



## AER Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT) Division

### VRT News Winter, 2020

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#### **Message from the Chair**

Greetings colleagues, friends, and vision rehabilitation professionals alike--

Spring is in the air and longer days are upon us! I hope with the new spring energy you find renewed hope and power in all that we do. Daily, we should be taking stock in what we can and what we do for our clients and for each other.

In the near present, YOU will have the opportunity to once again decide the future leadership of our division by voting for a chair-elect and treasurer secretary. With this, please give some thought to how YOU might be involved in our division. What can we do bigger, better, brighter and bolder? I would be thrilled to hear from YOU! YOU are the VRT division! Enjoy the coming sunshine!

Be well,

Amber Mooney, M.Ed. CVRT  
AER VRT Division Chair

## **Watercoolers: Learning and Earning CEU's!**

**Who:** Maggie Elgersma is a Western Michigan University grad and a Certified Low Vision and Vision Rehabilitation Therapist. She has worked at the Central Blind Rehabilitation Center at the Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital for 11 years. She previously has worked as an instructor in the Computer Access Training Department. Maggie was also the Polytrauma Blind Rehabilitation Outpatient Specialist. She is currently the Supervisor of the Visual Skills and Computer Access Training Department.

**What:** Virtual Educational Session: *Head Mounted Devices*

**When:** Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at 7:30pm Eastern

**Why:** Earn CE Hour! This session will provide a discussion about Head Mounted Devices (HMD), what they do, pros and cons of the device, and assessment/training protocol. The session will give participants a chance to define what a HMD is and describe general features of the device(s). In addition, participants will gain knowledge about the benefits and misconceptions of HMD's; and acquire a better understanding of the assessment and training protocol for HMD's

## **When You Can't Believe Your Eyes: Vision Loss and Personal Recovery**

By Hannah Fairbairn

Charles C. Thomas Ltd. Publisher, 2019

I am delighted that *When You Can't Believe Your Eyes* is now available on NLS Talking Books and on Bookshare; also in print and on Google Play Books as an audio or eBook.

For anyone not on Talking Books whose finances are stretched, the Google Play Books version is available free by filling out a simple form on the companion website: [WhenYouCantBelieveYourEyes.com](http://WhenYouCantBelieveYourEyes.com).

The book is a guide and “how to” book for adults facing vision loss, their friends and families. Everyone losing vision needs access to information about the process of adjustment, up-to-date resources, and a clear understanding of positive assertive speech to get their needs met:

The loss of eye contact, facial expression and body language disconnects people with vision impairment in social and business settings. The book offers tips and tricks for speaking up in all kinds of situations including coaching any helper.

Once someone has understood how spoken communication has to alter when the big visual component is mostly missing, and has practiced a new “speak-up” style, self-confidence can return. She or he can move away from dependence on family or worse; potential social isolation.

The second half of the book demonstrates positive assertive speech in all kinds of situations with increasing independence. When You Can’t Believe Your Eyes is concise, with twelve chapters arranged in five parts, following the phases of adjustment to vision loss. Each chapter contains many short sections and bullet-point lists for quick access to information.

I hope teachers and counselors talk about this visual disconnection to their clients, and encourage small practice groups to try out different solutions in stores, at medical appointments, social events, and more.

Hannah Fairbairn

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## **Lights! Camera! Action?**

The days of 60, 75 or 100 watt incandescent light bulbs being your only lighting option had come and gone. The world of illumination has become a domain in which CVRTs may wish to avail themselves. Consider becoming familiar with terms such as incandescent, fluorescent. Halogen, LED, wattage, kelvins and lumens. These are all terms associated with lighting. Wattage refers to the amount of electricity needed to illuminate a bulb. A

higher watt bulb will be more expensive to use but may be more inexpensive to purchase initially. . Both halogen and incandescent bulbs operate with a higher wattage and can be hot to the touch. Fluorescent bulbs can come in different shapes and sizes and the bulbs use a moderate amount of electricity. Light emitting diodes or LEDs are available in many shapes, and sizes. Their brightness can vary and they are a low wattage option, cool to the touch and less expensive to use.

Lumens refers to the brightness of a light. The higher the lumens, the brighter the light. Kelvins on the other hand refer to the appearance of the light. For instance a light may be referred to as warm white, soft white, cool white or daylight. Many commercially made table lamps and floor lamps contain LED lights that have options for adjusting both the Kelvins and the Lumens although you may not be able to determine exact kelvin and lumen levels from lamps like this. There are some “smart” bulbs that connect with the internet. This type of bulb when used in conjunction with a smart phone can give more precise information. When performing a lighting evaluation consider if the student/client has a preference for overhead lighting, task lighting or a combination of both. During a functional vision assessment, preferred lighting may be determined by demonstrating the various Kelvins that are available to you. A lamp with 2750K is a warmer light and may appear more yellow in color. As the K number increases the color changes and may appear more white n color. After determining if the student has a preference of Kelvins, adjust the brightness and discuss how changing these settings may affect their functional abilities. Note weather or not there is a change in their visual functioning.

Other factors to consider, not all light fixtures and dimmer switches are compatible with LED lighting. The initial investment in LED lighting can sometimes be off putting, however the package information can provide an estimation of the cost of using the lightbulb. Most often price of usage is based on 3 hours of use per day. Also LED bulbs last an average of 20-30X longer than an older style bulb.

**It's a bird...it's a plane... it's AER INTERNATIONAL!!!**

Earn CEU's, rub elbows, grown and learn, have fun! The 2020 AER International Conference this year is in St. Louis, Missouri the gateway to the country and beyond! July 22-26.

With conferences come **Awards!** We know that all VRTs dedicate themselves to their work and go out of the way for consumers. However, we know there are those out there who do it all on a level that is just barely human and deserve the recognition. Check out the awards below, what they represent, who has won them before and how you can nominate them. Please don't let the list of procedures overwhelm you! YOU deserve to go in the history books!

**DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS: APRIL 15.**

Please don't let the process get in your way; send in what you can!

**VRT Division Awards & Criteria**

**The Bruce McKenzie Award for Lifetime Achievement**

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

Criteria:

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

### Nominating Procedures:

- All nominations should include biographical information, education and training, employment history, leadership qualities, contributions, achievements and professional memberships.
- All nominations must be submitted and seconded in writing.
- If possible, a copy of the nominee's curriculum vitae should be included.
- The Division Awards Committee shall select the award recipient.
- Nominations must be submitted to Chair & Chair-Elect and Awards Committee Chair.

### Past Bruce McKenzie Award Recipients:

2010 B.J. LeJeune

2012 Lenore Dillon

2014 George Abbott

2016 John McMahon

2018 Laura Vittorioso and Diane Weiss

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

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

### Criteria:

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

### Nominating Procedures:

- All nominations should include biographical information, education and training, employment history, leadership qualities, contributions, achievements and professional memberships.
- All nominations must be submitted and seconded in writing.
- If possible, a copy of the nominee's curriculum vitae should be included.
- The Division Awards Committee shall select the award recipient.
- Nominations must be submitted to Chair & Chair-Elect and Awards Committee Chair.

Past Certificate of Recognition Award Recipients:

2010: Susan Dalton  
 2010: Patricia Smith  
 2012: Marybeth Harrison  
 2014: John McMahon  
 2016: Polly Abbott

**The Alice Raftary Rising Star Award**

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

Criteria:

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

Nominating Procedures:

- All nominations should include biographical information, education and training, employment, leadership qualities, contributions and achievements.
- A supervisor or professional mentor should submit the nomination.
- All nominations should be submitted and seconded in writing.

- If possible, a copy of the nominee's curriculum vitae should be included.
- The Division Awards Committee shall select the award recipient.
- Nominations must be submitted to Chair & Chair-Elect and Awards Committee Chair.

Past Rising Star Award Recipients:

2010: Ian Shadrick  
 2012: Cammy Moraros  
 2014: Joseph Jorgenson  
 2016: No Award Presented  
 2018: Amber Mooney

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

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

Criteria:

- Author(s) must be a member(s) of the VRT Division.
- The publication should be within the current biennium (July 2006—June 2008)
- The publication submitted should contribute to the rehabilitation field and enhance our knowledge base.

Nominating Procedure:

- Nominations may be submitted by the author or by another member of the Division.
- A copy of the publication must be submitted to the Awards Committee. Only publications costing over \$25 will be returned, please indicate as such with your submission.
- If possible, a copy of the author's curriculum vitae should be included.



- The Division Awards Committee shall select the award recipient and the division of the honorarium, if necessary.
- Nominations must be submitted to the Chair-Elect and Awards Committee Chair.
- Cover letter must include: Author's name and Contact Information; Nominator's name and contact information (if different than author); A Brief Summary of the Publication (no more than 2 paragraphs) of the significance of the publication; Publication date(s)/ Website date(s); and Publication title and credits.

Past VRT Publication Award Recipients:

2010: Vision Aware  
 2012: Margaret Cleary  
 2014: John McMahon & Kristy Swallow (Co-Authors)  
 2016: Maureen Duffy  
 2018: Steven Kelley

## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**April 15, 2020** Deadline for articles for next issue of VRT News. Send articles to Amber Mooney at [amooney@theiris.org](mailto:amooney@theiris.org).

### **Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Division Board Contact Information**

Chair: Amber Mooney, M.Ed., CVRT  
[amooney@theiris.org](mailto:amooney@theiris.org)

Please contact me if you have any questions, concerns, or errors regarding the VRT newsletter.