

WASHINGTON COUNCIL  
**WCB**  
OF THE BLIND  
Founded 1935

# NEWSLINE

Opportunity, Equality, Independence

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## From the President's Desk

By Cindy Van Winkle, WCB President

In January of 1986, a young mother-to-be attended a meeting of what would become the Peninsula Council of the Blind. Although at the time there were no intentions of becoming involved, she became one of the nine charter members of that chapter and was elected Vice-President. Three months later she became a mom, and six months after that, President by default. I can honestly say at that time she had no visions of one day becoming President of the statewide affiliate. Of course, I know this with certainty because that young mom was me!



Seahawks quilt presentation

Four years into my membership, WCB merged with the then, United Blind of Washington State. Back then I saw it as a way for us, the Washington Council of the Blind to grow. I didn't think then about what that merger really meant. That two diverse groups, with differing experiences and perspectives were joining forces and becoming one organization, putting differences aside and learning from one another and growing into who we are 25 years later, despite the inevitable growing pains.

In those early years, we existed on events and experiences of the past pre-merger days. Often there was an "us" and "them" mindset. While we've learned over the years the value of our rich history, we also knew as we moved forward that we needed to embrace new challenges, live in "the now", and focus on solutions that would build a stronger and brighter future for people who are blind in our state.

Externally, we worked for the passage of the “Braille Bill” to ensure legally blind and visually impaired children would have opportunity for true literacy through appropriate learning of braille. We have successfully fought to not only retain the residential component of the Orientation and Training Center, but also the Department of Services for the Blind as a separate state agency when the climate at the time was to consolidate state government. We have been there, more than once, to ensure our Washington Talking Book & Braille Library remains located in its current Seattle location and appropriately funded through some of the toughest fiscally challenging years.

We have provided supportive funding for organizations making a difference in local communities and on a national level through purchasing assistive technology, book and pamphlet publications in accessible formats and so much more. All the while, members of WCB have served on the Board of Trustees for the Washington State School for the Blind, the Patron Advisory Council for the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library, the State Rehabilitation Council for Department of Services for the Blind, and other national, statewide and local community boards and commissions representing the needs of the blind population.

On an internal level, we have strengthened WCB by enhancing our governing document with a set of bylaws which incorporated policies and traditions stored in the memory banks of leaders into a meaningful document that could be accessed by all members. Through leadership trainings, 232 members have benefited from our seminars over the past 15 years and current leaders have also been provided annual training over the past six. Monthly forum calls have brought meaningful topics to life to members across our state via phone conference calls. And by networking with an already existing program, we were able to practically seamlessly convert our award-winning publication, Newsline, from cassettes to digital cartridges.

Over these past 25 years, we tackled the introduction of email lists, conference calling and most currently, Facebook as our first efforts in social media. We've built and continue to enhance our web presence and have maintained a working toll-free phone line that provides 24/7 recorded information for callers as well as in-person reception answering and call returns. We have committed members serving on several committees doing the day-to-day onerous and sometimes tedious work of the organization to ensure our voices are heard through legislation, advocacy and community education. And we always remember the reason we are here, to ensure "OPPORTUNITY, EQUALITY, and INDEPENDENCE" for all people who are blind!

It is because of our willingness in these post-merger years to accept change and to focus on the future, we have created an even richer history to be proud of and learn from. Twenty-five years has grown the Washington Council of the Blind, and in doing so, it has allowed members like me to "dream big" and to reach deep within, to face fears, take risks, and yes, even become president of the finest statewide organization of the blind.

As I pass the gavel, I do so with pride, knowing that WCB is in the very capable hands of Steve Fiksdal. I invite each of you to join me in offering to him and the 2016 WCB officers and board of directors unwavering support and commitment to do whatever is necessary to assist him and future leaders in making a positive difference for the blind community over the next 25 years.

Thank you WCB family for allowing me to serve as your president. It truly has been a labor of love, and I know I am forever changed because of this opportunity and all of you!

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## **Editorial: The Most Important Thing Our Mom's Never Told Us** By Holly Turri

During the wonderful WCB Convention on Saturday morning, I was taking a break. What a pleasure it was to sit in the lobby near a gas fireplace, use my headphones, and answer my mail and texts.

Suddenly, my concentration was broken. I heard a strange monotonous noise punctuated with various random beeps and other strange technology sounds. It got louder and louder.

After a minute of thought, I realized there were a bunch of other visually impaired iPhone geeks in the same area as was I. They were not using ear buds or head phones. Since other people's "conversations" were interfering with theirs, each one raised the volume of his/her phone. What resulted was a raucous and frustrating cacophony.

Now, I'm the first one to say that if it were a choice of my iPhone or my right hand being removed, I'd have to think about it. This technology has dramatically improved the quality of our lives.

There is one downside. Sighted people can text quietly. We don't have that option. As interesting as it is for you, your baby's poopy-pants problems, what your boyfriend said to you, how much you paid for dinner last night, the guide dog's gastric distress, or your sex life do not fascinate me or anyone else sitting near you.

To avoid having voyeurs in your life we need to purchase a cheap pair of ear buds or head phones, keep these with our phone and use them frequently. Ear buds can be purchased for under \$10.00. For example: in this price range, Panasonic makes high quality options. Radio Shack has a perfectly serviceable folding



headphone set for around \$6.00. This simple and low cost action will reap invaluable returns for the enjoyment of others and peace in our lives.

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## **A Message to the Membership** By Steve Fiksdal

I don't know about you, but it took me a week to come down from all the excitement of convention. I obviously had a great weekend - thanks to you. So, THANK YOU WCB!

Together we are going to do great things. We will continue the long standing tradition of WCB to promote opportunity, equality and independence for the blind and visually impaired. As Helen Keller said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." Why? Because we can!



The weekend was especially special because of the Seattle Airport Marriott staff. In recognition of their efforts to make our stay as special as it was, we passed a resolution commending them for their efforts. I have arranged to present this resolution to them in person at their December Employee Town Hall meeting.

My door is always open. Feel free to call me at (206) 669-8001 or send an email to [steve@fiksdal.com](mailto:steve@fiksdal.com), whenever you feel I can be of assistance. I am very responsive with email and answer promptly. I always return phone calls. I may not answer the phone, for a number of reasons, but if you leave a message, I will return

your call, again promptly. Open communication and dialogue is very important in an organization such as ours. We reside in all four corners of the state. We need to communicate and share. I welcome an opportunity to listen to your needs, comments and suggestions.

Which brings me to another thought. If you do not currently subscribe to the list serve, I encourage you to do so. A great deal of useful information, advice, technology tips and notices come via the list. To subscribe send an email to [wcb-l-subscribe@wcbinfo.org](mailto:wcb-l-subscribe@wcbinfo.org).

One of my goals for the coming year is to investigate the viability of forming a group that is focused on the needs of our younger members. For me it seems like it's getting to be that everyone is younger, but for the purpose of this group, I'm thinking under forty years old. This group could be comprised of students sharing academic experiences, young professionals sharing employment experiences or those who seek meaningful employment. If you'd like to be a charter member of this group, I'd like to hear from you.

Lastly, as we move ahead together, there are a few words and phrases that don't sit well with me. These include "we can't do that" or "we tried that, it won't work". As I mentioned at convention "We can do that, because we can!"

No mountain is too steep or high to climb. And if we've tried something in the past and it didn't work, let's figure out why and make the necessary adjustments to allow it to happen. We must never sell ourselves short. We have the talents and abilities to do great things. We may not always succeed. But if we give our best effort, we can hold our heads high. One of my favorite quotes comes from Victor Kiam who said, "Even if you fall on your face,

you're still moving forward".

In closing, I need not remind you that we are a community of people with vision challenges. If you come across someone who shares in this, please invite them to join us. We welcome all with open arms. I have always believed that things happen for a reason. I lost my vision so that I could be with you. I intend to make the best of it. I encourage you to do so as well.

There is great satisfaction that comes from being of service to others. Those who give of themselves stand to reap richer rewards. Give to those around you, even the sighted. They need our help as well.

Happy holidays my friends.

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**Through the Eyes of a Child**

By Hayley Agers

Each year for the last seven years, my daughter Sydney has watched as I packed my bags, readied things at home, and talked for weeks about the upcoming WCB Convention that I would be attending. This year, with her heart to serve others, she asked if it would be possible for her to come with me. I must admit, I had to give this some thought. Would she be able to sit still in sessions? Would being around this many blind people be overwhelming to her? Could she handle the responsibility of assisting others when they need it, and was I



Sydney Agers

willing to give up some of my alone time that I so look forward to as a Mum of two? I spoke with her on many occasions, trying to explain what a convention is like and how spending the day at the

pool would not be on the agenda and still she insisted she go with me. Looking forward to some Mummy/daughter time and knowing this would be a great learning opportunity for her, I said yes.

On Thursday night, as Sydney and I lay in bed snuggling, we discussed what the next day might be like. She wondered what kind of help people might need, if they would be okay with a seven year old girl helping, if she would hurt anybody's feelings if she was not able to do what they needed of her, and how she would feel about being around so many adults and she being the only child. She was very excited that night as she bowed her head to say her nightly prayers. "Please God, help me to not be scared, to show me very clearly who might need my help, and please God, make this a good together time for me and my Mummy."

What an amazing little girl I am blessed to call my daughter, I thought to myself as I closed my weary eyes. The next morning she was raring to go. Up and dressed the minute her feet hit the floor, she asked, "Come on Mum, what's taking so long?"

The morning began with taking Farley out to relieve. Sydney could not believe her eyes when she stepped outside to see six or seven other people outside with their dogs too. This was only the second time she had been around so many guides. The first being at my GDB graduation in 2013. Then, it was inside to find a seat and have some breakfast; the whole time she was watching the door like a hawk, waiting for somebody to need her help to find a seat. Oh and when they did, she was grinning from ear to ear and so proud to come back and tell me that she had just helped somebody.

Throughout the day, she would frequent the volunteer or information desk, checking to see if Lori or Marlaina needed her to do anything. Sometimes she would bounce back into the room telling me she had just helped a man to find the right room for his

session. Sometimes it was something as simple as helping a person to locate something on the floor that they had dropped, and sometimes her help simply came in the form of just asking and smiling while she did so.

There were also the times that she was left with nothing to do and those were the times you may have heard a ball bouncing, or the sound of feet hitting the ground as she cart wheeled around the building, or the sound of me saying, "Sydney, you can't just be kicking your legs all around or throwing balls. What if you were to hit somebody? Do you think that would be helping them?" She is seven and sitting at all is difficult. Well, all except those times that Chef James hunted her down to find out if she'd like something to eat, other than what was on the menu; pancakes with syrup for breakfast, cheese quesadilla and fries for lunch, and so on. He even gave her a tour of the "Staff Only" kitchen and she got to meet all the amazing cook staff. This made her feel like quite the little princess, like she needs any encouragement!

One thing that really stands out to me is a conversation we had after sessions on Friday, as we walked back to our room. We had many throughout the day, like her wanting to know why some blind people don't look at you when they talk; why not everyone's eyes look the same; why some people wear glasses and some don't; why there are different types of canes; how blind people in wheelchairs get around?

All of these questions - great ones, from a little girl who is curious about others and how she can use this information to make their worlds better. This particular one really brought tears to my eyes however, as I could sense her urgency as she asked it. She just couldn't wait until we got back to our room. She pulled me into a corner and signaled for me to lower my head so she could whisper it to me. "Mummy, being here is fun, but it makes me a little sad for you." What did this mean? I wondered as I tried to wrap my mind

around the question, put myself in the place of a seven year old, and keep the tears from welling up. "Mum, it makes me sad because of the fact that one day you will be blind." And all along I was under the impression that she had a grasp on the fact that I already am. How does one reply to that?

So, this is what I said, "My sweet Syd, how I love you so. That day has already come for Mummy and being blind is okay. I know you sometimes forget just how much Mummy can't see because you are always in places with me that I am comfortable or familiar with. I know you believe that there isn't much I can't do and I thank you for your faith in me. I know you hear the questions your friends at school have and you answer them so easily because it's what your normal is. But sweetheart, Mummy is already blind and that's what makes me special. If I seem to you like I am strong and brave and not afraid to do things, it's because I have people like you and people like these at this conference by my side. With trust in God, a wonderful family, amazing friends, and a beautiful guide dog, there's not much any person wouldn't be able to do.

Through the eyes and mouth of a child, "Okay Mum, so being blind isn't scary as long as other people love you anyway, right? Is that what you are saying?"

This is not to make light of how scary being blind can sometimes be; how sometimes our fear of failure can paralyze us, or to make it seem that there is a pill that can take that all away. I am simply saying that being kind to others, sighted or blind, can make a situation so much more inviting and our ability to cope when we know we are loved regardless, is something we all need to experience daily.

Thank you to those who took the time to get to know my Sydney, to those of you who blessed her so on Friday by allowing her to help you, to those of you who asked where she was the next day,

to those of you who commented on her joyfulness and willingness to help where she was needed, and to those of you who also told her "no" when she asked if she could help. I say that only because through every experience she had, she grew...hopefully that's the case with all of us in life for that is part of the journey.

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**A WCB Warrior Lives On  
In Memory of Shirley Taylor**

Co-authored by Sue Ammeter and Julie Brannon

In Memory of Shirley

From Sue Ammeter:

On November 16, 2015 WCB lost a much loved member and friend, Shirley Taylor. Since Shirley's been in failing health, I've been in contact with Shirley's daughter-in-law, Kathy Bellin, who phoned me that Shirley had recently been diagnosed with ovarian cancer and passed away in hospice care.

Shirley Wilson Taylor was born in Seattle on January 26, 1916. While she was growing up Shirley had limited sight and she lost her remaining vision as an adult. Shirley was a fiercely independent and determined woman and she raised her first two sons Dale (deceased) and Rick as a single mother. To support her family she worked at the Lighthouse for the Blind as a weaver.

She raised chickens and rabbits and she bred collie puppies. Later she met and married Frank Taylor and they had her third son, Jim. Shirley was very proud of her family and she deeply loved her six grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren. Shirley was a guide dog user and she had four guides: Happy, Odie, Emon and Velma.

Shirley was a member of our organizations for over 40 years. She served as an officer and board member of UBWS and WCB, was the President of the United Blind of Seattle for several terms, served as Vice-President for the King County Chapter and was on the board for Guide Dog Users of Washington State.

Shirley was the Chair of the Crisis Committee for many years and she coordinated the buses that took all of us to many conventions. For years she was the friendly voice at the other end of the phone when we called to request stipends or convention loans. As one person said, "When you called Shirley you always had a warm and friendly conversation and she was both a mentor and a friend."

Shirley's funeral was held on Saturday, November 21, and several WCB members were there. It was a beautiful service, which was preceded by a slide show showing pictures of Shirley holding her grandchildren and great grandchildren when they were babies and pictures of Shirley at family gatherings. Just before the service began the grandchildren and great grandchildren each placed a red or yellow rose in a vase at the front of the sanctuary.

The wonderful part of the service was the loving and emotional tribute given by Kristy Jennings, one of her granddaughters. As she talked about her memories of her grandma it made us laugh or sometimes shed a few tears.

The respect and love that she had for Grandma Shirley was very evident. Kristy teaches the fifth grade and she made us all chuckle when she told about taking her class to Olympia to see the legislature in action and there was her grandma carrying a sign and rallying on the steps of the Capitol. Kristy remembered that her grandma loved going to elementary schools and showing the kids braille and talking about her guide dog.



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**In Memory of Chapter Membership**  
From Julie Brannon

When I joined the United Blind of Seattle in the early 90's, there was a prominent member in that chapter named Shirley Taylor. It was apparent to me early on that she knew all about, loved and worked diligently for not only the United Blind of Seattle Chapter, but also for the state component, the Washington Council of the Blind.

Shirley was the go-to person if chapter members needed to understand procedures, processes and policies in regard to council functioning. It was rare that Shirley didn't attend a monthly meeting; if she wasn't present, we all knew something was really wrong.

The major function Shirley took on for this chapter, on an annual basis, for which she is truly remembered and appreciated, was our fundraising endeavor of selling entertainment books. She did this for several years, and it wasn't an easy job. It entailed diligent record keeping for both the books received and returned; and accurate record keeping of funds raised. It also involved the delivering of those heavy boxes of books to people and places who planned to sell them. This was the major fundraiser for our chapter all the years Shirley headed the process. And you can probably only guess who won the prize, consistently, for selling the most books - you've got it, hard-working and diligent Shirley!

Due to health concerns, Shirley hasn't been able to be a part of chapter meetings for some years, but truly, her reputation and dedication lives on in the chapter, and I know always will.

We'll miss you Shirley.

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## 2015 Pre-Convention Board Meeting and Annual Business Meeting Report

By Denise Colley

The WCB Preconvention Board Meeting convened at the Seattle Airport Marriott Hotel in SeaTac, Washington, on November 5, 2015, at 7:10 p.m. All board members were present, except Eric Hunter, who was excused. All chapters were represented except King County.



Lori, Gaylen, Berl and Denise during  
business meeting

The minutes of the August 15, 2015 summer board meeting were approved as distributed. In the absence of the Treasurer, President Cindy Van Winkle read the third quarter Treasurer's Report. We have received a small amount from the Vehicle Donation Program, but even a small amount is progress. Investments continue to be positive.

In her President's Report Cindy Van Winkle said she has been quite busy working with a committee on processes for implementation of the Unified English Braille Code in 2016. She talked about our forum calls and that they are just another way for members to be involved in the work of WCB. Along with employment, technology, book club, and special forums, WCB has just started a Blind Parents Forum. This began as a request by some new blind/visually impaired parents. Hayley Agers is moderating this forum and they are meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month at 8pm.

Cindy reported that approximately 200 people registered for this convention, which is one of our largest. We also have the largest

number of vendors ever in the exhibit hall. The 2016 WCB Convention will again be in SeaTac, at this very same hotel, November 3-5 in 2016.

Malissa Hudson, Chair of the First-Timers Committee, reported that we have six of the seven first-timers at convention. Unfortunately, one ended up not being able to attend. There are also several OTC students attending. All first-timers to convention were encouraged to attend the first-timers breakfast.

Tim McCorcle, Scholarship Chair, said that nine scholarships were awarded this year. Seven of the nine are attending the convention in its entirety.

Julie Brannon, Awards Committee Chair, reported that this was an exciting year for the awards committee because several nominations were sent in. Internal awards will be given at the awards luncheon on Friday and external awards given at the banquet on Saturday.

Frank Cuta, Constitution and Bylaws Chair, reported that there were four proposed bylaw amendments and one proposed Constitutional amendment for consideration this year.

Debbie Lewis, Resolutions Chair, reported that we have several resolutions this year for consideration by the resolutions committee. Probably not all of them will come to the convention floor, however.

Meka White, Newslines Committee Chair, reminded everyone that the deadline date for submission of articles for the December 2015 Newslines is November 21.

Dorene Cornwell, Environmental Access Committee Chair, reported that the committee is reviewing who they are and what

they should be focusing on. A bylaw amendment is being introduced to the convention that more clearly defines their role. A transportation funding bill did pass this last legislative session, so there will be funding for Special Needs Transportation. It is unclear at this point what that will look like.

Sue Ammeter, Advocacy Chair, reported that they handled 28 cases so far this year. As usual, some cases required more time than others.

Carol Brame, Membership/Aging and Blindness Chair, said that this year's committee was focused strongly on outreach and growing chapters. She talked about the outreach activities they did in Spokane and at the Puyallup Fair.

Lori Allison, Chair of the Families with Blind Children Committee, reported that they have already begun some of the planning for the Braille Challenge in 2016.

Stuart Russell, Crisis Committee Chair, gave a brief explanation of what the crisis committee does for those people at the convention for the first time. Calls have been lighter this year, so they will have enough money to get them through the end of the year. A bylaw amendment is coming from the Constitution and Bylaws Committee changing eligibility for requesting crisis funding from one time to once every five years.

Berl Colley gave the report from the Washington State School for the Blind. He mentioned some of the new staff hires. The Board of Trustees Search Committee continues to move forward in developing the process for the recruitment and selection of a new school superintendent. They are working with Karras Consulting on this process. On Friday, November 13, Karras Consulting will be coming to the school to hold an open forum for all interested parties regarding the Superintendent selection process. They will

start the forum by reviewing the process, timelines, etc. and will then open it up to everyone for questions. Denise Colley will be representing the WCB Board at this forum.

Denise Colley, Patron Advisory Council Chair, reported that the next PAC meeting will be on February 14, 2016. Elections were held at the October meeting and Frank Cuta is the new chair, George Newbury is Vice Chair, and Debby Phillips was re-elected Secretary. Denise Colley will be serving as past chair. Greg Lane, Deputy Secretary of State, is currently handling oversight of the WA State Library while recruitment for a new state librarian is taking place. Greg joined the PAC meeting call and brought us up to date on the budget and other library activities.

Sue Ammeter reported that the State Rehab Council (SRC) met in September. The Council is still looking to fill two slots representing business and labor. Sue and Steve Fiksdal represented the Rehabilitation Council on Department of Services for the Blind committees working on the new strategic plan for the agency. The next SRC meeting is December 5 at the DSB Seattle office.

### **New Business**

Since the 2016 budget had already been presented to the board, Berl Colley took questions. Two major changes to this year's budget are the inclusion of a \$20,000 expenditure for grants and moving scholarships and WCB convention expenses from internal programs to external and ACB convention and Conference expenses from external to internal programs. A motion was made and passed to refer the 2016 budget to the general membership, at the annual business meeting, with a recommended do pass.

Dates for the upcoming board meetings for 2016 have not been finalized yet. Be sure to check the Newslite calendar for dates as they become available.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

## **Business Meeting**

The business meeting was convened by President, Cindy Van Winkle, on November 7, 2015 at 1:30 p.m. Several In Memoriams were read.

### **Elections**

Officers, board members, and the alternate delegate were elected.

They are as follows:

President: Steve Fiksdal

First Vice-President: Meka White

Second Vice-President: Sue Ammeter

(This is a one year position to complete Meka White's vacated position.)

Treasurer: Debbie Lewis

Secretary: Frank Cuta

(This is a one year term to fill the position vacated by Steve Fiksdal.)

Board Position 1. Jim Turi

Board Position 2. Danette Dixon

Board Position 3. Holly Kaczmarski

Board Position 4. Denise Colley

(This last is a one year position to complete Frank Cuta's vacated term.)

Alternate Delegate: Cindy Van Winkle

Constitution and Bylaw changes: One constitutional amendment and four bylaw amendment changes were adopted.

Three major Resolutions were adopted to include:

- Thanking the WA State Representatives who introduced HB 2195; a bill to provide a more stable source of funding for

the Heritage Center account, the funding source for the State’s Library system, which includes WTBBL.

- The involvement of WCB in the whole process of recruitment and selection of the new WSSB superintendent.
- The accessibility of materials that come out of the governor’s office.

Thank you resolutions to the hotel, host chapter and convention volunteers were also adopted.

The 2016 WCB budget was presented by Berl Colley. It was adopted.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

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**In Memoriam**

The following members of WCB who passed away since our 2014 convention, were fondly remembered with a moment of silence at the beginning of our 2015 annual business meeting.

- Harry (Bud) Kohl, YVCB
- Steve Kuntz, SKCB
- Dorothy Lacey, UBTC
- Loraine Osborne, SKCB
- Russ Richardson, UBSPO
- Harvey Rodgers, UBTC
- Ferd Swenson, UBWW
- Judy Thompson, YVCB
- Steve Vandecar, UBTC
- Ray Zack, PCAB

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### A Glimpse of Convention

By Cindy Van Winkle

The annual convention of the Washington Council of the Blind was held November 5-7 at the beautiful Seattle Airport Marriott. What better way to recap this weekend than by direct feedback from participants? So here they are!



Alco Canfield checks out the Seattle Lighthouse display

I found all the presentations well organized and interesting. I enjoyed the “Meet and Greet” session, which gave us a chance to meet peers and visitors in attendance. I thought the President’s Report was welcoming, encouraging and very inspirational. The Awards Luncheon was very nice. Overall, my favorite part was the business meeting and election process. – T. F.

This was my first convention I was very, very impressed. I liked the guide dog activities. I attended the self-defense class and thought it was well done. – K. W.



Chef James and banquet staff

The part of the convention that stood out most to me was from past and current members, who were able to give some history and background on how far we've come as a community. – H. A.



Enjoyed the fabulous WCB talent show and spending time with friends and catching up! The Banquet was so much fun! The food was excellent and the company was absolutely wonderful! This was the best weekend I've had in a long while! – K. K.



Registration Desk

I truly enjoyed the Friday afternoon program with, "Theater of the Mind" and the panel with Debbie, Paul and Dan. I attended the computer training with Al Yardley. It was better than I expected and he was easy to interact with. – B. C.

I especially liked the Hadley School presentation and the technology updates. I did purchase some new technology and I spent too much money. – L. A.



Lynne Hunter checking out the WTBBL booth

The DSB presentation stood out for me. The complete segment could be used to show persons who don't belong to WCB why blind organizations are important. – C. D.

Presentations that stood out: Old-time radio, Sue's banquet presentation, and the Library report. Not enough time to see everything in exhibits. Everything was great with the hotel, volunteers and meals. – J. K.

I found most of the presentations helpful. I really liked the presentation about the Hadley School and what it provides. I always like to hear what ACB is doing. – H. F.

I particularly enjoyed the presentations on plants and on old-time radio. They were a nice break from the normal sorts of reports that are equally important, but can get a bit tedious at times. – C. G.



The Big Three

I really loved the President's Report; really inspiring, the keynote from Toby Olson, the Hadley School presentation, the Jobs People Do, and Sue Ammeter's banquet presentation. I visited exhibits and purchased a few items. I loved the hotel. – R. D.

The State Agency reports stand out in my mind. The three directors had relevant, current updates and helped point out the effect the WCB has had in our state for many years. The talent show is always a highlight for me. There was a good selection of acts and it was fun seeing first-timers getting involved. – R. T.

Since I did a lot of other things like work at the silent auction and the information/registration desk, I didn't see everything. Cindy Van Winkle's excellent speech on Friday morning was the highlight for me. Additionally I enjoyed the panel on jobs. I went to exhibits for 15 minutes, found what I wanted and got the heck-out-of-dodge. The staff and volunteers with the convention and the Marriott were amazingly wonderful. Chef James and the ladies at the front desk were tops. Everyone I met without exception was courteous and kind. – H. T.

I really enjoyed the old-time radio presentation, the Hadley School for the Blind, Deb Lewis's presentation on the early days of O.T.C. and the President's message. I attended the self-defense seminar and it was better than I anticipated it would be. We certainly enjoyed the Lighthouse display of the products that they make. – J. S.

I attended as a first-timer. I enjoyed every minute of it. Everything was great and the old-time radio was so well presented. It was especially fun to learn about the history of radio entertainment. I did get to most of the exhibits. I purchased some kitchen items and a couple of watches. There were some visual aids I will be saving up to buy in the future. The hotel staff, volunteers, accommodations, and food were excellent. I can't wait to go back next year. – J. K.

Most of the time I thought I was at Nationals; it was so amazing! Everyone did an outstanding job. I loved everything. The voting was run with great respect and Roberts Rules to a fault. Great job! – S. D.

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## **New Year's Resolution**

By Meka White

New Year's resolutions can be a double edged sword. On one hand, we all want a fresh start and a renewal of intentions. On the other hand, we can put too much pressure on ourselves and fail before we even step out of the gate. The resolution below is one that I believe will help us all grow and hopefully will not be such a monumental task.

Whereas, the Washington Council of the Blind is made up of chapters located all around the state; and  
Whereas, every chapter is different in the goals that they set and the priorities that take focus; and  
Whereas, every member brings differing skill-sets and abilities that are known or have not yet been tapped and may find it difficult to discover their niche; and  
Whereas, members may have ideas and new ways of doing things in their chapter that may fly in the face of the way that it has always been done;  
and whereas every single member is important and has something to give; therefore, let it be resolved, by the Washington Council of the Blind on this day of reading the Newsline, that we, each member of WCB reaffirm our commitment to our chapter by being present for meetings and activities, setting an example to newer members and making one another feel welcome and valued, and keeping an open line of communication with local leadership; and  
Be it further resolved that we each take responsibility to bring new ideas to the membership and embrace others ideas as well to ensure positive growth in our organization.

This author recommends a do pass.

Don't delay, start today. There's no reason to wait until 2016 to take those first steps to being the change that you would like to see. Happy New Year!

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## Scholarship Winners

By Tim Mccorcle

The Washington Council of the Blind recognized the nine winners of WCB scholarships for 2015 on November 7 at the annual convention at the Seattle Airport Marriott. Seven of the nine scholarship recipients attended the convention, sharing their stories and insights during a panel



Scholarship winners

discussion at the scholarship reception and receiving their scholarship checks during the banquet. The scholarship committee is confident these recipients will succeed in their chosen academic pursuits and will inspire those they encounter along the way. The WCB awarded a total of \$17,500 to the following recipients:

**Wilson Charles** — Wilson, a 3-time WCB scholarship recipient, is a junior at the University of Washington, where he is double majoring in Political Science (International security option) and Philosophy. He is in the honors program and is carrying a 3.52 GPA. Mr. Charles plans to attend law school with the goal of becoming a diplomat. He is active in local party politics and hosts a community affairs show on KSER. Wilson received a \$3,000 scholarship.

**Steve Fiksdal** — Steve is pursuing a BA degree in leadership studies via an online degree program at Ft. Hays State University in Kansas. He intends to work in the area of leadership training and strength identification and development. He is the current vice chair of the State Rehabilitation Council, a two-time scholarship honoree, and the president-elect of WCB. Steve received a \$2,500 scholarship.

Tracy Fejeran — Tracy lives in Spokane and attends Spokane Falls Community College, where she is a sophomore studying social work. Upon completing her AA degree, Tracy intends to transfer to Eastern Washington University and pursue a master's degree in social work. She plans to use her skills and education in the public health sector and the delivery of social services. She is active in the United Blind of Spokane. The WCB awarded Tracy a \$2,500 scholarship.

Jeff Bowler — Jeff graduated with an MA in May 2015 from St. Martins University and is a licensed teacher in Washington State. He is a graduate student at the University of Northern Colorado, where he is studying for endorsements in Orientation and Mobility and as a teacher of the visually impaired. Jeff is a three-time WCB scholarship winner and received a \$2,500 award.

Shelby Kappler — Shelby hails from Vancouver and is a junior at the University of Wyoming in Laramie. She is pursuing bachelor degrees in international studies and Spanish with a minor in disability studies. She is in the honors program and is an active leader on campus. Shelby studied abroad in Spain this past summer and is president and co-founder of the Abilities Student Organization, which advocates for persons with disabilities. A three-time scholarship honoree, Shelby received a \$2,000 scholarship.

Erick Vazquez — Erick lives in Pasco and is a freshman at Columbia Basin Community College, where he is studying for an associate's degree in education with the ultimate goal of becoming a TVI. He attended the OTC in 2014 and served multiple terms as president and vice president on the student council. Erick worked in the DSB YES program, which confirmed his interest in becoming a teacher. The WCB honored Erick with a \$1,500 scholarship.

Delois Jennings — Delois carries a 3.68 GPA at Bellevue College where she is studying information technology, focusing on software development. Ms. Jennings has extensive experience in real estate, data processing, and is active in her church. Delois received a \$1,500 scholarship.

Jessamyn Landby — Jessamyn resides in Bremerton and attends Olympic College, where she is studying for an associate in technical arts degree specializing in accounting technology. She is an active volunteer at local schools and discovered her enthusiasm for accounting while serving as treasurer for the Peninsula Council of the Blind. Jess received a \$1,000 scholarship.

Maria Martinez — Maria lives in Toppenish and is a freshman at the Yakima Valley Community College. She is working towards an associate degree in legal assistance. She is returning to school after 30 years and is passionate about advocating for others. Maria received a \$250 scholarship from the Yakima Valley Council of the Blind in memory of Bud Cole and Judy Thompson. The WCB awarded Maria a \$1,000 scholarship.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the members of the scholarship committee for their creativity, energy and enthusiasm for the scholarship program and playing vital roles in a successful year.

Furthermore, I would like to thank the members of the WCB for your ongoing support of the scholarship program. It is through this support that we help talented students pursue their goals and nurture future leaders in our community and in society as a whole.

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**Visually Impaired Meet in Everett to Share**

The Herald of Everett, Washington

By Rikki King, Herald Writer

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EVERETT — Jane Reno knew she was losing her vision, but when the doctor confirmed it, she still got upset. She thought about her choices. There had to be support available, people who were going through the same thing.

On Monday, she attended the monthly support group for the visually impaired at the Carl Gipson Senior Center in Everett. This month's topic was dealing with medication, prescription bottles and pharmacists.

“We're a peer group. everybody's equal, and we learn from each other,” said Gloria Riley, who moved to Everett last year. Riley attended one of the support groups in 2014 and went back for one in January.

She was told the former leader had died. The senior center director asked Riley if she could lead the group. Her February group had two people attend. August's meeting had 14. They talked about devices that can help visually impaired people with chores. Someone brought a scale with an electronic voice that reads out the weight. They laughed about that: Who wants their weight read aloud?

The group encourages loved ones and caregivers to join them.

“Family, friends have no concept of what our vision range is or how we see the world,” Riley said.



She owns a set of cardboard eyeglasses that simulate the different kinds of vision problems. She has retinitis pigmentosa, a heredity disease that causes failing eyesight. The glasses that simulate her disease are solid cardboard, with pencil-sized holes to see through. She has no side vision or depth perception: Stairs are dangerous, because they appear to her as flat ground.

Underneath fluorescent lights, “it's like I'm looking through a white fog, and it isn't sharp or clear,” she said.

Her brother was blind all of his adult life, also from retinitis pigmentosa. She worked in bookkeeping and as an emergency dispatcher before retirement. She's not one for crying, but still, she remembers the first time she knocked over a glass of water in a restaurant. She couldn't see the clear plastic. She sobbed. Now she always warns her waitress.

When Riley's brother died in 2007, he hadn't lost hope that a cure for their disease would be found during his sister's lifetime.

“We're not going to give up because we're tough,” she said.

There's no cast on her arm, or bandage on her head, she said. It's a problem often faced by the visually impaired. Their disability can be invisible, and every one's vision is different, and that doesn't always match people's assumptions.

Albert Heimdahl's glasses shield his left eye from view. Heimdahl, who once trained as a chemist and later worked in personnel management, has macular degeneration and glaucoma. After all these years, his loved ones still are learning not to surprise him on his left side, he said.

The group shares life's successes, tips and tricks, frustrations and struggles.

Riley heard of a woman who learned to have her slacks folded differently if they were black or brown, so her outfit would match. Riley found she could put two rubber bands on a medication bottle, so she'd know to take two of those pills at a time. Recently, addressing envelopes stopped her. For Edmonds ZIP codes, the sixes and zeros were indistinguishable.

The technology is always changing. When Heimdahl was studying chemistry, he had a slide rule and punched cards for calculations. Now, his granddaughter made him get a smartphone, and his friends tell him his phone could do the same math for him.

Dave Mitchel is a former truck driver and retired counselor who has been legally blind for more than 30 years. He likes Siri, the iPhone computer personality. He uses Siri to organize his bus schedule and remind him to take his pills. On Monday, he donated a Braille label maker to the senior center. He also works on old cars. He knows them by touch. When he drops a nut or a bolt, he listens to hear where it bounces, he said.

“What kind of vision do you live with?” Riley asked him.

“None,” he said. “Light and dark. I don't see shapes and shadows anymore.”

Barb Vosburgh lost her peripheral vision after two strokes and a surgery. It's more difficult to make the bed now. “I don't get upset,” she said. “I had enough pity parties and nobody ever came.” She plays in the senior center's video game bowling league. She's learning loom knitting and she's picked up a hand-held version of the harp. It makes a sweet sound when the strings are touched.

“Does that open the door to heaven?” Heimdahl asked her, always the teaser. When his neighbors' young children told him that his glasses make him look like a pirate, he told them that sometimes people turn into pirates when they get older.

Jane Reno was 4 for her first eye exam. Technology and inventions prolonged her vision for years — a gift, she said. Little things can surprise her: What to her looks like a dessert might turn out to be beet salad.

What bothers her most is the reading. She likes to read, and it's getting harder.

“You can't sit around and say I'm not going to do anything, so I do the best I can,” she said.

*Rikki King: 425-339-3449; rking@heraldnet.com.*

More info

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The VIP, or Visually Impaired People, support group meets the third Monday of every month at the Carl Gipson Senior Center, 3025 Lombard Ave., Everett. More information: 425-257-8780.

Visually impaired meet in Everett to share, help each other

Ian Terry / The Herald

Gloria Riley shows a prescription pill container that has an audio feature to attendants of a monthly support group meeting for the blind and visually impaired at the Carl Gipson Senior Center in Everett on Monday.



Ian Terry / The Herald

Dave Mitchel, of Marysville, takes a seat with a helping hand from Deb Loughrey-Johnson during a monthly support group meeting for the blind and visually impaired at the Carl Gipson Senior Center in Everett on Monday. Mitchel has been legally blind since he was 27 years old.



Ian Terry / The Herald

Albert Heimdahl (left) and Barb Vosburgh examine a device used for voicing prescription labels during a monthly support group meeting for the blind and visually impaired at the Carl Gipson Senior Center in Everett on Monday.



Ian Terry / The Herald

Jane Reno, of Everett, tries on a pair of glasses designed to replicate visual impairment during a monthly support group meeting for the blind and visually impaired at the Carl Gipson Senior Center in Everett on Monday. The group, open to anyone with a visual impairment regardless of age, discusses topics ranging from technology designed to make everyday tasks easier to navigating interactions with others who may not fully understand blindness.



Ian Terry / The Herald

Deb Loughrey-Johnson (left), director of the Carl Gipson Senior Center in Everett, tries on a pair of glasses designed to replicate impaired vision next to Jane Reno (center), of Everett, and Amber Guinotte (right), with the American Cancer Society, during a monthly support group meeting for the blind and visually impaired at the center on Monday. The group, open to anyone with a visual impairment regardless of age, discusses topics ranging from technology designed to make everyday tasks easier to navigating interactions with others who may not fully understand blindness.



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**More Winners, Every Year**

By Julie Brannon, Awards Committee Chair

One might worry that after giving out WCB awards to deserving persons for the last 12 years, (our first awards given in 2004) that we might run out of deserving persons and outstanding examples of commitment, vision, dedication and just plain hard work, but that’s not the case! Every year, nominations are received by the awards committee for a variety of award categories, and this year of 2015 was not an exception. In fact, this year the committee was tasked with some very difficult decisions to make in a couple of categories. Many nominations were received.

Please see the names of people and groups below that received the 2015 WCB awards; but this isn’t the end; it’s only the beginning because a new year is coming around the bend, so be planning and thinking of deserving persons and/or groups that you want to nominate for 2016.

- The One World Award:

This is an award given to an individual or entity whose actions have a direct result of minimizing the impact of blindness by creating an opportunity of equal access. This year, the award was given to Larry Albert, currently the Executive Producer of Jim French's Imagination Theatre. He is willing to provide descriptions for persons who are blind in his audiences, and in many ways, Larry has encouraged people with disabilities to go after their dreams.



Toby Olson receiving  
Advocacy Award

- The Outstanding Advocacy Award:

This award is given to individuals who champion and safeguard the legal rights and entitlements afforded to blind and partially sighted people and who promote and support improvements to the lives of these individuals.

This year, this award was given to Toby Olson, who has been the Executive Secretary of the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment since 1987. Toby's commitment to equality and civil rights for blind and low vision citizens of Washington State and for all people with disabilities is beyond compare.

- The Chapter of the Year Award:

This award is given to that chapter of WCB which has demonstrated outstanding community interaction and outreach. This year the award was given to the Guide Dog Users of Washington State, Sheri Richardson, President. This year, the

special affiliate has re-established itself as an advocacy and support group for guide dog owners in the State. They re-affiliated with the national organization, and had an excellent Spring Fling program which included sharing with Uber the frustration regarding guide dog ride discrimination.

- The Outstanding Service Award:

This award is given to express appreciation to those members whose consistent donation of their skills, services and time have contributed to the successful operation of the Washington Council of the Blind. This year the award was given to outgoing WCB President, Cindy Van Winkle. The reason for her nomination stated: "Cindy is not a leader because of the office she holds. She is a leader because of her actions. Because of her ability to inspire others to do good things. One of the key characteristics of an effective leader is the ability to "think others first". Cindy is the epitome of this".

- The Newline Editor's Choice Award:

This award is nominated by the Newline editor, who chooses an article of outstanding quality submitted in the past year of quarterly Newline publications. This was given to Reginald George for his products review articles. He has written two of them thus far in both the June and September Newline.

- Outgoing Officer/Director Awards:

- President: Cindy Van Winkle
- Treasurer: Eric Hunter
- First Vice-President: Julie Brannon and Glenn Mccully
- Directors:
  - Sue Ammeter
  - Lori Allison

Gloria Walling

- \*Awards given for Ten Percent Chapter Growth:

Capital City Council  
 Greater Everett Area Council of the Blind  
 United Blind of Spokane  
 United Blind of Tri-cities  
 Yakima Valley Council

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**From My Kitchen to Yours**  
 Submitted by Hayley Agers

**Pomegranate Guacamole**

Okay here it is. I made this guacamole last Christmas for a party Sydney and I hosted. It was eight of her friends and their mums. The party was an ornament- making party and a lot of fun, but not many people were crafting. The girls were off playing in other rooms of the house and the mums could be found in the kitchen pigging out on this dip. Everyone emailed when they got home to say thank you for a fun day; however, at the bottom of each email was a request for the Pomegranate Guacamole. So, now it's that time of year again and we are making Christmas party plans; you better believe this dip will be on the table to serve. Healthy and so good, enjoy!

2 ripe avocados, pitted and slightly mashed  
 1 lime zested and then juiced  
 1 small red onion, finely chopped  
 1 jalapeño, seeded and finely chopped  
 Pinch of salt  
 1/2 cup pomegranate seeds  
 1 clove of garlic, minced



Combine all ingredients in a medium bowl and stir gently to combine. If not serving immediately, place a piece of saran wrap directly onto the guacamole and press down to cover. This will prevent the dip from turning brown and becoming watery. Place in the refrigerator. Serve with slices of jicama, celery, or carrots for one option. Or serve with tortilla chips. This also makes for a lovely spread in a turkey wrap.

### **Easy Crockpot Potato Soup**

As the weather cools down and it becomes damp, this is a soup recipe that anyone can make and everyone will love. I recently threw a fall party at my home, making six different soups for people to enjoy and this was everyone's favorite.

#### Easy Crock Pot Potato Soup

1 (30oz) pkg. of frozen hash browns

1 carton (4 cups) chicken broth

4oz crumbled bacon bits (do not use the ones in the salad dressing area)

1 can of cream of chicken soup

1 (8oz) pkg. of cream cheese, not fat free

Grated cheddar cheese

Green onions chopped

In a large crock pot, combine frozen hash browns, chicken broth, cream of chicken soup, and half of the bacon bits. Put on low for 6 to 7 hours. One hour before it is done, break up and stir in the room temperature cream cheese. Be sure to occasionally stir it so that it melts in and combines. When serving add additional bacon bits, shredded cheddar cheese, and chopped green onions. Top with a few sprinkles of hot sauce if that's what you like.

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## **Call for Committee Members**

By Steve Fiksdal, President-Elect

One of the first items of business of each year is to name committee chairs and designate committee membership. I would like to encourage you to become involved in the good things WCB does by joining a committee. Committee requests can be sent to [steve@fiksdal.com](mailto:steve@fiksdal.com). This is the preferred method. Or you may call me at 206-669-8001. Requests are due no later than December 31, 2015.

Following is a complete list of WCB's committees:

### **1. Advocacy**

This committee works on individual and general issues of discrimination that come to the attention of WCB throughout the year. Its members are called upon to do research and communicate on behalf of the organization with employers, businesses, other organizations and individuals in order to promote advocacy.

### **2. Aging and Blindness**

This committee's focus is the senior blind. It works throughout the year on ideas to improve the lives of senior citizens experiencing vision loss as well as tracking and reporting on issues of concern to the board and members of WCB.

### **3. Awards**

This committee administers the WCB Awards Program by processing nominations for specific awards, making the selections for awards as they deem appropriate, and presenting the awards at the annual WCB banquet.

### **4. Constitution and Bylaws**

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee shall be appointed by the president, no less than 60 days before the opening of the annual convention. This committee shall meet immediately following the preconvention board meeting. The first order of business will be to report the slate of proposed amendments.

### **5. Convention**

This committee is the planning group for the WCB State Convention.

### **6. Crisis**

This committee administers the WCB Crisis Program.

### **7. Environmental Access**

The Environmental Access Committee addresses environmental access issues specific to blindness and vision loss in the built environment. The committee also makes recommendations when the Council finds common cause with other communities affected by a specific issue.

### **8. Families with Blind Children**

This committee addresses issues specific to children who are blind and addresses the associated concerns of family members.

### **9. Finance**

This committee develops the WCB annual budget, which is presented at the preconvention board meeting, and voted on at the general membership business meeting. This committee processes all grant requests received by WCB and reports them to the board for action with a do pass/do not pass or no recommendation.

### **10. First-Timers**

This committee administers the WCB First-Timer Awards Programs for both the state and national conventions by processing applications and selecting the award winners.

### **11. History**

This committee is responsible for preserving the history of the WCB and that of the organizations which preceded it.

### **12. Investment**

This committee tracks the financial investments of the WCB and recommends changes in our investment strategy to the board.

### **13. Leadership**

This committee plans the WCB State Leadership and Training Seminars.

### **14. Legislative**

This committee tracks and reports legislative issues to the board and members of WCB.

### **15. List serve**

This committee works as moderators of the WCB email list, overseeing the list activity, ensuring that the list runs smoothly and keeping list rules up to date and relevant.

### **16. Membership**

This committee works to increase membership in the WCB, assists new chapters to get started and provides support and consultation to existing chapters.

### **17. Newsline**

This committee is the editorial body for the state newsletter, the Newsline. It reviews and processes all submitted articles and makes other editorial decisions regarding the next issue.

**18. Publicity**

The role of this committee shall be to develop strategies on how to communicate a WCB’s message to the public and to generate interest in the causes it represents. The committee may use a range of methods to get the word out, some of which include press releases, radio announcements, billboards and direct mail campaigns.

**19. Scholarship**

This committee administers the WCB Scholarship Program by processing applications, interviewing applicants, selecting the scholarship winners and presenting these awards at the WCB State Convention.

**20. Website Oversight**

This committee will act as the WCB's principle agent for maintaining a website that is informative, secure and accessible.

**Next Generation**

Next Generation is a special committee that will be created at our first Board meeting of the year. This committee will investigate the viability of forming a group dedicated to the needs of our younger members. For the purpose of this committee, younger shall mean under 40 years of age.

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**Around the State**

**Greater Everett Area Council of the Blind**

By Chris Coulter

A lot has happened in the life of our chapter during the past few months. Here are some of the highlights.

We now have a sound system. We used it for the first time at our September meeting. It works very well. That day we had not one, but two presentations. Randy Builder talked to us about all things Apple and Steve Fiksdal told us about his vision for WCB as its president. Steve let us know that he would like to communicate with as many members as possible before our November convention.

On September 26th we held an outreach day at the Everett Public Library. We thank the Library for the use of its auditorium for the event. Cindy Van Winkle, Steve Fiksdal and Danette Dixon were our speakers. They told us about the relationship among ACB, WCB, and our local chapters. Several guests attended the outreach day and one person joined on the spot.

At the October meeting we discussed our fall fundraiser. We brought in a good profit as a result of partnering with Flower Power in selling spring bulbs. Nancy Lind was our top sales person, receiving a gift certificate to Dairy Queen as an award for her efforts. We began making arrangements to have our Christmas party at Denny's Restaurant on the 12th of December. Election of officers also took place at our October meeting, with Danette Dixon being elected as President, Gale Chappell was elected as Vice-President, Marsha White as Secretary and Victor Harris as Treasurer.

In November we made quite a showing at the WCB convention. By my count, 11 people from our chapter attended the convention. We provided lots of warm and cozy gifts in two baskets for the silent auction. Danette Dixon was elected to the WCB Board of Directors. She won her election quite handily.

Now it's time to take a pause and enjoy the holidays with family and friends. We wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas and a wonderful 2016!

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## **Guide Dog Users of Washington State**

By Sheri Richardson, President

### Convention Report

The 2015 GDUWS conference was held on November 6 and 7 in conjunction with the WCB annual convention. At our Saturday business meeting, the following board positions were elected:

Sheri Richardson, President;  
Holly Kaczmarek, Treasurer;  
Deb Cook-Lewis, Director.

Special congratulations to Deb for joining the GDUWS board for the first time, and many thanks to Holly for being willing to serve as Treasurer for another term!

Our guest speaker for our lunch on Saturday was truly inspirational! Clark Roberts, author and public speaker extraordinaire, spoke movingly about the faith and trust involved in picking up the harness and moving confidently through life with a guide dog. He also spoke about how many supportive relationships come about as the result of partnering with a guide dog. What a perfect reminder of how many of my own positive relationships have come as the result of GDUWS and WCB! Best of all, Clark will continue to share his positive energy and leadership with GDUWS as a new member.

Speaking of membership, I am thrilled to welcome eight new members to GDUWS as a direct result of our convention. Money permitting, we hold two statewide conferences each year for GDUWS. These conferences are particularly important to us

because our members live all around the state and are not able to meet monthly as other WCB chapters do.

It seems GDUWS has started a new convention tradition – an informal dinner on Friday evening for members, friends and family, and really anyone else who wants a fun and friendly group of people to dine with. I was expecting about 16 people to attend this year, and I am very pleased to report we had 24 attendees. We may include this as an option on next year’s convention application for planning purposes, so please be on the look-out and join us.

If you are partnered with a guide dog, interested in learning about guide dogs, or want to support us in any way, please feel free to contact Sheri Richardson at dsrichardson@mindspring.com. We are looking forward to an exciting 2016!

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**Peninsula Council of the Blind**

By Stuart Russell, President

This quarter, we welcomed three new members to our PCB family. J.R. Kinnison moved to Bremerton from South King County. He has attended WCB leadership training and was active in California ACB affiliates.

Kat Woofter is a resident of Bremerton. She is a professional baker, and will be baking wonderful desserts for our Christmas party. Kat and J.R. met while attending the training course at Washington State Services for the Blind.

Shari Burns is a long time county resident, who has returned to the PCB family. The PCB members extend a warm welcome to Shari and her guide dog Cessna.



Our September meeting featured a conversation with PCB member Chelsea Armstrong. Chelsea talked with us about her decision to seek further training in blindness skills, her rigorous training program at the Orientation and Training Center of DSB, and her adventures working as part of the night staff at the YES program. Chelsea is now successfully employed at the Lighthouse in Seattle, and joins Stuart Russell every morning on the 4:50 am ferry to Seattle.

Our October meeting featured a presentation by Steve Fiksdal, WCB presidential candidate. He shared with us his vision for WCB. Also in October, we held a successful fundraising event at the Outback Steak house. Cindy presided with her usual high energy and contagious enthusiasm. Special thanks goes to J.R. Kinnison for securing excellent door prizes from local merchants.

At our November meeting we spent some time reflecting on our WCB convention experiences. Sixteen of our members attended our state convention. Our successful fundraiser allowed PCB to cover the cost of convention registration. We also had a short observance of the Veterans Day holiday.

In December, we will be enjoying a Christmas party, and electing new officers and board members for 2016.

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**Pierce County Association of the Blind (PCAB)**

By Lori Allison

Where has the year gone? It seems that it was only yesterday when PCAB was holding elections for new officers. The newly elected officers for 2016 are as follows: President - John McConnell, Vice- President - Cathy Wilson, Treasurer - Kitty Cummings and Secretaries are: Sabrina Beeler and Carol McConnell.

PCAB would like to thank the officers who have given of their time and enthusiasm serving as President - Lori Allison, Vice-President David Edick and Secretary Sue Burdyshaw. Each one of them has represented PCAB well and hopefully will continue to do so in a different capacity.

This year PCAB voted to have a new website designed using word press. The person who has been working hard to accomplish this momentous task is Lisa Arias with assistance from David Edick. Thanks to the hard work of several people, the website is now up and running. Our new address is: [www.pcabinfo.com](http://www.pcabinfo.com). So take a look and let us know what you think.

Beginning 2016 PCAB is going to be the proud sponsor of the "Tacoma Tides". This is an up and coming beep ball team. We are all excited to make the Tides a contender for the World Series. We hope to reach out to the younger visually impaired crowd in the community, while also teaching the sighted community the fun that the visually impaired can have.

This year at the WCB Convention, Pierce County Association of the Blind had several members attend. Each person who attended had a great time and gained more knowledge about new technologies and different programs that are available for the visually impaired.

One of the goals of PCAB is to assist our members who wish to attend convention. Each member that attends gets half of their registration and half of their room reimbursed. This is just one way that the chapter can give back to its members.

PCAB meets on the third Saturday of the month at TACID, 6513 South 19th Street in Tacoma. If you are in the neighborhood, we would love to have you stop in and say hello.

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**South King Council of the Blind**

By Gaylen Floy, President

This has been a HUGE year for our chapter: we got our 501(c)3 status, we hosted the WCB Convention, our own Steve Fiksdal was elected WCB President and Meka White, First Vice-President. The beep baseball team we sponsor took on Canada, and the Liebergs threw one humdinger of a fundraiser at The Mark Restaurant in Burien.

In October we held elections. Officers include Meka White, Secretary; Kevin Daniel, Treasurer; Marlaina Lieberg, Vice-President; and Gaylen Floy, President. Thank you to outgoing officers Kelsi Watson and Shannon Curry for your service.

For 2016, the chapter is brainstorming ideas to reach out to folks in South King County. For starters, we are compiling lists of community resources to post to our website. These organizations will be invited to link to our website.

Congratulations to Muayad Aziz! Muayad was recently hired by the Seattle School District to teach braille, assistive technology, and interpret.

Congratulations to Joy Iverson, the first winner in our Ace of Spades game. This is proving to be a good fundraiser and a great chance to win some cool cash.

We have a few members who need our support, thoughts, and prayers. Marlaina is undergoing shoulder surgery in December. Marie Masterson is recovering from a fractured disc in her back. Gina Allen is done with chemo.

Our Christmas Luncheon is Saturday, Dec. 19, Noon to 3 p.m. at Denny's in Federal Way. Y'all are invited. The address is 2132 S. 320th Street, just around the corner from the Transit Center. We're playing Dirty Santa, so bring a gift under \$15. Come prepared to sing.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone!

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**United Blind of Seattle**

By Casey Dutmer, Secretary

The United Blind of Seattle (UBS) held a spaghetti fundraiser in September. We had a good turnout of members and friends. We raised around one thousand dollars and we hope to have a similar event next fall.

In October we had our annual FRIENDS DAY at WTBBL. We had three speakers talk about the local, state, and national organizations. We also answered any questions visitors or members had about UBS. We had two guests who could be potential members.

The November chapter meeting was cancelled due to the funeral of Shirley Taylor, a long-time member of UBS. Many members wanted to go to Shirley's funeral. Because of this we haven't yet had our 2016 elections for the officers and open board positions. We most likely will have the elections at our annual Christmas Party.

UBS Christmas party will be on December 19th at the Spaghetti Factory in Seattle.

Our chapter wishes everyone a happy and joyful holiday season.

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## **United Blind of Spokane**

By Debby Clark, Vice-President

What a fall season we have had around here! It all started with our membership event headed up by Tracy and Jesse Fejeran at our famous 'Pig Out in the Park' event at Riverfront Park in September.

Tracy's reflections: "Members and friends came out and volunteered at this outreach from Sept 2 through Sept. 7. We had a good turnout even in the cold and rain. We all had an opportunity to get to know each other while huddled under cover from the rain and cold."

Shortly after, Tracy got a notice that she was a scholarship winner for WCB. She commented: "I was ecstatic. This was my first time for a convention and it was an exhilarating experience! It was well organized, facilities were manageable, we got to meet new people and make new friends. I am very humbled to be a part of such a great support system and to work with wonderful people".

In October, Steve Fiksdal came and explained his philosophy about WCB and asked for our votes. We sent seven people to convention and were able to help with our fundraisers. Thank you to Jeff, Cindy, Tracy, Jesse, Vivian, Deborah, and really all our members too numerous to list for fundraising involvement.

November saw us electing Danielle Maher to another term as President and Melanie Wait for another term as Secretary. Congratulations!

I brought my Script Talk unit to the meeting for talking prescriptions. Cindy received a 'First-Timer' scholarship to the convention and had a great time. We need a special award for

Jeff, who drove three of us and two guide dogs to Seatac. We also received an award for growing from 12 members to 20 this year!

We are having lots of fun and support at our meetings on the third Monday of the month at Lilac Services for the Blind. See you next month!

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## **United Blind of Walla Walla Takin' It to the Streets!**

By Alco Canfield, President

If you found yourself walking in downtown Walla Walla on Wednesday, September 23rd, you would have come upon an unusual sight. Gathered on our sunny streets that day were 12 engineers, Steffie Coleman, O and M specialist with the Department of Services for the Blind, and about five UBWW activists.

During the summer, the engineers replaced existing Accessible Pedestrian Signals and added new ones. We were there to check out their work relative to best practices for APS.

Two brave engineers "volunteered" at Steffi's invitation to walk across a street wearing sleep shades and using a white cane. They were terrified, using what I call the Toothbrush Technique with their canes. (Scrape, scrape, back and forth.) Frankly, it was fun to "watch" and I admire them for their courage. No one else took the challenge after them.

The purpose of this demonstration was to heighten the awareness of street workers concerning the difficulties we face when push buttons are not well placed and to demonstrate how flat curbs pose problems for us when we are trying to determine where the

sidewalk ends and the street begins.

The dialog between UBWW and the city was very productive and I believe the engineers got a better idea of the challenges blind and visually impaired pedestrians face when traveling. I think it says a lot for this community that the city engineers were willing to take the time to learn from us. We, in turn gained a better understanding about the challenges they face when installing signals. For example, ramps that work for people in wheelchairs do not work for us.

In September, Alco Canfield had the opportunity to provide information about UBWW, WCB, and ACB during an interview aired on KLOV Radio, a station located in the Tri-Cities.

Joleen continues to serve WCB in her Ex Officio position at the Washington State School for the Blind.

We may not be big, but we're busy. Tune in next time to find out what's going on with UBWW.

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**United Blind of Whatcom County**

By Holly Turri, Secretary

This past quarter has been an exciting one for UBWC. Our minds and hearts have been expanded by the events and choices we have made.

On August 1, 2015 we had our summer picnic. Due to electrical problems it was relocated to a different venue. All of us enjoyed the new place and in fact it may become our new traditional meeting spot.

On September 12, 2015 at our monthly meeting Halley Mcgee, who is a puppy raiser with Guide Dogs for the Blind, described the process for raising these wonderful animals.

On September 29, 2015 a group comprising members of UBWC plus individuals from the Low Vision Group, which meets at the Bellingham Senior Activities Center, took a trip to Seattle to visit the Sight Connection store. Everyone was entranced and fascinated by the variety of new technology available for people with fading vision.

It was decided to reactivate our PAK program. This program provides kits of low tech items for seniors who are losing their vision.

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**Yakima Valley Council of the Blind  
Yakity Yak from Yakima**

By Lisa George, Secretary

Greetings from sunny Yakima! This fall has been filled with activities, from the convention to guest speakers, and we're thankful that we can share these experiences together. For our two first-timers, the WCB convention was a whirlwind of information, new people, and an enlightening glimpse at all the facets of our organization. Gina Ontiveros and Anne Ridenour are excited to use their knowledge and ideas with our chapter in the coming year.

For 2016, our president will be Gina Ontiveros. Darla Hatfield has stepped into the Vice-President position, and our Treasurer and Secretary remain Howard Underwood and Lisa George, respectively. Susan Whitman was elected to our open board position. We're looking forward to an inspiring new year.



YVCB members hosted an informational presentation on Non-24 Sleep/Wake Disorder, open to the Yakima community. It was a great opportunity to ask questions and learn more about this medical condition that is prevalent in blind and low-vision individuals, but very under-diagnosed, or even misdiagnosed. Send an email to: [lmwgeorge@yahoo.com](mailto:lmwgeorge@yahoo.com), if you'd like the contact information for the Vanda Account Manager for our region.

If you're passing through the Yakima Valley, please join us for bowling every Friday morning at 11 a.m. We welcome all levels of bowling expertise and love to cheer each other on.

We hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season and we send our best wishes for a healthy and happy 2016!

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### **Bits and Pieces**

Compiled by Cindy Van Winkle

This column is presented for your information and enjoyment. Inclusion of information, products, and/or services does not constitute endorsement by the Washington Council of the Blind. If you have items for inclusion, email [newsline@wcbinfo.org](mailto:newsline@wcbinfo.org) and put "Bits and Pieces" in the subject line.

\*Career Connect

<http://www.afb.org/info/living-with-vision-loss/for-job-seekers/12>

The Career Connect website is a fully accessible AFB subsite dedicated to promoting the employment of people with vision loss. Career Connect boasts a number of helpful resources, such as articles about the employment process, stories from successfully employed people with vision loss ("Our Stories"), and connections to mentors who are blind or visually impaired and who are

employed in many fields. These mentors are great resources for career specific questions, job accommodation information, and more. Career Connect also offers useful links for job seekers, career exploration, and résumé development tools. In addition, Career Connect provides useful tools and activities for professionals working with clients who are blind or visually impaired.

\*Career Connect App, Version 2

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/afb-careerconnect/id881987520?mt=8>

AFB launched the free, fully accessible Career Connect App on June 24. The app offers access to the Career Connect Blog, with Stories section, and the Lesson Plans for Teachers and Professionals section. It provides access to the Career Connect social networking features. Use this feature to connect with mentors and accept connection requests.

\*Hadley School for the Blind

<http://www.hadley.edu/>

The Hadley School for the Blind offers online and correspondence courses for people with vision loss in subjects related to blindness skills, business writing, employment, and more. Hadley's exciting program, the Forsythe Center for Entrepreneurship, offers in-depth information and training for entrepreneurs, who are blind or visually impaired and who want to start their own businesses. This resource has seen growth and innovation through partnerships with groups like the Veteran's Administration and others.

\*For some fun listening.

<https://soundcloud.com/osbjazz/all-about-that-braille>

Here's a parody on the Meghan Trainor hit, All About That Bass; it's

All about That Braille. When going to this link, wait for a few seconds for the song to actually start. Enjoy!

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**Hats Off**

Compiled by Cindy Van Winkle

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to, and celebrate with, the following WCB members:

Sue Ammeter (JCCB) on being elected Second Vice-President of the Washington Council of the Blind for a partial term of one year.

Chelsea Armstrong (PCB) on accepting a position at the Seattle Lighthouse for the Blind.

Muayad Aziz (SKB) on being hired by Seattle School District to teach braille, assistive technology, and interpret.

Dorothy Bryant (SKCB) on the very special occasion of her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday!

Denise Colley (CCCB) on her election to fill one year of a vacated term on the Board of Directors for the Washington Council of the Blind.

Frank Cuta (UBTC) on his election as chair to the Patrons Advisory Council for the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library, and on his election to fill a one year vacancy as Secretary for the Washington Council of the Blind.

Danette Dixon (GEACB) on her election to the Board of Directors for the Washington Council of the Blind to serve a two year term.

David and Hayley Edick (PCAB) on the birth of their second child, a daughter, Emily Nicole born on November 20, 2016 at 5:43 pm, weighing 7 pounds, 6 ounces and 19 inches in length!

Steve Fiksdal (SKB) on his election as the next President of the Washington Council of the Blind.

Shirley Gray (KCC) on the celebration of her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday!

Connie and Jim Hollis (PCB) on the special occasions of their 75<sup>th</sup> birthdays and their 55<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary!

Holly Kaczmarek (UBTC, GDUWS) on her election to the Board of Directors for the Washington Council of the Blind for a two year term.

Deb Lewis (GDUWS) on her new partnership with Praline, a female yellow lab from Guide Dogs for the Blind, and on her election to serve the Washington Council of the Blind as Treasurer for the next two years.

Stuart Russell (PCB) on his new job at the Seattle Lighthouse for the Blind.

Nicole Torcolini (PCB) on the pairing with her new guide dog, Rivet, a female black Labrador retriever from Guide Dogs for the Blind.

Jim Turri (UBWC) on his election to the Board of Directors for the Washington Council of the Blind.

Meka White (SKB) on being elected First Vice-President of the Washington Council of the Blind for the next two years.

If you have something for consideration of inclusion for future Hats Off articles, please send to [newsline@wcbinfo.org](mailto:newsline@wcbinfo.org) with "Hats Off" in the subject line.

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**2016 WCB Officers and Board of Directors**

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**Calendar of Deadlines and Events, 2016**

**JANUARY**

- 5: Employment Forum, 8:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226
- 10: Deadline to submit committee requests to [steve@fiksdal.com](mailto:steve@fiksdal.com)
- 12: Technology Forum, 7:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226
- 19: Book Club Forum, 7:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226
- 25: Diabetics Forum, 7:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226
- 31: Deadline to make lunch reservation for upcoming WCB board meeting, [steve@fiksdal.com](mailto:steve@fiksdal.com)

**FEBRUARY**

- 2: Employment Forum, 8:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226
- 4: President's call, 8:00 pm
- 5: WCB Leadership Training, 4:00 pm-9:00 pm, Seattle Airport Marriott
- 6: WCB Winter Board Meeting, 9:00 am-3:00 pm, Seattle Airport Marriott
- 9: Technology Forum, 7:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226
- 10: Deadline to submit chapter membership lists and information to [dmc0124@comcast.net](mailto:dmc0124@comcast.net)
- 16: Book Club Forum, 7:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226
- 22: Diabetics Forum, 7:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226

**MARCH**

- 1: Employment Forum, 8:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226
- 8: Technology Forum, 7:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226
- 15: Book Club Forum, 7:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226
- 28: Diabetics Forum, 7:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226
- 31: Deadline to submit letters of application for the WCB Leadership Seminar

**APRIL**

- 5: Employment Forum, 8:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226

- 7: President's call, 8:00 pm
- 12: Technology Forum, 7:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226
- 19: Book Club Forum, 7:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226
- 25: Diabetics Forum, 7:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226

## MAY

- 1: Deadline to submit letters of Application for the First-Timer Scholarship to attend the national convention
- 8: Deadline to make lunch reservation for upcoming WCB Board Meeting, [steve@fiksdal.com](mailto:steve@fiksdal.com)
- 13-14: WCB Leadership Seminar, Seattle Airport Marriott
- 15: WCB Spring Board Meeting, 9:00 am-3:00 pm, Seattle Airport Marriott
- 15: Deadline to make stipend and loan requests for national convention

## JUNE

- 2: President's call, 8:00pm

## JULY

- 3: Opening Session of the ACB Conference and Convention, Minneapolis, MN.

## AUGUST

- 4: President's call, 8:00 pm
- 14: Deadline to make lunch reservation for upcoming WCB Board Meeting, [steve@fiksdal.com](mailto:steve@fiksdal.com)
- 20: WCB Summer Board Meeting, 10:00 am-3:00 pm, Washington Talking Book and Braille Library

## OCTOBER

- 6: President's call, 8:00 pm

## NOVEMBER

- 3-5: WCB Annual Convention, Seattle Airport Marriott



DECEMBER

1: President's call, 8:00 pm

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**Announcements**

The Newslines is available in large print, on cartridge, via email, and on our website at [www.wcbinfo.org](http://www.wcbinfo.org).

Subscribe to the Newslines email list to receive the quarterly publication via email and other important announcements from WCB by sending a blank email to [newsline-l-subscribe@wcbinfo.org](mailto:newsline-l-subscribe@wcbinfo.org).

**Newslines Article Submissions**

To be considered for inclusion in the March issue, article submissions and other information for publication must be received by Saturday, February 20, 2016. Articles should be sent as a Word document and should not exceed 750 words, while chapter updates should be no more than 350 words. Contributions may be edited for clarity and space considerations. Email to [newsline@wcbinfo.org](mailto:newsline@wcbinfo.org).

Address changes and subscription requests should be sent to Denise Colley at [dmc0124@comcast.net](mailto:dmc0124@comcast.net) or by leaving a phone message by calling 1-800-255-1147.