



SUMMER 2014 NEWSLETTER

Message from the President, Susan Langendonk

Hello to the members of the Michigan Chapter. We are coming off of another successful conference that, while not without its hurdles to overcome, received many favorable evaluations. Be assured that the board carefully reads the evaluations from the conference and particularly the suggestions for speakers and topics for the next conference. We're always looking to improve and our members give great suggestions!

Because of several bylaws amendments which were approved by the membership, you will be seeing some changes in how the board operates. One important change will be switching to annual elections. This means that every year we will be looking for a new President-Elect and two director positions and we're very hopeful the reduction in term lengths encourages more members to become involved. It's a rewarding way to give back to your association and your profession. Look for calls for nominations in early 2015.

The other important change you will see is an electronic election which will be held prior to the conference in 2015. The new board members will then be introduced at the conference. This amendment was approved by members at the annual business meeting in May. If our online votes fail to be an adequate representation of the membership, we have the option of returning next time to running the election during the annual business meeting at the conference. Board members are working to make sure the voting online voting is accessible to those using screen readers.

Lastly, save the date for the 2015 annual conference on April 23rd and 24th. We will again hold the conference at the Marriott at Laurel Park Place. While we always have a few requests to move the conference to another location, we continue to have great attendance in Livonia. Several years ago board members visited hotels in Lansing, Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids to compare costs and accommodations. We were unable to find anything for the cost the Marriott gives us along with the outstanding service we receive there. Remember that your MAER Board is made up of volunteers who mostly are working full time in addition to running the conference. The familiarity of the staff and facilities at the Marriott means we can concentrate our efforts to putting together a top notch program for you. We will be working to solve the problems of congestion in the halls by changing the registration process and utilizing rooms elsewhere in the hotel so that Salons B, C and D can be reconfigured to accommodate a larger audience for popular sessions.

Susan Langendonk
President, Michigan AER

AER International Conference 2014

"Moving Into The Future"

AER International Conference

July 30-Aug 3 2014

San Antonio, Texas

ATTN: The hotel is currently sold out of rooms at the group rate for the days prior to July 30. There are a few rooms left on July 29, but at a rate of \$189. AER has contracted for a block of rooms at the Hampton Inn San Antonio Downtown Riverwalk Area. To make a reservation, please use the Hampton's [Reservation Web Page](#). The Hampton Inn is located at 414 Bowie Street, San Antonio, TX 78205. (Information provided by [AERBVI](#))

MAER Annual Conference 2014

- More of the presenters have been making their presentations available on the website. Please check back to the site if there was a particular presentation you were looking for. We will continue to make these available if any more come in.
- The MAER Award is given each year to an individual or organization in appreciation of their outstanding contribution to serving persons in Michigan who are blind and visually impaired. The 2014 MAER Award was given to Leader Dogs for the Blind of Rochester, MI in honor of their 75th anniversary. Rod Haneline, Chief Programs and Services Officer of Leader Dog received the award for Leader Dog which was presented by Erica Ihrke, President of the Michigan Chapter.
- The David and Joann Search Lifetime Achievement Award was named in honor of two longtime AER members in Michigan who exemplified professionalism in the field of blindness. The 2014 Lifetime Achievement Award was given to Susan Bradley who continues to serve through her work at the Michigan Department of Education - Low Incidence Outreach and the Michigan Chapter of AER through her committee work. She was presented the award by longtime colleagues Collette Bauman and Lynn Pensari of MDE-LIO.
- Below are some pictures from the conference to recap the amazing opportunity we all had to learn, communicate, share, and explore our field in order to better our clients.



Leader Dog receiving the MAER award.



Susan Bradley and her past colleagues from Livonia Public Schools



Presenters Johana Anad and Stephanie Steffer share about Tactile Communication systems.



Vendors bring amazing tools for participants to explore.

Members Speak Out

Do you have an article, resource, or other information you would like added to the MAER newsletter? Use this opportunity to get information to other members. Please send all ideas to ssteffer@kresa.org

Our Mission: To render all possible assistance to the promotion, development and improvement of all phases of education and rehabilitation of blind and visually impaired persons of all ages.