



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ADULTS
WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS**

**NAASLN Membership News & Views
Issue Nine – February 2006**

NAASLN Membership News & Views is an outgrowth of the NAASLN Vision to offer our members a centralized hub of information, professional development, technical assistance, communication on issues and trends, and advocacy initiatives on behalf of adults with special learning needs.

What A Great Success! In this issue, we spotlight **NAASLN’s 2005 Conference** November 12-15, in Denver, Colorado. It was clearly an experience to remember. If you were not able to attend, you can still share in the success of the experience – highlights, audio recording, presentation – it’s all here. We’ll also continue to share this information throughout the coming year.

Watch your mail for the 2006 Membership Renewal Packet.

To all **NAASLN** members, new and old timers alike, we look forward to your continued participation throughout 2006! Join with us as we build upon the momentum of the conference state-by-state by enhancing the connections made with the State Directors, building membership, and increasing professional development opportunities for educators and service providers for adults with special learning needs.

Best wishes for a great and peaceful year,

Joan Hudson-Miller
NAASLN President

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View this newsletter in PDF format on the NAASLN web site or you can copy and paste this link into your browser.

<http://www.naasln.org/pages/Newsletter.html>

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NAASLN 2005 CONFERENCE – AN OVERVIEW

What A Great Success! The November 12-15 Denver Conference was clearly an experience to remember. The international audience, the array of sessions and conversations, the networking, the incredible information, the hotel facilities, the committed exhibitors...all added to the success of the experience.

Dale Brown set the theme and pace of the **NAASLN** conference with her keynote address, ***Becoming a Passionate and Empowered Professional***. In today's fast paced and low-funded environment, she proposes that individual passion be partnered with others in order to co-create the best possible learning opportunities for special needs students. This was followed by a breakout session, "Turning Learning Disabilities into Earning Abilities." To order a copy of the keynote speech or any of Ms. Brown's sessions, see "Ordering Audio Tapes and CDs" below.

Prior to the conference opening, NAASLN introduced and exemplified its commitment to partnerships with presentations at the Adult Education State Directors National Training Institute and a joint pre-conference session with the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium (NAEPDC), *Minding Your P's and Q's: Policies, Partnerships, Professional Development & Practices*. The Training Institute was co-sponsored by NAEPDC and the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education (NCSDAE). Both sessions focused on establishing state policies, professional development, and evidence-based practices for persons with specific learning needs. The NAEPDC/NAASLN pre-conference interactive Policy Panel with State Directors of Adult Education looked at successful models and suggested ways to promote quality collaborations between key stakeholders. Attendees rated both presentations as extremely helpful for planning, implementing, and supporting state initiatives for adults with special learning needs. Experience the NAEPDC/NAASLN Pre-Conference for yourself with an audio tape or CD. See ordering information below.

A conference highlight has always been the recognition of individuals and groups who are making a profound contribution to life long learning for adults with

special learning needs. This year's **NAASLN Distinguished Service Awards** went to: the Montana Coach Network of Jean Dahlman, Margaret Girkins, Vicki Mattingly, Jackie Provance, and Megan Thompson; Fran Holthaus, Upper Valley JVS, Ohio; and Kaye Cockrum, Houston AEL, Missouri. This year's **NAASLN 2005 President's Award** was given to CASAS, GED Testing Service and the McGraw-Hill Companies (CTB & Contemporary) for their on-going accommodation efforts to make their materials accessible to *all* adult learners. (See below for the recipient's perspective of the President's Award.)

Beyond these specific awards, the **NAASLN Board** would like to acknowledge and thank each one of the conference attendees, presenters, and exhibitors for their contribution, time, support, and effort in helping to fuel the passion, skills, and resource knowledge of providers of services to individuals with special learning needs.

If you missed a session or could not attend the conference, never fear. Throughout the coming year, on our Website and E-newsletter, **Membership News & Views**, you will be able to download highlights and/or purchase the audio recordings of entire presentations and sessions. (See below for information on ordering audio recordings.)

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NAASLN 2005 President's Awards Recognize Accommodations and Accessible

By Ginny Posey (CASA), Mario Payne (GED Testing Service) and Randy Pertler (McGraw-Hill Companies) - 2005 NAASLN President's Award Recipients

Three organizations received the 2005 NAASLN President's Award at the recent conference in Denver for their work in providing testing accommodations and accessible tests for students with special needs. Michael Padus from McGraw-Hill, Mario Payne from GED Testing Service, and Ginny Posey from CASAS represented their organizations and accepted the awards during an awards luncheon. **Read the complete article on the NAASLN web site, or copy and paste into your browser:** <http://www.naasln.org/pages/Articles.html>

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The Robyn Avery Rennick Practitioner Scholarship Fund

A first of its kind scholarship will soon facilitate attendance at NAASLN Conferences for field practitioners who might otherwise be unable to attend. The Robyn Avery Rennick Practitioner Scholarship was announced at the 2005 Conference by Patricia Hardman, PhD, Director of Woodland Hall Academy in Tallahassee, Florida. The scholarship will encourage personal growth for members as well as growth for NAASLN membership.

Dr. Hardman, who developed The Hardman Technique, a highly structured, multi-sensorial approach to learning, has generously set up the scholarship with a donation of \$2500.00 with the following stipulations:

1. The Scholarship(s) shall be awarded to actively engaged field practitioners who are members to attend a national NAASLN Conference.
2. It may be used for travel, room and board, or conference fees for the conference in all, or preferably in part.
3. The Board may establish the scholarship application and acceptance processes and determine how payments are to be made. Preferably reimburse for documented cost after the fact.
4. The scholarship(s) are not to be designated to Board Members to attend Board Meetings or the Conference or to state directors.

Other persons or organizations who want to establish similar tax deductible donations to this or other funds should contact the NAASLN Board, so that it may grow substantially.

This year a new page on the NAASLN website will be set up for this and other scholarship opportunities.

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Conference Session Spotlight

Visual-Perceptual Deficits and Their Relationship to Learning Disabilities – A Summary of Research Done by Helen Irlen, The Irlen Institute

Irlen Syndrome, also known as Scotopic Sensitivity, is a perceptual problem that keeps many people from reading effectively, efficiently, or not at all. Until now, it has baffled educators and medical scientists because it is undetected by standard visual, educational, or medical exams.

Individuals with Irlen Syndrome perceive the printed page differently and must constantly adapt to distortions from print or the background. They may suffer from slow or inefficient reading, poor comprehension, strain or fatigue. It can affect attention span, energy level, motivation, handwriting, and depth perception. Irlen Syndrome sufferers may be seen as underachievers with behavior, attitude, or motivation problems. It is a complex and variable condition sometimes found to co-exist with learning disabilities.

The Solution

Irlen Syndrome was first identified by Educational Psychologist Helen Irlen while she was working as Director of the Adult Learning Disability Program at CSULB in the early 1980's. Her research revealed that some students' reading improved when a colored plastic sheet was placed on text. She developed a patented treatment method which uses colored filters, worn as glasses, or plastic sheets (known as overlays) to reduce or eliminate the perceptual difficulties affecting reading. The ability to determine and provide the specific color an individual needs is the heart of the Irlen Method. Each person needs his/her own color,

chosen from an infinite number of colors. Ms. Irlen documented her work in the book, *Reading by the Colors*, published by Perigee, division of Penguin Putnam Publishing, in 1991.

Her discovery stimulated the interest of educational and medical researchers. Fifty-six research studies have been conducted at various universities worldwide. While not fully understood, it appears that the color allows the brain to correctly interpret visual information by normalizing the timing of visual input. Irlen's method of treating this syndrome has helped more than 90,000 people in 36 countries. **Read the complete article, which includes a PowerPoint presentation, The Irlen Method: A Piece of the Puzzle, with a reproducible handout on the NAASLN web site, or copy and paste into your browser: <http://www.naasln.org/pages/Articles.html>**

Next Month's Conference Spotlight

"How to Get What is Rightfully Yours" by John & Marie Hatfield

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Web Site of the Month: http://www.Irlen.com/sss_main.htm

The Irlen Syndrome/Scotopic Sensitivity website is a great place to learn more even about SSS. This method has received international acclaim and Helen Irlen's work has been included in professional journals, textbooks, National Geographic, TV shows such as *60 Minutes* and *Good Morning America*, and has been the subject of many news broadcasts by the BBC and news shows in Ireland, Hong Kong, Netherlands, New Zealand, and Australia.

The website describes itself as "A piece of the puzzle for reading problems, learning difficulties, AD/HD, dyslexia, headaches and other physical symptoms," and offers Self Tests, Q&A, Solutions, Symptoms, and Distortions

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Ordering Conference Session Audio Tapes and CDs: For sale on the NAASLN website.

Maybe you attended NAASLN 2005, but couldn't make it to every session. Or maybe you couldn't join us at all. Here's your chance to experience what you missed. Go to the NAASLN web site for the full list of over 60 sessions available on audio tape and CD. A downloadable order form is also available.

Sessions, presenters, and award recipients mentioned in the newsletter include:

*Pre-Conference - **Minding Your P's and Q's: Policies, Partnerships, Professional Development & Practices.**NAEPDC/NAASLN (Session #1)*

*Conference Opening & Keynote - **Minding Your P's and Q's,** Dale Brown (Session # 5)*

Turning Learning Disabilities into Earning Abilities, Dale Brown (Session #28)

The Impact of Color on Reading: Visual-Perceptual Deficits and Their Relationship to Learning Disabilities, Helen Irlen, (Session #29)

The GED - Ensuring Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities: From Request to Approval, Mario Payne/Neil Sturomski (Session #32)

It Didn't Just Go Away Because I Got Older: Dyslexia/ADD/SLD Affects Adults in Many Different Ways, Patricia Hardman (Session #33)

Vision & LD: A Look at the Effects of Long Term Vision Problems, Fran Holthaus (Session #43)

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

NAASLN is devoted to enhancing the opportunities for life-long learning for adults with special learning needs by improving the efforts of adult educators working with these individuals in the full range of life-long learning programs, i.e., ABE, ESL, GED, volunteer-based and community-based literacy programs.

Future Newsletter Submissions

Help us meet your needs. Recommend or submit an article, event announcements, book reviews, and web sites links.

E-mail newsletter@naasln.org or mail to: Joan Hudson-Miller, 14214 S. Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA 90066 or fax to 310-354-2601.

All submissions will be reviewed for appropriateness for our readership and will be selected at the discretion of the newsletter editors.

Sharing information

Do you have ideas on how you would like to better network with other members? Are there other features you would like to see in this Newsletter and on our website?

E-mail newsletter@naasln.org or leave a message on at 800-496-9222

Help Spread the Word

Please forward this newsletter to other educators and interested parties. If this newsletter was forwarded to you and you would like to become a member of NAASLN and a regular subscriber, send an email to naasln@aol.com for membership information or visit our web site: www.naasln.org.

We practice Permission Marketing. Go to <http://www.naasln.org/pages/privacypolicy.html> to read our Privacy Policy. If you ever want to stop receiving this e-newsletter, reply to newsletter@naasln.org and type 'Unsubscribe' in the body of the email.

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