



Message from the President

September 2020

Happy Fall! (My husband tells me that the meteorological fall began September 1st even though fall doesn't begin until September 22nd on the calendar. 😊)

Let me introduce myself to those who may not know me. I am Becky Smallwood, IN – AER President. I have been working as a COMS for almost 28 years. I am a private contractor/self-employed; I work with the VA, VR, and (thus far this year) two school systems. I travel across the state - lots of miles some days! 😊 Things are slow right now due to COVID, so I am cutting grass with my husband as well. It can be fun – no paperwork (for me)! Yeah!! Ha ha! On a personal note, we just celebrated our 22nd wedding anniversary & our daughter is in her second year at BSU.



Picture of pumpkins, apples, and various fall vegetables with a backdrop of a mountain and trees changing from green to yellow and orange.

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I would like to give a huge THANK YOU!!! to the past board members:

- President: Char Maternowski-Paul
- Past President: Krysti Hughes
- Treasurer: Marsha Egan
- Secretary: Tommie Roesch
- At Large Members: Katrina Anderson
Bianca Gerena-Perez
Jill Pangle
John Trueblood

President – Elect, Becky Deerr moved out of state. She tried to continue her Indiana membership long distance, but it was not conducive; she resigned. Thank you to her, as well for her time and efforts. Everyone did a great job during the past two years. Thank you again!

I would like to Welcome! the new board members:

- Past President: Char Maternowski-Paul
- President – Elect: Tommie Roesch

Treasurer: Samantha Kixmiller
Secretary: Krysti Hughes
At Large Members: Kurt Deichman
Jill Pangle
Amy Planalp &
John Trueblood

A special thank you to Jessica Hunt as well. She works hard behind the scenes running our website, setting up the Zoom meetings, is our technology guru and so much more! Thank you, Jessica!

The Board is already hard at work! It can be a bit overwhelming coming into a group that already has “irons in the fire” and trying to learn what is going on/what are you talking about? What is expected of me? Etc. Everyone is doing great! We are meeting via Zoom. Hopefully we will/are having some fun along the way as well! :) Feel free to contact any Board Member or leave a message on the website, www.in-aer.net, regarding your suggestions and/or concerns.

The Board has been busy preparing for the annual conference. It is being held October 26th & 27th. This year IN – AER is joining the PASS Project. We had hoped to meet at ISBVI, but now are going virtual. The good news is that the conference is now FREE! Yes, FREE! AND...we are still offering CEUs. All you & your coworkers must do is register and log-on. 😊 There will be two “tracts” – one more educational oriented and one for IN – AER. The choice is yours. The conference information may be found later in the newsletter as well as on the IN – AER website (www.in-aer.net). Don't miss out!

The tentative agenda includes two keynote speakers: Daniel Kish & Mika Baugh. Also presenting will be Indiana's own Deanna Austin (VA), Lenore Dillon (CVRT), and Dr. Hable (IU Low Vision Clinic). Marc Arneson will present from Hadley; Amy Schreiner from WMU, and Chris Tabb from Texas. It should be an interesting conference! Register now! At the end of the conference on the 27th, will be the IN – AER general membership meeting. We are going to propose a few changes to our By-Laws. It will be good for you to attend so that you will know on what you are voting. :}

2020 has been full of changes. Hopefully as the holiday season draws nearer, you will be able to spend time with your family and friends – whether in person or via technology.

“See” you at the IN – AER Conference in October!

Becky Smallwood, COMS
IN – AER President

IN-AER Fall Conference 2020

October 26-27, 2020

Earn FREE CEUs

Indiana AER has teamed up with PASS and ISBVI to present this year's conference 100% virtually and for free. You can register for the virtual conference by following the links that say "register now" on the IN-AER website.

October 26th session time: 8:30am - 4:30pm

October 27th session time: 8:30am - 1:15pm

***IN-AER General meeting for all to attend: October 27, 2020 1:15pm**

www.in-aer.net/2020-conference

**Presentations will be recorded for future playback with closed captioning. However, it will be available two to four weeks after the conference to ensure proper editing.

Registration Questions?
Contact Jennifer Mesanovic at (812) 237-8115 or
email Jennifer.Mesanovic@indstate.edu

Are you Current?

Make sure to check your AER Membership and renew! Being a member give you the opportunity to connect with and support other specialists and teachers in the field of blindness and low vision. Go the <http://aerbvi.org> to ensure your membership is current.

Committee Volunteers needed!

We are always in need of committee members. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer for any of the IN-AER committees, the chapter is looking for volunteers. The chapter is in need of volunteers to fill the **Membership Committee, Legislative Committee, and Finance Committee**. Interested members can inquire by emailing inaer2018@gmail.com. Full committee descriptions can be found on the IN-AER website at <http://in-are.net>.

Supporting Each Other Virtually

Krysti Hughes, COMS, TVI, CVRT

During the pandemic shutdown, there was some positivity with not meeting in person. One of the best experiences I had during this time, was setting up a “support” group that met virtually. Early in the pandemic, I learned about zoom meetings. I felt like I was “zooming” for everything. I got to thinking/missing my students and thought “why don’t we meet via Zoom”. I didn’t realize what I was getting myself into!

Due to the varying ages of the students, I grouped high school students and college students/clients separately. Meeting via Zoom was an opportunity to support each other, chat, and have a good time on a weekly basis. During these virtual meetings we practiced putting on masks, discussed how to socially distance, discussed technology, put up weekly challenges (even for me!) to help us stay in the moment and connected. These Zoom groups had been meeting weekly since March. Being back to teaching, we now have these meetings in the evenings (in my car while waiting for one of my boys to get out of practice!). Thank goodness, I am back to seeing and serving people in person!!

While I know my students loved meeting weekly (often they text me to set up the meeting and send out the invite), I benefited from these meetings too. Often times, I was dragging during this pandemic. I wasn’t myself! I finally realized why, I wasn’t working with people and teaching. These once a week meetings gave me and my students some sort of normalcy. It also gave them some support for each other. We were there to learn, to hang out, and to support each other. So, yes there are a couple good things from the pandemic that I have learned. Now my students from many different schools can connect with each other more than once or twice a year at our EAB events. Now they can chat weekly and not feel so alone.

Re-learn to Teach: Providing O&M to Students with Visual Impairment During COVID

By Jill B. Pangle, COMS

Cane. Check. Mask. Check. Hand sanitizer. Check. Sanitizer wipes. Check. Our checklist for going out into the community with our students and clients has drastically changed. What more do we need to add to our “tool box”??

Becoming a rehabilitation specialist for people that are blind or visually impaired was a moment of reshaping the way we teach already. Add a worldwide pandemic, things become even more different and difficult. As an O&M specialist we went from providing hands-on direct teaching to teaching behind a screen or socially distant from our students and colleagues. As rehabilitation specialists for the blind and visually impaired, we are now required to reshape the way we teach and provide essential services for our students with more caution.

We have changed the way we write our goals, how we provide the service, and how we approach our variety of students. When approaching a student’s goals, much consideration is put into how we can best serve them in the case virtual teaching is the only option. We increase the concept development aspect of our goals and fully consider the amount of time needed to work on these goals. Touching canes and physical reminders becomes an “essential need” basis, and instruction has become a more descriptive, hands-off approach. As well, we have to take a step back to ensure our students have a firm foundation of their basic skills, so that teaching can continue to be more hands-off.

I got the question often of “How do you teach O&M virtually?” Of course, some families have opted for their child be provided orientation and mobility services virtually. Providing virtual O&M has proven very difficult to many of us specialists. The big misconception people have about O&M is that we only teach the cane. There are skills and concepts that we have an opportunity to aim our focus so we can help our students develop better cane skills and travel. For example, our younger cane travelers we can work on basic body concepts and spatial awareness, while our older more advanced travelers can focus on technology to aid in safe traveling. Pre-COVID, we put a lot of focus on the direct teaching and cane travel, and in some cases our students are missing out on critical concepts to help them move to more complex skills. This time has given us an opportunity to give attention to the lacking concept or skill.

We have all been required to take on a very difficult role of continuing to help our students thrive during these crazy times. The most difficult being the ever-changing ways we have to teach and give our best to help our students become more independent and stronger individuals. But the most important requirement of all is supporting our students, clients, colleagues, and their families.

Go to the IN-AER Facebook page to keep the conversation going! How have you provided service during this difficult time? What have you learned and what type of ideas can you provide others in our field?

Become a Member

There are benefits to becoming a member. If you know someone in the field that isn't a member, here are a few perks!

- Discount to the IN-AER Conference
- Discount to national and international conferences
- Access to professional development
- Access to current and past publications
- Access to fellow professionals in your state, region, and occupation
- ACVREP credit
- Advocacy at local and national levels
- Low cost professional insurance

Most importantly, we support change and progress for our students and clients with visual impairment!

Up & Running

Reminder, the website is up and running. This is where you can find what you need for the IN-AER chapter. The chapter has revamped the website and made it work better for you. If you have content you would like to see on the website, let us know. Email us at inaercommunications@gmail.com

You will find newsletters, past award recipients, meeting minutes, and any information you need to know about Indiana AER Chapter. To see our new website, you can go to <http://in-aer.net>



What's Happening

IN-AER Board Meeting

All board and committee meeting are currently being held over zoom. All are welcome to attend meetings. For meeting zoom link, dates, and times visit <http://in-aer.net>

Current Standing Committee Meetings

Membership Committee Committee Chair: Becky Smallwood	Communications Committee Committee Chair: Krysti Hughes
Program Committee Committee Chair: Tommie Roesch	Finance Committee Committee Chair: Samantha Kixmiller
Bylaws Committee Committee Chair: Krysti Hughes	Nominations Committee Committee Chair: Becky Smallwood

Other Events

AER International Conference ~~2020~~ 2022

July 2022
St. Louis, MO
St. Louis Union Station Hotel

For More information go to www.aerbvi.org

IN-AER Fall Conference

October 26-27, 2020

Flyer is attached

From the “Eyes” of a Blind Infant

By Tommie Roesch

This is a story from the perspective of a blind child that is about 6 months old written by an Orientation & Mobility instructor.

Continued... It is my seven-month birthday today. I'm still not sure why they keep telling me it is my birthday, but I am more familiar with the voices of the new people and I do not mind them so much. They like to show me new toys and I always like new toys. They spend time talking to my mom and dad too and it seems to make mom and dad happy after they talk to them. So, I do not mind them coming over anymore.

The only thing that I do not like that they do, is when they are trying to get me to crawl on the floor. I kind of understand what it is that they want me to do but I wonder if they know that I am “blind” and cannot see what is in front of me. Do they know that there are still many sounds in my house that I do not understand and sometimes I hear my mom run into things? So, when they ask me to crawl to something I just lay there on my stomach. Sometimes I get on my hands and knees, if they help me get up on them. It's safer this way. They seem to get happy when I get up on my hands and knees, then they bring the toy so I will just do that for now.

Maybe that is what they mean by crawling; maybe it is just getting up on my hands and knees and getting toys brought to me. If it is then I can do this, and I will be happy to get on my hands and knees for my favorite toy, the raggedy old stuffed panda bear that jingles when you shake him. Besides, I only have to do this when the people come over to play with me otherwise my mom and dad will bring me all the toys.

To Be Continued...

2020-2022 Board Members

President Elect:	Tommie Roesch	Member at Large:	Kurt Deichman
President:	Becky Smallwood	Member at Large:	Jill Pangle
Past President:	Char Maternowski-Paul	Member at Large:	Amy Planalp
Secretary:	Kristi Hughes	Member at Large:	John Trueblood
Treasurer:	Samantha Kixmiller		

We are striving to provide quality professional support and development to the Indiana AER Chapter members, so that we can better teach and assist our students and clients to be self-sufficient, independent, and successful in present and future endeavors.

Hot AER is published by the Indiana AER Chapter (IN-AER).

If you have newsletter submission suggestions or articles for inclusion in Hot AER please go to <http://in-aer.net> to submit your ideas.