

The Arkansas Chapter of the Association for the Education and
Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired
February 2007 Newsletter
AR AER

P.O. Box 7248
Sherwood, AR 72124
www.araer.org

Notes From our Chapter President

Jo Ellen Croft

As I begin my first year as president of AR AER, I must convey how proud I am to represent an organization of such professional excellence. AR AER is an exemplary chapter, which has received national recognition in past years. I would like to remind you of the high level of professional service our chapter offers to its members.

Over the past few years our treasury has blossomed due to the fundraising efforts of our members. Treasury funds are used to support our membership through conferences, workshops, newsletters, scholarships, and advocacy efforts. In 2006 several professional development scholarships were awarded to Arkansas members to provide financial assistance for out-of-state conference expenses. In order to support the continuing education needs of our members, AR-AER has offered a variety of professional growth classes approved by the Academy. We also sponsor participation of an Executive Board Member to attend AERLift annually to represent our state and receive leadership training.

Communication with membership is crucial for any professional organization and AR AER is leading the way with our newly developed website.

Visit www.araer.org to review all the current activities of our chapter. To further enhance communication with its members, AR AER publishes a newsletter biannually, which includes updated information on agencies, future events and developments. In addition, our current secretary, Lis Geoghegan, has developed an e-mail database of our membership that will serve to deliver important information to members quickly. If you have not already heard from Lis, don't be surprised if you get e-mail from her in the near future.

Our state chapter is strong and most supportive of its membership. I encourage everyone to become more active in AER, not only on the state level, but on the national level as well. Our international conference held in July 2006 in Utah offered excellent opportunities for continuing education, networking, and pleasurable reunions with colleagues. Our Arkansas chapter was well represented with several of its members.

It is a privilege and honor to serve as your president. I look forward to seeing all of you at the

state conference in May at the North Little Rock Wyndham.

AR-AER Members Attend the AER International Conference in Utah

Sharon Niemczyk, AR-AER Chapter Past-President

The 2006 AER International Conference, Climbing HighAER, was held in Snowbird, Utah. Spending a week in July at a ski resort 8,000 feet above sea level and just east of Salt Lake City was an appealing idea. But to top it off, the mountain was swarming with people from the field of blindness.

The Arkansas chapter was well represented; we had close to 20 members attend. These enthusiastic Arkansans saw old friends and used the built in time for networking to get reacquainted. We also met people from all over the world who are the movers and shakers in the field.

The Friday before the conference began, the McFarland pre-conference focused on diabetes research, education and care. There were doctors, nurses, teachers, consumers and spouses who came together to present on the issues surrounding this disease. The keynote speaker for the McFarland pre-conference was Dr. Ian Herskowitz, MD. The ballroom was full for the general sessions and the break-out sessions were also well attended.

Saturday was division day. The divisions offered pre-conference training, meetings and networking. Division day was well attended. Saturday the flag ceremony was cancelled due to a mistake, and everyone was disappointed. The Mormon Battalion presented the American and Canadian flags. Our keynote speaker was Dr. Geoffrey Tabin, MD. Dr. Tabin is an ophthalmologist as well as a mountain climber. He has climbed to the highest peak on every continent, including Mt. Everest.

Sunday through Tuesday, general and concurrent sessions were in full swing. People would attend sessions and walk out talking about the great information or techniques presented. During free time conference attendees were seen using their

attraction passes. Snowbird offers several fun activities and attendees were offered a four-day pass. There was bob sled track, zip line ride, ski lift, aerial tram ride to the top of the mountain, a mechanical bull, and a gravity trampoline. There were two pools and four hot tubs for attendees to enjoy. For an extra fee, you could participate in wall climbing. The people who participated in wall climbing climbed the wall of the hotel. It was 12 stories high.

Monday night the host committee held an evening on the mountain. All the previously listed attractions were open as well as a bar-b-queue dinner, stargazing, bands, and story telling. The weather was perfect and the evening was enchanting.

Tuesday night was the evening on the town. Buses were chartered to take people down the mountain into Salt Lake City for an evening of fun. There was a rodeo, tour of the Mormon Tabernacle where the famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir was practicing, shopping, and a dinner cruise on The Great Salt Lake to name a few. Unfortunately, one of the buses broke down and the weather report called for thunderstorms and they were not allowing vessels on the lake. Even with the few glitches in the plans, our host committee pulled through and everyone enjoyed the evening.

Wednesday was the last general session and the final business meeting. Resolutions were passed, the new by-laws were amended and passed, and the new board was installed.

The 2006 conference committee along with the Utah host committee offered an awesome conference. We are now looking forward to Chicago in 2008!

Nominations Needed

Shelli Moore, AR-AER Nominations Committee Chair

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2007 AR-AER elections. All agencies are encouraged to nominate employees in order that the chapter Board represents our entire state's vision field. We rely heavily on the active participation by our retired members as well. Nominations are now being accepted for secretary, treasurer, and five at large board positions. Please send your nominations to Shelli Moore at smoore@asb.k12.ar.us or 501-296-1810.

AR-AER 2006-2007 Board of Directors Officers

President

Jo Ellen Croft
Facilitator for the Visually Impaired
Pulaski County Special School District
501-920-0596
jcroft0928@aol.com

President-elect

Bill Johnson
Political Action Committee co-Chair
Executive Director, Arkansas Lighthouse f/t Blind
501-562-2222
bjohnsonalb@sbcglobal.net

Past-President

Sharon Niemczyk
Membership & 2010 Host Committee Chair
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501-835-5448
sharonn@esvi.org

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501-538-5311
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Professor of O&M, UALR
501-247-4049
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Leonard Ogburn, Retired
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Shelli Moore
Social & Nominations Committee Chair
Early Intervention Coordinator, ASB
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Bette Parker
Early Intervention, ASB Coordinator
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bparker@asb.k12.ar.us

Secretary

Lis Geoghegan, CVRT, CTSVI
Newsletter & Professional Development Committee
Chair
Middle School Teacher, ASB
501-454-1554
LiveInSpirit@aol.com

Treasurer

Luanne Blaylock
Fundraising Committee Chair
Facilitator for the Visually Impaired
Pulaski County Special School District
501-831-6300
leblaylock@yahoo.com

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Coordinator of Rehabilitation Teaching and Low Vision,
LWSB
501-664-7100
cware@lwsb.org

Diane Woolly
Awards Chair
Retired (ASB)
501-664-4435
woolly@windstream.net

Ken Fowler
Assistant Principal, ASB
501-296-1810
arkken@yahoo.com

Kathy Brown
Conference Committee Co-Chair
Teacher of the Visually Impaired
Little Rock School District
501-447-5191
kkmbrown@sbcglobal.net

Minnie Rasberry, DSB
501-870-534
minnie.rasberry@arkansas.gov

Membership

Our chapter membership is staying steady at approximately 90 members. We lose a few and gain a few. My goal this year is to break 100 and keep it for several months.

Our chapter was honored at the International Conference in Snowbird, Utah for increasing membership by 5 percent from January to June.

As members, I hope you will all tell people about AR-AER. It is because of our members that we are able to offer a state conference every May. That conference is vital to keeping our organization going because of the social and professional development offered. It also allows our profession to grow because we are able to keep up by bringing in experts from the field.

If you are not a member or your membership has lapsed, please contact me or the AER central office for membership information.

sharonn@esvi.org

www.aerbvi.org

COZY AER HOODIES FOR SALE!!!

With cold weather upon us we all need a warm jacket to wear. What better than a toasty AER Hoodie? Our chapter has partnered with the Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind to make and sell these "cool" jackets. Made of washable fleece the hoodies are light gray with a classy "AER" logo embroidered in royal blue on the front. The hoodies zip and have a drawstring hood and are washable. We are selling them for \$35.00 in a variety of sizes. Mail orders are accepted for a price of \$40.00. Cash, check or charge will do! Production profit went to the Lighthouse and proceeds from sales go to our chapter. To get one, contact Luanne Blaylock (501-851-7863) or Bill Johnson(501-562-2222).

WintAER Social a Success

Shelli Moore & Bette Parker, Social Committee Co-Chairs

A special thanks to Shelli Moore and Bette Parker for arranging for the Arkansas AER members to gather at the beautifully decorated condominium's party room for the WintAER social on Tuesday, December 5, 2006. About 20 folks attended and a great time was had by all. Please join us for the next AR-AER social event to be announced later!

ICAN Offers Free Professional Training

Lis Geoghegan, Professional Development Chair

ICAN (Increasing Capabilities Access Network) will be offering two opportunities for free training on products for the visually impaired. On February 23rd training will be available on the VisuAide Trekker, a software application operating on Pocket PC (PDA) with WinCE fully adapted for the blind with maps and GPS information. On February 27th ICAN will be hosting an informational demonstration on products for the visually impaired, including environmental control units, screen reading programs, scanning and reading devices and portable magnifiers. The training is being offered at no cost and will

be held at ICON, 26 Corporate Hill in Little Rock. Anyone interested should contact Sharon Wofford at 501-683-3005 or srwofford@ars.state.ar.us for more information.

2007 Annual Arkansas AER Chapter Conference

Raising Canes: Let Your Voice be Heard!

Kathy Brown and Leanne Nannen, Conference Committee Co-Chairs

The AR-AER Conference committee is working hard to plan a spring event full of excellent professional development as well as opportunities for networking within our field and having fun. Continuing education credit will be offered to members of the Academy for the Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals, ACVREP. Also, most schools allow educational and administrative staff to use AR-AER conference training hours toward required ADE professional development hours. (Consult with your supervisor regarding documentation of this training for ADE.)

We have moved the conference this year to the beautiful Wyndham Hotel in downtown North Little Rock. Please mark your calendar and plan to join us on May 14 and 15 for “Raising Canes: Let Your Voices be Heard!”

This year, our keynote speaker will be Michael Higgenson, who will tell his inspirational story of his experiences as a dog guide user in the World Trade Center during the terrorist attack on 9/11. Other training sessions will include the following presenters and topics: Ginny McWilliams & Fiona Barnett, “Transition: What Happens After High School, What Next?”; Calvin Churchwell, “Recreational Activities For the Visually Impaired”; Jim Gandorf,

International AER Executive Director, “AER International and You”; Kay Ratzlaff, “The National Agenda,” and “Functional Vision Assessments and Multiple Disabilities”; Bill Jacobson & Theresa Mays, “O&M Basics” (participants must bring their own blindfold and white cane); and Lis Geoghegan, “Social Skills and Self-Advocacy”. Be sure to plan to attend the “State of Our State” continental breakfast, Tuesday morning, to hear all the exciting news our agencies from across our state have to share about the 2006-2007 year and what lies ahead for each. Representatives from the Arkansas School for the Blind, Lions World Services for the Blind, The Lighthouse for the Blind, Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Division of Services for the Blind, The University of Arkansas at Little Rock O&M, VRT and CRC departments, and Easter Seals will speak. Do not miss the annual business meeting on Tuesday morning, the fun-filled social Monday evening, nor the awards luncheon at the conclusion of the conference on Tuesday afternoon. (Details about each award and how to nominate a candidate to be an award recipient are included in this publication.) A registration form is included in this publication or can be downloaded from our web page at www.araer.org.

AR-AER CONFERENCE 2007 Registration Form
Raising Canes: Let Your Voice be Heard!
Wyndham Hotel, Little Rock
May 14 – 15, 2007

Name: _____
School or Agency: _____
Email Address: _____ When did you join: AER____ AAWB____
____ Please check here if you will need ACVREP CE credit for the conference.

Registration Fee:

Pre-registration (Before April 15, 2007)

Member: \$70.00__ Non-member: \$90.00__ Student/Retiree: \$25.00__

After April 15, 2006

Member: \$80.00__ Non-member: \$100.00__ Student/Retiree: \$35.00__

Conference Materials:

I would like to receive conference materials in the following format: (choose one)

Standard Print____ Braille____ Large Print____ CD____

____ Please check here if you would like an orientation to the hotel when you check in for the conference.

____ Please check here if you would like an orientation to the meeting area.

____ Please check here if you need a sign language interpreter.

____ Please check here if you need assistance at the buffet line.

____ Please check here if you do not give your consent to have any photographs of you taken at the conference included in future Aer publications or web site postings.

Special Needs: If you are entitled to any special needs as defined by the ADA, i.e. interpreter, and you opt to forego AR-AER providing this accommodation, attach a signed and dated written waiver clearly stating your decision. If you decide you do need special accommodations, please contact Lis Geoghegan at 501-454-1554 or lgeoghegan@asb.k12.ar.us.

IF SPECIAL NEEDS ARE TO BE MET THEY MUST BE CONVEYED BEFORE APRIL 1, 2007.

Please mail completed registration form and payment (checks made payable to AR-AER) to:

Luanne Blaylock, AR AER Treasurer
3 Hornrimme Ct.
Maumelle, AR 72113

For additional information, please contact:

Luanne Blaylock 501-831-6300

leblaylock@yahoo.com

Lis Geoghegan 501-454-1554

L.Geoghegan@asb.k12.ar.us

Kathy Brown 501-447-7424

kkmbrown@sbcglobal.net

Leann Nannen 501-871-8035

nannen@sbcglobal.net

Fundraiser News

Luanne Blaylock, Fundraising Committee Chair

Our Fundraising committee has been busy as always! We have sold numerous hoodies at various conferences/ meetings for a bargain price of \$35! This project has benefited both AR AER and the Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind. We extend many thanks to Bill Johnson who, with his staff, made these high quality jackets for us to sell. He and other AER members have worked hard selling them at various events. We plan to continue selling the hoodies through the winter months and will soon offer them on our website at www.ARAER.org.

Thanks also goes to Jimmy Jones who donated his creative talent and time to make miniature canes for us to sell as a fun novelty item. Jimmy kindly donated the materials cost and all profit to AR AER. We still have a few left for \$6 but they are going fast!

I am very excited to again announce our upcoming prize drawing. This will be our 6th drawing! The chapter historically makes

approximately \$5000 on this event. Committee folks are already collecting more great prizes to give away at the social May 14, 2007. Just a few so far include a diamond tennis bracelet, artwork, and weekend getaways. If anyone would like to donate something for the drawing or has a potential source for a donation, please contact Luanne Blaylock...I would be happy to contact them if necessary.

Plans for another silent auction in conjunction with the prize drawing are also underway. This year promises even more wonderful items to bid on! Last year's auction raised \$500!

Our committee works very hard on these projects. We are always looking for new members and new ideas for fundraising. If anyone would like to help in any capacity please feel free to contact Luanne Blaylock at (501-851-7863) or email me at leblaylock@yahoo.com.

UALR Orientation and Mobility Update

Dr. Bill Jacobson

The UALR O&M Program was well represented at this year's AER International Conference in SnowBird, Utah. Seven current online O&M students from Utah attended the conference and provided orientation to conference attendees at the Snowbird resort: Tiffany Lord, Nadine Passey, Carolyn Kwalleck, Amy Bailey, Paige Goodall, Judith Asay, and Shirley Jimenez. All participated in their Advanced Methods Seminar discussions overlooking the gorgeous

mountains of the resort, as well.

It was great fun to visit with a number of O&M graduates from the program and everyone seemed to have a great time and enjoyed the various presentations.

Congratulations to the following recent graduates of the O&M program who received their COMS: Elizabeth Kane, Sherri Speyrer, Danny Fuller, Nannette

Easterling and Maryanne Genova. They join 90+ other current COMS who have graduated from the UALR O&M Program.

AR-AER Awards

Diane Woolly

The Arkansas AER Awards Committee presents awards on an annual basis to recognize outstanding professionals and advocates within the field of blindness and visual impairment.

Nominations for each of the following awards and scholarships are considered: APH Hall of Fame Legends, J. Max Woolly Award, Joyce Ogburn Award, Tom Phifer Award, Arkansas Distinguished Advocate Awards and the Bill Tomlin Scholarship. The criterion for each award is listed below.

Please note that the APH Hall of Fame Legends is a recently established honor, which must be voted on by the entire AR-AER Board.

Nominations are currently being accepted for 2007 awards, which will be presented at our annual state conference on Tuesday May 15, 2007.

Nominations and support letters will be accepted through April 15, 2007. Nominations for Hall of Fame must be received by March 1, 2007.

All correspondence should be sent to:

Diane Woolly
Awards Committee Chair
6904 Briarwood Drive
Little Rock, AR 72205

J. Max Woolly Award

This award is presented in recognition of outstanding contributions in the field of work for people with visual impairments. The award may be given to an AER member for the following reasons:

1. Efforts far in excess of those of similar professional rank.
2. Professional excellence or accomplishment and outstanding achievements in one's own profession.
3. Personal intervention, which has directly helped a visually impaired client who was classified as difficult with the assistance changing the client to a successful orientation.
4. Research or literature accomplishments.
5. Development of a new technical adaptation or strategy that will benefit the consumer.
6. Accomplishments in the area of organization of and for the blind.

This award is not necessarily given each year, but only when the awards committee feels it has been earned. Nominations should refer to the specific criteria met by the nominee and should be accompanied by letters of support. Letters of nomination must be from current AER members.

Joyce Ogburn Memorial Award

The Joyce Ogburn Memorial Award is dedicated to the memory of Joyce Ogburn, a teacher at the Arkansas School for the Blind from 1971 to 1985. The dedication she showed to her students, school and colleagues was an inspiration to all who knew and worked with her. This award is meant to inspire others to walk in her footsteps and will honor only those who aspire to her ideals. The award will be made when deemed appropriate by the AER Awards Committee on the basis of the following:

1. Nominations may be made by AR-AER members only.
2. Recipients must be AR-AER members.
3. The recipient must be an instructor/teacher of visually impaired persons.
4. The award will be presented to a person who had rendered outstanding service in the field of education or rehabilitation of the visually impaired as demonstrated by:
 - a. Willingness to work beyond usual job requirements;
 - b. Concern for individual needs of students or clients
 - c. Involvement in professional organizations;
 - d. Dedication to the highest professional ideals

Tom Phifer Award

This award is in recognition of Tom Phifer, an Arkansas rehabilitation counselor who worked tirelessly to improve and enhance employment opportunities for persons who are blind and visually impaired. The award is to be given to an individual working in the field of blindness who has made significant contributions toward the independence of blind and visually impaired persons living in the state of Arkansas. Contributions may be made in the following areas:

1. Professional excellence or accomplishment in the area of rehabilitation teaching or vocational rehabilitation.
2. Utilization of new strategies, techniques, or equipment to achieve the independence goals of individuals with visual impairments.
3. Promotion of a positive image for potential employment of individuals who are blind and visually impaired.
4. Promoting the transition of persons who are blind or visually impaired into an independent lifestyle.

Recipients of this award must be members of AR-AER and the award will only be given when an individual with significant merit is nominated. Nominations must refer to specific criteria and should be accompanied by letters of support. Letters of nomination must be from current AER members.

Arkansas Distinguished Advocate Awards (For Groups and Individuals) ("ADAA Boy Awards")

These two awards are designed to honor individuals and organizations, groups, or businesses outside our "traditional" professional field. Contrary to other established awards, these will be announced prior to the state conference. The criteria for the awards are as follows:

1. Nominations for either award can come from any source.
2. Awards recipients are NOT limited to citizens of Arkansas or AER members.

3. The nominated person or group must demonstrate outstanding contributions to the dignity, independence and/or advancement of persons who are visually impaired in Arkansas.
4. The person or group efforts should benefit Arkansans who are blind or visually impaired.

APH Hall of Fame Legends

Guidelines for the AER Board to place individuals on the Hall of Fame Legends Wall at American Printing House for the Blind:

1. The AR-AER Board will vote on who should be honored for the Wall of Legends Plaque.
2. The Honor will not be a yearly award, but will be made at the discretion of the Board.
3. The dollar amount to be paid for the plaque will be determined by the AR-AER Board
4. Any AER member in good standing may submit a nominee to a current AR-AER Board member.
5. Board members may also nominate individuals for this award.

Criteria: In order to be considered for this nomination the chairperson of the Awards Committee should verify the following:

- The nominee must have been retired from his or her primary work in the field of vision for at least five years.
- The nominee's career should have been for at least twenty-five years in duration in the education or rehabilitation fields.
- A nominee should have been a twenty-year active member of AEVH, AAWB, or AER (combinations of these organizations is acceptable).
- An active member is an individual who has attended or presented at state and international conferences on a regular basis, has served on committees, held an office, or served on the Board of AEVH, AAWB, or AER.

Bill Tomlin Scholarship Award

This award was established by the Arkansas Chapter of the Association for Rehabilitation and Education of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AR-AER) to honor the memory of long time AR-AER member and past-president Bill Tomlin. A monetary award will be made each year to a student who is blind or visually impaired and who will be enrolled in a post-secondary educational or vocational training program for the 2007-2008 school year. Funds will be awarded for the purchase of textbooks, specialized materials or adaptive equipment. The award this year will be in the amount of \$1,000.

Eligibility Criteria:

1. Applicant must be legally blind and enrolled or planning to enroll in a post-secondary or educational program.
2. Applicant must currently be a legal resident of the state of Arkansas.
3. Applicant must submit a signed application with required supporting documents to the AR-AER Awards Committee Chairperson by April 15, 2007.

**Bill Tomlin Scholarship Award
Application Form Page 1 of 2**

Personal Data:

Name: _____

D.O.B. _____

Address:

Phone: Home _____ Other: _____

Cause of Visual Impairment:

Visual Acuity:

Method of Reading (check all that apply)

- Braille Recordings Large Print Regular Print Live Readers
 Other

If other, please explain _____

Educational Background:

Current or most recent school or training facility attended:

Name of School:

Address

Proposed or Current Field of Study:

Cumulative Grade Point Average, if applicable _____ *(Based on four point scale)*

**Bill Tomlin Scholarship Award
Application Form Page 2 of 2**

Supporting Documentation

Autobiography: Include no more than one to two type written pages listing personal goals, perceived strengths and needs, hobbies, honors, extra-curricular activities, achievements, etc.

If you have decided upon a field of study or a particular area of training, indicate why you are interested and your reasons for choosing that particular field of endeavor.

References: Two letters of recommendations from instructors/counselors at schools or facilities, which you have attended.

Transcript: A certified transcript of your grades from the school you are presently attending, or have most recently attended if applicable.

Conditions for Award

1. Proof of acceptance from applicant's choice of post-secondary training site is required before the monetary award can be made.
2. Scholarship recipients will be notified of the award prior to the annual state AR-AER Conference. Public announcement and acceptance of the award will take place at the conference awards luncheon, May 15, 2007 at 12:00 p.m.
3. Monetary awards will be made by AER directly to the post secondary educational or training facility indicated by the applicant. Awards may also be paid directly to specified vendors or agencies for the purchase of adaptive equipment.

Applicant's Signature:

Date: _____

Lions World Services for the Blind Prospers in 2006

Shelby Brewer

What an exciting and fulfilling year it has been at Lions World Services for the Blind in Little Rock, Arkansas! This year, we have helped approximately 300 blind and visually impaired adults gain independence and become productive members of society. We were proud to officially welcome our 9,000th trainee to LWSB (based on number of trainees we have served since the center opened in 1947), and the number of trainees we serve continues to increase as the need for our comprehensive services grows.

In October, we welcomed a couple that traveled all the way from Alexandria, Egypt, to receive basic childcare training at LWSB. Heba Kholeif, who has been totally blind since birth, was seven months pregnant when she came to LWSB. The 27-year-old had never taken care of a child, nor had she even held a baby. Her husband, Tamer, who is also blind, did not have any childcare experience. They both received individualized training on techniques such as feeding, clothing and bathing a baby. Now, they are back at home in Egypt and are raising their newborn girl, Rowan, with total confidence, thanks to the special LWSB training.

2006 was a successful year in terms of attendance at LWSB fundraisers and increased public awareness. Our annual Vision Award fundraiser, hosted by the World Services for the Blind Foundation, attracted more than 600 people – a record turnout. This year, we presented the award to Warren Stephens, CEO of Stephens Inc. We also had a successful Treat Your Treasure luncheon in April, hosted by the Angels of the Blind Auxiliary, and a Crazy Shades

event in October, hosted by the Junior Angels of the Blind, our newly formed group of young professionals. To wrap up the year, the World Services for the Blind Foundation hosted the annual Holiday Visions event. In addition, we helped spread the word about our services by hosting several open houses and tours for community leaders, and we have plans to host several more in 2007.

We are very proud to announce that LWSB has been named a finalist in this year's Arkansas Business of the Year Awards in the Non-Profit category for the second time. In other exciting news, next year will mark the 60th anniversary of LWSB. We plan to celebrate this significant mile marker with a community event. With a new year also comes a new and improved website for LWSB. We have been working with students from the Information Technology program at UALR to redevelop our website – to make it more accessible and more visibly pleasing. Plans to officially launch the new site are slated for early 2007.

While it may be several years before we are ready to open our new campus, efforts to move LWSB to downtown Little Rock are in full swing. LWSB has purchased property east of Interstate 30 on Sixth Street between Collins and College streets. The new complex will allow LWSB to double the number of trainees served. Construction on the 167,000-square-foot campus is slated to begin in 2008. The entire project, including the property purchases, should cost about \$25 million. For more information about LWSB, please call (501) 664-7100 or visit www.lwsb.org.

Educational Services for the Visually Impaired, ESVI *Submitted by Sharon Niemczyk*

It has been a busy fall at Educational Services for the Visually Impaired. Our educational vision consultants have been racking up the windshield time traveling to schools to make sure our students are getting appropriate materials and modifications. The CIRCUIT referral system is operating and has kept us jumping to check on all the new referrals of students who are enrolled in public school programs and preschoolers in centers and homes. Angyln Franquemont has been working with Division of Services for the Blind to ensure we coordinate and provide transition services for our students. AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST—after blood, sweat and tears—all of our consultants have completed the coursework for certification in orientation and mobility. That means as soon as the O&M examination is successfully taken, we will have a staff with orientation and mobility certification as well as vision.

Our staff increased in August when Melanie Birthright was hired as a new consultant for the Texarkana area. Cindy Lester has been assigned as our data management specialist working out of the Arkadelphia office.

The weather did not cooperate for our fall workshop but the show went on to a full house at the Best Western in Little Rock. ESVI, with some help from our friends at the Easter Seals Technology and Curriculum Center, hosted a day and a half workshop on assistive technology. The Arkansas Light House for the Blind provided packet materials. Jay Stiteley, from Seeing Eye in Morristown, NJ, gave us food for thought on Assistive Technology in the Real World and also presented in the break out session on Adaptive Mobility Devices. Dave Wilkinson from the Easter Seal Technology Center presented very valuable information on Braille devices, embossers, screen enhancement software, Open Book, Book Port and Duxbury. ESVI staff presented on near and distant devices and closed with a presentation on classroom application. We were able to offer those valuable ACVREP credits for attendance. The workshop was well received and we hope to be able to offer other workshops in the future.

Call us at our Sherwood office 501.835.5448 if you have questions about our services. If you want to make a referral and need assistance on the CIRCUIT system, call Cindy Lester at 870.246.7928.

UALR Recruitment Campaign *Dr. Pat Smith*

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock has just launched a new recruitment campaign, entitled, “A Degree of Difference”. If you haven’t seen them on TV, links are posted on the UALR web page at <http://www.ualr.edu>. Although the enrollments in the Rehabilitation Teaching and Orientation & Mobility programs have increased

since the formats were changed to online, more students are needed. Please share your recruitment ideas with the programs; send them to pbsmith@ualr.edu. They are looking forward to hearing from you.

Arkansas School for the Blind, ASB *Ken Fowler, Assistant Principal*

Second semester at the Arkansas School for the Blind (ASB) is off to a good start. We feel we had a very good first semester and look forward to the remainder of the year. Our students and staff are currently preparing for the state mandated assessments to be administered in the spring. We are very proud of the improvements the students are showing on these tests and will continue to work hard to help the students do their best. Many programs have been implemented to assist our students on these assessments. This year we have begun offering special ACTAAP skills classes, computerized programs designed specifically for the study of these skills (as an example ALMS), and offer special released item integration throughout the curriculum.

We are also proud to announce that ASB is once again fully accredited. There apparently has been some discussion about ASB losing its accreditation. ASB has never lost its accreditation. We continue to work with the State Department of Education to insure that all standards of Accreditation are followed fully. All staff members at ASB are fully certified and all meet the requirements for being Highly Qualified teachers under the no child left behind act.

We continue to offer Stop and Think social skills training. This program is working very well. The elementary students have shown an especially strong acceptance of this program.

Enrollment at ASB continues to increase this year. We had five new students start in January. This brings our total enrollment of new students to over twenty this year. The faculty and staff are excited to be given the opportunity to help these students achieve their academic and social goals.

ASB plans to once again participate in the “Close Up” program in Washington D.C. Three students have been selected to attend this year. These students and their sponsor are presently working to

raise funds to be able to attend this activity. We expect these students to represent ASB well as they learn about the inner workings of our national government.

The ASB Distance Learning Lab is now fully functional. Students were given the opportunity to enroll in a number of courses previously not available to our students. At this time we have students enrolled in “Advertising” and “Intro to Medical Professions”. This opportunity was made available through a grant from the Department of Education. We are very proud to be able to expand our curricular offerings through this technology. ASB hopes to offer in-service and course opportunities through this medium in the future.

The Birth to Three-year-old program continues to flourish. ASB presently employs two full time faculty members who in turn provide services to over thirty infants. These services include in home visits as well as instruction on campus.

The ASB wrestling program has been given a big boost by the addition of over twenty new schools participating in wrestling in Arkansas this year. It appears that wrestling may finally be started on a statewide scale in the public schools. This will allow our children more opportunities to participate with their peers. This will also eliminate the need to travel long distances.

Anyone desiring additional information about these or other programs offered at ASB may obtain that information by calling the school or coming by at any time we are open. An annual report to the public is prepared and presented yearly outlining progress and the state of the school. A copy of this report is available upon request.

We look forward to another strong year and are happy to be given the opportunity to provide services to the students of Arkansas who are either Blind or Visually Impaired.

The Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind
Contributed by Lis Geoghegan, Newsletter Chair

The Arkansas Lighthouse is a non-profit agency that produces and sells many diverse products for the Federal Government through contracts. It is located at 69th & Murray Streets in Little Rock, Arkansas. For more information about the Lighthouse, please contact the executive director, Bill Johnson via e-mail at bjohnson@arkansaslighthouse.org or by telephone at (501) 562-2222. You can also visit their web page at www.arkansaslighthouse.org

Division of Services for the Blind
Submitted by Kara Aaron

Division of Services for the Blind continues to provide excellent services for visually impaired and blind consumers. We are happy to report that we closed 344 vocational rehabilitation cases successfully for the federal fiscal year. We rehabilitated 340 older blind persons by providing services through our LIFE program. We are increasing our involvement with the state’s transition initiative for youth with disabilities.

DSB, together with the Arkansas School for the Blind, will again be providing Jump Start, a summer work experience program for blind and visually impaired high school students. If you have any questions about DSB or you want to refer a potential consumer, please give us a call at (501) 682-5463.

Congratulations to the following 2006 award recipients:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| J. Max Woolly..... | John Ed Chiles |
| Joyce Ogburn | Pam Raspberry |
| Tom Phifer | Lisa Reynolds |
| Arkansas Distinguished Advocate (Individual)..... | Sandy Hubbard |
| Bill Tomlin Scholarship..... | Kimberly Weaver |

Web Site

Diane Quick, Webmaster

Please contact Diane Quick, COMS, if you have ideas about items you would find useful to be included on our web page. She can be contacted through our site at www.ARAER.org. We welcome your input.

Newsletter

Lis Geoghegan, CVRT, CVI, Newsletter Chair

I hope that you found this publication to be informative and helpful. If you have any comments about how to make it more useful to you, please contact me at (501) 454-1554 or Lgeoghegan@ASB.K12.AR.US. We are always striving to keep our e-mail and “snail” mail addresses current. If you have received this mailing by mistake or would prefer to receive it at an alternate address, please inform me of any needed changes. In order to keep our costs low, we attempt to send electronic copies to our members whenever possible. However, we realize that sometimes a printed out copy (Braille or large print or regular print) is preferred by our members. Please advise if you require your newsletter in a different format.

I hope to see all of you at the May conference, if not sooner!

Respectfully submitted by Lis Geoghegan, AR-AER Secretary and Newsletter Chair, February 17, 2007