

Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired



Fall 2019

Orientation and Mobility Division Update

Volume 22 Number 3

From the Chair

With Autumn arriving soon, it is helpful to take stock of all we have gained in the year so far. Before we know it, we will be in full holiday season and on to 2020. One of the wonderful things about this time of year for those working with school age students is the start of a new school year and the opportunity to reconnect with other professionals as well as students. This reconnection and sharing can occur at any time of year and while working with any population of learner. The more we are willing to share what we know, what we are excited about, and what we want to learn more about, the more our field grows, strengthens, and matures.

We are well into planning the 2020 AER International Conference that will be held next summer in St. Louis. Soon you will begin seeing more details via email and social media about the conference. You will also begin seeing calls for submissions for presentations. Though we try to have amazing speakers that come from beyond our field, such as those from the fields of medicine, related therapies, and motivational speakers, it is the contributions of working Orientation and Mobility Specialists and University Professionals in the field of O&M that allow learning to occur which can immediately impact those we work with. The sharing of what you know and develop with your learners, strategies and techniques you develop and research, these are the very essence of what our community thrives on. So please, when those emails start coming, think about what you find meaningful, what you use that others could benefit from; think about what you can pour into others.

I am so grateful to work in the field of Orientation and Mobility, and a large part of that is the way we learn from one another and take the time to share what we know. It truly is what makes us grow. We can be both students and teachers when we are willing!

Chris Tabb

Division Announcements

Professional Issues Committee on Support Canes Survey

The Professional Issues Committee on Support Canes of the Orientation and Mobility Division has been working hard to gather information to help guide potentially developing the need for a position paper on this topic. We are seeking information from members of the O&M community who are associated with academia.

We would greatly appreciate your assistance with this voluntary questionnaire. Your replies will help guide the committee members as we move forward to determine the need for a position paper on this topic. Please share with interested parties in the field.

Thank in advance for your contribution and assistance.

The link to the survey is: <https://support cane survey>

Additionally, the link below provides both historical and contemporary definitions of identification, short, and long canes. They are intended as a reference point for this survey.

The link to the literature review is: <https://references>

Orientation and Mobility Division 2020 Awards

The Orientation and Mobility Division Awards Committee invites you to tell us about a fellow O&M'er who deserves to receive one of our esteemed awards. Please consider submitting a letter nominating a deserving colleague for the Blaha, the Kronick or the O&M Citation of Excellence. Review the criteria listed below to determine the best fit for your distinguished colleague. The award presentation will be held at the 2020 AER International Conference July 22-26 in St. Louis, MO. Don't let this be the year that someone you know, could have, or should have been honored but you did not get around to submitting that letter!!!

Awards Committee members include: Susan Langendonk, Justin Kaiser, Christopher Tabb (ex-officio), Bruce Blasch, Gala Brooks and Nick Leon, Chair. Please email nickleon86@gmail.com if you're interested in joining the committee.

Nominations for the awards and letters of support may be submitted at any time. The deadline for submissions is April 30, 2020. Submissions should be sent to Nick Leon at nickleon86@gmail.com. Award recipients will be notified and announced by June 1, 2020.

Should any Division member have questions or comments regarding the awards, the presentations or the celebration, please contact Nick Leon at nickleon86@gmail.com or 765-586-8729.

Lawrence E. Blaha Memorial Award

Lawrence E. Blaha Memorial Award is given every two years.

Selection Criteria:

- a. The individual must have at least ten years experience in the field of blindness and must have distinguished himself or herself in activities related to Orientation and Mobility such as:
 - contribute to the body of knowledge/literature
 - excel in a leadership manner in the provision of O&M services
 - recruit or otherwise impact the decision of a large number of individuals to enter the field of Orientation and Mobility,
 - serve in a "mentor capacity" to a significant number of O&M professionals.
- b. The achievements being recognized must have had a significant impact upon the field of Orientation and Mobility.
- c. The individual must be an O&M Division member and be a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist unless retired or out of the field (administration).
- d. Nominations and letters of support shall be made by members of the O&M Division with a letter of up to two pages in length. The number of letters submitted shall not influence the decision one way or the other.

History:

The Lawrence E. Blaha Award was initiated in 1968 to honor people who have shown exemplary behavior in the field of O&M, made outstanding contributions to the profession, and shown dedication to serving people with visual impairments. It is the highest honor that the O&M Division can bestow. Each recipient of this award is the Guardian of Sir Francis Campbell's cane until it is passed along to the next award recipient. The handle of the cane was used by Sir Francis Campbell, and can be seen in a photograph of him that is displayed in the C. Warren Bledsoe Orientation and Mobility Archives.

This award was named in honor of Lawrence Blaha who was a pioneer in the field of O&M. He is remembered for his wit, athletic abilities, philosophy, technical skill and his high standards. He was an educator whose ideas are remembered and continued through this award. In 1948, he began his career working with people with visual impairments at the Central Blind Rehabilitation Center for Visually Impaired and Blinded Veterans, VA Hospital, Hines, Illinois. He was one of a group of six individuals chosen for training to become the original O&M specialists at Hines. In 1961, he joined the faculty of Western Michigan University; from 1964 until his sudden death, he was Director of the O&M program at California State College, Los Angeles. The first Lawrence E. Blaha Award was given to him posthumously in 1968.

Sir Francis Campbell, whose cane handle is passed along to award recipients, was an American expatriate who was knighted by King Edward VII. Campbell was born in Tennessee and accidentally blinded before he was six. He was educated at the Tennessee State Institute for the Blind and at the University of Tennessee. Campbell taught music at the Perkins School for the Blind. At Perkins, he was involved in early efforts to teach Orientation and Mobility.

The names of past recipients of the Lawrence E. Blaha Award are published with the call for nominations:

1969 Dr. Richard E. Hoover, MD	1994 Berdell "Pete" Wurzburger
1972 W.G. Debetaz	1996 William Wiener
1973 Stanley Suterko	1998 Bruce B. Blasch
1975 Russell C. Williams	2000 Gala Saber Brooks
1977 Donald Blasch	2002 Billie Louis Bentzen
1979 John D. Malamazian	2004 Dona Sauerburger
1981 John R. Eichorn, Ed.D.	2006 Steve LaGrow
1983 Leicester W. Farmer	2008 Janet Barlow
1984 C. Warren Bledsoe	2010 Eileen Siffermann
1986 Walter G. Olenek	2012 Richard Long
1988 Richard L. Welsh	2014 George Zimmerman
1990 Hugo Vigoroso	2016 Sandra Rosen
1992 Everett "Butch" Hill	2018 Rod Kossick

The Orientation and Mobility Citation of Excellence for Direct Service

Orientation and Mobility Citation of Excellence for Direct Service is given only when a worthy nominee has been nominated.

Selection Criteria:

- a. The individual must be in direct service the year preceding the AER International Conference teaching Orientation and Mobility to either children or adults for a period of 5-10 years.
- b. The individual must be an O&M Division member and be a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

History:

The Orientation and Mobility Citation of Excellence for Direct Service was established in 1985 to present "to a younger member of the profession, to encourage O&M specialists whose present excellent teaching records already foreshadow promising careers in our profession" (1996-97 Division newsletter). It continues to be awarded to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions to the profession during the first ten years of their career in O&M and to encourage these individuals to continue their promising careers in our profession.

Past Recipients of the Orientation and Mobility Citation of Excellence for Direct Service are:

1986 Peggy Madera, Judy Davidhizar-Holmes	2004 Julie Hapeman
1988 Joani Levy Myers	2006 Danene Fast
1990 Judy Hayes	2008 None
1992 Bonnie Dodson-Burk, Darick Wright	2010 Marcia Vickroy
1994 Carol Otten, Colleen Calhoon	2012 Shannon Cuniak
1996 Sharon O'Mara Maida	2014 None
1998 Mary Konigsfeld-Wejrowski	2016 Raychel Callary
2000 James Scott Crawford	2018 Mary Ball-Swartwout
2002 John E. Clare	

The Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award

The Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award is given only when a worthy nominee has been nominated.

Selection Criteria:

- a. The individual must have had at least ten years experience in the field of blindness with the majority of professional career in direct service teaching O&M to visually impaired people; and have demonstrated distinguished service by doing one or more of the following:
 - extend beyond the usual job requirements by using talents and expertise to enhance the field of O&M
 - initiate innovative or unique programs
 - serve as a mentor to other O&M specialists
 - present at local, regional, or international conferences
 - publish work in a professional journal
- b. The individual must have been a longstanding member of the O&M Division (majority of career) and be a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist unless retired or out of the field (administration).
- c. The individual must exemplify the standards outlined in the O&M Code of Ethics.

History

The Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award was established in 1994 to recognize professionals who demonstrate distinguished service in O&M through a long-term commitment in direct service. The award was named after Sandy Kronick because of his lifelong commitment and dedication to teaching O&M to visually impaired people. He taught O&M in Oregon until his sudden death in May 1993. The first Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award was given to him posthumously and accepted by his wife, Bethanne Kronick, at the 1994 AER International Conference in Dallas. Sandy Kronick was chosen as the first recipient of this award because of his lifelong dedication to teaching Orientation and Mobility, while continuing to be actively involved with numerous professional activities and committees.

Mr. Kronick was a very active member of AER, especially during his last ten years. He was instrumental in forming the Oregon AER Chapter and served as its president. He served on several international committees and had just completed his term as AER's Northwest Regional Rehabilitation Representative at the time of his death.

The establishment of this award is a fitting tribute to Sandy Kronick and to all the O&M specialists who forego promotions or higher paying career changes in order to continue doing what they know and love best, namely teach Orientation and Mobility. The award will be given only when a worthy recipient is determined.

Past Recipients of the Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award are:

1994 Sandy Kronick, posthumously	2006 Laura Park-Leach
1996 Kathleen Newman	2008 None
1998 Richard Russo	2010 Pat Zeinstra
2000 Lukas Franck	2012 Gene Bourquin
2002 William P. McCloskey	2014 Lea Ann Myer, Tom Rotunno
2004 Vince Fazzi	2016 Marjorie Wood
	2018 Christopher Tabb

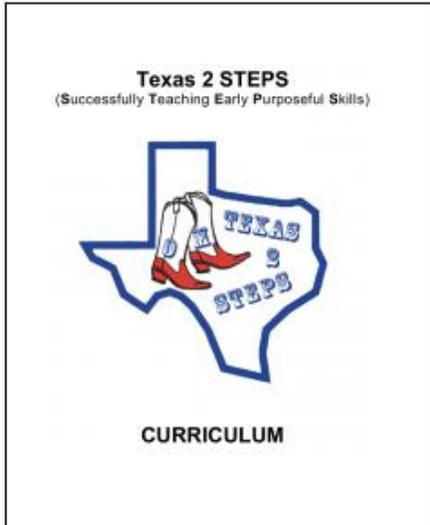
Intersection Traffic Safety Video Series

Mark O'Brien, COMS

A few years ago I was on an intersection safety committee to reduce fatal and severe injury crashes here in Missoula, Montana. I was doing presentations at the local driver education classes and ended up doing a video that the driver education instructors in Montana can show to their students. If there are any orientation and mobility specialists who like to do presentations on driver safety and the long white cane to young drivers, they might find this video useful. The video has five chapters with questions at the end of each chapter. Link to access the video: <https://Traffic Safety Video Series>

Evaluation Tool for Birth – Five

Marjie Wood and Jill Brown



Texas 2 STEPS is a new evaluation and curriculum tool designed for children birth to 5 years. When the project began in 2012, the need to have such a tool was vitally important in providing best practices to all children who were visually impaired. By 2013, Texas HB was passed, stating that, All students with visual impairments, upon initial referral to special education, will be required to have an O&M evaluation by an appropriately certified orientation and mobility specialist”.

<http://www.Alliancevitexans.org>

The *Texas 2 STEPS* evaluation tool is comprised of orientation and mobility skills unique to this young population. The 16 specific motor skill sets in mobility range from head control to early cane skills and the 9 specific orientation skill sets cover the various conceptual and sensory development in children. The curriculum contains supporting activities and routines for every evaluation skill. It also outlines the purpose of teaching the specific skill related to orientation and mobility for each child, infused skills, and the next steps in that skill development. Although both the evaluation and curriculum are designed for children who have visual impairments and/or blindness, it is also appropriate for children who have additional disabilities including DeafBlindness, orthopedic impairments, other health impairments, and intellectual disabilities. This curriculum addresses needs for children in all settings i.e., the home, daycare, school and community. We're excited that we're hearing positive feedback from this easy-to-use tool. For additional information, please visit the online store at tsbvi.edu/store.

District Director Reports

District 3 – Maggie Winn

Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ontario and Wisconsin

Illinois

Make sure to check out the upcoming events for clients at Second Sense at 65 E. Wacker Place Suite 1010 in downtown Chicago. Upcoming events include 1 Touch Self Defense and much more!

<https://www.second-sense.org/calendar/>

It is time to submit a proposal to present at the 2020 IAER Conference!

Proposals must be submitted no later than September 17 and the lead presenter receives a \$50 conference registration voucher. To submit a proposal, visit <https://tinyurl.com/ilaer2020proposals>.

Indiana

Indiana AER held its annual conference at Bosma Industries June 19-20. Thank you to everyone who made this year's conference a success!

Michigan

MAER Outreach and Recruitment Committee

MAER is looking for individuals who would like to be part of the Outreach and Recruitment Committee. Participants in this committee can earn ACVREP credit for their services.

The MAER annual conference will be April 23 and 24, 2020 at the Livonia Marriott. Look for the Call for Papers to go out this fall.

MDE-LIO

Come join Michigan Department of Education - Low Incidence Outreach at Camp Tuhsmeheeta for our first 2-day O&M and ILS Winter Workshop and SWAP! On day 1, come learn tools and techniques for winter travel. We will travel into Greenville to train and practice our winter O&M skills. Then we'll return to Camp T, where we'll build skills for teaching independent living skills in areas such as hygiene and cooking. Explore winter recreational activities such as cross-country skiing and sledding. Meet by the fire with your fellow O&M, TVI and VI paraprofessionals to share your ideas and resources. On day 2, practice what you have learned with students and families. The cabins will be available Thursday night to professionals and Friday and Saturday night for both families and professionals. Space in the cabins may be limited depending on the number of registrations we receive. Registration will be posted on mdelio.org in the near future.

Programs at Leader Dog

Orientation and Mobility Services

Leader Dogs for the Blind is accepting client applications for 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 <https://www.leaderdog.org/programs/accelerated-om-training/>

Guide Dog Seminar for COMS

This seminar introduces practicing O&M professionals to our guide dog training, travel and field support requirements. Participants have the opportunity to experience guide dog problem-solving and preview GPS navigational technology. Participants receive 10 to 12 ACVREP continuing education credits.

- Eligibility Requirements:
 - Participants must have completed university coursework and graduated at least six months prior to the seminar.
 - Participants must be certified orientation and mobility specialists with at least six months of experience.
 - Participants must not have previously attended this seminar within the last five years.
- Challenge Level: Easy to moderate
- Upcoming seminar:
 - Wednesday, May 27–Friday, May 29, 2020. **Application deadline:** April 27, 2020.
<https://om-guide-dog-seminar-application/>

Summer Experience Camp for 16 and 17 year olds

Summer Experience Camp is a unique opportunity for teenagers who are 16 and 17 and are legally blind. To help teens prepare for the next stage of their lives, we offer leadership development, an introduction to guide dogs, and the opportunity to spend time with peers. GPS devices are incorporated throughout the week in a variety of useful environments, including a college campus. Campers also experience tandem biking, beep kickball, rock wall climbing and more!

Summer Experience Camp will be held Wednesday, June 24-Wednesday, July 1, 2020.

Application deadline is Wednesday, April 1, 2020. <https://apply-for-summer-experience-camp/>

District 6 – Valery Kircher

Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virgin Islands, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington D.C.

Orientation and Mobility - Mapping Their Success, Professional and Family Development on September 13-14, 2019 at Maryland School for the Deaf (flyer attached)

Virginia AER 2020 Conference

March 30, 2020 to April 1, 2020

DoubleTree Hilton Hotel, Charlottesville, VA

DC-MD AER, in partnership with the Maryland State Steering Committee for Programs Serving Students with Visual Impairments

“Closing the Gap for our Students and Clients”

2020 Annual Conference in Annapolis, Maryland (location TBD)

March 26 and 27, 2020

AERO Division Day- Together Towards Tomorrow

Friday, October 25, 2019 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM (Eastern Time)

Ohio State School for the Blind

5220 North High Street

Columbus, OH 43214

Division Executive Committee

CHAIR: Chris Tabb
EMAIL: christophert@mdschblind.org

PAST CHAIR: Justin Kaiser
EMAIL: justin.kaiser@uky.edu

CHAIR ELECT: JoAnne Chalom
EMAIL: jchalom@infocusmobility.com

SECRETARY: Jennifer Duncan
EMAIL: duncanj@d62.org

TREASURER: Anne Zanger
EMAIL: azanger@geneseeisd.org

DISTRICT 1: Loana Mason
EMAIL: loanam@nmsu.edu
(Alaska, Alberta, Arizona, British Columbia, Colorado, Hawaii, New Mexico, California, Nevada, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Northwest Territories, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Yukon Territories)

DISTRICT 2: John McAllister
EMAIL: jwmcallister@ualr.edu
(Arkansas, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Manitoba, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Saskatchewan, Texas)

DISTRICT 3: Margaret Winn
EMAIL: margaretkwinn@gmail.com
(Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ontario and Wisconsin)

DISTRICT 4: Claudia Libis
EMAIL: clibis13@gmail.com
(Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, New Hampshire, New York, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Rhode Island, Vermont)

DISTRICT 5: Amanda Stolz
EMAIL: argordon08@gmail.com
(Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Puerto Rico, Tennessee)

DISTRICT 6: Valery Kircher
EMAIL: valeryherring@yahoo.com
(Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virgin Islands, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington D.C.)

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

Susan Langendonk, Editor
susanlangendonk@gmail.com
Next deadline: December 1, 2019

Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired
5680 King Centre Drive, Suite 600, Alexandria, VA 22315
aer@aerbvi.org ■ www.aerbvi.org ■ <https://aerbvi.org/oandmdivision>