

WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF THE BLIND NEWSLINE

Winter 2019 Edition

Opportunity, Equality, Independence
Founded 1935

Visit our website at <http://www.WCBinfo.org> or call us toll-free at 800-255-1147. Our mailing address is PO Box 1354, Puyallup, WA 98371.

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WCB is a 501(c)(3) organization, which means those much-needed contributions are tax deductible. Payments should be directed to Treasurer Deb Lewis at TreasurerWCB@gmail.com or mailed to PO Box 1354, Puyallup, WA 98856. For other ways you can make a difference, please visit our Donate page at <http://WCBinfo.org/?s=donate>.

To remember Washington Council of the Blind in your Last Will and Testament, you may include a special paragraph for that purpose in your Will or Trust. If your wishes are complex, please contact WCB at 800-255-1147.

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It's Your Newslines ... Just Say It!

We are pleased to present you with your very own section to tell us your most important thoughts, voice your valued opinions, inspire us with your grandest ideas, and share your honest concerns so that we may continue to evolve our publication into the Newslines you can't wait to read!

We have no feedback from the summer issue, but here for your reading pleasure is some of the reaction we received to our 2018 WCB Convention:

"I loved the fact that the hotel was very accessible and convenient. With my RA that I've dealt with for 63 years, the long halls and long walks about exhaust me before I get to the conference room, dining room, or restrooms. I'd vote yes on this hotel again." – Cindy Glidden

"If you don't like the decisions that are made, then join the committee!" – Nathan Brannon

"It was great that 120 voting members cooperated and worked together this year to get through 13 amendments, 6 resolutions and the usual stiff competition for board positions. We elected a completely new face to be Vice President and 2 new faces to the board." – Frank Cuta

Now it's up to you.

Submit your letters to theWCBNewslines@gmail.com.

Calling all members: Newslines needs articles from you! We will publish the next WCB Newslines in late spring and are anxious to read your quality content. Please submit your articles by February 28, 2019.

Publication Guidelines:

- We do not accept anonymous letters.
- We reserve the right to publish unless you explicitly tell us not to in your comments, and to edit all submissions for brevity and clarity.
- Articles should be less than 750 words and submitted as Microsoft Word files whenever possible.
- Chapter updates may be up to 350 words and may include pictures.
- Do not use indents or tabs.
- Send all submissions to theWCBNewsline@gmail.com.

Announcements:

The Newsline is available in large print, on cartridge, via email, and on our website at <http://www.WCBinfo.org>.

Subscribe to the Newsline email list to receive this publication and other important announcements from WCB via email by sending a blank email to Newsline-I-subscribe@WCBinfo.org.

Address changes and subscription requests should be sent to Lori Allison at lori.allison2002@gmail.com or by leaving a phone message at 800-255-1147.

President's Message

by Denise Colley

As I write this message, I am reflecting back on a stellar convention and what I believe to have been a successful year in the life of the Washington Council of the Blind. You will read about the success of the convention later in this issue. Let me just add my voice to what has already been said by saying how encouraged I was in having one of the largest convention attendance numbers we have ever had, and by the energy I felt all weekend. Not only did we have great presentations, but we also did a lot of hard work at our business meeting. I also want to congratulate our newly elected board members: Jeff Bishop, Second Vice President; Frank Cuta, elected to his second term as Secretary; Julie Brannon, Director; Reginald George, Director; and Heather Meares, Director. I also want to say a huge thank you to outgoing board members Lori Allison, Carol Brame and Annee Hartzell. While they may no longer be on the board, each has made great contributions to the work of WCB and I'm sure will continue to do so.

In my President's Report at Convention, I highlighted our accomplishments over the past year. One of our successes was the passage of a key piece of legislation related to the status of service animals in Washington State. House Bill 2822 now makes it a civil infraction for anyone to misrepresent an animal as a service animal. If a person is found to have committed such a civil infraction, he/she will be assessed a monetary penalty. Thank you to our Guide Dog Users of Washington State affiliate for their hard work on this legislation.

One of the other advocacy issues of importance to our membership is the availability and accessibility of prescription drug labeling. To that end, a task force made up of

representatives from the Washington Council of the Blind, the National Federation of the Blind of Washington, the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment, the Human Rights Commission, and Disability Rights Washington has been convened to explore how best to move forward, either through legislation or proposed rule-making around this issue.

We diligently began the work on a complete overhaul of the WCB website. We worked with a professional consultant who had the knowledge to design and maintain a fully accessible portal that would allow our committees to upload their own content in the future. This year our emphasis has been to recreate both our scholarship application and convention registration forms, and this was accomplished successfully. Watch for more to come.

In June, we held our first WCB caucus via Zoom Cloud, prior to arriving at the national convention. This gave members unable to go to the convention an opportunity to hear from and ask questions of the national candidates and be a more active part of the process.

In August, the WCB Board and a few other key leaders met for an action planning workshop to engage in critical discussion and planning for the future direction of WCB. The work of WCB was divided into five initiatives:

- development and fundraising
- marketing and communication
- membership and conventions
- advocacy legislation and policy
- organizational structure

We identified the strengths and challenges WCB has in each of the five action areas.

The next step was to weigh the benefits of each initiative and set goals to prioritize and implement them. Our objectives include:

- create leadership training for committee chairs
- rebuild advocacy in the organization
- mentor and develop our membership
- refine and update our communication tools to better tell our story
- create and maintain Facebook and Twitter pages to focus on social media
- produce an annual report highlighting WCB accomplishments
- construct a database of individual donors and corporations
establish an endowment fund

We are an organization with a lot of potential. However, to achieve this potential will require the efforts of many more of us. As I've said many times before, WCB is not just about the officers and directors. It is only when we all do our part that we will continue to grow and thrive. As I share with you more about the key areas we want to focus on, I hope many of you will reach out to me and let me know where you believe you would best fit.

In Memoriam
by Denise Colley

The following are members of Washington Council of the Blind who have passed away since our 2017 convention, and who were fondly remembered with a moment of silence at the beginning of our 2018 annual business meeting.

Bud Adams, Yakima Valley Council of the Blind (YVCB)

Diane Allen, United Blind of Tri-Cities, Inc. (UBTC)

Sue Ammeter, Jefferson County Council of the Blind (JCCB)

Sabrina Beeler, Pierce County Association of the Blind (PCAB)

Beverly Bray, United Blind of Tri-Cities, Inc. (UBTC)

Bill Carter, Skagit and Island Counties Council of the Blind (SICCB)

Evelyn Crouse, United Blind of Tri-Cities, Inc. (UBTC)

Marlaina Lieberg, South King Council of the Blind (SKB) and Guide Dog Users of Washington State (GDUWS)

Ernie Jones, United Blind of Walla Walla (UBWW)

Greg Sherman, Yakima Valley Council of the Blind (YVCB)

Sarah Starr, South Kitsap Council of the Blind (SKCB)

Betty Whittaker, United Blind of Whatcom County (UBWC)

Features
The Cheshire Cat Interviews #3
Live, Love, and Be Happy
by Heather Meares

Traveling through life on a day to day basis, sometimes an hour by hour basis, can be interesting to say the least. You just never know what is in store for you, what challenges and sorrows may arrive, what joys and surprises you will encounter. These are the things that make life such a complex maze. You are constantly asking yourself, "Am I doing the right thing? Making the wrong choice? What can I learn from this experience and do better the next time? What was I thinking?!" The list is endless.

You extend the timeframe to months and years. Things start making more sense, falling into place for the plans you think you have made and then ... life happens. Again and again and again. To all of us. The hands on the clock keep going around, starting the cycle over every time they get back to the 12. You read a great book and as soon as you finish one chapter, another one starts, sometimes leaving you hanging with things unfinished. The magical carousel ride is continually spinning. It is up to you to decide when to jump on and enjoy the ride and when you must get off before you make yourself sick. The choices seem so difficult and complicated, but it's simple. Two options really. Curl up in a ball in a corner somewhere and give up, or bend a little and keep going, no matter what.

When I think about the people who have been doing this life thing for many decades, it makes me want to know their thoughts about how and why they have survived their own particular road map. I had the opportunity to speak with three such women for this article, and it was a beautiful gift I was not expecting. Each one of them gave me wisdom beyond compare. They all brought giant

smiles to my heart. I asked them each this question. “If you could ask people one question about life, what would it be and how would you answer it yourself?”

Dorothy Carroll, president of a group called A Day Out for the Blind, in Spokane, said “I would ask people if they have lived a good life and if they are happy? My answer would be yes. I have had a very good life. I celebrate life. I take one day at a time and enjoy every minute.”

Dorothy also spoke about the things in her life that bring her happiness including the importance of her family, staying involved in her community as a leader, and participating in many service projects. “Keeping busy makes me happy.”

Peggy Shoel, former editor of our WCB Newsline for 15 years, said “Well, this is funny for me. Bear in mind that I am 85 years old. My question would be do you ever wish this was a practice, a dry run, and you could go back and do it all over again? Because you know better now, you are smarter now and could have a second chance, would you? And of course my answer is yes, because I did a lot of wrong things. Things I would not do again because they affected people’s lives. When you’re younger you don’t think this way, but when you are 85, you can look back and understand more. But this is not a dry run. You don’t get a second chance. So think before you act on everything that affects other people.”

Marilyn Donnelly, who volunteered for the WCB 1-800 phone line for 30 years and currently resides in Seattle, said the question she loves to ask people the most is “How are you? It sounds simple, but let that sink in for a minute. When you ask someone this, do you really want to know the answer? Are you asking it with sincere intentions of fully listening to the reality they may be facing at that moment?”

She then went on to explain that sometimes if she listens closely to the answer, she might be able to find ways to help bring a little happiness to this person. And her own answer was even better ... “I’m old but I’m very positive; no doom and gloom from me. So live, love and be happy!”

So I say thank you Marilyn, Dorothy, and Peggy, for bringing some happiness my way!

It's what you do with what you got!
by Carl Jarvis

To All who are Feeling a Little Achy Today, and Dream of Their Lost Youth.

“What an absolutely glorious spring day,” I sighed, chomping down on a big slice of hot banana bread oozing in butter.

“It could be a little warmer and I wouldn’t complain,” grumbled Winston, the Wonder Cat, as he sprawled out on the warm deck.

In case you’ve not met him, let me introduce Winston. He appeared out of the forest some years back, looked our house over, and decided that it would do him just fine. Something had chomped off his tail and done a little damage to his hip, and he was covered with ticks and fleas. But Winston was a survivor and we opened our door and our hearts to him, after a trip to the vet, of course.

Winston was lean, sharp eyed and quick in those days. Now, glaucoma has claimed his eyesight and too many late night snacks have fluffed up his soft black fur to a round 25 pounds.

“I should be out here with the brush axe clearing the tall weeds on the water tank trail,” I mused.

“Why would you want to do that? Just relax and enjoy the sunshine,” Winston said, rising up and giving a big stretch.

“Well, I used to be out early in the morning cutting up firewood, clearing the brush along the road and filling pot holes. I just feel guilty sitting here doing nothing.”

“So what’s so wrong with doing nothing?” Winston purred, trying to clamber up into my lap.

“Look at you,” I told him, “You have gotten so fat you can’t even hop up on my lap or the bed without help. Don’t you miss those carefree days when you could leap into the air after the butterflies and chase squirrels up the trees?”

Winston began kneading my expansive stomach until I grabbed both of his paws. “That was then,” he said, trying to get around my hands, “And this is now. Sure I had good times. But I was young and agile back then. I’d kill myself if I tried doing that today.”

“But I can’t help thinking how it was just a few short years ago,” I complained. “I could walk for miles without tiring, cut up fallen trees and pull the logs down where we could cut them up for firewood, and still have enough energy to go out for the evening. Getting old just isn’t what it’s cracked up to be.”

“If you ask me,” Winston said, beginning to do his housekeeping while perched on my lap, “If you ask me, you are spending far too much time missing yesterday. You’re going to wake up one fine day and realize that you’ve missed today.”

Winston hopped down and waddled over to a spot on the deck that had been warmed by the sun, sprawling out full length. “Yes,” he yawned, “Those were good times, and I did enjoy every minute. But today is good times, too. I would rather focus on the joy of being here now, than to become frustrated wishing I could go back in time.” Winston looked up at me and then closed his eyes. As he drifted off to sleep he murmured, “Remember, it’s what you do with what you got that counts.”

I considered the words of Winston, the Wonder Cat, as I reached for another tasty slice of banana bread. “You know,” I said to myself, “I think you’ve got something there, my chubby little buddy. I’m going to start right now to enjoy today for all that it is, and with all that I have to give it.”

Demystifying the Legislative Process

by Denise Colley, President

January 2019 will be here much sooner than we think, and with it will be the start of the 2019 legislative session in Washington State. The 2019 legislative session will open on Monday, January 14, 2019.

During even-numbered years our state’s legislature meets for a 60-day session. On the odd-numbered years the session is 105 days. The longer sessions are years when the state budget is debated for the next 2-year cycle. This is why the session is longer. This means that this upcoming session will be a long session. If the legislature does not complete its work in the time allocated, state law permits the governor to call a special session of up to an additional 30 days so that the work can be completed.

Before you can become an effective advocate for crucial pieces of legislation that may affect the blind community, it is important to have a basic understanding of who represents you and how they are elected.

The Washington State legislature is a bicameral body. We have a state senate and a state house of representatives that are similar to those at the federal level. Bills must pass both the senate and the house before they can be sent to the Governor for signing.

Washington State is divided into 49 congressional districts. These districts are also based on population, and their borders can change every ten years depending on the results of the Census. The Washington State Senate has a total of 49 members. One is elected from each of the congressional districts. In Washington, our state senators are elected for terms of 4 years. The Senate is elected in the even-numbered years that have a Presidential and Gubernatorial election.

The Washington State House of Representatives has 98 members. Two are elected from each of the 49 state congressional districts. State house members or congressmen/congresswomen are elected for two year terms in the even-numbered years.

This means that every district is represented by one senator and two representatives. It is important to know which district you live in, and who your senator and representatives are.

If you don't know this information there are a couple of ways to find out. The first and easiest way is to call the legislative hotline at 800-562-6000. Give the operator your name, street address and city, and they can provide you with the district you are in and who your senator and two representatives are.

The second way is to go to the Washington State Legislative website at www.leg.wa.gov and then to the link that says Find Your District and Legislators. There you will find a form that asks for your street address including city and zip code. Complete the form and you will be given your district number and the names of your senator and representatives.

The WCB Governmental Affairs Committee meets regularly during the legislative session to identify and follow any legislative bills or issues that could positively or negatively impact our three state agencies serving the blind and visually impaired populations: Washington Talking Book and Braille Library, Department of Services for the Blind, and Washington State School for the Blind. We also identify any other legislation that could have a significant impact on our community.

How can you get involved? Throughout the session, we may call on you to contact your legislators to share with them how a particular bill or issue would impact you, and requesting them to vote a yes or no. Remember, we are the people who vote them into office, and it is essential we tell them what's important to us.

When we contact you and ask you to make that call you can do one of two things. Call the legislative hotline and tell the operator you want to leave a message for your senator or representatives, depending on whether it is a House bill or Senate bill we are concerned about. Just a few brief sentences are all you need to give. You can also contact your legislator's office directly and speak with someone to share your personal story about the impact of the bill or issue on you. Those personal stories from constituents in their districts are what legislators want to hear about.

Finally, if you are someone who has a passion for advocacy through the legislative process, I want to hear from you. As an

organization of the blind we need to stay ever vigilant in identifying and following any legislation introduced during the session that could have a positive or negative effect, and ensure our voice is heard. For that we need interested, committed, and knowledgeable committee members. Could that be you? If so, you can contact me by email at dmc0124@comcast.net or call me at 360-438-5783.

The Woman Who Never Quit Finding Her Way by Nancy Lind with Joleen Ferguson

“I think when God created me, He must have used leftover funny bones. Because of my cerebral palsy, I look like a basket case. Yet I no longer feel like a basket case. Most of the time now, I forget how I am. I forget what my outsides look like. Inside I am just me. And to me, I’m normal.”

These words of Carolyn Martin from her book [I can't Walk, so I'll Learn to Dance](#) certainly resonate with me. I, too, was born with cerebral palsy, affecting all my movements and my speech. Additionally, I am totally blind. I have been unable to walk and have used a wheelchair for as long as I can remember. Lots of things have changed since my beginning 76 years ago. People like me were often institutionalized. I remember being sent to the Washington State School for the Blind when I was young, returning home only for vacations and holidays. While I was there, they did not know how to adapt for my wheelchair and cerebral palsy prevented me from learning Braille.

Then I went to a center for cerebral palsy. There, they did not know what to do with me because of my blindness. They made me do pantomime and charades. As you can imagine, there were

not many job openings for a blind charade player and disabled mime.

I remember my mother taking me to see the Superintendent of Schools in Monroe begging and pleading for something for me. He said, "We have nothing for your daughter and that is that." After the Americans with Disabilities Act passed in 1990, educators are no longer able to say "We have nothing for you."

Eventually, I quit school and stayed home with my parents, living and learning since then. In many ways, I was lucky. I had a social worker who believed in me. She advocated with a lot of people to find opportunities for me, but more importantly, I never gave up. I never quit trying and wanting to be part of the community and contribute to society. I could have been called the woman who fell through the cracks. I call myself the woman who never quit finding her way. That is my message to all of you. Don't ever let anyone write your story for you.

I worked at the Lighthouse in Seattle and then at Work Opportunities in Lynnwood until my retirement, and am now a motivational speaker.

My current activities include going to the North Shore Senior Citizen Center in Bothell to sing every Monday and attending monthly meetings of Snohomish Council County of the Blind in Everett where I have been elected Second Vice President. Once a month I attend Bridge Ministry for Disabilities. They meet in various churches and have free dinners. I am an active church attendee and have recently attended the Edmonds Methodist church – they have a van with a lift. I attend the University Presbyterian Church Thursday Bible studies in Seattle. I participate weekly in Speech Recognition Word Cue. In WCB, I am a member of the Advocacy and History committees and attend their conference calls. I especially enjoy attending the

WCB conventions when I can. I use access and Dial-a-ride independently. I enjoy visiting with friends with my iPhone and reading talking books from NLS.

Ignorance about people with disabilities persists. I will leave you with this story: I met a lady at a bridal shower and invited her to lunch with my mother and me. While we were eating, she said she had a swimming pool in her back yard. I asked, "What does it look like?" She said, "I'll draw you a picture." She didn't get that my blindness would prevent me from seeing her work. It goes to show, just because you have sight, doesn't mean you can always see.

Many have been a source of encouragement to me over my lifetime beginning with my parents – my first advocates. Others include my cousin Suzie and my friend Anita who have been faithful through the years.

I encourage each of you to read [I Can't Walk so I'll learn to Dance](#) by Carolyn Martin / Gregg A. Lewis

Available in print: **ISBN-10:** 0310576008

NLS Book Number DB 38962

The author and I were contemporaries for a time at the United Cerebral Palsy Center in Seattle and I am mentioned in her book.

Living and Learning New Beginnings

by Annee Hartzell

The willingness to learn often opens our lives to new possibilities; new avenues of exploration can lead us into new frontiers in all facets of life. Let me describe my last few years as an example.

Over the last decade, I have been fighting an on-going battle with cancer. I have also been diagnosed with Mineare's Disease, a condition that produces pressure and ringing in the ears, vertigo, and in my case severe hearing loss. If you know me well, you will know that loss of hearing has long been my number one fear, a fear even larger than my cancer diagnosis. How would I access my world? How would I travel, communicate, enjoy my hobbies like listening to music? Imagine my distress when I learned that I am now deaf-blind.

My fear took on life. I found myself avoiding group conversations, as I could not hear accurately. I disliked going to restaurants as such experiences stressed me out – I couldn't hear my friends and family, nor could I communicate with the servers without assistance. My fears controlled me to the degree that I did not feel safe traveling alone.

Well, I started looking for answers. As someone who values long walks in the countryside, traveling overseas, and eating out, I had to find answers. I reached out to friends at Department of Services for the Blind, who in turn connected me with the Helen Keller National Center.

A representative visited my home and encouraged me to seek training from the Center. She offered me hope. I went to the Center this last year. I am now a baby signer, learning tactile

signing; I renewed my Braille certificate; and started learning about the significant needs associated with deaf-blindness. I learned about Haptics, a touch signals system used to impart visual information. I learned about a concept called FingerBraille, where folks Braille on the fingers to converse.

The biggest lesson I gained from my experiences at Helen Keller is that to learn means to hope; to hope leads to a deeper understanding of the self and the ultimate destruction of fear. I can now travel alone again; I can eat out and have ways to communicate with others; and my ability to involve myself in my hobbies has been restored. My willingness to learn has brought me a second career as well. Life is not perfect, but through learning, life is sweeter than ever.

I hope my thoughts inspire you to embrace the power of learning and lead a life of hope.

Lifestyle
For the Love of You:
Mindful Thoughts, Healthy Recipes and a Happy Heart
How to Happily Hibernate
by Hayley Agers

Winter is here. It's time to look inward to restore your body and mind. Put on the fire, wrap yourself up in a blanket, make yourself a cup of tea, mulled cider, or pour a glass of wine, dig into a good book, and yup, get that dinner ready early so you have all day to look after yourself and your loved ones.

I used to stress myself out trying to get what I considered the perfect meal on the table. The table had to be elegantly set, everyone had to be seated together, and the meal had to appeal to everyone, every time. Well, let's be a bit more realistic. I am a busy Mum with picky eaters, so I had to change my thought process.

Now our meals look more like this most nights: a blanket on the living room floor, soup bowls or plates in our hands, half of the people not liking the food, and everyone rushing to get done so they can move onto the next thing.

I do insist that two nights a week we still have dinner around the table, with everyone focused on one another, talking and praying together, but most nights are simple. **YOU LIVE AND YOU LEARN** that what's important is being together and being sure that everyone eats a healthy whole food meal.

Crockpot Indian Chickpea and Red Potato Stew

2 tsp olive oil

1 medium yellow onion, diced

2 cloves of garlic, minced

2 tsp coriander

2 tsp cumin

1/2 tsp garam masala (found in spice isle)

1/2 tsp ground ginger

1/4 tsp turmeric

1/4 tsp crushed red pepper flakes

1 tsp salt

1 15 ounce can of diced tomatoes

2 Tbsp tomato paste

1 cup vegetable broth

2 15 ounce cans of chickpeas*, drained and rinsed

1 lb red potatoes, cut into bite sized chunks

A bunch of cilantro

Heat oil in a small pan.

Add onion, garlic, herbs, and spices and saute until spices are fragrant and onions are tender, 3 to 4 minutes.

Stir in the vegetable broth, tomato paste, diced tomatoes, and combine.

Pour mixture into crockpot, then add the cubed potatoes and 2 cans of chick peas.

Cover and cook on low for 8 hours or high for 4 hours.

*While chickpeas are abundant in protein, if this is not hearty enough for you, you can cut up and pre-cook 2 boneless chicken breasts ahead of time and add to the crockpot along with the remaining ingredients. To serve, either spoon over rice or simply serve as a stew with naan bread. Top each portion with the chopped cilantro and enjoy.

Here is one way to show gratitude to those who have made your world a better place this year. Make up a big batch of this nut recipe and feel good about knowing you took the time to bless others, even when your life may seem so busy.

Wine bar Nut Mix

2 cups pecan halves

2 cups walnut halves

2 cups unsalted whole almonds

1/4 cup pure maple syrup

2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil

2 Tbsp Herbes de Provence (found in spice isle)

1/4 tsp cayenne pepper

salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

In a large bowl, combine the almonds, walnuts, and pecans.

Drizzle with the extra virgin olive oil and the maple syrup and toss to coat.

Sprinkle on the Herbes de Provence and cayenne and toss once more.

Spread onto a lightly greased cookie sheet.

Bake in the oven for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally so they don't burn.

Remove from oven, season with salt and pepper, toss and let cool.

Place in an air tight container and leave on the counter for up to two weeks.

These are a healthy snack to munch on or package up in mason jars or cellophane bags, tie with a ribbon, put on a label, and gift to those you love for a beautiful and yummy present.

“Happiness cannot be traveled to, owned, earned, worn, or consumed. Happiness is the spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace, and gratitude.” – Denis Waitley

Make tiny steps to live your life in a way that shines a light for others who may still be in the darkness. I choose to set a reminder for several times throughout my day, to stop and breathe and think of five things I am grateful for. Find what works for you and be happy!

How Do You Spell “LOVE” with a “D”?

by Fred Baker

The Tacoma Tide Beep Ball Club was generously offered an unheard of gift this past summer. This summer was our fourth playing season. While we have not grown in powerhouse hitting records, we have grown in strength. This game is very difficult to master, but we get better each and every day. We do know that we will keep on keeping on.

We have played at several different fields as opportunities have presented themselves. Each has given us unique challenges, and all were good for us. The search to find a field that is perfect for beep ball is a serious challenge, and ours has just come to a wonderful conclusion.

Beep Ball is best played on an all grass surface. Dirt infields and our expensive balls are not good playmates. The life of the ball is seriously impacted when the dirt gets into the sound generators. Few all-grass fields have accommodations for spectators and players to sit down without bringing your own chairs. Restrooms are seldom found at such locations. Other criteria are important,

but we have the chance to handle each one of them as they come up.

The Tacoma Tide Beep Ball Club was offered, and we accepted, the opportunity to develop a dream field at the Elks Lodge 1450 in Puyallup, Washington. An abandoned tennis court and the surrounding space were given to us to build the field we needed, the way we needed it. Long conversations led up to this offer, and we are grateful to the Lodge's Board of Directors for their faith in us. Only after we gained a permit from the City of Puyallup were we allowed to move forward on this project.

Several of us started looking at the possibility of this ever happening due to the costs involved. Our projections of cost had many "zeros" involved. Before we were able to get a final overall fundraising plan drawn up, it started to happen!

The "D" in love came into sight. "D"onations started falling into our laps at an unbelievable rate. Every person we contacted to engage in getting a cost bid from was asking me if they could "d"onate to our cause. They were moved by our story, and wanted to be involved at their own expense. Now, how do we say no to that outpouring of generosity?

Each of you will have the privilege of meeting all of these outstanding human beings, as we honor them at the planned GRAND OPENING Celebration scheduled next spring.

The Elks Lodge 1450 is located at 314 27th St NE, Puyallup, WA 98372. It is fully accessible by Pierce Transit Shuttle, and there is ample parking.

We are not finished with our drive to accomplish building the ultimate Beep Ball field, and we are open to suggestions, referrals, and donations that will move this project forward.

Anyone can learn more about the sport by viewing the Beep Ball Web page at <http://www.beeppball.org>. Our info and schedule can be found at <http://tacomatide.beeppball.org>.

This world has many wonderful people like those we have just described. Many have been given much, and many have been given less. All in all, it is within all of us to share that which we have been given custodial care over. My small contribution to the good of others is just as important as the gift that has many “zeros” behind it.

Whoever you are, and wherever you see a need that you might be able to assist with, take the opportunity. It will bring joy into your life.

We look forward to seeing all of you at the events that the Tacoma Tide Beep Ball Club will be involved in this next year!

**A Great Concept
Kids Teaching Parents**
by Holly Turri

Ideally, life should encourage learning. Teachers are everywhere. Education is not confined solely to the classroom.

My husband and I are blind, as is our daughter. Our son has normal vision. When Tracey was born and it was apparent she could not see, I said “She’ll rebel by getting a guide dog.”

They should hire me to predict the future. At age 19, Tracey announced she wanted to try for a guide dog. Surprise, surprise, surprise!

So, after applying to some schools, she chose and was accepted at Guide Dogs for the Blind. In 2009, Tracey attended class at the San Rafael campus. Three weeks later, she returned home with Pria.

To say the least, I was dubious about this dog thing. As a child, I lived with two neurotic shelties. I thought, "Canines and me? I don't think so."

My husband Jim and I attended her graduation. The ceremony was moving and inspiring.

At the same time, I started my application process. Now, I didn't really want a dog. I just had to do better than my kid.

The moment that caused my change was two days after our team returned home. We went to lunch at an extremely busy and crowded diner and were seated in the rear. After finishing a delicious meal, Tracey said "Hey, Mom, you gotta watch this." She got up and said "Pria, let's go outside." I'll be darned if that dog didn't weave through all that chaos and walk out to the curb. As the "cow's tail," I was struggling to keep up and not run into or over anyone.

Suddenly, it hit me. Not all the smart ideas pass from parents to children. Our offspring can teach us a thing or two. Our minds have to be open, and our mouths must remain shut. Bravo, Tracey. At age 53, in 2010, I received my first dog, named SaraBelle. Now I'm on my second, named Pima.

Tracey's example taught me a lot. After marrying my wonderful husband, becoming a guide dog team has been the most positive life changing experience ever!!! Thank you, dear daughter.

Science and Technology How Alaska Airlines is Bridging the Communications Gap

by Reginald George

Recently I had occasion to fly across the country on Alaska Airlines. I had heard about their free texting service. They claim to allow text messaging and the ability to use several apps such as WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger. I wanted to see just how accessible this service is, and what it could do.

To start, here is how AA describes this offering.
“A few things about our free texting:

It’s completely free. No purchase is required, and no texting or data charges apply.

Chat using popular apps. Free texting only works with iMessage, Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp. Be sure to have one of these apps added to your phone before you fly, and that the people you are texting are using these apps too.

Express yourself. Fill your texts with words and emoji’s; sending photos, videos, or SMS messages are not supported. If you’re on a flight with heavy Wi-Fi usage, and your text doesn’t send right away, wait a few minutes, and try sending again.

Chat away. Free texting is only available on flights with inflight internet. You can send texts on most flights over North America, except flights to Mexico, Hawai’i, and Latin America.”

Once you connect to their inflight wireless network, which is not secured so no password is required, you are taken to a page with the free chat option. No sign in is necessary, but after you accept

the license agreement, as usual you must solve a captcha. My heart sank. Surprisingly however, one of the nicest parts of the process from my perspective was that double-tapping on the “I am visually impaired” link allows you to solve a simple math problem like $5+3$. Once you submit the answer, you get a congratulations page and you are ready to text.

It was great to see that thought had been put into designing the service with universal design principles in mind. Once I was online, I was able to actually do quite a bit more than what is technically supported or what you would expect. I was able to use Siri to dictate messages. The way this works best is to open iMessage on your iPhone, double-tap with 1 finger on the microphone button to the left of the space bar, or use a 2 finger double-tap in the edit box, and speak your message. These instructions assume you are running Voiceover.

I was even able to send and receive email, but this required me to leave the app open for 20 minutes or so for a few messages to come in. I also managed to receive an audio message and reply in WhatsApp. The service was designed to be slow and have the lowest priority for band width, but it is good to have a free way to communicate when flying, and good that the needs of visually impaired people were taken into consideration when designing the system.

Delta, Alaska, Jet Blue, and Southwest airlines now all offer some level of free in-flight texting. It was widely publicized when the president of American Airlines stated they would offer this service in September of 2017, but they have since backtracked and now say they aren't sure if or when this will be available.

If you have tried any of these services, write us at theWCBNewsline@gmail.com and share your experiences.

Relearning the Basics of O&M Travel with Sound

by Danette Dixon

Recently I attended an Orientation and Mobility (O&M) immersion program put on by Guide Dogs for the Blind. This week-long program was very intense, challenging and well worth the time. There were 6 other students and we stayed at Lighthouse for the Blind in San Francisco, California.

I traveled to this training without my guide dog, as the intent of it was to grow in my skills and confidence using a cane.

We began with a simple task. When my instructor's phone was playing a beeping sound, I had to turn and face the sound.

Next, it got a little harder. I had to tell her how far the noise was that her phone was playing, telling the distance: 20, 40, or even 60 feet away. Then I had to walk to the sound. I did this in the exercise room where the acoustics had a lot of echo, which made my task even harder.

Then we took this outside the exercise room to hear the different sounds inside a building. I had to decide if the flooring was carpet or tile, whether there was a sky light, if we were in a hallway or even a carpeted room, was the sound hollow or muffled. For example, if I was walking past a hallway, there was a small echo, but walking past the elevators, it was a much bigger and defined echo.

I was using a longer cane than previously accustomed. So this was something else to get acquainted with. I was using a cane with a metal tip, which defines the sounds even more.

After lunch we took ourselves outside to the streets of San Francisco. There were even more different sounds. I had to determine when I was under an awning or between buildings. If I thought I was, I stopped using the cane and clapped my hands, if it echoed then yes, I was under an awning or between buildings. Something else I had to do is stop in the middle of a block and determine how far away the perpendicular street was. I also found if I go slower than normal I have the time to register what the cane is telling me.

I began using the NFB graphite cane; I used this cane for a couple days. I did like it, but someone stepped on it and it broke. What I liked about it is that it is much lighter in weight than my personal cane.

When I was at a street crossing, there were a lot of different things I had to listen for. Just to name a few: is there a visibility disruption, like construction or can the parallel traffic see me? If I could not tell, I clapped my hands and if there was an echo they likely could not see me very well.

I had to determine how far the farthest lane of traffic was on the perpendicular street. This would tell me how far the cross walk is. I had to decide how far the farthest parallel traffic was, so I could cross. I had to determine if there was an island in the middle of the crossing.

Another thing I had to know is what type of intersection is it? A lighted intersection? Is the parallel lighted and not the perpendicular, or the other way around? Is it a four-way stop? Is there a turn lane?

Some days this was overwhelming, and I waited for a few cycles before crossing. I was also reminded of how important it is to

make sure that my body is lined up with the parallel traffic. I am to take things slow and to not rush anything.

One day I rode the BART train to Walnut Creek. The train was very interesting. It went under the bay where it was very loud, and it went through a mountain to Oakland and a few more stops before I was in Walnut Creek. There were all kinds of traffic patterns, some easy and some very hard, but the sidewalks were not as crowded.

I came home from this experience with new tools to use. I can cross streets if I take my time and do not use my automatic thinking. Instead, I will use my hearing, sounds, my feet, my entire body, and all my senses.

This program has given me the ability to be almost as independent and confident a cane traveler as I am with my Guide Dog. Oh yes, I ended up coming home with the NFB Telescope cane.

This program is just getting started. For now, it is only for GDB graduates, or those wanting a Guide Dog from GDB. I highly recommend it if you are receiving your first dog, between dogs, or if, like me, you have lost more eyesight and want more tools in your tool box.

WCB Happenings
Thank You for Paving the Way
by Cindy Van Winkle

What an amazing weekend Convention was! So many “thank you’s” to bestow. I just hope I don’t forget anyone.

The 2018 Convention Committee worked tirelessly all year and didn't stop. Thank you to: Heather Meares, Darryl Roberts, Cathy Wilson, Kevin Daniel, Carol Brame, Lori Allison, Holly Turri, and Denise Colley who each contributed to this event. Extra kudos go to Lori Allison, who ensured registration ran smoothly; Holly Turri, for coordinating volunteers; and Carol Brame, for providing an excellent array of exhibitors.

The South King County Council of the Blind chapter did a phenomenal job as host chapter, providing fun goody bags, yummy snacks for hospitality, and great energy. Thank you!

Behind the scenes, Lisa George did a stellar job with our successful Multi-Raffle for which many chapters, businesses, and individuals donated items; Kim Thiel was wherever we needed her to be to accept money; Rick Lewis kept us live on ACB Radio; David Edick and Frank Cuta ensured all presentations could be heard; Shannon Curry brought excitement to the convention with door prizes for which many chapters and individuals donated; Alan Bentson organized a jam-packed night of entertainment for the Showcase of Talent; Deb Lewis and those who served on Resolutions, and Frank Cuta and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee – dotting the i’s and crossing the t’s to bring thoughtful change before our membership; Chris Brame and Kevin Daniel worked the bar in hospitality; David Edick provided a fun night of Karaoke; Kim Moberg and the Scholarship Committee arranged another great Scholarship Reception; Hayley Agers, Colette

Arvidson, and the WCB Families Committee worked alongside DSB (with the support of Rooted in Rights) to bring back a youth program to our convention; Julie Brannon and the Membership Committee created a welcoming environment with the Welcome Lounge and convention buddies; and Meka White and the Awards Committee hosted the First Timers Breakfast and Awards Luncheon. I'm humbled by each of you. Thank you!

To each president who participated by sharing a short update during the Chapter Round-Ups, and each and every person who facilitated a panel, served as a presenter, performed in our Showcase of Talent, purchased a raffle ticket, volunteered as a convention buddy for first timers, as a mentor to our youth participants, or served in any way, shape, or form to help our convention. We truly couldn't have done this without you. Thank you!

We had 226 register for Convention and including volunteers vendors, and presenters, well over 300 people made their way through the door of the Crowne Plaza and into our convention this year, many for the first time. And if my numbers are correct, eight conventioners became life members of WCB! Also noteworthy, we raised \$2,525 from our Multi-Raffle!

It truly does take a village to pull off something of this magnitude, and together we did it! All of this is to say, WCB is the best village of blind people ever.

Business Meeting Recap by Lisa George

This year's convention was my fifth, and it was certainly the most jam-packed business meeting I've attended.

Saturday's annual business meeting was very productive and ended on time, which is always appreciated. After nominations from the floor and statements from supporters, four individuals were newly elected: Jeff Bishop to the office of Second Vice President, and Reginald George, Julie Brannon, and Heather Meares to the Board as Directors. Secretary Frank Cuta was re-elected to his position, running unopposed.

2019 WCB Officers and Board of Directors

Denise Colley, President, Olympia
Andy Arvidson, First Vice President, Anacortes
Jeff Bishop, Second Vice President, Kirkland
Frank Cuta, Secretary, Benton City
Deb Cook Lewis, Treasurer, Clarkston
Steve Fiksdal, Immediate Past President, Federal Way
Julie Brannon, Director, Seattle
Reg (Reginald) George, Director, Yakima
Holly Kaczmarek, Director, Dayton
J.R. (James) Kinnison, Director, Bremerton
Heather Meares, Director, Walla Walla
Jim (James) Turri, Director, Bellingham

Constitution and Bylaws Proposed Amendments

All thirteen proposed amendments were passed by the membership.

Summary of changes to the Constitution by Article and Section:
Article III Membership – changed the voting age for members to 18 to be consistent with ACB's constitution, defined member in good standing, and detailed what privileges are given to members in good standing (running for elected office, receiving stipends, loans, monetary awards, and/or travel reimbursement, and representing WCB at conventions and seminars.)

Article IV Affiliates, Section 1 Application for Affiliation – changed requirements for any group wishing to become a WCB affiliate in

the future: must have an existing bank account and a minimum of 10 dues-paying members.

Article IV Affiliates, Section 2 Affiliate Responsibilities – changed due dates for membership data to February 1 and payment of dues to March 1 as a result of the new process of having WCB calculate what's due from each chapter.

Article V Dues, Section 1 Annual WCB Membership – changed due dates for membership data to February 1 and payment of dues to March 1 as a result of the new process of having WCB calculate what's due from each chapter.

Article V Dues, Section 2 Lifetime WCB Membership – now specifies that each lifetime member is responsible for ensuring his/her dues are paid; WCB lifetime membership goes dormant after one year of failing to pay ACB dues.

Summary of changes to the Bylaws:

Bylaw 1 WCB Standing Committees – changed the deadline for committee appointments to January 31 and renamed Families with Blind Children to WCB Families.

Bylaw 3 WCB Stipends and Loans to Attend the ACB Convention – now specifies that only members in good standing may receive stipends and loans; Board may ask for repayment if recipient did not meet participation requirements.

Bylaw 4 WCB First-timers to ACB Convention

Bylaw 5 WCB Representative to ACB Affiliate President's Meeting

Bylaw 6 WCB Representatives to the ACB Legislative Seminar

Bylaw 8 Member Incentives to Attend the WCB State Convention

and Bylaw 9 WCB Equipment Loan Program – all now require applicants/recipients to be members in good standing.

Bylaw 7 WCB Sponsored Attendance to State Board Meetings and Seminars – now requires recipients to be members in good standing; elected officer/board member delinquent on a loan may be required to immediately repay the loan balance in full; expenses directly paid by such an individual may be applied to the outstanding loan balance.

Bylaw 11 WCB Scholarship Program – redefined recipient benefits, specifically that recipient's lodging and travel will fall under the current WCB Policy document and recipient's guest receives the banquet meal only.

Bylaw 13 Affiliate Stipends – removed language existing elsewhere (see WCB Constitution Article IV, Section 2).

2019 WCB Annual Budget

The Proposed 2019 Annual Budget was approved by the membership. For 2019, the Total Income is expected to be \$46,450 with Total Expenses projected at \$124,824, which would result in a Net Loss for the year of \$78,374.

Major differences from the previous year's budgeted income are a \$25,000 reduction in the expected income from ATS Northwest. Changes in Internal Expenses include a \$12,000 reduction due to the elimination of an in-person Winter Board Meeting; \$2,000 added to the Spring Board Meeting/Leadership; and elimination of chapter stipends totaling \$5,400. [NOTE: Chapters will now be able to request funds for specific projects via the Grants and Donations line item.]. External Expenses were similar to the previous year's budget overall, but moved between line items, most notably a \$6,000 increase in the State Convention Food/Facility cost, a \$1,000 increase to the Communications Committee line item, and a \$4,600 reduction to Grants and Donations.

2018 WCB Convention Fundraising Activities

The first-ever Multi-Raffle generated \$2,525 for WCB, which included a donation of \$25. This is \$168 more than last year's silent auction at the convention in Pasco. Also new this year, Yakima Valley Council of the Blind shared the proceeds from their convention fundraiser 50/50 with WCB. YVCB's "Hospitality Jail" raised \$428, which means the \$214 forwarded to WCB makes the total "Other Fundraising" number \$2,739.

2018 WCB Scholarship Program by Kim Moberg, Scholarship Chair

First of all I want to take this opportunity to thank my wonderful committee members. You are an awesome team.

This year the scholarship program got off to an unusually late start. WCB was in the process of creating a new website with a new webmaster. All new forms were created and uploaded instead of just updating the old ones. Once the forms went live we were up and running.

The application period this year was from June 11 to July 31, 2018. While this was short, 9 people applied. The committee was amazed we received so many applications in such a short amount of time. Out of the 9 applicants, we awarded 4 individuals scholarships. Let me introduce our 4 scholarship winners.

Jessamyn Landby is in her senior year at Olympic College in Bremerton. Besides going to school, Jessamyn is raising her son on her own. He is 14 years old and a freshman in high school. Jessamyn will be receiving an Associate of Technical Arts degree

in Accounting. She was awarded a scholarship in the amount of \$3,000.

Courtney Cole is a junior at Seattle Central College in Seattle and was recently accepted into the University of Washington. While going to college, Courtney also works for Rooted in Rights. She was a presenter at the 2018 WCB convention this year where we all learned more about this organization. Courtney is studying Communications. She will graduate in the spring of 2020 with a Bachelor's degree in Communications. Courtney was awarded a scholarship in the amount of \$3,000.

Amber DiGerlando is a senior at Evergreen State College in Olympia. Amber is working in the area of soil conservation. In January 2019, she will receive an award for her work in this field. Amber will graduate in the spring of 2019 with a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Education. She has been awarded a \$3,500 scholarship.

Tracy Fejeran is a senior at Eastern Washington University in Cheney. Tracy is very active and involved in her community. She is a member of 3 nonprofits. Tracy is a wife, mother, and grandmother along with going to college. Over the years, Tracy has had some serious medical conditions but through it all Tracy has continued to pursue her educational goals. Tracy is a go getter! She puts her all into everything she does. Tracy will graduate in the spring of 2019 with a Bachelor's degree in Communications. Tracy has been awarded a scholarship in the amount of \$5,000.

If you are considering going to college for the first time or you want to return to college to finish a degree or pursue new interests, I hope you will consider applying for this worthwhile scholarship. In order to apply you need to be a resident of Washington State. A resident of Washington is someone who has

lived in this state for the previous 12 months consecutively. You must be legally blind with best correction in the better eye. You must be enrolled for the 2019-2020 academic school year. You will need to fill out a scholarship application, submit the 6 required documents, which include a personal essay, proof of legal blindness, 2 letters of reference, transcripts, and proof that you are enrolled for the 2019-2020 academic school year.

Once all that has been submitted and the application period has closed, you will have a phone interview by a scholarship committee member, which will be shared with the rest of the committee. After all that is done the scholarship committee begins the selection process. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at goofeybabbysitter@gmail.com. When the application goes live you can find it on the WCB website. As soon as I have this information we will be posting an announcement to the WCB email list.

Paving the Way with Awards by Meka White, Awards Committee Chair

The WCB Convention was wonderful, but for me, the greatest highlight was being able to welcome our first-time attendees during the breakfast. Whether they were winners of our First Timer Scholarship, or if they found out about the convention via other means, it was a treat to get to know them.

There were four WCB members chosen by the Awards Committee as first-time award winners. They are:

- Jeff Johnson, United Blind of Tri-Cities, Inc.
- Pat Johnson, United Blind of Tri-Cities, Inc.
- Harold Quantrille, Yakima Valley Council of the Blind

- Marcia White, United Blind of Whatcom County

This group of award recipients was enthusiastic, friendly, and excited to be a part of the convention. It was a joy getting to know them.

During the awards luncheon, the committee recognized the following officers and board members who finished their current term in their position.

- Sue Ammeter was awarded posthumously for her position as 2nd Vice President
- Cindy Van Winkle, 2nd Vice President
- Frank Cuta, Secretary
- Annee Hartzell, Board Director
- Carol Brame, Board Director
- Lori Allison, Board Director

The following chapters received awards for membership growth at or exceeding ten percent:

- Pierce County Association of the Blind
- United Blind of Spokane
- Wenatchee Valley Council of the Blind
- Yakima Valley Council of the Blind

The last award given during this year's awards luncheon was our One World Award, given to a person or entity which has made an impact in the lives of those who are blind. This year's winner was The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc., for providing 100 years of service through its main headquarters, satellite facilities, and base supply centers. Cindy Watson, Senior Vice President, represented The Lighthouse and spoke eloquently about the company having been chosen.



Photo above: Meka White listens to Cindy Watson as she accepts the award.

During the banquet, our last two awards for the year were presented. Frank Cuta received the Newline Editor's Award for his intriguing article entitled "Peering into the Tech Crystal Ball," which was a fascinating look into what could come of mainstream technology in the future.



The Teacher of the Year Award is a fairly new category. This award is presented to a teacher who is making a difference in the lives of blind students, whether they are children or adults. This award was given to Andrew Stauffer, Braille instructor, who works at The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc., for all of the hard work that he has done to provide solid curriculum and instruction to employees, particularly in the transition to the Unified English Braille Code.

Photo above: Meka White smiles as she congratulates Andrew Stauffer for his award.

As a point of personal privilege, I thoroughly enjoyed my position as Chair of the Awards Committee. Working with committee members to choose worthwhile recipients for our awards was a wonderful process, and I believe that all who have been recognized will continue to pave the way in both the community and throughout the state.

Perkins Brailers ... the Newly Discovered Link

by Hayley Edick

At the youth seminar during the Washington Council of the Blind Convention this year, I had the opportunity to be a mentor to a 17 year old student, as well as share my experiences with her mother. Through this meeting, I learned a little bit about the advantages that attending the School for the Blind has brought this student, the commonalities we share as blind individuals, and hopefully helped her feel that she is not alone in her struggles and triumphs.

I realized how much high school has changed when she told me that she enjoys taking robotics classes at the neighboring college. Robotics may have been offered at my public high school, but being one of the first blind students to attend, I either did not have time in my schedule, did not know how to access such programs, or just completely missed out on that experience! Her home economics classes are definitely more helpful than the occasional weekend experiences I had in the blindness programs I attended, and her family's encouragement in such endeavors at home are more prevalent for her.

I was glad to hear that she still uses a Perkins Braille for math, and laughed when we discussed the fact that my braille was always made of metal as opposed to the lightweight materials found today. The advancement of electronic media, notetaking devices, computer programs, and accessible cell phones has definitely made her learning experience varied from mine, though I hadn't thought of myself as "old."

She seemed a bit shy to tell me her interests, but I let her know that nothing is too crazy, and that I am here to support, not to judge the things she likes.

Speaking with the student and her mother was a great experience. As a parent, I know that I often speak for my child, and this student's mom encouraged her daughter to speak for herself.

It is important for parents to have their questions addressed, to offer them a support system, and to give them resources to help handle difficult situations as they come up. It is always reassuring to know that we are not alone, as a parent or child, and to know that many other people have gone through the same experiences. Parents like to know that they are doing the right thing for their child, especially when some in society may think contrary to this.

I am so eager to serve as a mentor to students who are blind, their parents or guardians, and the whole family of persons who happen to be visually impaired, and I know that I will learn many new things with the evolvement of education, technology, and society.

WCB Families Update by Hayley Agers

This last quarter of the year has proven to be a busy one for the WCB Families committee. Notice first that our name has recently changed from Families with Blind Children to WCB Families. We truly believe that when a person has a visual impairment or is blind, the impact it has is not limited to just that person. Blindness impacts all of those who are around and love that person, be it a parent, a sibling, a child, or any relative who wants to find resources to help that person be as successful as possible. We thank you for voting this name change through at the November convention.

We were honored to once again have the opportunity to host a youth conference that occurred on the Saturday of convention. We were joined by six families and have heard some great feedback, as well as a desire to do it again next year. Thank you to Rooted in Rights, DSB, the WCB Families Committee, and the WCB Convention Committee for making this happen.

In the next few months, we are looking forward to partnering with WTBBL to have a Braille Challenge in both Seattle and Spokane. If you are able to help in any way or know of anyone who would like to be a participant, please contact Colette Arvidson at 360-391-5880. The 2019 event dates are January 12 in Seattle and February 23 in Spokane.

Our goal for the upcoming year is to reach as many families as possible and we could really use your help. It is our hope that each Chapter will step up, contact us, and work with us on ways to reach out to our local communities and come up with events to get families involved.

We were fortunate enough to recently receive the donation of a large number of Brailled children's books. The committee wishes to make good use of them. Some of our ideas involve you! Whether it means that each chapter will work on reaching out to their local TVI's, us holding events where we can distribute them, or you personally letting us know of a need, we want to get them into the hands of students, families, and schools who can most benefit from this treasure trove of material.

Not everyone can commit to signing up to be a member of a committee; we know this. But it is possible to be a part of smaller events that committees participate in, and we would love to have you. For more info, email Hayley Agers at haydav@comcast.net.

Membership Memo 2

by Julie Brannon, Membership Committee Chair

It's hard to believe that nearly a half year has passed since the first Membership Memo article was written and printed. Quite a bit has happened since that time, so let me share with you what the membership committee has been up to. As with the previous article, I will list the committee member names below, just so you know whom to connect with regarding anything membership.

We have initiated and had several quarterly membership committee calls with assigned chapter membership reps: May's call outlined recruitment, August's call outlined retention ideas, and December's call will outline ideas for younger member recruitment and retention, along with what chapters are doing for the Christmas holidays.

In September, the committee had a call with committee chairs (Cindy for convention, Kim for scholarships, and Meka for first-timers) to assess how the membership committee could interact and assist with convention processes. We developed the Convention Friend function, which paired first-time attendees with experienced members for guidance and support. Thank you to many members of the WCB family; 17 convention friends were connected with first-timers. We are hoping these contacts and connections continue.

Membership Committee members East side:

Tracy Fejeran, Cindy Glidden, Joy Kelley, and Janice Squires

Membership Committee members West side:

Lori Allison, Jenny Anderson, Carol Brame, and Shannon Curry

Because membership is concerned with both chapter recruitment and retention, please feel free to communicate with membership committee members, or your chapter membership reps with ideas, suggestions, and plans.

The membership committee wants to extend their wish that this upcoming season be fruitful, not only in regard to membership, but in every other way.

Resolutions Summary 2018

by Denise Colley

The following is a summary of the major resolutions passed at the 2018 fall convention of WCB.

RESOLUTION 2018-01 deals with the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) Independent Living Program.

It addresses issues around the following facts: there has been no funding increase to the program in more than 10 years at either the federal or state level; the eligible population has substantially increased along with increases in the overall cost of delivering services; there was a 20% reduction in funding this year implemented by DSB, due to a lack of discretionary funds.

WCB is concerned that Contractors and consumer organizations received no significant advance warning of the funding reduction, and contractors have received little direction during the first four months of the fiscal year in how to uniformly implement the reductions.

Our resolution does acknowledge the fact that DSB has advised the Governor's office through a budget request process that

without restoration of lost funding, rural areas of the state will be particularly affected, as DSB will no longer be able to sustain minimal service levels statewide.

The resolution charges WCB to:

- Send a letter to the Governor's office expressing support of DSB's Independent Living funding proposal, with a copy to the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind.
- Go on record expressing our deepest concern and significant frustration with how DSB has implemented the Independent Living funding reduction.
- Strongly request that DSB immediately move forward to determine an Independent Living action plan for the remainder of this year and for the foreseeable future until funding can be restored or increased.
- The Board of Directors of this organization, in partnership with the Committee on Aging and Vision Loss, seek opportunities to communicate with the Governor's Office and with the State Legislature regarding the funding crisis and service needs in the Independent Living program.

RESOLUTION 2018-2 is in Recognition of Sarah Edick and her work with the Tacoma Tenants' Organizing Committee and their waging of a successful campaign including media events, testimony before the Tacoma City Council, and other efforts to educate the public about the impact of the housing affordability crisis to mitigate the displacement caused by redevelopment of the Tiki housing complex.

Through this resolution, WCB thanks Sarah Edick for her advocacy, congratulates her as part of the Tacoma Tenants Organizing Committee recognized by the annual Washington Low Income Housing Alliance Nancy Amidei Prize in Movement Building, and encourages Sarah and the WCB Advocacy

committee to connect interested WCB members with the activities and advocacy of the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance.

RESOLUTION 2018-03 deals with the lack of accessibility of vending machines.

It addresses the fact that vending companies are increasingly using credit cards to transact the purchase of their products from vending machines.

Blind users cannot tell how much they are paying when the machine displays transaction information in the window, and if the particular selection is out of stock, the user cannot read the displayed message.

Some manufacturers are making their selections available using alpha numeric keypads which require a user to press the correct combination of keys to make a selection. Machine owners often change the location of the items so that memorizing the items isn't reliable.

The resolution directs the WCB President and Board of Directors to:

- Consult with the ACB National Office to determine what actions are being taken with respect to previously passed ACB resolutions on this matter.
- Seek consultation with the Washington State Vendors Committee and the Business Enterprise Program of Department of Services for the Blind to determine the level of interest in this matter, and what actions might be taken through contract negotiations or other leveraging options with government and industry.
- Initiate discussions with technology developers to determine options that might be feasible for implementation of accessible vending choices.

- Consult with the Human Rights Commission regarding applicability of the Washington State law against discrimination RCW 49.60.
- Take additional steps based on the findings of these activities and report back to the WCB Board of Directors.

Behind the Scenes of Convention by Cindy Van Winkle

Ever wonder what goes in to putting on a convention? Preparing for a convention of our size takes many months of preparation; the committee works out all details and ensures the event comes off successfully, and so many others help to ensure its success. But actually, the preparation begins long before even the committee convenes its work. It starts with finding a suitable venue and working out the details of a contract.

Finding a convention site has three main goals:

- **Accessibility:** meets ADA standards with plenty of accessible rooms and located near a main thoroughfare with lots of public transportation access.
- **Affordability:** Guest room pricing as low as possible for conventioners, and food and beverage minimums which are reachable by our group to ensure WCB incurs the least amount of expense possible.
- **Convention Needs:** Ensuring there is enough meeting space for all the things we typically do, as well as for new things we may want to do, for the number of people we typically have attend, yet with room to grow and expand; the ability to meet special dietary needs; ensuring there are suitable designated relieving areas; and a host of other details around AV, internet, parking, airport access, etc.

Oh yes, before we can even get to these three primary goals, we need to check on date availability and preferably make a site visit to ensure accessibility and our needs can be met.

Once I went to the SeaTac Doubletree for a site visit, I was reminded what an ideal venue it is for our group with plenty of meeting space, guest rooms within close proximity (if able to negotiate the tower rooms), great location, etc. I shared some concerns I had with our one time convention there in 2006 when they double booked another group alongside us and the challenges that made, which were positively addressed by including language in the contract preventing such a situation recurring.

Numerous emails and phone calls took place over several months negotiating pricing, guest rooms in the tower, food and beverage minimums for all three years, hospitality concessions, and so on.

We had a contract originally to sign at the end of June but ran into challenges with dates for Vancouver. Then after visiting SeaTac and considering the proposed budget, we worked through an optional proposal for three years in SeaTac.

To give you a picture of this next year's contract compared to this recent one, guest room rates for 2019 are \$102 per night; in 2018 they were \$99. We usually contract for 300 guest rooms which are individual rooms per night combined. The standard minimum we need to meet is 90 percent. The contracts for the next three years give us an 80 percent minimum before we incur any penalties.

Our food and beverage minimum to meet in 2019 is \$22,000 which offsets the cost of all meeting space at our disposal (this goes up \$1,000 each subsequent year). In 2018 the food and beverage minimum was \$24,000 which covered our meeting

space. We reached our F&B minimum this year and so should easily reach a lesser amount next year.

The tower rooms which will hold our block are usually more expensive and were originally going to cost an additional \$10 per night. I negotiated the lower rate of \$102 to keep us near the conferencing area (this rate goes up to \$104 and \$109 in 2020 and 2021 respectively).

The grand ballroom will be able to handle all of our main functions. There are restrooms very close to the ballroom and we will not be sharing any of that conferencing space with another group, having sole access to the grand foyer for our registration and volunteer tables throughout. There is also meeting space on the 2nd floor of the tower to handle smaller meal functions, hospitality, and breakout sessions (if we decide to hold them). The contract also clearly states our ability to bring in our own AV equipment and we should not have to move the hard wire for internet, which is both a huge cost savings.

Although overall the Crowne Plaza worked out well for us in 2018, one of the frustrations folks had was the general meals on the 12th floor and there only being 3 elevators and one of those being a service elevator, opened for our use and which caused staff to have to wait to get on for upwards of 20 minutes at a time. At the SeaTac Doubletree we have 6 elevators in the tower alone and they are a short distance from the conferencing area and the relieving area.

The SeaTac Doubletree can accommodate us at 2018 numbers and programming, as well as if our convention grows or wants to make changes. The Crowne Plaza was a tight fit for us this year and would not allow for any growth.

By entering into a three year deal with Hilton, we not only were able to secure the guest room rates in the tower and food and beverage minimum listed above for our needed meeting space, but we receive other extra concessions such as: a reduced self-parking rate of \$10 all three years, reduced banquet meal pricing, a complimentary two night stay and \$100 dining credit to Seaports restaurant to use each year for fundraising, complimentary guest room WiFi, piano for the Showcase of Talent, Presidential Suite, one room per 40 rooms sold, parking passes for use by outside volunteers, ability to bring in snacks and soft drinks for hospitality and the hotel to provide the bar at a reduced flat rate of \$5 per drink (to increase 25 cents per year), and the 80 percent minimum of guest rooms to be actualized.

In short, the SeaTac Doubletree is a Hilton property and has gone above and beyond to work out some wonderful deals for us, and we have our conventions secured for the next three years. Oh yes, and let us not forget the warm Doubletree cookies awaiting us upon our arrival!

Mark your calendars for the following convention dates:

- October 24-26, 2019
- October 29-31, 2020
- October 28-30, 2021

And we'll see you at the SeaTac Doubletree!

Agency Updates:
Report from Department of Services for the Blind
by Ladell Lockwood

December is the time when everyone reflects on the year that was. At DSB that year had its share of highs and lows.

In October, we began a new federal fiscal year and gathered data on the previous 12 months of services. For the period of October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018, DSB served more than 1,400 Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) clients interested in gaining or retaining employment. One hundred fifty-seven of those clients finished their VR training and gained or retained competitive jobs with an average wage of \$24.07 per hour. Our independent living program helped more than 1,600 people over age 55 – and not interested in returning to work – receive the services they needed to be active in their homes and communities. Our Youth Services programs provided educational workshops and camps for hundreds of young people preparing for their future careers.

Unfortunately, this October, DSB was forced to implement Order of Selection (OOS). OOS is the process that a state vocational rehabilitation agency utilizes when resources are not adequate to meet the service needs of all eligible individuals at the time eligibility is determined. If an agency does not have the resources to serve every eligible person who requests services, then the agency must create a prioritized wait list, and begin to serve those eligible individuals by priority category. Through OOS, the agency assures that we provide services first to those most in need.

DSB will continue to serve all those currently in an active DSB employment plan, and we will also continue to take applications, provide information and referral services, and determine eligibility. As of October 1, there are no wait list priority category spaces

open. Individuals who require services to keep a current job may be exempt from the wait list, as resources allow. We will continuously re-evaluate the opportunity to take individuals off the wait list and to open categories. Looking forward to 2019, we realize that OOS will continue to be a challenge. Nevertheless, we are still out in the community helping people access the services they need to reach their career goals. There are several workshops for youth and students scheduled statewide and we are supporting other organizations in spreading the word at events across the state.

You can find more details on DSB's Successful Outcomes and how the agency is handling OOS online at www.dsb.wa.gov or follow us on Facebook or LinkedIn for the most up-to-date information on the agency's activities.

Washington Talking Book & Braille Library Update by Danielle Miller, Director

Happy New Year to everyone in the Washington Council of the Blind. Attending your 2018 Annual Convention was my eleventh WCB convention and a highlight of 2018. It is always a joy to see so many library users and champions of accessibility and access to information all in one place. It is also a great opportunity to see people in person and meet new and potential library users. I hope many of you will stay in touch and continue to give me feedback on how we can continue to improve library services.

As we look to the future, the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) has great things on the horizon, like beginning the development of the next generation digital talking book player, making books on BARD streamable, and loaning Braille e-readers.

At WTBBL we will be upgrading our Audio Book Production Department, undertaking several facilities improvement projects, continuing to increase our outreach efforts, and we anticipate an increase in the number of patrons using the Custom Book Service.

We are also extremely excited about the Marrakesh Treaty Implementation Act, which will increase access to accessible materials for people around the world. NLS is working with key Library of Congress staff to determine the specific updates to NLS services and will provide us guidance soon on how we will implement the Marrakesh Treaty and increase access to materials in languages other than English.

Since I've been at WTBBL, your support has been incredible. And, throughout the years, the dedication of WTBBL staff members to provide the best library service possible to all our patrons has been a constant. Their commitment to service, innovation, and willingness to try new things keeps WTBBL nimble and focused on meeting the current and future needs of our patrons. Thank you for being such an important part of the WTBBL community.

Around the State
Capitol City Council of the Blind (CCCB)
by Alan Bentson, Secretary

At our November chapter meeting, Gloria Walling was re-elected president unanimously. Berl Colley became our new Treasurer. As Berl Colley was already our vice president we needed someone to fill his term and Zandra Brown was elected to the office. Zandra is our point person on lobbying the city for audible signals.

Our outgoing Treasurer, Dan Lovell suffered a stroke during surgery this week, and all our wishes and prayers are going out for a speedy recovery.

We held our usual chapter picnic in August at LBA Park in Lacey. Our thanks go to Danny and Kathy Matsen, our social committee, for putting on a great affair. Our thanks also to Berl Colley for taking the lead in organizing our traditional Christmas Party which will be held at Panorama City in Lacey on December 1.

Four of our members attended the Stop the Bleed class at the Snohomish County Chapter, and they all said it was a really well-done and educational event.

Our speaker at the November meeting was Rob Lafontaine from Inter City Transit. They have promised to visit us twice a year to alert our group about upcoming changes in public transit, and to hear our questions and comments.

We regret the loss of Paige Myer Peter who moved to Sacramento this fall. She was the founder and facilitator of our CCCB support group, and, needless to say, we are looking for someone to continue this endeavor.

Guide Dog Users of Washington State (GDUWS) by Vivian Conger, President

It was great to see folks at the WCB/GDUWS convention held in November. Even though it was a hard convention without Marlaina and Sue, it was a great convention too.

At this event, we were able to set up the Marlaina Lieberg Memorial Scholarship fund which was a life-long dream of Marlaina's. This Scholarship can be applied for by our members to start with, and then opened up to others when funding permits. The scholarship will be available to members who are receiving a new dog guide whether at a resident program or through in-home training with proof of acceptance. The Scholarship has been set up in the amount of \$100 per application. The Committee is currently working on an application and will let us all know when it is available.

For those who got up at that insane hour of 7 a.m. to attend our breakfast and business meeting to conduct our important elections, I personally want to thank you. The results of those elections are: Vivian Conger, President (completing the second year of Marlaina's term); Andy Arvidson, Vice-President; Danette Dixon, Secretary; Holly Kaczmariski, Treasurer (one-year term after Deb's resignation); Hayley Edick, Director; and Deb Cook Lewis, Director (one-year term).

We had a great presentation from Andy Arvidson – The Cruising Dog and a very informative update from Deb Cook Lewis on the Air Carrier Access Act for our luncheon program. We had a lot of fun holding an auction at lunch too with the proceeds going toward the Marlaina Lieberg Memorial Scholarship fund. The Canadian candy was donated by Josette Kernaghan. Hayley

Agers donated a terrific basket that was drawn along with our 50/50 raffle.

Look forward to details regarding our Spring Fling coming soon.

Jefferson County Council of the Blind (JCCB) by Carl Jarvis, Secretary

Although our numbers have been down a bit this Fall, we had two very lively and informative gatherings in September and October. President Nancy Villagran asked members what they felt were issues we should look to during the coming year. Heading up the list was discussion about coping with changes as we age and as many of us continue to lose additional vision, and need to adjust. Nancy said she would be looking for informed folks in our community who will be willing to share their knowledge and experiences with us and become part of a community support network.

For our October meeting, Nancy presented Willie Bence, new director of the Jefferson County Department of Emergency Management. Bence spent his first weeks getting acquainted with folks in Jefferson County. He told us that “it is better to over-communicate than under-communicate.” To that end, Bence plans to spend his first weeks making contact with “key players” and community stakeholders like the Jefferson County Council of the Blind.

“Part of what drew me here is that you all have such a strong emergency management program already, so I want to make sure I understand what your strengths are, and what's worked for you historically,” Bence said. “If it's not broken, I'm not looking to fix it. I want to learn from the locals, and empower their efforts.”

Bence praised the existing volunteer base for emergency management in Jefferson County, whom he hopes to help build their own emergency response plans.

“I really want to continue and expand the training exercises I've seen here,” Bence said. “Emergency preparations are clearly already embedded in the culture of this county, but I'd like to develop that even further. During an emergency, we tend to think in terms of people stepping up to meet the challenge, when what they actually do is sink to the level of their training. The value of constant emergency preparedness exercises is that you can fall back on that muscle memory.”

King County Chapter (KCC) by Linda Wickersham, President

Hello from the King County Chapter. We hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving. Dale and I certainly did.

At our October meeting, Allison (allisonfeher@seattlelwv.org) from the League of Women Voters came and spoke about the different initiative issues. She was very informative and cleared up a lot of questions people had. If you have questions on future ballot issues I would recommend her very highly. I heard a lot of compliments from the Chapter about her.

Also, we held our elections. My term ends at the end of the year. Our new Officers are: Tim Schneebeck, President; Linda Wickersham, Vice President; Heidi Campbell, Secretary; Linda Wickersham, Treasurer (yes, two offices!). Congratulations to all the Officers on the team.

At our November meeting we had a new member, Kathleen Carson join us. She was originally from California and then moved

to Fairbanks, Alaska and then came here. I am pleased to announce her membership. I truly enjoyed visiting with her at the meeting.

Two members visited Israel last spring and at one of our meetings spoke about it. Through all of the digging, Israel has found history to be very accurate. They shared the information about the City of David and about the high security that exists in Israel, including eye scanners. I would recommend the team, husband and wife, Lynn Hunter and Ed Stevens as speakers at any Chapter.

I and the King County Chapter want to wish everyone a wonderful inclusive and safe Holiday season. Christian, Muslim, Jewish or any other community; Merry Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, and Shopping!

Pierce County Association of the Blind (PCAB)
by Linda Wilder, acting Secretary

PCAB had an exciting year filled with fund raising activities, parties and awards!

We kicked off 2018 in May with our 2nd annual Spaghetti in the Dark fundraiser, put on by PCAB and The Tacoma Tide Beep Ball Club. The event was held at Christ Lutheran Church in Lakewood. The church allowed PCAB to use their banquet room, a full size commercial kitchen, and had several staff and church members come and volunteer to help us get orientated as well as clean up. A few PCAB members did the prep work, cutting and chopping the veggies for the spaghetti sauce. The spaghetti, salad bread, and dessert were all fantastic!

It was a great opportunity to show the sighted community that blind people can put on a great feed. Once again this was a success; it was good to see new faces from the community. The Program included: a video on Beep Ball, Q & A on blindness, and a game which required the guest to decipher a Brailled famous quote using a Braille alphabet card. It was a challenge to get everyone to keep their sleep shades on throughout the entire event. At our 2019 event, we will be having toiletry drive for the Nativity House.



In July, we had our annual BBQ at Spanaway Park. There was a great turnout of members, guests and kids. The food was bountiful and delicious, we played games played music, and of course KARAOKE!!! There were lots of door prizes given away.

Photo to left: PCAB members enjoy their day at the park.

In September, PCAB worked with WCB and other chapters providing outreach at the Puyallup Fair. By participating in this fun and exciting outreach, people have learned about WCB who we are and what we are about.

Once again, we received an award for increasing our membership (22%). So if you are interested and are in the Tacoma area come visit us at TACID, 6315 South 19th Street, Tacoma WA. On the 3rd Saturday of the month from 11 to 1 p.m.

Peninsula Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired (PCB)

by Cindy Van Winkle, member

It's been a while since we've submitted an update, so here's a sweeping view of 2018.

In June, we held our second annual Beep Ball event between the South King Sluggers and Kitsap County's Finest, which have included Bremerton and Kitsap County Police departments. The 2019 event is already being planned.

Several members got together during May and June for a couple of tandem rides. Although they just took place in a local neighborhood, riders were able to go out as often as they wanted during our few hours together and everyone had such a great time!



Photo to left: Kevin Torcolini and Michele Denzer enjoy their ride on a tandem bike.

Photo below: Mike Magures and John Moberg try out a recumbent tandem.



Our All Ears book club continues to meet each month reading varying genres and sharing about the book of the month and solving all of the world's problems, or at least discussing them.

We always enjoy going out for a fun meal together to socialize and of course eat. We went to the Guitar Café and listened to some live music at an open-mic night, had breakfast at a local German restaurant, and a well-attended picnic in August, just to name a few of our social activities.

At each of our meetings we collect change for a local food bank and will be giving more than \$100 to the Silverdale Food bank for the holidays.

In October we made some changes to our constitution, changing our chapter name to Peninsula Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired, adding language to include Associate memberships for those who cannot attend our meetings on a regular basis so as not to impact our meeting quorum, and providing language for members to attend our meetings via phone with prior notice.

In November elections were held for 2019. JR Kinnison was re-elected President, Carrol Gray was elected Vice President and Michelle Denzer, Kat Woofter, and Cindy Van Winkle as Directors.

We meet on the second Saturday of most months from noon to 2 p.m. in the restaurant of Allstar Lanes in Silverdale. We'd love to have you join us some time!

Skagit and Island Counties Council of the Blind (SICCB)

by Andy Arvidson, President

We had our elections for the 2019 and 2020 term in October and the following results are:

President Andy Arvidson

Vice-President Phil Bleyhl

Secretary Billie Bleyhl

Treasurer Colette Arvidson

Looking forward to the future, a new low vision support group is going to start in the Anacortes Senior Activity Center in January, meeting on the last Thursday of each month, more information to follow.

Louie Braille was born January 4, 1809 and passed January 6, 1852, so we are going to have a birthday party in his honor at our January 12th meeting all will be invited. Cake will be served.

We are planning a spring symphony at Skagit Valley College, they have special arrangements for disabled individuals.

Phil our Vice-President is looking through the WCB Newsline to get ideas about what other chapters are doing to see what we might do to increase interest and enthusiasm. In looking at the word enthuse, in Latin means the God within. So, we hope to use others chapters ambitions to inspire us.

Our membership is in an era of fluctuation due to some death and illnesses, but we are looking at new ways to increase our group through better communications and interesting activities.

On an upbeat note we are looking at doing a disaster preparedness training seminar. Rick Larsen has offered to talk to our Chapter, which is a great thing. Looking at doing some walking in nature activities such as the Whatcom County Scent Garden, etc.

South Kitsap Council of the Blind (SKCB)

by Kim Moberg, President

These past several months have kept this little chapter busy. Several members have been having medical issues but it looks like they are on the mend.

At our October meeting Cindy Van Winkle was our speaker. She talked to us about accessible games. Many of our members expressed an interest in this topic. It was fun seeing many of my childhood games available in a format that all can play. I really loved the Monopoly board. Some of us stayed later to learn to play "Left Center Right."

Several of our members attended the WCB convention at SeaTac. We all had a grand time. It was fun seeing both old friends and making some new friends as well. Our chapter did a little fundraiser at convention. We did a 50/50 raffle and Sarah Edick won \$102 and our chapter got \$102. Jessamyn Landby sold Sarah the winning ticket so next year you know who to buy your ticket from.

Our November meeting is always a fun event. We always have a little Thanksgiving feast. Everyone brings leftovers to share with everyone. It is always fun and the food is always delicious. I even made orange fudge as a special treat for the members.

We had election of officers at the meeting as well. Kim Moberg is President for another year. Pat Whitlow will continue as Vice President. Chris Brame will continue as Secretary. We welcome Jessamyn Landby as our new Treasurer. A special thank you to Carol Brame as outgoing Treasurer. You have worked very hard over the years for our chapter. You might not have an office this year but I can guarantee you will be kept busy doing many things. Merry Christmas to each and every one this holiday season.

United Blind of Spokane (UBSPO)
by Debby Clark, President

Happy Holidays from Spokane and other reasons to be glad! We have two new guide dogs from GDB this year and that is always a reason to be glad. This grows our dog herd to at least five. Debby Clark with female golden, Hummus and Vicki Rhodes with yellow lab Phantom. Dog transitions can be quite challenging but well worth it.

Another reason to be glad is the eight members traveling to the convention. We liked the chapter roundups and the great networking that went on. Oh yes and the food. Jeff Clark deserves a medal for driving five of us and two guide dogs to and from. Another reason to be glad is better understanding of the mission of WCB and learning about the great work of the WCB committees for our blindness community. The Star Trek like new technology was lots of fun to encounter.

Another reason to be glad was our Sept. Oct. and November meetings. We do really have the best food, fellowship and information available.

Another reason to be glad is that Tracy is out of rehab and back home after breaking her leg just before Convention.

We have five new members since our last update. Locally we have Patrice, transplants Kathy and Vicki, a dynamic mother-daughter duo. Debby Phillips has reappeared with her energy and expertise, and Jennifer La Varnway coming from Wisconsin for her husband to work at the Spokane Lighthouse. She is currently making and selling dog treats. Good thing we have so many hungry dogs. Our guests feel welcome and cared for and often become members.

We are looking forward to our Christmas potluck on Dec. 17 at Lilac Blind.

Join us at Lilac Blind on the third Monday of every month from eleven to one for fun, food and fellowship.

United Blind of Tri-Cities (UBTC)
by Frank Cuta, Secretary

We have an unusually vigorous chapter here in the Tri-Cities and it's all about relationships. We follow-up with first time attendees and follow-up with members who tend to drift away. We do not just see each other at our breakfast business meeting, we get together continuously throughout the month at our social events like book club, described play, tech group, card party, lunch bunch and after that there are the additional social happenings at the Edith Bishel Center. And we do not just assume that people will come to meetings we call them every month and remind them.

In August we had 25 at our annual picnic and in September we took a couple of car loads over to the Fort Walla Walla museum and ended the day with a grand BBQ picnic with the UBWW group at Annee and John Hartzell's. After dinner I demonstrated a Calvary bugle that I picked up at the gift shop. It seems that this

was not fully appreciated by the group. Some people just have no taste.

At our October meeting everyone enjoyed listening to a recording of the presentation given by the blind actress, Marilee Talkington at the ACB convention. Also that month a group of us visited the new aviation museum at the Pasco airport. This was organized by Jennifer Soltis, one of our new members, and there was lots and lots to touch.

In November we took a van load to the state convention at SeaTac including Jeff and Pat Johnson who were WCB first-timers and already very active in our group. At our November business meeting, we had a discussion on accessible medical technology and several devices were demonstrated. Sherry Dubbin was again elected president. Jennifer ran from the floor and won a contested seat on the board.

All members were shocked to learn last week that our night transportation service was shut down when the taxi subcontractor closed their doors for good. Shades of the future.

United Blind of Walla Walla (UBWW) by Annee Hartzell, President

This has been a busy few months for the United Blind of Walla Walla.

In September, we held our first annual regional cook-out with the United Blind of Tri Cities. In October, the UBWW collaborated with the Delta Gamma Sorority to hold the second Bites Without Lights event.

We also worked toward setting chapter priorities for the upcoming year. We, as a chapter, are interested in reaching out to seniors in the community and supporting local blind/visually impaired veterans. We are researching blanketing the downtown area with beacons, making it possible for those using their iPhones to learn more about local businesses and attractions in town. In short, it promises to be another busy year!

Finally, we elected Heather Meares as President, Annee Hartzell as Vice President, and Joleen Ferguson as Secretary of our chapter. We are looking forward to an exciting year of growth and new partnerships within our community.

United Blind of Whatcom County (UBWC)

by Holly Turri, President

Ours has been a busy time of the year. We've had a corn feed, Thanksgiving dinner, book club, and the most important thing a coupon book fundraiser. We made over \$500 with this. Many thanks to the chapter members who worked so hard to raise this money.

Yakima Valley Council of the Blind (YVCB)

by Lisa George, Secretary

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Happy New Year from YVCB! Our best wishes to everyone for a healthy, enjoyable, memorable 2019!

YVCB's newly elected officers are all returning officers, so we'll hit the ground running with President Darla Hatfield, Vice President

Reg George, Treasurer Howard Underwood, and Secretary Lisa George.

Everyone here is excited that Reg was elected to the WCB Board at last fall's convention. We know he'll be engaged and respectful of all the views offered when working with the WCB officers and board to determine the path for our organization.

Last year was full of new ideas and programs to engage our members and reach out to new members-to-be. This year, we're working to make those programs more refined and even more effective.

The "Hospitality Jail" raised \$428 at the last WCB convention, half of which we donated to WCB. As a brand-new idea from our 2 first-timers, we thought it was very successful, but will need to have a few more rules in place so that it's not punitive or intrusive to anyone.

Our SMMAC program to encourage members to save money toward expenses at convention allowed 5 of our members to go to SeaTac. We hope that more members are able to participate this year.

This year's primary task will be fundraising so that our programs, especially our bowling outreach, are funded to the level we've enjoyed in years past. We will continue our collaboration with our local non-profit, Vision for Independence Center, and we hope that WTBBL may have a visit planned to this part of the state sometime soon.

You are always welcome to bowl with us if you're ever passing through Yakima on a Friday morning!

Hats Off

compiled by Denise Colley

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

Debby Clark (UBSPO) received her new female golden retriever Hummus from GDB July 1. Quite a beauty.

Vicki Rhodes (UBSPO) received her male yellow lab Phantom from GDB November 18. Very pleased.

If you have something for consideration of inclusion for future Hats Off articles, please send to theWCBNewsline@gmail.com with "Hats Off" in the subject line.

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 Washington Council of the Blind. If you have items for inclusion, email theWCBNewsline@gmail.com and put "Bits and Pieces" in the subject line.

Advocacy

ACB is producing a weekly podcast on blindness and advocacy. You can listen to these each week, as well as to previous broadcasts going back to the first one published on September 25. <http://acbradio.org/acb-advocacy>

Home Entertainment

Catching up with other entertainment providers, Hulu agrees to make its services more accessible. <http://fox28spokane.com/hulu-agrees-to-make-service-more-accessible-to-blind-and-visually-impaired-customers>

Museums

The Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington D.C. now offers an accessible monthly docent-led tour to ensure blind and visually impaired visitors can experience the depth of this museum.

<https://wjla.com/news/local/smithsonian-tours-visually-impaired>

Off the Shelf

Herbal Essence is making their shampoo and conditioner accessible to those who cannot see by creating a special etched design on the bottom of their shampoo and conditioner bottles (lines for shampoo, dots for conditioner). Check out your local store for these new mainstream products.

<https://people.com/style/herbal-essences-new-bottle-design/>

Scholarships

American Council of the Blind's scholarship application process is now open. Whether going to a technical college, an entering freshman, undergraduate or a graduate student, over \$55,000 in scholarships are awarded to students each year. To be eligible, you need to be legally blind in both eyes, maintain a 3.0 GPA, and be involved in your school/local community. The deadline to apply is February 15, 2019. <http://acb.org/2019-scholarship>

Digital Assistants

Our third Tech it Out on digital assistants (Alexa, Siri and Google) was a great discussion on the pros, cons, and helpful tips for using these valuable tools. Here's a link to the recordings from our YouTube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFuPN3KKsy4&list=PLclupCht58ldgWQ5hDGeAtx06ng3dw0vl>

Social Media

Instagram is making their platform more accessible for those who are blind or visually impaired by providing automatic alternative text with object recognition to describe photos using a screen reader and introducing custom alternative text so a poster can provide a richer description of uploaded photos.

<https://instagram-press.com/blog/2018/11/28/creating-a-more-accessible-instagram/>

Windows and Office Accessibility

Three free Webinars from Microsoft showing how to use the latest accessibility features and improvements in Windows 10 and Office 365. <https://sway.office.com/ofnj0y3PT7dnqb0Z?ref=Link>

2019 WCB Calendar of Deadlines and Events

JANUARY

3 – WCB Presidents call at 7 p.m.

8 – Technology forum call at 7 p.m.

12 – Puget Sound Regional Braille Challenge at 9 a.m. at Washington Talking Book and Braille Library in Seattle

FEBRUARY

1 – Deadline to submit chapter membership lists and information

2 – WCB Winter Board Meeting using the Zoom Cloud Platform at 9 a.m.

7 – WCB Presidents call at 7 p.m.

9 – Patron Advisory Committee meeting at 9 a.m. at Washington Talking Book and Braille Library in Seattle

12 – Technology Forum call at 7 p.m.

15 – Deadline to apply for ACB Educational Scholarship

23 – Eastern Washington Braille Challenge at 9 a.m. at Spokane Public Library

28 – Deadline for submission of articles for the Spring 2019 issue of the WCB Newline

MARCH

1 – Deadline to submit Letters of Application for First-Timer Scholarship to the ACB Conference and Convention

7 – WCB Presidents call at 7 p.m.

8 – State Rehabilitation Council meeting at 9 a.m. at Department of Services for the Blind in Seattle

12 – Technology Forum call at 7 p.m.

15 – Board of Trustees meeting at 11 a.m. at Washington State School for the Blind in Vancouver

APRIL

- 4 – WCB presidents call at 7 p.m.
- 9 – Technology Forum call at 7 p.m.

MAY

- 1 – Deadline to make stipend and loan requests for national ACB Conference and Convention
- 2 – WCB Presidents call at 7 p.m.
- 7 – Technology Forum call at 7 p.m.
- 31 – Deadline for submitting WCB scholarship applications

JUNE

- 6 – Washington State School for the Blind Commencement at 9:30 a.m. in Vancouver
- 6 – Board of Trustees meeting at noon at WSSB in Vancouver
- 6 – WCB Presidents call at 7 p.m.
- 8 – WCB summer Board Meeting using the Zoom Cloud Platform at 9 a.m.
- 11 – Technology Forum call at 7 p.m.
- 14 – State Rehabilitation Council meeting at 9 a.m. at Department of Services for the Blind in Seattle
- 30 – Deadline for submission of articles for the Fall 2019 issue of the WCB Newslines

JULY

- 5 – Opening Session of the ACB Conference and Convention, Rochester, NY

AUGUST

- 1 – WCB Presidents call at 7 p.m.

SEPTEMBER

5 – WCB Presidents call at 7 p.m.

10 – Technology Forum call at 7 p.m.

13 – State Rehabilitation Council meeting at 9 a.m. at Department of Services for the Blind in Seattle

OCTOBER

3 – WCB Presidents call at 7 p.m.

8 – Technology Forum call at 7 p.m.

24-26 – WCB Annual Convention at the DoubleTree by Hilton Seattle Airport

31 – Deadline for submission of articles for the fall 2019 issue of the WCB Newsline

NOVEMBER

7 – WCB Presidents call at 7 p.m.

12 – Technology Forum call at 7 p.m.

DECEMBER

5 – WCB Presidents call at 7 p.m.

6 – State Rehabilitation Council meeting at 9 a.m. at Department of Services for the Blind in Seattle

10 – Technology Forum call at 7 p.m.

2019 WCB OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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