Excited to be sharing as part of our Division Newsletter and very grateful to Susan Langendonk for preparing it for everyone. We had lots of great networking that occurred in Reno at the AER Conference, as well as being able to celebrate Rod Kossick at the O&M Awards. We are just beginning this biennium and thanks to Justin Kaiser and the Strategic Planning Committee we know have a clear idea of what to focus the Division's efforts on. We will be looking at trying to move the profession of Orientation and Mobility into greater awareness of both the medical community and those in the labor field so that we can position ourselves to be more recognizable as a field for third-party funding. An area that is new to the organization since the Strategic Plan was developed, is the currently developing AER Accreditation Program for agency and school accreditations. It is yet to be determined in what ways the division may be of assistance to the program; we will keep the lines of communication open by sharing information and updates through emails, newsletters, social media, the Wiki, and the O&M Outpost site (<http://aerom.org>).

In order for District Directors to be able to gather and share information it would be most helpful if you could relay to them any events or activities happening in your local area, so they can get the word out to others that might be interested. You can find the contact information for your District Director on the AER O&M Division pages at <https://aerbvi.org/about/divisions/orientation-mobility-division/district-directors-corner/>.

If you have questions, suggestions, comments, or just want to share things related to Orientation and Mobility, you can reach me at tabbc@tsbvi.edu.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the AER Orientation and Mobility Division,

Chris Tabb

Orientation & Mobility Division Awards

Introduction:

Good evening and welcome to colleagues, honorees and distinguished Guests. My name is Gala Brooks. It has been my honor and pleasure to have served as your award committee chair for the past biennium. This has been made much easier due to my cooperative and responsive committee. My most sincere appreciation to:

Susan Langendonk, Bruce Blasch, Jane Mundschenk, Nick Leon, Chris Tabb, Justin Kaiser for your hard work.

We had some very, very difficult decisions to make; quite painful at times. We did our very best and know that you will be pleased with our results. So many deserve recognition. We are blessed with colleagues who go above and beyond, who raise the bar and achieve so much.

We thank all of you who submitted nominating and supporting letters.

Before introducing you to the 2018 honor class, I would like to take a minute to acknowledge those previous recipients of our awards who are with us today. O&M Citation - Raychel Callary; Kronick Award - Marjie Wood, Vince Fazzi, and Lukas Franck; and the Blaha Award – Bill Wiener, Eileen Siffermann, George Zimmerman and Gala Brooks.

And we have a very special guest in the room, Sue Melrose, Rod Kossick's bride of a few decades and I suspect she is really the power behind the throne!!!!

And, now, for our first presentation,

The Orientation and Mobility Citation of Excellence for Direct Service.

Thirty-four years ago, at a division meeting the question was raised as to why a person waited until the end of their career to be honored. At that time, the only nation mobility award was the Lawrence E. Blaha Memorial Award. So, a committee was formed to develop an award and criteria and it was first presented in 1986 to Peggy Madera and Judy Davidhizar Holmes. The award was to be presented to a "younger" member of the profession whose excellent teaching skills and professional participation foretold of a promising career.



Gala Brooks

This year's "newbie" award recipient not only meets but exceeds the criteria.

Julie Stevens, who nominated this year's recipient wanted to be here but was not able to work it out. So, it is my pleasure to fill-in for Julie. Here is her letter:

April 15, 2018

Dear Ms. Brooks,

I am writing with the purpose of nominating Mary Ball-Swartwout for the Orientation and Mobility Citation of Excellence for Direct Service Award.

I have been very fortunate to know Mary for a number of years now, beginning in the summer of 2013 when I was enrolled in the O&M licensure program through the Ohio State University, and she came to us as an instructor at the Ohio State School for the Blind and facilitator with the OSU O&M program. Later that fall she was assigned to be my techniques instructor and opened up a whole new world of instruction to me. She has a gift for clarifying the information provided in the instructional texts and making the mobility experience leap off the page into the real world. I found that reading the descriptions of the techniques was a good first step, but it was vital to me to go through the experience of using those techniques in order to understand. Mary is very good at scaffolding the skills so each layer builds upon another, never disseminating too much information at a time and watching closely to monitor our ability to absorb and learn.

While we always knew she was close by, she did not rescue us too quickly and our problem-solving abilities grew as we built skill sets we would later pass along to our own students.

That calm, cheerful voice will forever be in my ear as I now work with children and families in my own career.

Later in 2013 and into 2014, I was able to spend time with Mary as she worked with the students on her caseload and gain experience working with them myself, honing skills and knowledge and confidence and seeing her students do the same. She works with such a wide range of ages and abilities - from the adults in the O&M program to the children 3-22 years of age through the OSSB preschool and school-age enrollment, and some students have multiple disabilities that affect their ability to hear, feel tactile input, move independently and comprehend complex directions. Mary has worked hard to build her own American Sign Language skills and often works with students at the nearby Ohio School for the Deaf who also have visual impairments. She advocates for those students in their IEP meetings, in the community and sometimes further out as they enter college. It was inspiring to watch her calm confidence in so many different settings, her ability to read her students and provide the appropriate support and input that matched their goals and abilities.

Currently, I work with parents and children ages birth through six years who have visual impairments or are blind. There are times when we consult with each other as I have been an early intervention specialist for some time and she has so much experience in general. There are times when I have a child move from my program to the OSSB preschool and it is a delight to be able to share with parents the utmost confidence I have with her moving forward with their child where I left off. I look forward to many more years of collaboration and feel there could not be a more deserving recipient of this award than Mary Ball-Swartwout.

Sincerely yours,
Julie Stevens, MEd COMS
Franklin County Bd of DD Early Childhood Program

Letters of support make note of personal and professional qualities. She is innovative and creative, encouraging and adapting for students of all abilities. She is passionate, enthusiastic, resourceful and committed to the work she does at the Ohio State School for the Blind.

A past Citation recipient comments that Mary has much to offer our field and potential to be one of the great leaders in the future of Orientation and Mobility.

It would be my distinct pleasure to ask Mary to come forward at this time to be recognized as the 18th recipient of the O&M Citation of Excellence for Direct Service.... but unfortunately, someone needed her more.... her toddler son.....and she was unable to come as planned. But she sent these heartfelt remarks;

Mary's Comments:

“It is difficult for me to express how grateful I am to receive the Orientation and Mobility Citation for Excellence for Direct Service. It is a great honor to be recognized by my peers for my work at The Ohio State School for the Blind.

My students' successes, like identifying their near parallel traffic surge or making their first solo purchase at the store, is the reason I go to work each day. I enjoy introducing students to their first white cane to set the foundational skills that they will use for the rest of their lives. I feel pride when I step back from a student who uses a street crossing card or rides the bus independently. Every day, I learn from my students and adapt my teaching style to fit their needs.

I am sorry that I could not be there in person to receive the award. I am very thankful to be honored for my work. I want to thank those who helped me achieve my O&M knowledge and skills including co-workers, administrators, mentors, friends, family and a big thank you to my students.”

Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award

In 1994, the Kronick Award was established to recognize professionals who demonstrate distinguished service in O&M through a long term commitment to direct service. Sandy Kronick had a lifelong commitment and dedication to teaching O&M in Oregon until his sudden death in May 1993. This award was presented to him, posthumously and accepted by his wife Bethanne at the 1994 AER conference in Dallas.

The establishment of this award is fitting tribute to Sandy Kronick and the countless other O&M Specialists who forego promotions or higher paying career changes in order to do what they know and love best.... namely teach O&M.

To present the 2018 Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award to the 13th recipient is that lovely VIP to many, 34 year veteran O&M'er and Cal State @LA, college professor extraordinaire, Brenda Naimy.

**Nomination of Christopher Tabb
for the
Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award**

Every now and then, you meet someone that you know could rise to the top of any profession they choose, and you realize we are so fortunate that they chose Orientation & Mobility as their career. When Christopher Tabb applied to the O&M specialist training program at Cal State LA in 1998, he said he wanted to serve and he thought that helping people become more independent through orientation and mobility instruction would make a difference in people's lives. In the 20 years that have passed, Chris' actions have shown he is true to his word. In addition to providing direct O&M services to countless children and adults with visual impairment in California, Connecticut and Texas, Chris has also quietly worked behind the scenes to strengthen the profession of O&M. It didn't surprise me in the least to see this quote from Dr. Martin Luther King recently favorited by Chris on a social media website; "*Everybody can be great, because everyone can serve.*" While I suspect this nomination is not nearly an inclusive review of Chris's contributions to our profession to date, I think it touches upon at least a few highlights. Chris has excelled as a direct service provider throughout his career. As soon as he was eligible, just three years after completing his own training, Chris served as a master teacher for trainees in the O&M program at Cal State LA. It is unusual for one so new to the profession to be asked to serve as a master teacher, however Chris's work with adults with visual impairments was highly respected by his colleagues who had many years of experience. Being a master teacher is one of the most profound ways an O&M specialist can support the quality and growth of our profession. Master teachers have the power to make or break moral, build or break down confidence, and inspire or discourage new teachers. In his role as a master teacher, Chris mentored by example, providing ongoing support, thoughtful guidance and gentle feedback to O&M trainees in their initial teaching efforts. In recent years, Chris has been honored for his provision of outreach services as the recipient of the 2013 Outstanding Related Service Provider from the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI), the 2017 Outstanding Provider of Outreach Services by the Principals of Schools for the Blind (POSB), and the 2017 Outstanding Outreach Provider Award from the TSBVI.

As part of his service to the profession of O&M, Chris has contributed his expertise in social media, communication, and assistive technology, benefitting O&M specialists both nationally and internationally. Kate Hurst, a TSBVI colleague of Chris's, quite accurately described him as "*A terrific presenter with a great passion for orientation and mobility. He is very knowledgeable, current on all O&M tech (a geek), and someone who is on top of the latest trends in the field.*" One of Chris's many notable contributions to the profession is an extensive array of resources he has developed, acquired and organized that O&M specialists can access via LiveBinders (<http://bit.ly/LiveBinderOM>). The LiveBinders site contains information and resources on topics such as the expanded core curriculum, early childhood O&M, iOS and Android apps, navigation technologies, location literacy, paperwork necessities, and working with students who have additional disabilities, including deafblindness. The site is easily accessed, highly organized and allows for others to contribute. The view count alone indicates it has already been of use to thousands of O&Ms and related professionals. To help keep AER Division 9 members in-touch and up-to-date, Chris has established and maintained the Division 9 Facebook page, and the *AER O&M Outpost*, a website that has been founded to serve as an archive of O&M information and resources. The home page of the *Outpost* provides the latest information on upcoming and current events, including professional development opportunities. The Resources page of the *Outpost* will link one to archives of the AER conferences, newsletters, and O&M Division minutes. On numerous occasions, Chris has presented on the use of assistive technology for O&M, most recently on "*Technology for Orientation and Mobility: What is Affordable, What Works and Where Can We Get It?*" for the 2018 inaugural International Orientation and Mobility Online Symposium.

Chris also contributes to the profession of O&M through his service on a variety of committees for the ACVREP and AER. He is currently serving as a subject matter expert in O&M for the ACVREP and as part of this role, he has participated in committees promoting international certification and addressing the internship requirements of certified O&M specialists. Up next as a subject matter expert for ACVREP, he (and the rest of the subject matter experts) will be tackling the gargantuan task of updating the national certification exam for O&M specialists. Chris has also served in a variety of capacities for AER over the last several years, including: chair of the AER Professional Issues Committee and Scholarship Committees, co-chair of the AER Communications/Media Committee, member of the 2017 AER International O&M Conference planning committee, and member of the Ad Hoc Committee of Strategic Planning, Goals and Initiatives. Very notably, Chris was the 2017 recipient of the Bob Bryant and Bill Bryan O&M Leadership Award issued by the Texas AER O&M Division! **In fact**, Chris's commitment to professional service makes it ridiculously difficult for him to be recognized through the AER Division 9 service awards! ☺ As of the writing of this nomination, Chris is serving on the AER Awards Committee which makes him ineligible to accept a nomination. In 2020, he will be ineligible as a nominee, because at that time, Chris will be serving as the Division 9 Chair of AER, and as part of that role, he will again be serving on the awards committee as an ex-officio member. In 2022, he will be serving as Past-Chair of Division 9, and again, likely participating in the awards and other committees to provide continuity and support.

This nomination is submitted knowing that Chris will only be eligible if he chooses to step down from the Awards committee and allow the other capable members to cover for him. He is most certainly a worthy recipient of the Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award, and he deserves to pause to take a bow.

Respectfully submitted,
Brenda J. Naimy, COMS
State University Los Angeles

Christopher Tabb's comments: I am rather embarrassed to be standing in front of a room full of people who have inspired me. Before I came into this field, I was literally digging ditches working as a plumber's apprentice after graduating with a psychology degree. I couldn't imagine being happier anywhere else than in this field. Thank you to everyone for doing what you do and setting an example with your work and your passion.

Christopher Tabb and Brenda Naimy



Lawrence E Blaha Award

Fifty years ago, a pioneer, an athlete, a war hero, a master technician, a keeper of the highest standards, a kind and compassionate human being. . . .these all describe Lawrence E. Blaha. He was one of the original six individuals chosen by Russ Williams for training to become O&M Specialists at Hines. He was a magnificent master teacher of blinded veterans. He was empathic and compassionate. He bolstered the weak and challenged the strong. He believed in and respected their ability to become independent.

One day Larry was out with a veteran who, during his street crossing, veered into his parallel street. Larry, close by, patiently waiting for the vet to orient himself as traffic was whizzing by was yelled at by a lady on the sidewalk who hollered “why don’t you help that guy”. Larry, thought a minute and then answered “because I cannot go home with him”.

He developed that terror inspiring, infamous “drop-off lesson” for his veterans and continued to use it as a teaching tool after he left Hines to teach in the newly developed college preparation program at WMU.

He became director of the O&M program at CAL State@LA until his sudden death in 1968.

This award honors Larry and those who receive it for their outstanding contributions and dedication to the profession of Orientation and Mobility. He received the first Lawrence E. Blaha Memorial Award posthumously in 1968.

Today, we remember and we celebrate the highest honor that the O&M Division can bestow. Additionally, The Blaha Award recipient also becomes the declared guardian of Sir Francis Campbell’s cane.

Sir Francis Joseph Campbell was born in 1932 in Tennessee and was an American anti-slavery campaigner, musician, teacher, mountain climber, spirited paradigm shifter and co-founder of the Royal National College for the Blind in the United Kingdom.

Campbell lost his sight due to an acacia thorn accident when he was 3 ½. He became known as “Little blind Joseph” and was excluded from attending public schools. He convinced his parents that he needed to go to school and at age 12 was the second enrollee in the newly established TN School f/t Blind. Eventually teaching music there and at the Wisconsin School for the Blind.

In 1856, as a human rights advocate he voiced strong anti-slavery views. For teaching a slave to read, he was threatened with lynching unless he renounced his views.... he refused...he escaped hanging because of public sympathy for his blindness. He continued to rock the boat at Perkins and eventually ended up in England establishing the Royal Norman College and Academy of Music for the Blind.

He developed his own cane techniques and was an accomplished independent traveler. A writer once described that his cane “had brains, could almost talk and ought to vote”.

In 1909, King Edward VII conferred knighthood on him in Buckingham Palace with the title of “Sir” to precede his name.

His 18K gold handled cane was presented to him by his students and inscribed:” Presented to Dr. Campbell by the pupils of the Royal National College as a token of their esteem. July 25, 1894” 124 years ago, yesterday!!!!

Bill Wiener, O&M’er, college professor, Blaha award recipient, Shotwell award recipient, graduate dean, Vice Provost a man who is a legend in his own time, please come forward to present the 27th recipient of the Blaha Award and the 25th guardian of Sir Francis Campbell’s cane.

Presentation of the Lawrence E. Blaha Award to Rod Kossick
by
Bill Wiener

It is an honor to be able to present the Lawrence E Blaha award to Rod Kossick. At this conference, we are celebrating 50 years since offering the first Blaha award. I have been in this field for a very long time and have had the privilege of attending most of these award ceremonies and even presenting at a couple of them. In the early days, we would look toward our founders and honor those who had a major impact upon the development of the field. We honored the early pioneers including some from the first wave of original orientors and the second wave of orientors. I remember presenting one of the early Blaha awards to John Malamazian, one of the first wave orientors who came to lead Hines in later years.

Each time a Blaha award was given, it recalled the major contributions that the person made to the development of orientation and mobility. We later turned to our contemporaries, some of whom were university faculty members and others who through their devotion to outstanding practice had contributed greatly. Somehow over the years, we neglected to honor the one individual who served as the bridge between these two groups and the one who helped launch our profession by making our collective organization possible through starting the Orientation and Mobility Division, and helping to encourage funding for the wave of university programs that were to follow. It is only fitting that at this 50th anniversary of the Blaha Award that we honor that individual, Rod Kossick.

Rod graduated from Western Michigan University from its first class of O&M specialists in 1962. Following his graduation Rod served as an O&M specialist. In 1964 the new profession of Orientation and Mobility along with its original pioneers was starting to build a small cadre of graduates from Boston College and Western Michigan University. The field of orientation and mobility was in its infancy and there was no structural organization that encompassed the practitioners. The development of a true profession starts with practitioners coming together and forming an organization where they can share ideas and develop standards. Rod was the individual responsible for recognizing this need and taking action to start the first orientation and mobility group. In those days we had two predecessor organizations of professionals, AAWB the Association of Workers for the Blind (serving adults), and AEVH the Association for Education of the Visually Handicapped, (serving children). At the 1964 AAWB convention in New York City, Rod called an informal meeting of all individuals interested in Orientation and Mobility. Those attending the meeting discussed the establishment of an organization that would bring together O&M specialists to share ideas and improve services. The meeting participants decided to pursue the establishment of a group within AAWB. Rod took the initiative of securing more than 50 signatures as required for the formulation of such a group. He then asked the AAWB Board of Directors to establish Interest Group IX. Rod presided over the first official meeting in Denver in 1965. It was Rod's dedication to the field that led to our current Orientation and Mobility Division.

In those early years, there were a number of short term training programs in the U.S. designed to prepare educators and house parents to teach orientation and mobility to individuals who were blind. In that year Rod took it upon himself to contact Douglas MacFarland, Chief of the Division of Services for the Blind in the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration and explained that the short-term nature of these programs was doing an injustice by turning out ill-prepared instructors. He instead advocated for support of the existing two O&M university programs, Boston College and Western Michigan University, as well as for the development of additional university programs. He explained that short term training turns out instructors who do not have the necessary competencies to insure success in travel. His letter was copied to Mary Switzer, Louis Rives, and a host of other individuals who were influential in the government. Eventually, Mary Switzer made use of the letter to discuss short term training with Douglas MacFarland.

Governmental support of the short-term training programs ended and additional grants to universities came to be.

Rod next focused his attention to international matters. Between 1966 and 1968 he contracted with the United States Agency for International Development, and served as the Blind Rehabilitation Consultant for South Viet Nam. His duties included preparing South Vietnamese personnel to teach O&M, braille, typing, and pre-vocational assessment and counseling. During that time he was instrumental in helping to establish a rehabilitation center adjustment program, and in developing a long-range plan for services within the country. His work in that country resulted in the article published in the 1970 AAWB Blindness Annual entitled Activating a Program for the Blind in South Vietnam.

His next several years were spent as an O&M instructor and administrator at the Northwest Regional Rehabilitation Center for the Blind in Washington State before again turning his attention to O&M international. Working in cooperation with the Australian Council for Rehabilitation of the Disabled, he served as the Chief Instructor for the National Orientation and Mobility Training School in Australia where he implemented a curriculum and coordinated much of the training requirements.

Upon returning, he served as the State Director for the Blind Division of the Indiana Rehabilitation Services. In that capacity he supervised the operation of the agency and instituted an internship program for Orientation and Mobility Specialists. He later held a similar Directorship with the Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. During his final years of employment, Rod returned to providing direct services in Orientation and Mobility on a statewide basis in Wisconsin.

Throughout the years Rod has contributed to many of the organizations that are dedicated to our field. He has contributed to the establishment of the APH Hall of Fame for leaders and legends in the blindness field, and was a leader of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind. In regard to AER, he has contributed to AER's predecessor organization AAWB by serving on its Legislative Committee, and Awards Committee. He was also active in three chapters of the organization: Northwest, Indiana, and Wisconsin. Rod has also been a Life Member of AER. Rod continues to be an active member of AER and the O&M Division. He continues to attend our conferences and contributes his ideas, stands up for what he believes, and offers his assistance in pursuing the best possible services.

It is clear from the above description that Rod Kossick dedicated his life to orientation and mobility here in the United States and abroad. He clearly is one of the icons in our field. While he has received numerous awards including the Civilian Medal of Honor-Second Class from the government of South Viet Nam, the Outstanding Service Award from AER, and the Omar L. Miron Award for Exemplary Leadership and Dedicated Service to Persons with Visual Impairments from Wisconsin AER, the O&M Division has yet to acknowledge his contributions.

I believe that on this fiftieth anniversary of the Blaha award, it is fitting that we acknowledge the monumental contributions that he has made to this field and bestow upon one of our founders, and contemporaries, the Lawrence E. Blaha Award.

Response to Lawrence Blaha Award

**By
Rod Kossick**

First things first!

A very warm and heart-felt "thank you" Bill for that generous introduction. As I listened, I thought "Wow, this guy must be older than Methuselah—wonder if he can still sit up and take nourishment."

I also want to recognize the rest of the awards committee honoring me with this great award. And I give thanks to those members who took the time and effort to write support letters.

Bill Wiener was the instigator for my nomination, and to you, Bill, a very special thank you. I know it involved a lot of background research, phone calls, emails and politicking. Thank you, Bill.

The Lawrence E. Blaha Award for Orientation and Mobility is much larger than a moment in time, a plaque and Sir Francis Campbell's cane, the congratulatory wishes of Division 9 and others throughout this field.

Larry was a person who was consummate regarding the profession of Orientation and Mobility, and its delivery of services to blind persons. He brought to the field an unusual warehouse of sound human values; empathy, teaching mechanics, the value and dignity of every person, and paramount, the notion that this new profession should be stringently codified and protected. He realized that administrators, bean counters and the unbelieving; could not only dilute and harm its growing inception, but be a serious threat to its full development and continued existence.

As the jurist Clarence Day said, "When eras die, their legacies are claimed by strange police. Professors in New England, guard the glory that was Greece."

Larry knew that all the years of Hines contributions including the work of Williams, Hoover, Bledsoe, Et al, and then the fledgling efforts of the university programs, had to remain faithful to the truths that were developed. Sequential skills of orientation and mobility, i.e. basic techniques, correct cane skills, and successes tempered by challenge, were tenets of Larry's beliefs.

I remember hearing Larry stating these beliefs at: the National Conference on Mobility Instruction for the Blind, Washington D.C., and April 18-20, 1966.

Again, at the Mobility Trainers and Technologists Conference at MIT, December 14-15, 1967, he delivered a paper, "Basic Techniques Essential to Orientation and Mobility." Larry closed his paper with "basic techniques can and should embody skills which provide a blind person with methods for independently and systematically exploring new environments and developing proficient, efficient mobility with the greatest ease in the shortest time. I should like to impress upon you that Basic Techniques are more than protective hand and arm procedures. It is the beginning of the development or orientation and mobility skills. It is the foundation which ultimately determines the structure to follow."

Unfortunately, Larry and I did not have many opportunities to be together. Even so, I was able to see his commitment and concern for our profession. I like to think that on the wall in his office were both Bledsoe's Credo and our Code of Ethics.

The Lawrence E Blaha Award is much larger than its physical items, awardees or a moment in time. John Donne, a seventeenth century poet, wrote "No man is an island, any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

The life and contributions of Larry Blaha touched all of us, and indeed, blind persons throughout the world. He set the bell tolling.

Listen to that bell.

Rod Kossick and Bill Wiener



Gala: The Toast:

Ernie Banks said that the measure of a man is in the lives he has touched.....well, Mary, Christopher and Rod.... here's to you three who have touched more lives than Bill Gates has dollars!

News and Events

Orientation & Mobility Chairs Breakfast



Held at AERI in Reno, Nevada.

Seated from left to right are Gala Brooks, Marjie Wood, Susan Langendonk, Nora Griffin-Shirley, Laura Bozeman, Eileen Siffermann.

Standing from left to right are JoAnne Chalom, Rod Kossick, Justin Kaiser, Chris Tabb, Kevin Hollinger, Bill Wiener

Need for Accessible Pedestrian Signals when Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs) and Exclusive Pedestrian Phases are installed

By Joanne Chalom and Janet Barlow

New signal timing strategies that are intended to help pedestrians and improve walkability may have a negative and dangerous effect for pedestrians who are blind, who have low vision, or who are deafblind, if accessible pedestrian signals are not installed. Two of the most popular, installed in many cities in recent months are:

- **Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs)**-an LPI provides the pedestrian walk signal before motorists can proceed, giving the pedestrian several seconds (usually 3 to 6 seconds) to start crossing in the crosswalk before the green signal is provided to vehicles.
- **Exclusive Pedestrian Phase, also sometimes also called Pedestrian Scramble or Barnes Dance**
 - Where there is an exclusive pedestrian phase, all vehicular traffic has a red signal during the pedestrian phase (walk and flashing don't walk). Pedestrians have a don't walk signal when any vehicles have a green signal. Intersections with exclusive pedestrian phases often include the option for pedestrians to walk diagonally across the intersection.

Traditionally pedestrians with visual impairments have been taught to begin crossing with parallel vehicular traffic movement closest to their crosswalk (near lane parallel traffic). These signal strategies separate the beginning of the pedestrian phase from the surge of near lane parallel traffic.

The installation of Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) whenever an LPI or exclusive pedestrian phase is installed can provide the benefit of this new signal timing strategy while mitigating risks to pedestrians who have visual impairments.

What are the risks (without APS)?

When there is a LPI, the pedestrian who is blind or who has low vision may enter the crosswalk lane as the vehicles begin moving just when drivers' expectation of pedestrian movement is reduced. If the signal timing is minimal, the pedestrian may still be in the street when the signal changes.

Similar concerns arise when Exclusive Pedestrian Phasing is used. A blind pedestrian will typically traverse an intersection with the parallel surge of traffic, not during the exclusive pedestrian phase. Drivers would not anticipate that a pedestrian would begin crossing during a vehicular phase.

O&M specialists should be aware of these issues and educate their clients about these possible signal timing strategies. They and their clients should advocate for the installation of APS when such changes are being made.

The EAC is ready to help you and answer your questions. You can access EAC resources

- Log-in to AER
- Select AER Divisions
- Select Orientation and Mobility Division
- Select Resources
- Scroll down to view general resources

Topics such as Accessible Pedestrian Signals, Detectable Warning Surfaces, and Guidance through Construction Areas are at your disposal. Updated and new resources such as Roundabouts and Pedestrians

who are Blind or who have Low Vision and Need for Accessible Pedestrian Signals when Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs) and Exclusive Pedestrian Phases are installed are coming soon.

We 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. Some of those may negatively impact the travel of individuals who are blind or who have low vision without careful consideration during the design phase. 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.

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.

References

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Franck, Lukas. Letter to the Editor. **Giving Pedestrians A Head Start When Crossing Streets**. The New York Times. November 24, 2017

Barlow, Janet and Franck, Lukas. Letter to the Editor. **May 2018 ITE Journal “Guidance on Signal Control strategies for Pedestrians to Improve Walkability.”** ITE Journal. August 2018

From Division member Marion G. Myhre

“A Two-Part Hybrid Course: Beyond Arms Reach: O&M Curriculum Made Accessible for Travelers Who Are Deaf-Blind”. (Part 1 Online—October 26-November 8, 2018, Part 2 On-Site—November 13-16, 2018 at the Helen Keller National Center in Sands Point, NY. Registration Deadline — September 30, 2018). To get official information for the hybrid course trainings, contact PLD@hknc.org.

DISTRICT REPORTS

District 3 – Maggie Winn

Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ontario and Wisconsin

Indiana

Save the Date!

The Indiana AER conference at McCormick’s Creek on September 13-14.

Please respond to Bianca Gerena at biancag@bosma.org for more information.

Illinois

The Chicago Lighthouse Youth Transition Program had a very busy this summer! There were 2 sessions of Summer in the City and 5 separate work sites with First Jobs Program partnering with Walgreens. The data for all programs shows remarkable change in independence and confidence from each participant.

Both sessions of Summer in the City provided extraordinary opportunities for the participants to travel throughout Chicago on foot, by bus and by trains; far exceeding the 10,000 steps suggested for daily travel. Experiences provided included a private tour of Wrigley Field, walk along the Mag Mile, concert in Millennium Park, two hour boat cruise and lunch provided by Chicago Yacht Club, explore Navy Pier, rock climb, private tour of Lincoln Park Zoo, iFly indoor sky diving, touch tour and audio description of Looking Glass Theater's production of 20,000 Leagues under the Sea, many restaurant experiences and cuisine and a talent show. The participants marveled in obtaining their own fountain drinks, taking turns determining when it was safe to cross 4 and 6 lane city streets, and being responsible for themselves and their belongings living in UIC dorm.

First Jobs partnership with Walgreens was also highly successful. Each of the 5 worksites, in the city and suburbs, plan to employ the participants following our week training and 6 weeks of support on the job. Each participant learned about retail and customer service, was capable and proud to assist customers in finding items in the store or giving advice on product selection, assisted in the warehouse and much more.

For more information, view the event flyer.

Or contact Shelle Hamer at shelle.hamer@chicagolighthouse.org | (847) 510-2055

REGISTER ONLINE and **COMPLETE ASSESSMENTS** at: chicagolighthouse.org/youth-transition-application <https://chicagolighthouse.org/summer-in-the-city-assessment/>

2019 IAER Conference

“Connecting the Dots” February 14-15, 2019

Chicago Marriott Naperville

1801 North Naper Boulevard

Naperville, Illinois 60563

(Link for call for papers: <https://aerbvi.org/about/chapters/illinois/>)

Michigan

re:con November 7-9 2018

2018 re:con is the premier event for Michigan professionals looking to revitalize themselves in their support of individuals with disabilities and other barriers.

Participants will walk away with ideas to implement change, information on best practices, and equipped with the tools and resources to succeed. Through breakouts, workshops, panel discussions, and networking, they will be re:fueled and re:invigorated. Opportunities to engage with vendors and suppliers, support micro-enterprises, participate in wellness activities, and celebrate leaders and innovators, will leave participants ready to take on the challenges of our industry. To register follow the link below.

<https://mi-recon.org/events/recon-2018-attendee-registration/>

Leader Dogs for the Blind is accepting applications for Accelerated Orientation and Mobility, a one-week program that allows your clients to enhance their skills, and then continue training with their local COMS upon their return home. For more information, visit

<http://www.leaderdog.org/clients/programs/accelerated-o-m-program>

Leader Dogs for the Blind Summer Experience Camp will be held Saturday, June 22–Saturday, June 29, 2019. Applications for 2019 will be available this fall for individuals who will be 16 or 17 during the dates of camp. Summer Experience Camp is a unique summer camp for boys and girls ages 16 and 17 who are legally blind combining summer fun, independent travel skill training, leadership development, an introduction to guide dogs and the opportunity to spend time with peers facing similar challenges. Follow the link below for more information.

<http://www.leaderdog.org/clients/programs/summer-experience-camp>

Minnesota

The Lighthouse Center for Vision Loss in Duluth, MN has upcoming camps for Transition age youth (14-21). <https://www.lcfvl.org/transition>

This year's School Year Transition Program has two main focuses: 1) Orientation and mobility, especially city travel; 2) technology skills for college and career

We ask that applications to the school year program be submitted no later than September 15th, 2018. That is only 3 weeks away so please act fast!

-This year's program will consist of 4 weekend camps

-1 to 2 home visits by the Lighthouse staff for training in the community, for training in their home community

-Remote training sessions throughout the school year

-and, new this year, 3-5 individual training days during the school year, which students will be able to schedule over a selection of dates. These individual sessions are not mandatory, as we know that it can be difficult for families to schedule times to come to Duluth around school breaks, but we highly recommend families take advantage of this opportunity.

Tentative dates are as follows:

-October 5-7, at the Lighthouse, arrive Friday by 3pm and depart Sunday at noon. There will be both student and parent programming during this weekend.

-January 19-21st, in the Twin Cities Arrive Saturday at noon and depart Monday by 2pm

-April 5th-7th, at the Lighthouse, Arrive Friday by 3pm and depart Sunday at Noon, Student programming only

-June 8-10, At the Lighthouse, Arrive Saturday at 3pm and depart Monday at noon, Student programming only, except there will be a parent programming brunch and graduation ceremony Monday morning

If you are interested, please fill out the Short Lighthouse Application <http://lcfvl.org/transition> to let us know of your interest

Contact your state counselor to inform them of your possible interest and call the Lighthouse Center for Vision Loss for any questions you may have.

Wisconsin

The upcoming NCOMA Conference will be held September 28th-29th 2018 in Milwaukee, WI.

To Register, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/NCOMA2018reg>.

The deadline for early registration is September 7 as is the deadline for reserving a hotel room at the state rate.

There will be many great presenters and opportunities to network with other O&M professionals. There will be door prizes highlighting Wisconsin-made products as well as items that will be useful for your job. The big door prize we will be awarding is a **VR Trek**, donated by **HumanWare**.

District 5 – Amanda Stolz

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Puerto Rico, Tennessee

Eye of The Tigers

By Amanda Stolz, COMS

When Clemson University's Student Accessibility Services says their mission is "...to ensure that all students at Clemson have equivalent access to campus curricula, facilities, services, and resources through universal design, accommodations, and creative solutions," they mean it!

In an effort to ensure students with visual impairments have safe access to all areas of the campus, Clemson coordinated with a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist during recent instruction on Clemson's campus in South Carolina. The enthusiasm from Clemson did not end with a few emails and phone conferences. Their dedication continued with a staff member attending an O&M lesson (one of those long, hot, summer, all-day lessons) to observe areas of interest and concern, as well as to provide access to buildings prior to the start of the semester.

So, what did Clemson do when they traveled these routes and realized that several critical street crossings to get to their Academic Success Center didn't have truncated domes installed? They took action. Fast. In just over two weeks, Clemson had 4 new truncated dome panels installed. During installation and upon completion of the project, Clemson even made sure their students with visual impairments who travel those routes were informed of the changes.

The dedication and enthusiasm from Clemson might just make you want to shout "Go Tigers!"

University of South Carolina

Due to the critical need for additional certified O&M personnel, the University of South Carolina (USC) Upstate developed a set of O&M courses for teachers of the visually impaired interested in obtaining certification through ACVREP. Most of the students received tuition funding through the South Carolina Department of Education and Project Create, which is a state program to increase the number of professionals in high-need education areas. In the summer of 2018, the blindfold cane technique courses were taught in Spartanburg and Greenville, South Carolina. There are currently 9 students in their last content course this fall. They are set to begin their internship in the spring or summer of 2019. These courses were coordinated and taught by Dr. Justin Kaiser, COMS and Amanda Stolz, COMS.

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind will host the first ever Cane Quest® competition in the state!

Cane Quest® is a national Orientation and Mobility program of the Braille Institute of America. During Cane Quest®, competitors complete a course of travel challenges using sensory information, white canes and their "O&M" skills. At each challenge station, a Cane Quest® competitor will earn coins they will exchange for some awesome from prizes the Cane Quest® Prize Store.

What is "O&M"? The "O" is for Orientation. Orientation is knowing where you are and where you want to go. The "M" is for Mobility. Mobility is using strategy to safely move towards your goal. The Cane Quest® Competitors will use O&M skills to navigate through their schools, universities, jobsites and life.

This November 10th, AIDB is inviting all Alabama 3rd to 6th graders who use a white cane, to show off their O&M skills and to compete on the beautiful Helen Keller School Campus.

We are seeking: eligible students from all over the state to compete, TVIs and O&M Specialist for judges, hands on volunteers, as well as individual and organization sponsorship.

Please contact Alabama Cane Quest Committee at alcanequest@aidb.org .
Go to <https://www.brailleinstitute.org/cane-quest> to see Cane Quest in action!

We are 1 of only 14 states to participate in this national program! Show America how we do it in the "Sweet Tea Belt"!

Enthusiastically yours,
Melody Brown, COMS, TVI VRT
Alabama Cane Quest Regional Coordinator

Division Executive Committee

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Visit the O&M website for a list of Committees: <https://aerbvi.org/oandmdivision>

Susan Langendonk, Editor
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Next newsletter submission deadline: December 1, 2018

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