

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

**NEWSLINE**

Opportunity, Equality, Independence

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Steve Fiksdal, WCB President

Steve Fiksdal, President  
(206) 669-8001  
steve@fiksdal.com  
Federal Way, WA

Meka White, Editor  
(360) 689-1678  
mekawh@gmail.com  
Federal Way, WA

[www.wcbinfo.org](http://www.wcbinfo.org)

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## **Editorial: The Times, They Are a Changing**

By Frank Cuta

The leadership of our national organization, the American Council of the Blind, is seriously considering implementing a system of remote voting at our national convention. Another words, all voting on elections and probably voting on bylaws changes would be performed using some combination of electronic voting, telephone voting and mail voting.

I believe that this would be the largest administrative change that the ACB has ever attempted. We would be changing our organization in many significant ways and all of them are not positive. I think that we all should consider this issue very, very carefully.

Of course, one advantage is that we might stimulate involvement by more young people. Most of them are already immersed in a culture that is steeped in social electronics. Another advantage is that we might be able to extend the participation of our older members who, because of old age infirmities find it hard to attend conventions in person.

We would be converting from a representative democracy to a more pure form of a democracy. It is my opinion that the members who scrimp and save all year to go to the convention are probably also more knowledgeable about the candidates and the issues. But it's also true that if a member chooses to take the trouble to vote remotely he or she is probably going to also take the trouble to find out something about what is being voted on.

I think it disheartening that most of the votes will be cast by remote voters and thus those who come to convention may play only a

minor part in determining the outcomes of elections. I have never liked block voting and remote voting increases the danger that more members might employ this strategy. Of course, many affiliates already employ block voting in the form of the infamous "unit rule".

If we switch to remote voting it is anticipated that the additional administrative effort will make it necessary to lock in nominations early in the convention week. This means less caucusing and no nominations from the floor. I think that these dynamics are two of the most engaging and interesting processes associated with our convention culture and they will be sorely missed. Remote voters will have only a limited text statement about each candidate on which to base their selection. Note, that if a very qualified person loses an election for vice president he or she will not be able to run for some other position on the board against a weaker candidate. They will need to wait until next year's elections to run again. It also complicates the process of filling a vacant chair when a board member runs for higher office and gets elected.

I guess it's clear that I am not too excited about the possibility that we may soon change our voting process. However, change is one of those things that happens whether we want it or not. I believe that I have covered most of the pros as well as the cons and when the issue comes up on the convention floor you should not be surprised.

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**President's Report**  
By Steve Fiksdal

Has it only been a month or two since the beginning of my term as President of WCB? My how the time flies!

I must say everyone is busy doing the work of WCB. All of our committees are in place and diligently moving forward, setting new goals for the coming year. I've listened in on many of their conference calls over the past few weeks and I am quite impressed. We have much to look forward this year. Of note:

- Advocacy, in addition to fine work they already do, is putting together a list of pharmacies in our state that provide accessible prescription labels.
- Finance in cooperation with our Treasurer are looking to restructure our financial reporting in an effort to provide a more detailed and retrospective view of our finances.
- Aging and Blindness is looking for ways to reach out to seniors, with the message that WCB is here to support and inform.
- Convention is out of the gate with their eyes on next year's convention. It already looks to be a great event, maybe with even a few surprises.
- Families with Blind Children will have hosted the 2016 Puget Sound Braille Challenge. The event was held on February 27<sup>th</sup> at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Federal Way. (Had to get a little plug in there for my new place of residence)

And that's just a glimpse at what is happening within our committees.

We are in the midst of a legislative session and it's been relatively quiet in terms of issues that affect the blind and visually impaired. One bill that was recently highlighted is the Lighthouse Bill (HR2398) which has passed through the House of Representatives and Senate and now awaits our Governor's signature. The bill's sponsor Jeff Holy says "Current state statute says that all things being held equal, like price, a like market, and like availability, should give consideration, not a set aside, first to blind-made goods. The state's procurement process seems to

have missed this component. This bill changes the current procurement process so the state doesn't miss blind-made services”.

On Friday, February 26<sup>th</sup> I departed for Washington D.C. to attend ACB's Mid-Year Meetings. Unlike at home where the Seattle area experienced rain and wind, in Washington D.C. it was 60 plus degrees and clear blue skies. The ACB Board of Director's meeting took place on Saturday and Sunday was the Affiliate President's meeting. Yours truly gave a presentation on the Durward K. McDaniel First-Timer Awards and the new Leadership Fellow awards. We spent Monday discussing the legislative priorities of ACB and on Tuesday Denise Colley and I visited Capitol Hill and negotiated what seemed like miles of underground corridors and hallways. All in all, it was a great trip and I can report that progress is being made on national legislation relating to issues of the blind and visually impaired.

Much of my time was spent preparing for my first WCB Board of Directors meeting on February 6<sup>th</sup>. We had a very impressive turnout and I'm sure there is a recap of the meeting somewhere in this Newsline so I won't repeat what is to be reported. The President's Training, held the evening prior to the Board meeting was well attended. Thank you presidents and designees. The evening was capped off by an inward look at our individual strengths. This was our second year of offering this exercise and I believe the attendees found it to be very revealing and reassuring.

Looking ahead I'd like us all, not just the board, to be looking for opportunities to help one another. The old saying "it takes a village" (well maybe not so old) is so true. When we pull together in support of one another we can do great things. If you see someone in need, assist them. If you see a need in your community, bring it to the attention of your local chapter or WCB.

I'd like to leave you with one last thought. Promote what you love, instead of bashing what you hate. Live positive.

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## **Eyes Wide Open**

By Courtney Cole

A room covered in boxes, wrappings, and bows accompanied by piles of just-opened gifts. The remains of a hearty dinner filling tummies and like a lullaby, pulling families into naps after all the anticipation and excitement. The thing I forgot about the most wonderful time of the year is that it is also the prime time for sickness. As I'm being reminded of this fact with a sore throat and the feeling of my body giving a definitive feeling of UGH, I try to think of the last time I felt this terrible.

I don't get sick often, but I have some memories of periods where I became part of the couch, living on crackers and Gatorade.

Surprisingly, these aren't what comes to my mind first. I realized that the feeling that comes to my mind first has nothing to do with a bacterium or virus. Honestly, it's much more crippling.

The worst thing I have ever felt in my life is feeling like I was less of a person because of my physical disability.

It's hard to think about, hard to even write that sentence. I mean, why should I feel bad about something that I have absolutely no control over?

It seems ludicrous but I felt this way, and not just for a little while. I'm talking years of my life. I couldn't make friends in middle and high school, at least not real ones. I ended up hanging out with any crowd that would accept me, and even there I was an outcast.

I'm not the only one. Over the years I've made friends who deal with the same things I do and the story is often similar.

So now, years later, I've finally realized the truth. I've realized that I actually have incredible value just like all of my legally/totally blind friends. But why did it take me so long to figure that out?

Because when I was growing up there were commercials and models and general media showing blind individuals as we truly are.

People.

Not an anomaly, not "wow that's incredible they can do x, y, z considering they're blind".

I wasn't exposed to this and neither were my peers, or the peers of my friends. As a result impairments become like that curse word that even those who swear a lot refuse to say.

This isn't just the case for visual impairment. Across the board physical impairments are displayed as an oddity. An oddity in itself considering that in one car accident, anyone could become a part of our underrepresented group.

I say all of this not to be bitter but, to be honest. I would never want someone to go through the isolation that I experienced during school. No one should have to because after all, this is the Information Age. Media does so much to negatively affect younger kids, giving them misconceptions about how they should look or act. Why not make it into something positive? Teach them that physical impairments happen and that those who deal with them are getting through life just the same as everyone else. We can help people to see, we just have to open their eyes.

This article was reprinted with permission from the author. Her blog, The Blink Butterfly, can be found at <http://theblinkbutterfly.wordpress.com>.

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**A Journey of 30 Years of Service in Washington State**  
By Dr. Dean O. Stenehjem, Superintendent, WSSB

As many of you may be aware, I have announced my retirement, which will be effective June 30, 2016.

At this time the Governor's Office and WSSB's Board of Trustees are in the process of conducting a national search. Interviews will be conducted in March with hopeful naming of the new superintendent shortly thereafter. I wish the best success in the search process and will support the new superintendent in any way possible toward continual statewide programs improvements for blind/visually impaired students and families.

My tenure at WSSB has been an amazing career, which would not have been possible without great staff working side by side in helping to improve program and program options for blind and visually impaired students. I am grateful for the support and confidence that was provided by staff, consumers, the School's Board of Trustees, the Governor's office and many more than I could ever name. As Helen Keller said, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much", was something I tried to live by during my career.

My roots go back to North Dakota where I was presented the opportunity to help develop a vocational/technical program for BVI students in the Grand Forks Public School System. This was before PL 94-142 (IDEA), a time when the students with whom I

worked helped open the doors of opportunities for future generations of students to come, by eroding false assumptions about blindness and visual impairment, and just enjoying the opportunities presented at the time. My journey then took me into an administrative position at the N.D. School for the Blind, followed by a move to Colorado, where I completed my doctoral program, then on to Iowa where I was the Director of Education at the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School (School for the Blind), followed by a move to the state of Washington. This journey helped set the stage for an amazing career in our wonderful state and in a wonderful field. In 1986, I was hired as the Director of Education at WSSB, under superintendent Dr. Roy Brothers who provided me the opportunity to spread my wings and explore new ways of providing services on campus. Within a relatively short period of time I was hired as superintendent (1990). During this journey, my wife Sue and I started a family, with the birth of our first son Eric, now 30 years old and research scientist with Intel, and our second son Brian, 27 years old and a civil engineer in Seattle with the Army Corps of Engineers. I think both of the boys and Sue are interested in my retirement and have projects lined up that we have put off for years. I'm sure they will keep me quite busy! Retirement will be one more journey which I will embrace as a new adventure.

The State of Washington and the school have been good to me and my family and I am very grateful for the time I had in public service and the opportunity to work with so many wonderful people.

While at WSSB, I had the good fortune to serve under five different Governor's and work with amazing people that helped develop new programs and services that provided options and opportunities for students. This included major changes in

programs and facilities for the on-campus programs, expansion and development of the Outreach Program, development of the Braille Access Center, acquisition and expansion of the Instructional Resource Center, increases in professional development for both on-campus and throughout the Pacific Northwest, development of Accessible Online learning System, creation of the Assistive Technology Services for BVI, facilitation of statewide coordination of Birth – Three Services, development of a new foundation “Pacific Foundation for Blind Children”, and numerous other initiatives. However, these were never done in isolation, but in partnership with many state agencies, organization, stakeholders, staff, families, the board and wide array of individuals both within our state and throughout the country. These partnerships have been a key in all that we have accomplished during my career in Washington that spans almost 30 years.

I would like to end by thanking everyone for all they have done for blind/visually impaired children over the years and ask everyone to remember that we are always at the beginning of a journey of improving services for blind/visually impaired children. The day you think you have it all figured out is a day that will never come. Program improvement is a continuous process. As society changes, expectations change, technology changes and so better the pedagogy of service delivery and options for students. Innovation is never born out of yester years thinking, but what is needed for tomorrow. I am optimistic about the future and have confidence that new leaders and staff will continue to work in partnership with numerous individuals/organizations in discovering better ways of providing quality educational services to students who are blind/visually impaired. Embrace ideas and new approaches and best of luck in the wonderful world of exploration and program improvement and creating the best programs and

services for students. Thank you for a wonderful 30 years in Washington!

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**A Penny Saved...**

By Cindy Van Winkle, Chair, WCB Convention Committee

It's not too early to begin saving those pennies and dollars. Convention will be here before you know it (November 3-5) and we want everyone who wants to be there to be able to be.

One of the most common reasons folks give for not attending convention is financial. So I thought I'd jot down some proactive ways we can each participate to make 2016 the year we aren't left behind at home while everyone else is partying at the WCB Convention!

For the sake of this article, we have eight months in which to save up and I will always round to the nearest dollar!

So here's what we know. Room rates at the Seattle Airport Marriott will once again be \$99 per night, with tax ends up about \$113. Registration including the meal package (five meals) will be \$95 per person.

If two people share a room for two nights and each register with the meal package, this would be \$208 per person. Divide by eight and you have to set aside just \$26 each to cover room and registration.

If two people sharing a room wish to stay all three nights, again adding in the registration with meal package, the cost would be

\$265 per person and you would need to save \$33 over the next eight months.

And for those who are more local to SeaTac, maybe staying just one night would work for you. In that case, the amount needing to save would be just \$19.

Adding an extra \$5 to your monthly saving will help you with spending money at convention, or at least the one or two meals you would need to cover outside of the package.

Now of course you could choose to have more people in your room and the cost would even be less, or you may be a couple or someone who wishes to room alone and the amount needing to be saved will be more. But I just want us all to be thinking about how we can make it work for our own personal needs.

If your chapter already makes it a habit to assist members in some financial way to attend convention, thumbs up to your chapter! If you're not already doing so, why don't you bring the idea up at your next meeting? Maybe hold a fundraiser specific to this cause. Paying your member's registration, or giving a stipend of some amount is always appreciated and might mean the difference between someone attending this year's convention or not.

More details about convention will be in subsequent issues of Newsline, but we just wanted you to get those juices flowing and begin not only thinking about going to convention this year, but actively planning for it!

So whether it be in a coffee can, the bottom of your sock drawer or in that old forgotten piggy bank on your dresser, it's up to you to begin now so that you can join us at the beautiful Seattle Airport

Marriott the weekend of November 3<sup>rd</sup> and take part in the event of the year for Washingtonians who are blind!

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### **It's All Worth It...**

By Holly Turri

For those of you who are new parents just beginning that fun, fascinating and sometimes frustrating journey down the path toward raising productive, respectful and happy adults, in 20 years or so, the best part will be hearing these words "mom (or dad) I really appreciate what you did." When calming the wailing newborn, soothing the toddler's tantrum, or setting limits for the self-absorbed impulse controlled teen, it may seem that I'm espousing an interesting form of fiction. If we are blessed, we hear the above phrase, and it will feel really, really good!!! Just recently I have and it does.

About six months ago, our daughter who is married, also blind and the mother of an inquisitive active two year old began a part time job which requires an hour and a half commute each way on public transportation. From our children's infancies this very scenario was part of our family's life. The difference was I had two kids and worked full time. After that first week on the job, our girl called to say, "Mom I don't know how you did it. I'm so tired. I understand why you yelled sometimes. All I want to do is sleep!!!."

From age 12 my daughter suddenly acquired all knowledge about every subject. Suddenly I've noticed she's getting dumber and I'm getting smarter. How can this be?

Well to be fair when she gave birth to her daughter I came in for a few advice questions on parenting. Whether she used what I told her or not is unclear. She did listen and ask intelligent questions.

Suddenly with this new job, I've gained even more status. To spare her sighted husband's feelings her queries usually begin with "Mom, as a blind woman..." "How do I deal with an out of control guide dog that wants to bite mine?" "How do I ask for help if I'm lost?" "How do I know if someone is official?" These are just some of the topics we've discussed. My favorite truly shocked me. I'm known by both of my darling offspring "as that old hippie fashion train wreck our mother." Before the first day of her new job at a bank I heard "Mom, what does a professional woman wear to work?" Miracle of miracles, she went and bought what I suggested. Then, she related that her boss complimented her choices.

This morning, in md where she lives it was 16 degrees with a 25 mph wind. It felt like minus whatever. I just got off the phone and she said, "Mom, you are my hero. How did you go to work when it was this bad, and why didn't you complain?" At the risk of severing all the ties to the new, kinder, gentler and humbler child I said, "When you were kids, I always said 'whining changes nothing.' Now do you get it?" She said, "Yes mom I do and I love you so very much."

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## **Winter Board Report**

By Holly Kaczmariski

The WCB Winter Board meeting was held February 6, 2016 at the Seattle Airport Marriott Hotel. The meeting opened with all board members present and 43 people who attended in all. This was the first board meeting of the year and it was held in conjunction with the Annual Leadership Training for chapter presidents and the WCB Board taking place the night before.

Deb Lewis gave the Treasurer's Report and said that finances were in order with some needed changes. She also said that all reimbursements will require receipts, no exceptions.

Berl Colley presented the financial report and indicated that finances were good and that there would be some changes in reporting.

In his President's Report, Steve Fiksdal talked about what is happening in WCB. He mentioned his intention to meet with various leaders of blindness agencies, and has so far met with Dean Stenehjerm from the Washington State School for the Blind. The Durward K. McDaniel award was mentioned for first timers to the ACB Convention. The application process is simple, send a letter expressing a desire to go and why, as well as what a person has done on a local and state level involving leadership.

In the advocacy report, Sue ammeter spoke on the goal of providing a list of pharmacies that have accessible prescription labels. She also discussed working with Group Health and Bartell's in hopes that this is successful.

In the aging and blindness report, Holly Kaczmariski listed committee members and reported on their goals. Berl reported that people asked for brochures and the resource list. It will be posted on the WCB website.

Meka White reported on new times and titles for the Newline in the future to be labeled: Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter editions. You are encouraged to submit your articles early.

In her Awards Report, Julie Brannon announced that Joann Hunter would be the vice-chair. This is a small committee that is more active during the awards nomination process.

In the Constitution and Bylaws Report, Frank Cuta said this year the committee will be discussing editorial and substantive changes.

Stuart Russell reported on the previous year concerning the crisis committee, and Jim Turri reported as the new Chair. Their issues are time-sensitive. The budget is a total of up to \$6,000.

Dorene Cornwell discussed the Environmental Access committee who has not met yet and will provide further information.

Cindy Van Winkle discussed the next WCB Convention at the Seattle Marriott Hotel, November 3-5, 2016, Hotel rates, registrations and travel stipends will stay at 2015 convention pricing. People are encouraged to begin saving for the convention and chapters should consider ways to support their members to attend.

Danette Dixon reminded us that the deadline to apply for the first-timer scholarship to attend National Convention is May 1. Send letters of application to danettedixon63@gmail.com.

Chris Coulter reported on the History Committee's activities and introduced members. She also discussed the history of WCB and the movers and shakers in our group during the merger times.

Cindy reported that the Leadership Seminar will be May 13 to 15. Deadline for letters will be April 15<sup>th</sup>. For more information about how to apply, please see Deb Lewis's article.

Denise Colley began her report by sharing that Zandra Brown will be the vice chair for the Legislative Committee. The committee's goal this year is to put together a complete listing of all WCB members and their legislative districts, which will be most useful when needing to get quick action from members in specific areas.

Most of the bills that the committee is currently watching are ones that have been reintroduced this year because they didn't pass out of session last year. The two we will specifically be following include a bill which requires the creation of a Uniform Disabilities Application form to be used by institutions of higher education in determining a student's eligibility for core services or other accommodations at the institution, and one which would essentially exclude a not-for-profit religious organization from the definition of a place of public accommodation under the Washington State Law Against Discrimination.

The intent of the committee is to spend this year by beginning to look at upcoming issues that WCB might be involved in promoting.

Carol reported about their desire to do more outreach in eastern Washington. The committee hopes to partner with Aging and Blindness.

Gaylen Floy reported that the WCB website was migrated to Wordpress in December. We are using an accessible theme that is responsive. People using smart phones and tablets will have no problem navigating the site. Our webmaster is researching third party options to make our forms responsive to accommodate college students.

WCB Cares is a new committee established by President Steve Fiksdal. Hayley agers, as the chair, reported on the fact that we are a family and that family matters, so the committee will reach out to members through cards and phone calls.

In the afternoon, Larry Watkinson, Title VI/Compliance Manager, Washington State Department of Transportation, talked about his efforts to reach out to the blind community and learn about environmental concerns related to accessibility. He welcomes chapters to invite him to speak with their individual groups.

Sue Ammeter as Chair of the SRC, Frank Cuta as Chair of the PAC and Berl Colley representing the WSSB Board of Trustees each gave a report respectively.

Words are limited, so sadly I must end this report.

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**“Popcorn in the Front Row”**  
**Movie Review Column**  
**By Kevin Daniel**

As a lifelong movie enthusiast and appreciator, I’m hoping to bring my perspective, insight, opinion, and recommendations on what to see and what to definitely miss to the WCB community. I want to inspire and ignite interest in theatrical offerings in the hope that readers might be compelled to go see a movie that could offer an escape, help discover a passion, thoroughly inform, or simply present wonderful opportunity to get lost in a cinematic vortex of entertainment.

My reviews will span through all genres, ratings, and categories. I will rate each movie I review on a six point “Braille Cell” style system, where “6” dots is the very best rating a reviewed movie may receive; meaning it is extremely good and recommended, and “1” dot will be the worst rating. A “1” dot rating will indicate that the movie reviewed isn’t at all recommended and should be avoided.

Each article will feature three recently release movies that I’ve screened. In addition, I’ll add fun facts, insightful tidbits, and general information about the featured films. I hope you’ll enjoy these articles and find my perspectives useful and yes, entertaining. My movie viewing philosophy, “In good times and in bad, happy times and sad, is that a great movie is always welcomed!”

Movie #1 “Room” Released in November of 2015 is rated R and tells the extraordinary story of a spirited five year old named Jack, who is looked after by his loving and devoted mother. Like any good mother, dedication to keeping her son (Jack) happy and safe is of the utmost, given their serious and dire circumstances. I found this movie extremely disturbing, riveting, fantastic, and one of the best I saw in 2015. Brie Larson, who just won the academy award for her role as the mother in this film, was excellent. The other performances in this movie also delivered. The movie is an actual account of an abducted woman and her son and their experience. I highly recommend this movie with a gentle warning that it is not always easy to watch. I give it 5 out of 6 braille cell dots!

Movie #2 - Eddie the Eagle Released in January of 2016 is rated PG-13 and recounts Eddie Edwards rise to popularity as the underdog British ski jumper (Eddie the Eagle) in the 1988 Winter Olympics. Though the movie was cute, it really didn’t deliver on actual story which I vividly remember watching. To be fair, I really don’t think the movie makers were trying to make a theatrical masterpiece, but a fun feel good movie. However, a better effort at the actual screenplay, writing, and direction would have gotten them a better movie. I can’t recommend this movie. However, it comes to cable or Netflix and you don’t have anything else to do, it might be ok for filler. I give this movie 2 out of 6 braille cell dots.

Movie #3 - Race Released in February of 2016 and is rated PG-13 is sports drama about courage, determination, tolerance, and friendship. It chronicles Jesse Owens fight to

become an Olympian at the 1936 Berlin games. I really hate to knock this movie because of its historical and inspirational value to American and black culture. But, it is not a good movie. The acting is poor, the way they chose to lay the story was hard to follow, and I already knew the story, so you'd think would have been easier. I think the movie makers may have spent too much time on attempting to be politically correct instead of laying out the actual story. It didn't help that the direction was lacking and the ensemble of actors for the film were miscast in almost every case. Now, yes, there were solid moments in the film that held me in my chair. The action/racing scenes were very well done, and getting some insight into a moment in history that truly brought blacks and whites together in a celebratory national pride arena were pleasing. But that is about the extent of my enjoyment of this movie. I think historians might like it better than the general movie going public. I unfortunately can't recommend this movie, and it breaks my heart!!!

I give this movie 2 out of 6 braille cell dots.

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## **On the National Legislative Front**

By Steve Fiksdal

The American Council of the Blind is busily working on several imperatives on your behalf. Following is a brief detail on four of these imperatives.

### **Making the Internet Accessible for All**

When the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was originally passed, the Internet was still in its infancy, relegated more to universities and federal agencies than the general public. It would

make sense, then, that as the Internet grew, so too would protections for accessibility under the ADA. However, this has not been the case. For the most part, industry has been forced to comply with the ADA through legal proceedings, which routinely raise questions on how Title II and III of the ADA apply to web accessibility. The Department of Justice (DOJ) has for over a decade now indicated the need to develop such regulatory guidance. However, it continues to prolong the inevitable.

Part of the problem is that the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has failed to give a green light following a 2010 Announcement for Proposed Rule-Making (ANPRM) on Information and Communication Technology (ICT). In November 2015, the DOJ announced it had pushed back release of the proposed regulations until 2018.

The time has come for OFM to give the DOJ the green light to get this done. No more delays.

### **Marrakesh Treaty Ratification**

All of us need access to the books and magazines that influence the cultural life of our communities. Although advances in technology in recent years have given people with visual impairments many more options for accessing printed materials in accessible formats, the World Blind Union estimates that we still have access to only about five percent of the books published worldwide each year. With very few exceptions, copyright laws in countries worldwide, including our own, only allow producers of accessible format books to distribute them to eligible persons within their own country. These works cannot be exported.

In an effort to remedy this situation, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) adopted the Treaty to Facilitate Access to Printed Material for People Who Are Blind or Have Other Print

Reading Disabilities. This treaty is known as the Marrakesh Treaty, because it was adopted at a diplomatic conference held in Marrakesh, Morocco in 2013. On February 10, 2016, President Obama transmitted the ratification package to the U.S. Senate.

The U.S. Senate needs to ratify this treaty.

### **H.R. 3535: The Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act**

The Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act (H.R. 3535) is intended to improve the delivery of appropriate special education and related services to all students who are blind or visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, or deaf-blind, including students who may have additional disabilities. While the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has made great strides in advancing education for students with disabilities, it remains grounded in a 40-year-old mindset. Consequently, students with sensory disabilities face a myriad of challenges unique to each student in a rapidly changing world, and the need for improved input and flexibility has increased significantly. Based on evidence-driven best practice, the legislation ensures that properly designed and individually tailored services are in fact provided, meeting the unique learning needs of students with sensory disabilities, and that the educators who serve them are prepared and supported to do their jobs well in a 21st century setting.

ACB supports HR 3535.

### **H.R. 729 Low-Vision Device Act**

In November of 2008, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) promulgated a regulation that has had a detrimental impact on the lives of countless individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies (DMEPOS) Competitive

Acquisition Rule contains a provision entitled "Low Vision Aid Exclusion" which states that all devices, "irrespective of their size, form, or technological features that use one or more lens to aid vision or provide magnification of images for impaired vision" are excluded from Medicare coverage based on the statutory "eyeglass" exclusion. ACB believes this extremely restrictive reading of the "eyeglass" exclusion has resulted in the denial of vital assistive devices for seniors and other Medicare beneficiaries.

The expansion of the eyeglass exclusion has prevented access to devices such as hand-held magnifiers, video monitors, and a wide array of technologies that utilize lenses to assist individuals in overcoming the obstacles impeding their independence.

ACB supports HR 729.

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## **My Oregon Road Trip**

By Frank Cuta

In November my brother Mike and I took a five day road trip through western Oregon in his truck listening to Willie's Roadhouse on the radio and stopping at breweries and tap houses that advertised barrel aged beer. We were pursuing my favorite brew, an imperial barrel aged Porter. This is an account of my daily Facebook postings. The included descriptions of the photos were just a joke on my sighted Facebook friends. They are always sending me photos without descriptions so for five days I sent them descriptions without photos.

Day 1

We visited the full size replica of Stonehenge at Maryhill and the aircraft museum at McMinnville.

There are photographs of me dwarfed by a huge stone monolith at Stonehenge, behind the dual 50 caliber machine guns mounted on a B-17 bomber, with my hand on the cone of a Titan rocket engine looking up at 100 feet of missile and standing in front of an SR-71 Blackhawk.

## Day 2

We made it to three breweries and the aircraft museum at Tillamook. This museum is housed in an immense old WW II blimp hangar that covers seven acres. There are photos of myself seated in an A7 trainer, standing in front of a MIG 17 fighter, with my head and shoulders in the jet intake of a MIG 17, and with my arms wrapped around a WW II Navy depth charge. (Hey, when you are this far from home you take your hugs where you find them!)

In Astoria we found our first barrel aged product, BA Stout at Fort George Brewery. It is kind of a mystery what happened to it. We do not remember drinking it. Later we tasted a pretty good Black Dynamite BA stout at the Seaside brewery in Seaside and found a barrel aged ale at the Pelican Brewery in Pacific City. It was an admirable start. Tomorrow we are heading south for bigger brews and warmer weather.

## Day 3

We woke up to sunshine. It did not last long but we took advantage of the moment to visit the awesome beach. The only photo I took is of Mike and I standing on the beach with Haystack Rock in the background. We each have a seed sticking from our mouths. The caption is "two hayseeds in front of Haystack."

I tasted the BA ale at Pelican Brewery and liked it a lot. I also tasted their Queen of Hearts Belgian ale aged in gin barrels. The next stop was Lincoln City. At McMenamins Brewery I found the best brew thus far, BA Commodore's Barley Wine. I also tried their brew called Cherry Poppin Dory which is aged in whiskey barrels.

The next stop was in Newport at the Rogue House Brewery. They had a tasty BA product called Big Ass Wheat. Properly hydrated we got on 101 and continued south.

#### Day 4

In Bandan we walked about a mile on the beach and investigated some grottos carved out by the wind, waves and sand. Photos include me walking on the beach, having a beer, taking in the view from our deck, and exploring. We failed to get the shot of the undertow trying to drag me out to sea. We got surprised and the water grabbed at me up the full length of my legs. I did not notice how much trouble Mike was in but, if it drug him out to sea I would have written a poignant tragic folk ballad about him. Fortunately, he survived and my aspirations to become a great folk musician were crushed.

#### Day 5

We woke Friday morning to a glorious, bright, sunny and blue sky day. Of course, we only had a couple of hours to enjoy it since we were now on our way out of town. The photo shows me standing in the sun in front of the remains of a huge log that some frightful storm once cast up on the beach. We quickly had breakfast, stocked up on cookies and ducked out of town.

Sailing north on I-5, Mike climbed up to the crow's nest and scoped out the road in front of us. Up ahead it looked like about a dozen breweries and brewpubs in Eugene and Salem -- definitely too formidable for us to take on all at once given that we only had a couple of hours to kill. I did some calling and we chose to attack the Tap and Growler in Eugene. This turned out to be an excellent choice as we found liquid treasure - the second brew on this trip that I really liked. I bought a full glass and dove in. This beer is from Plank Town Brewing in Springfield and is called Hobbit's Little Helper. It is also called bourbon barrel aged Hobbit's Habit. Yes, it could be a habit if I lived anywhere near Eugene. Also at this pub I tried big bad batch Imperial Russian Stout which had been aged in whiskey barrels. I left most of it in the glass.

We faced serious traffic entering the Portland Harbor but finally reached the Hop works Urban Brewery (HUB) around dinnertime. There was no sign of the BA product of theirs that had been praised on the web. (Shiver me timbers!) So I just bought a tee shirt and we rowed over to the Marriott where the annual Oregon science fiction convention was just getting underway. I sang a couple of pirate songs in the evening song circle and five hours later we were back on the land and headed for Kennewick. My search for the perfect porter was a failure but not fruitless since I found out that I like barley wine nearly as much.

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## **Fragrance Gardening in Northeast Washington**

By Debby Clark

About 45 years ago my husband Jeff and I began a journey of organic gardening. We did this because I was concerned about our health. Those were the days when I could still see to drive and everything else. Over the years we always included flowers and

herbs as well as those fruits and vegetables. We canned, froze and dried our produce as well as some flowers and herbs.

As time went by and I began seriously to lose my vision I needed some sources of beauty that were not visual. Bird song and fragrant flowers are at the top of that list. We went to our local April Garden Center and they introduced us to many fragrant flowers, shrubs and annual flowers and herbs that are fragrant. This project has grown to such large proportions that you can easily smell our flowers as you go by our home.

We have many, many unique bird feeders and habitats for my song birds and I can hear them outside my sunny office window all year round. I love these sources of beauty!

I look forward every spring to the heady fragrance of Hyacinth or Paper Whites blooming from bulbs that flower in late February or early March. One of these blooms in the house fills the air in my kitchen. Next I can look forward to fragrant Viburnum. This is a shrub that gives a lovely fragrance all over my back yard. Sometime in early May we have low growing Rock Daphne with a sweet, spicy fragrance closely followed by lilacs which ring our property. I have a huge one by my front porch. When I go outside in front I also smell fragrant Peonies which smell a little like roses. Around Mother's Day, my husband Jeff plants blue flash petunias and sweet white alyssum. These two flowers planted together have a unique fragrance that lasts almost till the snow flies.

I am surrounded by planters on my patio full of flowers and herbs for my enjoyment. I have pots of lavender, cilantro, dill, oregano,

lemon mint, heliotrope and a lemon geranium. This lemon plant is leafy without flowers and when you crush a leaf you get a wonderful lemon fragrance quite unlike any other plant. In my front yard later in May or June is a mock orange shrub that is a slice of heaven for fragrance. Last but not least is my Stock flower with its lovely fragrance.

I am very thankful for my husband Jeff who plants me all these lovely smelling flowers. Most of these are perennials and come back and bloom year after year except for the petunias, alyssum and some of the herbs. Most of the flowers listed here also grow in Western Washington.

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### **Land of the Blind**

By Carl Jarvis

The date was Wednesday, March 3, 1965 when I entered the Land of the Blind. On that day I believed it was the last day of my life. Today, 51 years down Life's Road, I can't help but chuckle at that bleak mind set. The thought that my life was at the mercy of my eyeball! I honestly believed I was at the end of the road, so far as any usefulness was concerned.

"Well," I groaned as I plopped down on the sofa, "I'm done. This is it. Nothing more that I can do."

A wife, a two year old daughter, a house payment and no job. I'd never been out of work in my entire 29 years. Even as a child I mowed lawns, packed papers and did odd jobs. I worked in a drapery factory during the day, and did freelance photography evenings and weekends. My life had been full and there was no

way I could imagine that it would ever be positive and productive again. I was a Blind Man! In my mind that meant I was helpless, dependent and useless.

It's amazing when you stop and think about it. Our minds can control so much of who we are. So knowing this, it should be a simple, easy task to change our thinking and become a positive, productive person. It turns out that this is far more difficult than it sounds. But change is central to the rehabilitation process. Without altering my mental image of who I am, rehabilitation will not happen.

So on this, my 51<sup>st</sup> anniversary of becoming a Blind Man, you can give me a birthday gift. Here it is. Find a blind acquaintance and visit them or call them up. No emails or likes. Tell them just how much they have meant in your life. And if we're lucky, we'll all receive calls. As my dad used to tell me, "We are all success stories. Each of us are here as the result of an unbroken chain of success stories." You can't beat that!

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**The 2016 Puget Sound Regional Braille Challenge**

By Lori Allison, Chair, Families with Blind Children Committee

On February 27 the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library (WTBBL) and the Washington Council of the Blind (WCB) Families with Blind Children Committee hosted the 2016 Regional Braille Challenge at St. Luke's Methodist Church in Federal Way.



Cindy Van Winkle and little girl sitting next to her while Cindy feels her work in Perkins

The Braille Challenge was created by the Braille Institute of America (BIA) in 2000 and has become a national program. This academic competition is for students enrolled in grades 1-12 and encourages braille literacy in a fun and competitive atmosphere.

Several adult volunteers made this event happen: Teachers of the Visually Impaired, Braille Transcriptionists and WCB Members were amongst those who proctored the testing and painstakingly worked to score all tests to ensure we followed all guidelines set forth by the Braille Challenge.

This year we had six participants—the youngest being three six-year-olds and the oldest being a 13-year-old. Although we won't know the results of their efforts for some time, as only the top 10 in the respective age groups are publicly announced--all children enthusiastically showed their love of braille and were engaged as they took part in their several tests.

Programs were presented to the families and parents of the students. Meka White, First Vice-President of WCB shared about activities and resources available through WCB. Marian Mays, the Youth Services Librarian from the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library (WTBBL) talked about the many services and opportunities that the library offers as well as



Cindy Van Winkle and little girl sitting next to her while Cindy helps her with braille.



Marian, Cindy Van Winkle and Marianne. Cindy and Marianne are feeling braille at the

some upcoming events for the students.

In addition to the Challenge, the students had the opportunity to participate in games and earn prizes throughout the day! At noon, a pizza lunch was provided for all while the students and their families learned more about each other.

Toward the end of the day, Fred Baker from the Tacoma Tides Beep Baseball Club talked about Beep Kickball. Fred had brought in a beep kickball and allowed the students to play with the ball. The families as well as the students were very interested in this sport.

The Braille Challenge takes place annually and allows families with blind children, the opportunity to meet. This event was great fun as well as informative for all who had participated.



First graders (6 year olds) brailleing and reading with Marian and Cindy.

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### **Take Me Out to the Ball Game!**

By Cindy Van Winkle

For several years now, I have had the pleasure of organizing a group for WCB to attend a Mariner’s game. Each year, the response has been one of excitement leading up to the game and one of hope afterward that we’ll do it again next year. Well, I’m pleased to say to the latter, “Yes we will!”

This year we will be rooting on the M's to victory over the Houston Astros. July 16 is the day, with a start time of 1:10 pm. This is a rare day game on a Saturday and it's also a Robinson Cano bobblehead give-away to the first 20,000 fans.

Once again, we will be in the Hit It Here Café, where \$18 of each ticket may be used toward your food and beverage. The cost this year is \$60 per ticket. Keep in mind though, with this ticket you will be seated at a counter seat with plenty of room for guide dogs, long legs and wheelchairs, in a covered café protected from the elements but with the front opened to the field allowing you to hear the smack of bat to ball, and a great view from right-center field for those who can see. Oh yes, and best of all, an attentive server will come to you to take your order, serve you and refill your beverage.

For those coming alone and needing such assistance, Mariner's guest services will provide designated meeting times and location for escort services to your seat. Detailed information on this and much more will be sent out prior to the game to all those who reserve their seat.

All tickets must be paid in full by June 5, 2016. However, those purchasing their tickets by May 15, 2016 will be placed in a drawing for two tickets to an upcoming Mariner game of the winner's choosing.

For those wishing to make their reservation, you can use Square or PayPal by sending to [cindy.vw@gmail.com](mailto:cindy.vw@gmail.com) (please add \$1 per ticket if using a credit card to offset PayPal charges). Checks must be paid to the order of Cindy Van Winkle and mailed to: 6686 Capricorn Ln. NE, Bremerton, WA 98311.

Tickets will be placed at Will Call ready for pick up on game day under the name of the ticket purchaser. If wishing to receive your tickets ahead of time, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the above mailing address prior to June 5<sup>th</sup>.

This is fun for the entire family! Chapters have been known to make this a group outing as well. So, share the info with your fellow members, friends and loved ones and let's make this the biggest group to date. 70 tickets have been reserved and I hope we'll use every one of them!

So, while you make your summer plans for picnics, vacations and other fun activities, be sure to include one of America's favorite pastimes and join your WCB family at Safeco Field for a fun-filled day of baseball as the Mariner's host the Astros on July 16!

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**This Journey**  
By David Eagan

Twenty-two years ago my life made a huge leap forward into independence and dignity. Before then I had no concept of how much a guide dog would improve quality of life, enhance friendships, bring forward professional opportunities, and bring so much laughter along with tears of pure joy.

It all started back in 1994 on a hot summer day when my instructor knocked at my door in the training facility. This huge affectionate creature leaped into my arms, and life for me was forever changed for the better.

At one point I remember thinking what on earth have I got myself into this time. While fumbling with the harness, turning green when picking up after him the first time, being so clumsy, and it all seemed so awkward. Here was a man in his 40's feeling like a child.

It is still like the very first time whenever I hold the harness and leash, give the forward command, and we glide as one. There remains such a huge sense of pride. There is still that huge rush as we weave our way along crowded sidewalks, make difficult crossings, find our way along rural roadways, and discover new places while being able to revisit familiar ones. All it takes is good training, a basic set of commands, trust, and of course a perfect match.

Trust? The most difficult hurdle for me back then was learning to trust my dog. It happened all at once during a traffic check while making a crossing during rush hour. A car came at us with tires squealing, engine roaring, and I 'm thinking of meeting my maker. Then my guide drug me back to safety on the sidewalk. It then hit me all at once as tears fell, and holding that little guy in my arms, with my instructor saying, "Now you trust him."

That first guide and I had nearly eight good years together. With him I could go nearly anywhere at any time independently. Nothing can prepare folks like me for dealing with the loss of a sweet companion/friend/guide. He was diagnosed with lymphoma at eight years, and finally had to let go when almost ten.

The very next day on my way home from work while waiting at a transit stop without my guide, feeling so hurt and lost, along came a lady with her guide dog. Never before had I met another working team in this area. My pain of loss was so extreme that I had decided to never apply for another guide. She suggested I

communicate with the school to explain what had transpired with my first pup. I now know it never gets any easier, and it somehow makes us better people. I did call our school the next day, ended up re-applying, and within a short time was on my way to train with a second guide pup.

This second guide became our pumpkin angel. We were together for nearly fourteen years. There are certainly many options to consider when making plans to retire a guide, but I chose to go the entire distance with him.

We had to let him leave us last autumn. The grief within me was overpowering. Looking back as I hold close to me this third beautiful guide who is now leaning against me with his toy hanging from his mouth, and paw on my lap I now realize that so much caught up to me all at once. Heart felt messages from other dog guide handlers, and close friends have shown me that the heart has enough room to hold fondness for each guide/friend. There is a special page for each shared journey together. I'd like to believe those huge fluffy angel tails are wagging happy blessings all over heaven and earth.

Three weeks ago at the same training facility, there was once again a knock at my door. Suddenly a huge bundle of pure unconditional love leaped into my arms, and found his way into my very existence. At 20 months he is full of energy, a bit naughty, yet has a strong work ethic. He too has become the center of my universe.

For me right now this third big bundle of joy represents all that is good. He too is a confident and trustworthy guide. The partnership is indeed complex with all the subtle communication constantly taking place, yet for me this beautiful dance is indeed a miracle needing no words, and no explanations.

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## **WCB Leadership Seminar is Fast Approaching Applications due April 15, 2016**

By Deb Lewis

What's more fun than slaving over your income tax forms? Well just about everything of course, but in particular it's more fun to complete your application letter for the WCB Leadership Seminar. I know this because last year I attended the seminar and found it to be fun, challenging and rewarding. If you've never attended the WCB Leadership Seminar, and if you want to learn more about becoming involved with WCB, provide better leadership in your chapter, or even become a national leader in ACB, then you should consider beginning that process by applying for this year's seminar.

The WCB Leadership Seminar will be held May 13-15 at the Seattle Airport Marriott. To apply, send an email introducing yourself and explaining why you would like to attend the seminar to [cindy.vw@gmail.com](mailto:cindy.vw@gmail.com) no later than April 15. The Leadership Committee will accept up to 16 applicants, so in addition to stating why you'd like to attend the WCB Leadership Seminar, you should also describe what you feel you bring to the organization and what you hope to gain from the seminar.

This year's theme is Upward and Onward. I love this theme because it describes us as moving together in a particular direction. During the weekend we'll learn about the history of WCB, how to be a leader at various levels of the organization, and how to find your place in WCB. Of course you'll meet new people, have a fun weekend, and have an experience you won't forget. Oh, I must warn you that after completing the seminar, you just

might find yourself becoming much more active in leadership in your chapter and in the state as we move Onward and Upward together.

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## **Retirement and the Next Chapter of Your Life**

By Denise Colley, WCB Board Member

A lot of us in WCB have reached the phase in our life journey known as RETIREMENT. How many of us enter retirement and then don't know what to do with ourselves? The days become long and we no longer feel as productive as we once were. For others of us, however, with retirement comes travel, and exploring all those hobbies and interests we never had time to while working. My husband Berl and I have found ourselves in the second category, and I want to share a little bit about the interesting paths our new journey has taken.

In 2013 we made the decision to sell our house and buy into a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) in Lacey called Panorama. A CCRC is a facility that provides a continuum of care from independent living to assisted living, rehabilitation and skilled nursing. The facility is located on 140 landscaped acres with more than 850 homes in styles ranging from spacious duplexes to cozy cottages and single-family homes overlooking the lake, independent and assisted living apartments and the rehabilitation and convalescent center. While the campus is beautiful and kept well maintained, what I really want to talk about is the wide array of on campus and off campus activities and cultural events available to the residents.

We have access to a complete aquatics and fitness center with a wide range of physical fitness options. A state-of-the-art auditorium brings in live cultural events, lectures and the showing of movies on a regular basis. There are two woodworking shops, a metal shop, weaving and ceramics studios, an art studio and our very own TV studio. Transportation is provided to off campus events at such places as the Washington Center for the Performing Arts in Olympia, the Fifth Avenue and Paramount Theaters in Seattle, and Benaroya Hall. There are also approximately 80 different on campus interest groups and activities, all organized and run by residents. To give you an idea of the kinds of things these consist of, let me share a little about what we are doing.

The TV studio is a Comcast insert channel that goes out to all residents. We both volunteer in the production studio working the sound board and acting as floor manager during program shoots. Both of us have our own half hour interview shows that we do once or twice monthly. Mine is called Meet Your Neighbor, where I interview residents about their lives before and after Panorama. Berl does a show entitled Outside Panorama, where he brings in guests from the community to talk about issues of interest to our retirement community. I perform with their sixty voice four part harmony chorus which rehearses weekly and does four performances a year. There is an on-campus low vision group that we help facilitate and bring in speakers. Because the campus is so large, Panorama provides on-campus transportation which we both utilize and provide dispatching for to schedule rides. I also serve as secretary for the Resident Transit Steering Committee. We take advantage of both the pools and exercise equipment at the fitness center. I'm involved in a group called Pet Partners,

which addresses the on-campus needs of residents with pets. I am also getting to try my hand at Readers Theater, an activity I've always wanted to do.

So, as you can see, all of this, along with our organizational and other community involvement keeps our lives very full. Retirement doesn't have to be boring or lonely. It's your opportunity to experience all those things out there you never had time for before.

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### **There's No Such Thing as Hopeless**

By Malissa Hudson, Vice-President, United Blind of Seattle

One of the wonderful things about being a part of the blind and visually impaired community is how one can touch people's lives in the smallest but yet inspiring ways. I never imagined that this would happen to me.

There's a country music disc jockey that I've been listening to since I was two years old named Bob Kingsley. He has been the host of the ever popular American Country Countdown since the 70's and in 2006, he started the Country Top 40. One of the features on this program is called Listener Request, just like Casey Kasem's Long Distance Dedication feature on his show. Listeners have the opportunity to submit in a letter to Mr. Kingsley with a song request and a story to go along with it. Back in 2010, I submitted one and told Bob my life story and about my blindness. I also shared that I was heavily involved with WCB. The song I requested was "The Impossible" by Joe Nichols. There's a line in

that song that goes: “So don’t tell me that it’s over, don’t give up on you and me, BECAUSE there’s no such thing as hopeless if you believe.” I dedicated it to all people who have disabilities.

The story didn’t end there! In January of this year, I wrote to the webmaster of CT40 and told them about my request letter and how much lives were touched here in Washington. I also told them that I had always wanted to talk with Bob Kingsley and how much he had meant to me with that beautiful voice of his and the passion he has for everything he speaks about. On January 18, I had the day off work and my home phone rang. I answered it, and this voice comes on the other end of the line and says, “Malissa please?” To which I replied, “This is Malissa. How can I help you?” He said, “Hi MALISSA. It’s Bob Kingsley!” I had never been so speechless in my life! I cried and we talked on the phone for about 20 minutes. At one point during our conversation, I thanked him for what he does for radio, for the country music industry, and for what he does to help our brave men and women who are fighting for our country and who have given their lives for our freedom. There was a long pause on the other end and all Bob could say was, “Thank you.”

I share this with you to let you know that there are so many blind and visually impaired people out there who are struggling because they feel like there’s no light at the end of the tunnel. The Washington Council of the Blind can be that light at the end of the tunnel. Whether it’s inviting people to a chapter meeting, having a social event, or just calling someone up that’s in need and telling them that you care. It’s amazing to me how the power of radio can touch just that one listener at a time, such as the case with me

with a simple request letter. I love country music, I love Bob Kingsley, and most importantly, I thank you for letting me share my story.

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## **Bits and Pieces**

Compiled by Meka White

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.

\*Hadley Institute for the Blind and Visually-impaired  
Formerly the Hadley School for the Blind, the organization has changed its name in order to be more inclusive and reflective of the students that they serve. For more information about the Hadley Institute for the Blind and Visually-Impaired, as well as to peruse course offerings, you can visit their website at [www.hadley.edu](http://www.hadley.edu)

\*app news

Netflix - The popular program used to stream movies and TV shows has gotten a facelift and is even more accessible than before. More audio described titles have been added and you can view the ever-increasing list by visiting <http://www.acb.org/adp/netflixad.html>

Taptapsee -- This helpful app which identifies pictures has now gone free. Also, it is worth noting that the code is open-source for the Android platform.

Disney Movies Anywhere - this app allows you to watch movies from Disney, Marvel, Pixar, and more. The app has undergone great accessibility improvements, and perhaps the most exciting is that you can watch Disney and Pixar movies on the phone or on your TV with audio description that will sync no matter where you are.

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**Around the State**

**Greater Everett Area Council of the Blind**

By Chris Coulter

Since our last report, it has been a time of mostly ups and one difficult down.

On December 12th of 2015 we held our annual Christmas party at Denny’s in Everett. We had several meal choices, a gift exchange and lots of conversation and Christmas spirit. I’m enjoying my gift of a pair of hand-knitted socks and a cap, made and donated by the Nitwits, a group that meets to knit for the joy of it at the Carl Gibson Senior Center.

Later in the month we all received some sad news. Donald Causer, one of our most enthusiastic members, died unexpectedly on December 27th. We knew he had many health issues but had seemed to be doing quite well. He will be missed.

At our January meeting we spent some time talking about our memories of Donald. He attended our convention in November as a winner of our first-timer award and had really enjoyed it. Also, we discussed holding a WCB outreach day event every other year, alternating with a year when there are one or more fairly high-profile speakers and then will invite people to join us, making the visit its own outreach event.

In February we celebrated four birthdays: Lona Burrow, Gale Chappell, and twins, Marcia and Michelle White. We also had several guests. Hayley Agers shared with us about the WCB Cares Committee she is chairing, tasked with reaching out to members in need of encouragement. Andy Arvidson joined us to get ideas for possibly starting a new chapter in the Anacortes area. And, if that wasn't enough, we had gluten-free cupcakes in honor of the retirement of Velma, President, Danette Dixon's guide dog. Danette will be traveling to Oregon in March to get a successor dog.

Danette is now on the WCB Board of Directors and attended the first board meeting of the year in February along with two other members.

As spring gets closer I know that we're all getting ready for it in one way or another. There will be more news about what's happening in Everett in the next issue of your Newslines.

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### **Guide Dog Users of Washington State (GDUWS)**

By Deb Lewis, Board of Directors

I love spring—flowers blooming, warmer rain if not less of it, longer days, the Guide Dog Users of Washington State Spring Fling, and Beep Baseball. I have no idea whether nature will deliver on flowers, warmer temperatures and daylight, but I can assure you that GDUWS will have a wonderful Spring Fling this year and I hope you don't miss out if you are a guide dog user or have an interest in guide dogs.

The Spring Fling will be held on May 14 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the Seattle Airport Marriott in conjunction with the WCB

Leadership Seminar. Cost will be \$20 (payable at the door by cash, check or credit card) and includes lunch. We need an accurate head count (your heads, not those of your dogs) for lunch, so please reserve your spot by contacting Marlaina 1guidedog@gmail.com no later than April 15.

GDUWS members who live outside King or Pierce counties who attend the Spring Fling and wish to stay over for the WCB Board meeting to be held on May 15 are eligible to receive a \$50 stipend to help with lodging Saturday night.

This year’s program will again include fun and informational presentations and interactions. We will be sharing more information as we make plans.

Oh and you were wondering what Beep baseball has to do with GDUWS, come out on June 4 to support not one, not two, but three of your favorite groups and activities! The Seattle Sluggers beep baseball team will take on the Seattle Police at Rainier Beach High School. Guide Dog Users of Washington State and the Burien Lions Club will be there to cheer on the Sluggers and to add fun, food, and other exciting activities. For more information, go to [www.seattlesouthkingsluggers.org](http://www.seattlesouthkingsluggers.org).

Stay tuned for more details on these great events!

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**Peninsula Council of the Blind (PCB)**  
By Cindy Van Winkle, Secretary

The PCB membership ended 2015 with elections held at our Christmas party. 2016 officers are: Stuart Russell—President, Eric Hunter—Vice President, Cindy Van Winkle—Secretary, Joanne Hunter—Treasurer, Gary Beck—Director, Carrol Gray—Director, J R Kinneson—Director.

Our Christmas party highlights include: delicious pies prepared by Kat Woofter, a lively gift exchange and Christmas music played in the background! We held this at our regular meeting place, Allstar Lanes, and our server Kelly and the rest of the staff are always so attentive.

Then, we didn't let the holiday season end there. Many of our members attended the fun-filled Christmas party of our neighboring chapter, SKCB in Port Orchard. It was fun to visit with old friends and meet new ones, and all of the food was delicious too!

2016 continues our All Ears book club which meets on the first Thursday of each month at Subway in Silverdale. It has a small dedicated group that regularly attend and sometimes they even discuss books, but they always have a great time and welcome anyone who would like to join in!

At our February meeting, Carl and Cathy Jarvis, representing Peninsula Rehabilitation Services, were our guests. Carl not only; shared about the real concerns surrounding the needs of our older blind, but some history of his involvement in the blindness movement. We were very pleased to have them with us on what happened to be their 34<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

It is our chapter's goal this year to reach out to restaurants our own members frequent and advocate for braille and large print

menus. February’s dinner social found us at the Bremerton Bar and Grill where advocacy several years ago encouraged them to acquire braille menus and we enjoyed a yummy meal together.

A new activities committee has been formed and we look forward to some fun reasons to get together throughout this year that will get our members out and about in our community and with one another. And we always enjoy others joining in with us whether at our meeting or our social event!

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**Pierce County Association of the Blind**

By John Mcconnell, President

Greetings WCB Family:

We are starting our year off with a bang!

We have elected new officers, and we are moving forward with a revamped web site.

We do not have just one fundraiser going, but two! First, we are selling the ever popular APH calendars for \$12 per calendar. We are also selling Almond Roka for \$15 per can.

We will be having various speakers come to our chapter. In April, Earl Tillis, a visually impaired insurance agent will be speaking to us. We hope to have a WCB Board member speak to us some time later this year.

John McConnell, President, was involved with leadership training on February 5th. The major part of the training was Dependable Strengths. We learned about experiences that affected ourselves, that made us who we are today. John highlighted his experiences

in wrestling, winning in a state music contest, and being the first in his family to receive both a college degree, and a Master of Divinity Degree. All in all, the training, and board meeting were very well done.

We will be sponsoring the Tacoma Tide Beep Baseball team. This will be the team to beat. Look out Sluggers!

There will be more upcoming events that we will share during the year.

Thank you for reading.

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**South King Council of the Blind, Going and Growing**

By Marlaina Lieberg, Vice President

It's been busy in South King County. After our successful fundraiser at the end of 2015 which brought in close to \$1,000, we're still going.

We recently partnered with the Burien Lions Club for a great put put golf event. Best part? Everybody had to do at least one hole under blindfold!

Two of our members, Steve Fiksdal and Marlaina Lieberg traveled far afield. Steve represented WCB at the ACB Mid-Year Meetings and on Capitol Hill to press the current ACB Legislative Agenda. We are so proud to have Steve in our chapter. Marlaina was invited by the Randolph Shepherd Vendors of America to deliver the keynote speech at their annual conference in Las Vegas.

On June 4, we'll be there to support the Sluggers as they play a beep baseball game against the Seattle Police Department.

Each month, we choose a restaurant to visit and provide them with braille and large print menus for their future use. It's a great way to get more accessible menus while educating business owners and the public.

And last but not least, we are rolling out a new program to spotlight one member per month, giving a chance to tell their story and have lunch on us. If you want to join in, we meet the second Saturday of each month at Marlaina's Mediterranean Kitchen, 643 SW 152nd St. in Burien. Come check us out, and grow and go with us!

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**South Kitsap Council of the Blind News**

By Kim L. Moberg

The last few months have been rather busy for the South Kitsap Council of the Blind. In November several of us attended the WCB convention. I think it is safe to say that all who attended had a great time. We also elected new officers at our November meeting.

Kevin Jones was re-elected as our President for this year. Vice President is Bob Herman. Treasurer is Carol Brame and Chris Brame is our Secretary. Kim Moberg will be taking care of Sunshine Committee for us.

In December we had our annual Christmas party and dinner. There was a lot of good food to eat. Chris and Carol Brame cooked a ham and there were lots of yummy side dishes to go with it. We invited The Peninsula Council of the Blind to join us and several of their members did so. Lori Alison of the Pierce County chapter was also in attendance. We also had a gift exchange which is always loads of fun.

Our chapter is slowly growing. This past year and on into our January meeting we have had several new people join our group. It is always fun to have new people join us. We welcome each of them.

At our January meeting several things were brought up for planning for the future. We talked about our summer picnic and possible speakers. There were some birthdays in January and Kim Moberg sent those people cards.

At our March meeting, Steve Fiksdal WCB President, will be our speaker. This should be a great meeting. I for one am looking forward to hearing what Steve, as our newly elected President has to share with us. So mark your calendars for this event.

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### **United Blind of Spokane (UBSPO)**

By Debby Clark.

How do I love thee United Blind of Spokane and WCB? Let me count the ways!

First of course there is that Opportunity, Equality and Independence we promote for blind, visually impaired and the sighted in our midst. We all need support.

In our meetings we share the products and activities that make our lives a little brighter and better. We have been partnering with Sports for the Blind on our fund raisers. Still working on our own 501-c three.

New member spotlight goes to Hal and Carolyn Ellis and Sheila Kay Paris. All joined in January after attending a local theater production that Rachel from Lilac Blind described. Inviting people on special transportation has also been a great source of new members. Hal and Carolyn went to Seattle to check out a very interesting product.

Cindy Glidden went to the last board meeting with a training for leaders. This is what she reported: "Let me start by sharing how delighted I was to attend the recent WCB board meeting. I found it fascinating and as such I found a real desire to pursue further growth as a member at UPSPO and WCB. I had no idea exactly what to expect and it was all that and more. Steve's training on leadership motivated me even further. If I was somewhat reluctant in the beginning I now find leadership in WCB something I am striving for."

We continue to try to keep our group positive and motivated. In February, we partnered with Lilac Blind for a health day followed by a social. We received manicures, pedicures, blood pressure and blood sugar readings from students in the area.

On March 21 we have a speaker coming to discuss advanced directives as well as a grab and go file for emergencies that will address all of our medical needs. We have a busy couple of months coming up and look forward to many more activities to keep us excited, motivated and educated.

Join us on the third Monday of the month at Lilac Blind in Spokane.

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## **United Blind of the Tri-Cities**

By Holly Kaczmarski

Hello to everyone reading the Newslines. I hope you are having a wonderful spring. We in United Blind of the Tri-Cities, UBTC, have had several events happening this year. We are an active group.

First, let me announce that we have a new President, Bernie Vinther. In December, we had elections and the results are as follows:

Bernie Vinther - President

Joy Kelley - First Vice-President

Sherry Dubbin - Second Vice-President

Frank Cuta - Secretary

Brenda Vinther - Treasurer

Karyn Vandecar - Board Member

Cheryl Stone - Board Member

We have a wild, crazy and often noisy card party each month. Everybody has a great time. The losers donate their losing money into a fund to pay for a pizza party at year end.

We have bingo parties every quarter. We have a lunch on the first Thursday of each month. We have audio described plays offered at the Richland Playhouse Theatre. This year we are considering taking a trip out on a sternwheeler in the Columbia River. The members of the UBTC Chapter sure do know how to have a good time.

Our members definitely do not stand still for very long. We are a very active group and are always doing something fun, and sometimes educational, and enjoying friendship together. At our

annual Christmas Party, we had a food drive with 58 pounds of canned food donated to the Jericho Road Woman's Shelter.

We have had several special speakers since the last chapter update. One of them was Daniel Lipparelli, the new Director of the Edith Bishel Center in Kennewick. Our other speaker was a physical therapist, Andy Hay, from Oasis Physical Therapy who helped show our members various forms of exercise options that are low stress but very good for our muscles to help our balance. So if we aren't out doing something fun and active, we are exercising to keep our bodies in shape, or we are doing things at the Edith Bishel Center which is a great place for us to socialize.

Stay tuned for future events from United Blind of the Tri-Cities.

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**United Blind of Walla Walla (UBWW)**

By Alco Canfield, President

The bears may have been hibernating these past several months, but definitely not the members of UBWW!

At our November meeting we held elections.  
Alco Canfield remains President for two more years.  
Vice President: Annee Hartzel  
Secretary-Treasurer: Joleen Ferguson.

In December, Ernie Jones received an award in a writing contest.  
(See Hats Off)

2016 started off with a bang. At our January meeting, we welcomed Daphne Martin, Reginald and Lisa George, and Frank Cuta. Daphne, a Vocational Counselor with the Department of Services for the Blind shared with us information about vocational services.

Reginald George, Assistive Technology Specialist at DSB showed us some of the latest and greatest in low vision equipment as well as a very small braille display.

Frank Cuta, a charter member of UBWW rejoined us. John Bleth who came for the first time to our January meeting became our newest member.

Everyone enjoyed meeting Lisa George. She was a most welcome visitor.

At our February meeting, Bev Thompson spoke to us about a program called Eyes for India which restores vision to those visually impaired from cataracts.

Joleen Ferguson continues to work with the city of Walla Walla regarding Accessible Pedestrian Signals. She also continues to update our website. Come visit us at: [www.ubww.org](http://www.ubww.org). There you can get up to date information about everything we are doing.

We will have exciting news to share in the March Newslines, so don't miss a thing! Read all about it!

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**United Blind of Whatcom County**

By Holly Turri, President

Here in Whatcom County, the past quarter has been a busy one. It's been a time of giving, sharing, and learning.

In October, we enjoyed a lunch at a local Thai restaurant.

November was convention and election month. This year, we had four people attend. The following officers were elected, Holly Turri, President; Yvonne Thomas-Miller First Vice President, and Jim Turri Secretary.

During the month of December we resurrected and enjoyed our annual caroling program. One performance was at the fundraiser for the Health Support Center which is the venue where we meet. Additionally, we did other programs at senior living facilities. The most amazing and moving one was in a memory care unit. While listening to the music, the people seemed to bloom.

Our UBWC family enjoyed a Christmas potluck party at Betty's home. She did such a lovely job of decorating her abode and the turkey was great.

During the giving season, we hold a food drive. This year we brought around 27 pounds of nonperishable items to the food bank.

As a requirement for using the facilities at the Health Support Center we must submit volunteer hours. I'm not a great math brain, but I know that we did approximately 2500 hours of assisting others this year.

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**Hats Off**

Compiled by Cindy Van Winkle

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

David Egan (KCC) on receiving his new guide, Bernie, a male Golden Retriever from the Seeing Eye!

Tracy and Jesse Fejeran (UBSPO) on the birth of their grandson Jesse John Aldan!

Steve and Kelly Fiksdal (SKB) on the special occasion of their 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary!

Bob Herman (SKCB) and his wife Judy on their 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary!

Ernie Jones (UBWW) on placing third in The ReImaging Writing contest; his story will be published on TheReImaging.net website sometime in 2016.

Jolynn Page (GDUWS) on the birth of her son, Parker!

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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## Calendar of Deadlines and Events, 2016

### 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
- 15: Leadership seminar application deadline, cindy.vw@gmail.com
- 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, danettedixon63@gmail.com
- 3: Employment Forum, 8:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226
- 8: Deadline to make lunch reservation for upcoming WCB Board Meeting, steve@fiksdal.com
- 10: Technology Forum, 7:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226
- 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
- 17: Book Club Forum, 7:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226
- 23: Diabetics Forum, 7:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226

### JUNE

- 2: President's call, 8:00pm
- 3: Department of Services for the Blind Rehabilitation Council meeting, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Location to be announced
- 3: Washington State School for the Blind Commencement, 9:30 a.m.

- 3: Washington State School for the Blind Board of Trustees meeting, 12:00 p.m., Old Main Building Conference Room
- 7: Employment Forum, 8:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226
- 11: Washington Talking Book and Braille Library Patron Advisory Committee meeting, 9:00 a.m.
- 14: Technology Forum, 7:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226
- 21: Book Club Forum, 7:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226
- 27: Diabetics Forum, 7:00 pm, 800-977-8002 code: 5419226

## 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 Boo and Braille Library

## September

- 2: Department of Services for the Blind Rehabilitation Council Meeting, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Location to be announced

## 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
- 2: Department of Services for the Blind State Rehabilitation Council meeting, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Location to be announced

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**Announcements**

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

Subscribe to the Newsline 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).

**Newsline Article Submissions**

To be considered for inclusion in the summer issue, article submissions and other information for publication must be received by Saturday, June 4, 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.