



The AERial View



Newsletter of the Northern California Chapter,
Association for the
Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind
and Visually Impaired

Volume 15, No. 3

June 2004

Pat Leader, Editor

From the President's Desk . . .

Our Awards Banquet and Installation Ceremony for new officers was a wonderful evening at Scott's on Jack London Square. Congratulations to the award recipients, and thank you to our new Board members for their commitment to serve our chapter.

We were extremely fortunate to have our very own chapter member and President Elect of AER International, Dr. Greg Goodrich, as our Installation Officer. In his talk, Greg emphasized the need for chapter activities to support the national agenda of AER and for the national organization to encourage and support the local activities of the chapter. This event was a fine example of those principles. Thanks Greg.

As I find myself making the last of these presidential comments, I am even more enthusiastic about the challenges and rewards of serving persons who are blind or visually impaired. My term as president of NCAER has enabled me to focus on the issues with which I have been struggling my entire career: the need for specialized services, support for the full array of service delivery options, the teacher shortage, the caseload crisis, the need to ensure sufficient intensity and frequency of services. These are all inter-related issues and are the same ones we've been working on for the past several decades.

In fact, I sometimes hear other professionals groan at leadership meetings: "We're still discussing the same problems. . . We haven't gotten anywhere." However, I will disagree. We've made progress on all of these fronts, in spite of setbacks. Sometimes external forces create obstacles to the accomplishment our goals. Sometimes we manage to muck things up without any outside help. However, we are always in there, fighting the good fight, working together, and struggling to make progress.

It is a mistake to become frustrated because we have not solved the issues that confront us. Perhaps we just need the wisdom to know that the fight is worth the effort, because the objective is so important: **access to quality services for all those with visual impairments.**

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as NCAER president these last two years. For those of you who have yet to serve as a member of the NCAER Board or as an officer, let me strongly encourage you to consider that role. You will find yourself working alongside some of the best people you'll ever meet, and you'll find that you get much more reward from the experience than you could ever imagine. . . **I did.**

Stuart Wittenstein, Ed.D.

NCAER President 2002-2004

NCAER 2004-2006 Officers and Board Members

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Student Representative: Sadiya Espino

Elections and Awards

By Stephen A. Goodman

Many NCAER members had the opportunity to enjoy the fun and festivities of the Biennial NCAER Awards Banquet, held at Scott's Seafood on Jack London Square. Following a superb regale, awards were presented. The evening concluded with the installation of our 2004-2006 slate of officers.

Nominators presented awards to:

Yia Thao	Senior Student of the Year
Barbara Goldenberg	Paraprofessional of the Year
Alec Karp	Rehabilitation Specialist of the Year
Cheryl Besden	Educator of the Year

The comments of presenters and recipients were well received, and reminded us of the values we hold as professionals, and our commitment to our field.

Our own Greg Goodrich, President-Elect of AER International, acknowledged the contributions our chapter members have made to International AERBVI. In addition to Greg, Pat Leader is running for a second term as Board Representative, Tony Candela is Division Chair Elect of our Rehabilitation Division, Sharon Sacks is Chair of the Personnel Prep Division and past president of AER International, Amanda Lueck is running for Division Chair of Low Vision, and I am Chair-Elect of the Division of Psycho-Social Services. Greg has also been an International Board Member, and Treasurer.

Greg's comments emphasized that our organization focuses on "We" and "Us" and that he will be striving to ensure that the International Office and Board are not viewed as "They." He recounted how important it is to have involvement at the Chapter level, and went on to introduce our 2004-2006 officers.

President	Amanda Lueck
President-Elect	Anthony Candela
Past-President	Stuart Wittenstein
Treasurer	Sharon Hudson
Secretary	Pat Leader
Board Members	Kathleen Anderson Liz Barclay Jennifer Dorwin Stephanie Herlich Geoff Perel Paul Raskin
Student Board Member	Sadiya Espino

It is especially heartening to report that we had more members participating in elections than we have had in several years . . . Thank you for your interest and involvement.

Spotlight on Excellence

NCAER and SCAER Honor Samuel L. Genensky

Anyone who has ever seen or used a close-circuit television magnification system owes a debt of gratitude to the man honored at the 2004 NCAER banquet. Together with our sister organization in Southern California (SCAER), NCAER has purchased a 'brick' in the name of Sam Genensky for the American Printing House for the Blind's "Wall of Tribute," a part of APH's Leaders and Legends museum in Louisville, KY.

Born in New Bedford, Mass. In 1927, Sam Genensky's eyes were damaged by undiluted silver nitrate, used in all newborns at that time to prevent various diseases. He was left with no vision in his left eye and a best-corrected visual acuity in his right eye of 20/1000. Sam attended "sight-saving" classes through elementary school and one year at the Perkins Institute. Although he had enough vision to get by without it, Sam allowed the instructors at Perkins to teach him Braille. After a year, however, he yearned for the mainstream and returned to complete high school in New Bedford.

It was in high school that Sam used his first low-vision device. "I brought my father's World War I binoculars to school, and in my geometry class I used them to look at the chalkboard." A doctor at the Dartmouth Eye Institute suggested placing a plus diopter on the large lens of the binoculars, to use it for close reading. Thus, in his own way, Sam invented the first combination distance and near reading device for extreme low-vision persons.

Sam used this "giant bifocal optical system" throughout his remaining high school years, his undergraduate and graduate years, when employed as a mathematician at the U.S. Bureau of Standards from 1951-1954, and later at the Rand Corporation in Santa Monica, California.

These words, quoted from the March 2001 Braille Forum, summarize Sam's ultimate achievements:

"I was hired by Rand and I became a member of the senior staff of its mathematics department in the summer of 1958. While at Rand I not only did mathematics, but I also became involved in other problem areas of interest to the company. It was while working in one of these problem areas and while slumped over an inclined drawing board in an attempt to writ, that I received a visit from my colleague, Paul Baran. Paul observed what I was doing and said, "There has to be a better way for you to read and write."

I told him that I agreed and asked if he would join me in trying to find that better way. He said that he would and together with other Rand colleagues and professional friends at Aerospace Corporation and the Polaroid Corporation, we succeeded in designing and building the first practical and user-friendly closed circuit TV (CCTV) system for the partially sighted. We showed that prototype system at the 1968 annual meeting of the American Academy of Optometry, which was held at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. Via an article written by George A.W. Bohem, entitled 'Sam Genensky's Marvelous Seeing Machine' that appeared in the January 1971 issue of 'Reader's Digest', the world learned of our work."

"I received thousands of letters as a result of this article and hundreds of people came to the Rand Corporation to see and try our prototype device. From those people I learned that I was not alone in recognizing that partially sighted people were receiving services that were at best only suitable for the totally blind, or were receiving no help at all. I concluded that neither of these alternatives was satisfactory, and that a third alternative was needed. I therefore began working on that alternative and came up with the design of a center that would provide partially sighted people with a set of services that were designed to meet their special needs, and would encourage them to use all of their sensory capabilities, including their residual eyesight to remain or become an integral part of the overall society."

“I was given an opportunity to turn this thinking into concrete reality in 1975, when the medical staff of the Santa Monica Hospital in Santa Monica, Calif., invited me to create such a center at the hospital and to bring my own money to do so. I moved with two of my colleagues to the hospital in the fall of 1976, and with their help and the help of colleagues back at the Rand Corporation, obtained funds from the federal government in the fall of 1977 to create and operate a Center for the Partially Sighted. This center began providing services in the spring of 1978 and went on its own as a non-profit, tax exempt, public benefit California charitable corporation in April 1983. The center has served more than 14,000 individuals since it came into existence.”

As if these legacies aren't enough, Sam Genensky claims bragging rights to another innovation – one of widespread social import.

“Remembering my years at the Rand Corporation I recall with a smile on my face the many times I walked down the hall in search of a restroom. Now in those days the room doors of Rand were unpainted and blonde in color and the doors that led into restrooms had, at eye level, blonde plastic signs that were about three inches long and one and one-half inches high, into which were cut the word “men” or “women” as appropriate. To read these signs, I was obliged to bring my right eye to within an inch of them. All too frequently when I did this, the sign said “women;” a woman would open the restroom door and I would explain that I could not see well and had to get very close to the sign on the door to determine whether the door led into a men's or ladies' restroom.

Sometimes I think the lady believed me and sometimes I think she thought I was some kind of weirdo. The problem came to a head when the friendly guards in the lobby said to me good-humoredly, “Sam, we hear that you are smelling restroom doors.” That did it, and as a result, I came up with a scheme for marking rest room doors and restroom entrances that is now used in all new and renovated public buildings in California. So the next time you see or feel a triangular or circular restroom sign in a public building in California think of me; I am the character who had them placed there so that you and I could find the appropriate restroom without being embarrassed.”

When asked if there has been a major disappointment in his life, Sam talks about his disappointment that a classroom-based CCTV system he invented never made it into mainstream classrooms. The system allowed visually impaired children to operate cameras at their desk, focusing either down at their reading material or up at the chalkboard. The teacher had a monitor at his or her desk by which to see exactly what the student was looking at. It enabled more effective monitoring of the student and much easier interaction – especially since the teacher didn't have to run back and forth to the student's desk. In the end, Sam reports, the system was too expensive.

Still, Sam has his priorities in order -

“While I found my years at the Rand Corporation to be very exciting and stimulating, I can honestly say that the years that I spent developing CCTV systems, creating and running the Center for the Partially Sighted, and creating the signage that allows us to find the appropriate restroom in a public building have been the most enjoyable and satisfying years of my professional life.”

In honor of Mr. Genensky and his valuable accomplishments, the inscription on the “Wall of Tribute” reads:

Samuel Genensky
Father of CCTV
NCAER and SCAER

Submitted by Anthony R. Candela
May 2004

Announcements

Phil Hatlen, CEC Outstanding Leader of 2004

Philip Hatlen, superintendent of the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Austin, Texas, recently received the Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC's) 2004 Outstanding Leadership Award.

For more than 50 years, Hatlen has led efforts in shaping policy, advocating for, and developing best practices for students with disabilities. He spearheaded innovations in serving students with visual impairments, such as developing position papers on educating students with visual impairments that said highly specialized teachers are needed for these students. These position papers are still used today for curriculum design and service delivery. Additionally, Hatlen was the first to adopt a disability-specific curriculum for students with visual impairments.

Hatlen also led lobbying efforts on behalf of youth with visual impairments. He ensured these students received career education before adolescence and established a low-incidence funding source in California. In addition, Hatlen helped create *Choices for Children*, which ensures an array of placement options for students with visual impairments, and the *National Agenda*, a blueprint for providing quality educational services for this student population.

Hatlen also founded the Living Skills Center for the Visually Impaired, a post-secondary program for young adults who are blind. He developed innovative programs at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired as well, such as building partnerships between that school and local school districts so children can benefit from the strengths of both placement options.

The CEC Outstanding Leadership Award recognizes a CEC member who has made significant contributions to the Council and whose work has resulted in CEC being recognized for its commitment, leadership, and dedication to service for students with disabilities and/or gifts and talents.

NCAER Congratulates Phil on his dedicated career,
and a well-deserved award!

Position Openings

ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY SPECIALIST: The California School for the Blind seeks an Orientation and Mobility Specialist to join a team serving visually impaired, blind and deaf-blind students, many with additional handicapping conditions, attending CSB. If you are creative, enthusiastic, and enjoy working with highly skilled colleagues using a team approach, this job is designed for you. Position open until filled.

Contact: Stephen A. Goodman, D. P. P. S.
California School for the Blind
500 Walnut Avenue
Fremont, CA 94536
(510) 794 3800 x 210
FAX (510) 794 3993
Email sgoodman@csb-cde.ca.gov

HOME COUNSELOR--EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM: Part-Time Position Available in the Napa/Solano County Areas. In-home visits to provide parent education and support, information and referral, vision and developmental assessment and direct early intervention for infant and pre-school children with visual impairments, and their families; also consultation with program staff and medical community. **Minimum qualifications:** B.A. or B.S. degree, experience and/or training working with 0-6 year old children and families in a home-based program, strong interpersonal communication skills with diverse client populations, agencies and professionals, ability to work independently, dependable means of transportation and auto insurance for job-related travel. **Additional Qualifications and Experience:** Teaching credentials in VI, O&M, SH, or Early Childhood Special Education or equivalent, experience working with children with visual impairments and other disabilities, Masters degree in education related field, Spanish speaking/Bilingual, and familiarity with local early intervention services and resources.

Contact: Julie Bernas-Pierce, Program Director
Blind Babies Foundation
5016 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94112
(415) 586-6140 Fax: (415) 586-6279

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: THE BLIND BABIES FOUNDATION (BBF): BBF, of San Francisco, helps families meet the unique needs of infant and preschool children who are blind, visually impaired, or have multiple disabilities including a visual impairment. BBF has an annual budget of \$1.3 million and an administrative staff of 6, along with 13 home counselors. The organization is seeking an Executive Director with a strong interest in serving families of blind and visually impaired children. Must have proven nonprofit leadership, fundraising, administrative, and financial experience. Minimum of 3 years experience in a nonprofit leadership position required. View the complete job announcement at www.blindbabies.org.

This search is being conducted by CompassPoint Nonprofit Services in San Francisco

Calendar of Events

2004

June

- 8 – 18** – China-U.S. Conference on Educating Students with Special Needs, in Beijing, China. Sponsored by CEC, Global Interactions and the China International Conference Center for Science and Technology. Contact: Global Interactions 602-906-8886 or by email: <educ@globalinteractions.org>
- 10 – 13** – Guide Dogs for the Blind **Free** Seminar for Orientation and Mobility Instructors, in San Rafael, CA. Contact Leslie Edmonds at 800-295-4050 or ledmonds@guidedogs.com
- 23 – 27** – 107th Annual American Optometric Association Congress, in Orlando, FL. Contact AOA703-739-9200 or the website <www.aoa.org>
- 29 – July 5** – NFB Convention at the Marriott Marquis, in Atlanta, GA. Contact NFB at 410-659-9314 or www.nfb.org.

July

- 3 – 10** – ACB National Convention at the Sheraton, in Birmingham, AL. Contact Cynthia Tower at 800-424-8666, or the website <www.acb.org>.
- 12 – 16** - Assistive Technology Applications Certificate Program (ATACP) Workshop, in Monrovia, CA. Contact Kirk Behnke, Center on Disabilities, CSUN, 818-677-2578 or kirk.behnke@csun.edu.
- 13 – 18** - AER Biennial International Conference, “Where Dreams Come True,” to be held in Orlando, Florida, at the Hilton, Walt Disney World. Contact Barbara Sherr, CMP, at AER, toll free 877-492-2708 ext. 201.
- 30 – Aug. 1** – Guiding Eyes for the Blind Orientation and Mobility Seminar in Yorktown Heights, NY. Call: 800-942-0149 or bklayman@guidingeyes.org.

August

- 2 – 5** - Guide Dogs for the Blind **Free** Seminar for Orientation and Mobility Instructors, in Boring, OR. Contact Leslie Edmonds at 800-295-4050 or ledmonds@guidedogs.com.
- 2 – 6** - Assistive Technology Applications Certificate Program (ATACP) Workshop, in Washington, D.C.. Contact Kirk Behnke, Center on Disabilities, CSUN, 818-677-2578 or kirk.behnke@csun.edu.

September

- 17 – 19** - Guiding Eyes for the Blind Orientation and Mobility Seminar in Yorktown Heights, NY. Call: 800-942-0149 or bklayman@guidingeyes.org.

October

- 1 – 3** - Guiding Eyes for the Blind Orientation and Mobility Seminar in Yorktown Heights, NY. Call: 800-942-0149 or bklayman@guidingeyes.org.
- 9** - Lions Clubs International World Sight Day, held in various locations. Contact Lions Clubs International Headquarters, 630-571-5466 or www.lionsclubs.org.

9 – 11 - Back to the Roots of RT: Joint Conference of the Mid-America Conference of Rehabilitation Teachers and the Association of Southeastern Rehabilitation Teachers, in Chicago, IL. Contact Latisha Houston, 800-843-6154 dhsrsm@dhs.state.il.us.

15 – Lions Clubs White Cane Safety Day, held in various locations in the U.S. Contact Lions Clubs International Headquarters, 630-572-5466 or www.lionsclubs.org.

21 – 23 – National Braille Association Fall Meeting and Workshops, in Memphis, TN. Call: 585-427-8260 or nbaoffice@compuserv.com.

28 - 31 – CCB Convention in Los Angeles; further details will be published at a later date.

30 – JAC Meeting to be held at the Blind Children’s Learning Center in Santa Ana, CA, from 10:00 to 4:00. Contact Jane Vogel, 714-734-8651, for details.

November

5 – 7 – CAOMS Annual Statewide Conference at the Courtyard, by Marriott, in Pasadena. Contact Vince Fazzi at vfazzi@pacbell.net.

2005

January

31 – Deadline for submission of articles for a special theme issue of JVIB, on orientation and mobility (O & M). Inquiries to Kathy Huebner: KathyH@pco.edu, or William Wiener williamwiener@wmich.edu.

March

3 – 6 - CTEVH Annual Conference to be held at the San Francisco Airport Marriott in Burlingame. Contact: Steve Goodman, sgoodman@csb-cde.ca.gov

April

13 – 15 - World Cornea Congress V., in Washington, D.C. Contact American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery at 703-591-2220 www.ascrs.org/meetings/worldcornea05/corneacongress.html.

14 – 16 National Braille Association 28th National Conference and Workshops in Dallas, TX. Call: 585-427-8260 or nbaoffice@compuserv.com>

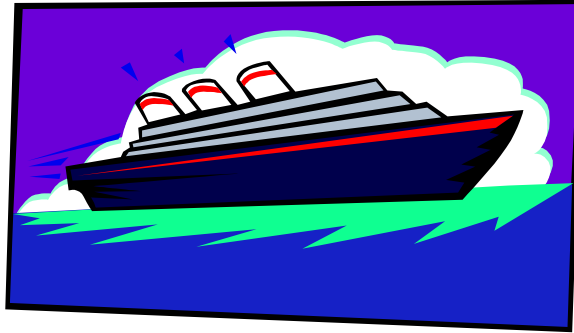
May

1 – 6 – Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology Annual Meeting, in Fort Lauderdale, FL. Call: 240-221-2900 or www.arvo.org.

June

27 – July 1 - 2005 Lions Clubs International Annual Convention in Hong Kong, China. Contact: Lions Clubs International Headquarters 630-571-5466 or www.lionsclubs.org.

**THE VIEW FROM HERE:
Learning from the Past, Planning for the
Future**



Join us in San Francisco

March 3-6, 2005
(Preconference March 3, 2005)

San Francisco Airport Marriott
1800 Old Bayshore Highway
Burlingame, CA 94010
(650) 692 9100
Hotel registration available as of
April 2, 2004

46th CTEVH CONFERENCE
CALL FOR WORKSHOPS
MARCH 4-6, 2005
Marriott Hotel, Burlingame

Response must be returned by October 1, 2004

Name _____

Title/Affiliation _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Title of workshop _____

Description (less than 100 words) _____

Panelists _____

Seating preferred Classroom Theater

AV equipment required (provide as much as you can)

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