# WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF THE BLIND NEWSLINE

**Summer 2019 Edition**

**“Big Beautiful World”**

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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# President’s Update

by Denise Colley

For most of us here in Washington, spring has been very pleasant, making outdoor activities plentiful. I hope everyone has taken advantage of all spring has to offer.

On April 7, we held our first face-to-face board meeting of 2019 at the Red Lion Richland Hanford House in Richland, WA. Approximately 30 members were in attendance in Richland and several more attended using Zoom. This continues to be a successful way to give more WCB members an opportunity to attend and participate in board meetings.

Kim Moberg has been selected as this year’s first-timer to the ACB National Convention in Rochester, NY. Kim is from Port Orchard, and is the president of her local chapter, the Kitsap County Council of the Blind. She is also chair of the Washington Council of the Blind Scholarship Committee. We want to congratulate Kim, and know that her experiences at the national convention will grow her both as a person and as a leader.

WCB has begun working with a web group called accessibility.net as our new website host. They will also help us with the redesign of the WCB website. This is the same group that developed ACBLink, the iPhone and Android app for the American Council of the Blind. They have already begun working on security, a backup process and encryption. They also worked with the WCB Scholarship Committee on the design of a very user-friendly online scholarship application and the ability for applicants to upload all of their supporting documents as a part of the application process.

Just prior to the spring board meeting, WCB held leadership training for the presidents of our local chapters and special-interest affiliates. The training addressed such topics as fundraising, WCB history, the pros and cons of becoming a 501C3 organization, membership recruitment and retention, conflict resolution, and succession planning and rotating leadership. You will read more about the event later in this issue, but I have heard nothing but positive comments. Thank you to the Leadership Committee for doing such a great job.

By the time you read this issue, several of us will be in the final preparations for heading to Rochester, NY, for the 2019 American Council of the Blind annual conference and convention. As has been done previously, ACB will be streaming all the general sessions, the banquet, and a number of the committee and special-interest affiliates’ educational sessions on ACB radio. The program looks like a good one, and there will be much business to be taken up, including the election of new officers. I want to encourage those of you who will be here at home to listen to convention sessions as often as you can. It is very important that we all feel a part of our national organization and the great work it does.

# Letter from the Editors

Dear WCB,

As summer is making its arrival, we bring to you a thought-provoking issue. What may appear at first to be a light and fluffy theme is in reality the exact opposite for most of us. Yes, it is a “Big, Beautiful World” -- that is, until it’s not. What do you do when everything seems to be crashing all around you? How do you make decisions when you’re not sure which way to go next? These are the times we find out what we are truly made of. Without going through the difficult events life throws our way, we may never have the opportunity to experience some of the most amazing gifts that arise out of those ashes. Or maybe we get so caught up in the “what’s the point of it all” that it becomes hard to even see, hear, feel, taste or touch the beauty right in front of us. What are the things that challenge us to find a higher place? These are some of the questions, ideas, and stories you will find in this issue.

For us as editors of the Newsline, making this publication authentic, educational, enlightening, and even a bit controversial at times is what challenges us.

"It's a beautiful world we live in, a sweet romantic place. Beautiful people everywhere, the way they show they care, make me want to say it's a beautiful world, for you, not me." DEVO

Warmest wishes to you all,

Heather Meares, Content Editor, and Reginald George, Technical Editor

# It’s Your Newsline ... 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 of our articles, inspire us with your grandest ideas, and share your honest concerns so that we may continue to evolve our publication into the Newsline you can’t wait to read.

On “Awakening the cacophony” by Heather Meares:

The article you wrote in the last Newsline was very entertaining and, well, just great! Keep up the great work!

Debby Clark

The spring issue of the Newsline hit me as having a lot of diverse content, and also more content of a personal nature. I feel I know several members a little better after hearing about their personal interests and activities.

I would like to see more of the meetings and committee deadlines added to the calendar.

Frank Cuta

The editors reply:

We agree. However, we can only include what we are given.

Good morning,

As a reader of the WCB Newsline, I would like to express my warmest thanks to both Heather and Reggie for making the formatting of the latest edition so wonderful. It’s easy to read, it’s organized, and it’s easily navigable. It’s refreshing to see such positive change. Thank you both again for the difference that you make.

Kayla King

That last Newsline was "Creme de la Crème." Even Alco read  
it way down in Texas, and liked it so well that she took it to her  
local TCB meeting to share.

Carl Jarvis

Now it’s up to you.

Please submit your letters and comments, good or bad, to [theWCBNewsline@gmail.com](mailto:theWCBNewsline@gmail.com). We can take it.

Calling all members:

Please consider recycling your large-print issue by donating where someone else might see it and benefit from it.

We will publish the next WCB Newsline in September and are anxious to read your quality content.

# FEATURES

## The Cheshire Cat Interviews #5 Do Leprechauns Like Peanut Butter?

by Heather Meares

Risk. A concept we are faced with, to some degree, from the day we are born until the day we die. As young children we learn at a very early age that we have choices and that the outcome of every choice we make will affect our life in some way. Some may seem very small and insignificant, and others so overwhelming it's almost impossible to see a clear path to the right choice, if there even is such a thing. And then there are times when doing nothing is actually the choice we make. The risk factors are always there.

Take a simple thing like eating a peanut butter sandwich for the first time. You might find out you really love peanut butter. You may discover that you hate peanut butter. Hopefully, you don’t find out that you are extremely allergic to peanut butter. Without taking the risk of trying it, you will never know the answer.

I have always found it fascinating to observe how different personalities deal with risk. There are the ones who would never try the sandwich in the first place because they are too afraid they might be allergic to peanut butter and would feel much safer and more comfortable not trying it at all. There are those who choose to eat the sandwich just because it is what they were given at the moment, whether they like it or not. To settle and be grateful is often the path of least resistance and avoids potential conflict. Then there are the people who will try every kind of sandwich they can find in order to determine the full range of exactly what their likes and dislikes are. If they happen to find out they have an allergy along the way, they just deal with it when it happens. None of these methods are right or wrong in general. It totally depends on what works best for the individual making the decision.

I decided to interview Alexann Turenmann, a student at Walla Walla Community College. She is a member of the United Blind of Walla Walla and is preparing to transfer to Eastern Washington University in the fall. I was curious about what her thoughts are on the idea of risk-taking and how it has helped or hurt her in her life journey so far.

Heather: “What does the idea of A Big, Beautiful World mean to you and how do you experience it?”

Alexann: “Every day you have your little bubble and you have the choice to stay in that bubble or go outside and experience the world. You never know what you might find. You could find a little Leprechaun under a rock, some hypothetical thing, some pretty cool stuff. You have to adventure and go out of your comfort zone and look for all these fun things. Or you can choose to not do anything. For me, I have chosen to step way out of my comfort zone, sometimes having to ask random people for help. It’s hard, it’s tough, I’ve been rejected, and I have had to get over it and keep moving forward.”

Heather: “What is the biggest risk you have had to take?”

Alexann: “Waking up every day and deciding what I want to do.”

Heather: “What is the best thing that resulted from a risk you have taken, and what is something you’ve missed out on because you chose not to risk it?”

Alexann: “I found my dream school by going and seeing and asking thousands of questions. Also, applying for an apartment to find another way to live and save on expenses and be independent. Now I feel like I can start to build my life and be an adult. As far as the second part of the question, I don’t think there’s ever been a day when I haven’t taken a risk. There have been days when I thought about it, but then I remember that I have been taking chances and making choices for 21 years...why stop now?”

Heather: “Okay, I have one more really important question for you: What is your favorite sandwich?”

Alexann: “Ummm...I really love a banana and peanut butter sandwich.”

## No Bass, All Treble

by Meka White

On May 1, I was in New York at Guiding Eyes for the Blind, getting ready to meet a yellow lab named Treble. I couldn’t help but think that as a singer, this was a perfect name for my new companion.

When the knock came on the door, I took a moment before answering. This would be another start with a new guide dog and I experienced all of the emotions that come with that. Some people may believe that it is an easy process, but attending guide dog school is fraught with emotions and transition, highs and lows, and the steady hope that you'll come out as a better team on the other side. Here I was, ready to embark on this journey yet again, a journey that would include getting up a lot earlier and adjusting my lifestyle so that a dog could easily be a part of it once again. Thoughts of previous dogs and new experiences that could happen flitted through my brain, but I knew I was ready.

I took a breath, invited my instructor into the room, and clipped the leash to the collar of this 58-pound dog that I thought wanted nothing at all to do with me. Step by cautious and often fumbling step, we stopped tiptoeing around one another and began to work together. She had to learn to trust me and I had to figure her out. Truth be told, I'm still learning to do that.

While I will not go into details of training, I would like to give some highlights. Treble was rock solid when we went to Manhattan, a place that I am not entirely familiar with and find slightly overwhelming. There are so many sights, sounds, fragrances, and experiences. I wondered about the stories of each person that walked down the sidewalk, and then began to consider our own tale of the emerging team with the cautious but excited human and the reserved yet eager dog. What a great pair.

Another highlight of training was being able to meet Treble's puppy-raiser, an air traffic controller. How appropriate that the dog tasked with making certain I safely get to where I need to be was raised by a woman who helps pilots traverse the skies and direct them to safe landings.

Now, Treble and I are home and figuring things out. So far, we've traveled by plane, ferry, bus, train, and car. Who knows where else we will travel in our big, beautiful world, but I know that the best part of our story has yet to be written.

For more information and insight regarding our training, go to my blog at [www.bookability.me](http://www.bookability.me).

## A Different Take on Life

by Chris Coulter

It is a cool, calm, quiet morning in May. This morning I don’t need gallons of coffee to drag myself out of the crabby mood I’m often in when I wake up. Something has changed. What could it be? Oh, my goodness! It’s something in me, something in the way I see the world around me.

I have been blind since birth and my family has always been good at encouraging me to live a life of freedom and of knowing my own mind and making my own decisions. But somehow, during my teens and twenties, I found my attitudes about the way things should be hardening into perfectionism. I saw the world as a series of traps just waiting to spring and catch me if I said or did anything wrong. I don’t know exactly where that attitude came from but it definitely made it difficult for me to use my hard-won independence as a blind person. I just knew that everyone was watching me. If I did things right, the watchers might reward me with a great job. But I also saw them watching me and just knew that if I made even one tiny mistake, the people around me would decide that my place would be that of a pretty, little ornament on someone’s top shelf, not serving any purpose. Maybe at least some of you can relate.

Over the course of time, I became so worried and frazzled that I dreaded getting out of bed in the morning. I put on my emotional and spiritual makeup every time I was in public. I was good at playing the part of a woman who had it all together when what was really going on was that my knees were knocking with stage fright.

As I grew older I realized that I could no longer live like that. I needed to stop dragging my heart into places where it would get hurt, because I was taking on attitudes that I was never meant to have. I learned a lot about my own heart and about love of all kinds through marriage and through deepening relationships with my parents, sisters and my closest friends. I also learned from facing the deaths of my parents and the very sudden death of one of my sisters.

Now, let’s come back to this morning. I am feeling the impact of all that learning from teachers who didn’t know they were teaching me, namely, the people I have just mentioned. My eyes have been opened and I see that the world isn’t a place filled with traps that will spring and catch me in their jaws. No, the world isn’t like that. Today, I see a big, beautiful world that I don’t know well but I can’t wait to get to know better.

## Advice to Graduates: “Get out there and start your adventure!”

by Lisa George

It was a beautiful, sunny day for the class of 2019 at their commencement ceremony June 13 on Washington State School for the Blind’s Vancouver campus. The three new graduates are Alex Johnson from Vancouver, WA; Alyssa Loftis from Gresham, OR; and Jorden Raze from Ridgefield, WA.

Photo on left: Everyone is in place on the stage as WSSB Principal Sean McCormick welcomes attendees.

Shown left to right: seniors Jorden Raze, Alyssa Loftis, and Alex Johnson; WSSB Superintendent Scott McCallum; WSSB Board of Trustees Chair Nancy McDaniel; commencement speaker Janet George; WSSB Principal Sean McCormick.

The senior class motto, “With every ending there is a new beginning,” dovetailed perfectly with the commencement address by Janet George. Janet, who is a program specialist at the Department of Services for the Blind, shared how she learned to advocate for herself as a child in Jamaica and her range of emotions as each graduation led her to new opportunities in new places, but away from family and familiar surroundings. She encouraged the graduates to “get out there and start your adventure,” and also to “never say ‘I can’t’ until you’ve tried.”

In addition, the ceremony featured a senior class slideshow presentation of photos throughout the years narrated by each graduate, the Board of Trustees award, a graduation address by the principal, a short speech by senior Jorden Raze, and the presentation of diplomas.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, attendees followed the new graduates across the campus to the courtyard for their decades-old tradition. Graduates had the opportunity to ring the bell for each year spent at WSSB.

Photo on left: New graduate Jorden Raze rings the bell nine times to the delight of all in attendance.

Following a receiving line and punch reception, the activities moved to the Discovery Courtyard for the presentation of the Dr. Roy J. Brothers award, a scholarship award from the Vancouver Lions, a Habitat for Humanity award, and academic awards for the fourth quarter. The event concluded with hamburgers and hotdogs grilled by the WSSB staff.

Congratulations to all the graduates!

Photo on left: Former WSSB Superintendent Dr. Roy J. Brothers gives hints to the crowd to guess who this year’s award recipient is. (Spoiler alert: it’s Lizbeth Meza, wearing pink sneakers and seated on the picnic bench at the far right of the photo.)

# LIFESTYLE

## For the Love of You: Mindful Thoughts, Healthy Recipes, and a Happy Heart

by Hayley Agers

According to bestselling author and researcher Branee Brown, time is a huge non-renewable resource that can’t be replaced. What does this mean? It means time won’t wait. How are you making the most of your life and all that is out there waiting to be explored?

We’ve all said to ourselves, “Oh, I’ll do that tomorrow.” None of us are promised tomorrow. While that may sound a little daunting, it’s not meant to. It is meant to encourage us to make the most of today and take nothing for granted. Whether you’ve been wanting to try a new recreational activity, take a trip on your bucket list, host a dinner party, go back to college to start a new career, begin a new healthy eating lifestyle, or something simpler like reading a new book for inspiration...stop making excuses.

That being said, I do live in a realistic world where funds don’t necessarily allow that fancy and expensive trip, and bills don’t always allow you to quit a job and go to college. Break it down and take baby steps. Maybe what draws you to a European vacation is the idea of learning to bake exotic pastries or drink vintage wines. How about starting smaller: buy a ticket for a summer concert at a local winery to taste some wines made a little closer to home. Maybe you’ve always thought it would be cool to be part of a team that does the Seattle-to-Portland bike ride, but you know your body isn’t quite in the shape it needs to be. Why not start by joining your neighborhood YMCA and asking for some help with a routine to work on this? If your desire is to host that summer party at your house, don’t start off attempting a recipe that honestly only Julia Childs could perfect. Start with simple, clean recipes that are sure to turn out superbly and will have your guests begging for the next invitation.

Below are a few recipes that will hopefully inspire you to try something new. Without a healthy body and a healthy mind, attempting new things becomes more difficult. Starting anything new takes a lot of courage. Try these recipes to help nourish your body. Then take a nice walk outside. Allow your mind to clear and just be present.

Strawberry Vinaigrette

1 cup chopped fresh organic strawberries  
4 Tbsp. raw coconut vinegar or white wine vinegar  
2 Tbsp. water  
2 tsp. raw honey  
2 to 4 tsp. chopped fresh herbs (use more if using basil)   
1 small garlic clove, peeled (optional)   
1/2 tsp. sea salt  
6 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil

Place the strawberries, vinegar, water, honey, herbs, garlic clove, and salt into a blender and blend on medium speed until somewhat smooth (I like to leave it a little chunky). With the motor running on low speed, slowly add the olive oil. If you blend it too much, it will completely emulsify and get really thick the next day. Just blend it enough to combine the oil with the rest of the mixture. Pour into a jar to serve. Cover and refrigerate for up to 10 days, being sure to shake before each use.

This vinaigrette is great served over your favorite salad or simply over a bed of greens, topped with some candied pecans, and a crumble of feta cheese.

Stuffed Peppers

6 large bell peppers, halved

1 lb. ground turkey

1/3 cup chopped onion

1 8-oz can whole kernel corn, drained

1 8-oz can tomato sauce

3/4 cup cooked rice

1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese

2 Tbsp. chili sauce

1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

1/2 tsp. chili powder

3/4 cup breadcrumbs

1 Tbsp. butter, melted

3/4 tsp. salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Prepare peppers and place in baking dish. In a skillet, cook ground turkey and onion until meat is browned. Stir in corn, tomato sauce, rice, cheese, chili powder, Worcestershire sauce, chili sauce, and 3/4 tsp. salt. Stir to combine. Fill pepper halves with meat mixture and set aside. Combine breadcrumbs and melted butter. Sprinkle on top of each pepper half. Bake uncovered about 35 minutes.

“Change can be frightening and the temptation is to often resist it, but change almost always provides opportunities to try new things, to rethink tired processes, and improve the way we work.”

Author: Klaus Schwab

You will enrich your life immeasurably if you approach it with a sense of wonder and discovery and always challenge yourself to try new things.

## Dreams Can and Do Come True!

by Fred Baker

Remember to mark the date of June 29 in red. On that special day, the Tacoma Tide Beep Ball Club is extending an open invitation to all our friends and families. Come join us as we dedicate our very own new playing field. It is beautiful.

Mother Nature has not played nicely with us this year, of all years, with 15 inches of snow and 80-degree heat, but we love her anyway.

Elks Lodge No. 1450 in Puyallup gave us the opportunity to develop a fully grassed Beep Ball playing field on the site of an abandoned tennis court.

They told us, “If you can make that work, then go for it,” and we did. Every contractor we approached to obtain a bid for the work answered in the same way: “You tell me what you need, and we will donate our services and material to make this happen for you.” Who knew that there were so many great men and women just waiting to do something good and help fulfill a dream? May God bless them all. The club will recognize each and every one of them at the dedication celebration, scheduled for noon June 29. It might be warm, so dress accordingly. A game will be played with the Puyallup Police Department. Any visitors who might want to give it a swing, or a run, will have a chance to test your own skills. We will have ballpark food, and popcorn (also, maybe peanuts) and lots of fun.

This community outreach has been planned for more than a year, and as the date moves up on us we are getting more and more excited. The visually-impaired community in Pierce County is so grateful for all the support we have received from everyone involved. We cannot fully enjoy this great blessing without sharing it with all that would like to join us on this big, beautiful day.

Elks Lodge No. 1450 is at 314 27th St. N.E., Puyallup, WA 98372. This site is accessible by Pierce Transit shuttle. Please do not park in the Linden Golf and Country Club parking lot.

If you have any questions, contact us at [tacomatide@beepball.org](mailto:tacomatide@beepball.org) or [fred@beepball.org](mailto:fred@beepball.org), or call 253-381-1269.

## Entrepreneurship – Finding Inspiration for New Products

by Nathan McCann

In this series of articles, I’ll be sharing some ideas for people with visual impairments who are interested in becoming entrepreneurs.

The most important questions involved in starting a business begin with the words “what,” “why,” or “how,” and the toughest of all to answer is, “What should my business sell?”

One of many options is to sell a simple object that makes everyday life that little bit easier. An example would be a desktop cup holder with improved traction to keep your drink from spilling over and a few little compartments for storing sweeteners. The utility of a product like this is obvious when you think about it, but how would anyone come up with an idea like this in the first place?

While market research is a common way to come up with a new product, simply paying attention to what you wish could go more smoothly in your day-to-day life is much easier. This old-fashioned method is a highly effective way to find unfilled niches. They say necessity is the mother of invention, but convenience is a great source of inspiration, as well. People with sensory impairments are uniquely positioned to uncover opportunities that people with full sight or hearing might not think of. A product that helps people with the same disability overcome an obstacle might be very successful, and if it is also able to help people without that disability, it is even more likely to be successful.

You don’t have to go to extraordinary lengths to find a problem for your product to solve and, in fact, the best place to start is with problems so common that you don’t have to go looking for them. If you notice yourself feeling annoyed whenever you try to accomplish a specific task and have ever thought, “I can’t believe nobody sells something to make this easier,” that could be a clue to an unfilled niche. The cup holder I mentioned previously was created by a blind entrepreneur who became annoyed about repeatedly knocking over his drink.

If you think you’ve found a problem that could be solved by some kind of device or object, try to find out if there is already something being sold to help. If it turns out that there’s already something easily and commonly available that solves your problem and at a reasonable price, putting effort into selling the same thing is not going to be effective. On the bright side, you can buy one for yourself to solve that problem. However, if there’s not anything that specifically meets the need you’ve found, perhaps you could be the person to fill that need.

# SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

## Introduction to 3D Printing

by Jennifer Soltis

What is a 3D printer, and how can this technology benefit the blind and low-vision community? In this series of articles, I will talk about the basics of 3D printing, the pros and cons, and some ways that 3D printing has been used to benefit people who are blind or low vision, as well as people with other disabilities.

A 3D printer is a bit like an inkjet printer, but instead of putting ink onto a page, it puts many thin layers of plastic filament onto a movable platform. Printing multiple layers on top of each other allows this device to print in 3D. After the first layer of plastic is laid down, the printer nozzle moves up a small amount and adds another layer. This process repeats until the object is its final height. Then the completed plastic piece can be taken off the platform. All the parts of a 3D printer are controlled by a computer. First, the pattern is processed on a normal computer to produce a set of instructions for the printer. These instructions tell it how to move the printer nozzle to create the desired shapes. For example, if you wanted to print a cylinder, the nozzle would first lay down a circle of plastic. It is easy to adjust the settings to make the circle several rows thick. Then the nozzle goes back and forth in straight lines until the interior of the circle is filled with plastic. Finally, the nozzle moves up to print the next layer, following the same process. When you are setting the instructions, you also tell the printer what temperature to heat the plastic and how fast the nozzle should move.

In most cases, you then save the processed pattern to an SD card or USB stick. This way, you can put the memory card directly into the printer and use your computer for other things. The printer has a very small computer built in. All it can do is read the instructions from the memory card and perform tasks like moving the platform, preheating the printer, and loading and unloading filament. The most common plastic filament is 1.75 mm in diameter and comes on spools weighing up to 1 kg apiece. Those spools are about 20 cm in diameter and 6 cm wide. If you order a smaller amount of filament, it will come on a smaller spool. The filament most commonly recommended for beginners is called PLA, or polylactic acid, but many other plastics and specialty filaments (glow in the dark, wood-filled, etc.) are available.

Two of the great things about 3D printing are its low cost and high level of customization. There are printers that cost as little as $200 and still produce great prints. The main limit to these printers is that they can’t make any objects larger than 120 mm on one side, which is a little smaller than a CD jewel case. Of course, high-end printers for home use cost several thousand dollars, and industrial-sized printers that can work with metal and very large objects cost tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars. But it is pretty inexpensive for the average person to get started. Basic PLA filament costs 2 to 7 cents per gram and is available in a huge range of colors. Again, other materials and specialty filament cost more.

3D printing is also highly customizable. You may have heard of 3D printed ultrasounds being made for blind parents. Talk about a one-of-a-kind product. Designs can be created from scratch or adapted from existing patterns. There are online databases, such as [Thingiverse (www.thingiverse.com)](http://www.thingiverse.com/), that have thousands of models that can be downloaded for free, and some of those can be customized using very simple tools built into their website that do not require you to know anything about coding or computer-aided design. Unfortunately, almost no program used for 3D design or 3D printing is screen-reader compatible. I’ll talk more about this in a future article, but if you don’t want to wait and are interested in coding, check out OpenSCAD, which is screen-reader compatible and can be run entirely from a command line.

There are lots of uses for 3D printing, enough to appeal to everyone. One of the most entertaining things I have printed is a flexible T-rex toy, and one of the most practical ones is a replacement for one of the rings that holds up my shower curtain. Even though the T-rex has nine moving parts, it prints all of the parts, with their moving joints, at one time and already joined together. You can’t do this with traditional manufacturing methods. I also made a replacement latch for my neighbor’s dryer when the original one broke and he had a massive backload of laundry. Sometimes you want a customized product, sometimes you want something that can’t be made with traditional methods, and sometimes you can’t go to the store or wait for the part to arrive in the mail. If that’s the case, 3D printing might be just what you need.

## Consider Be My Eyes, an Aira Alternative

by Reginald George

Let’s start right at the beginning. There is a real digital divide between those who have smart phones and those who will never get comfortable with mobile devices. There is another important divide between the paid and free services that can be accessed from these devices. Whether it’s fair or not, if you want to be as independent as possible, it is important to understand how to get the most freedom out of the options available. While we wait for smart wireless glasses that will work with any product, and cost a reasonable amount, we can still take advantage of services that allow one to make an anonymous video call to a person who will help you perform many useful actions that save effort and time. Things like helping you find weeds in your garden, finding lost items, helping you navigate a public building, describing art works, reading menus, finding the outlets in a hotel room, checking food expiration dates, or reading your computer screen when it goes silent.

Let’s compare options:

Be My Eyes is a not-for-profit organization that was created to connect us with volunteers, through crowd sourcing, who are willing to assist with tasks like this just for the experience of being able to help someone.

The similar for-profit service that has gotten the lion’s share of the publicity in the last year is called Aira. Frank Cuta and I used it about a year ago to navigate our way through security at the Seattle airport without sighted assistance. So much has been written about them that I can’t do it justice in this small space. They employ trained, paid agents. Some people consider this to be a huge advantage because they are not only opening doors to allow blind people to do more types of jobs, they are providing work-from-home positions to many others who are older or have disabilities and wouldn’t feel comfortable working in a traditional work setting. This company is growing fast and altering our perceptions of what is possible for many people. They have also worked hard to arrange with many businesses to offer the service at no cost to the user. All this is to be commended.

Not all of us are in a position to purchase expensive glasses, or willing to sign up for a monthly plan, especially if you are only using the app occasionally for accomplishing simple things around your home. I believe there is room for both approaches.

Be My Eyes has also worked hard to provide free 24/7 technical support through Microsoft’s and Google’s accessibility departments. This is huge. Another company with which they have established a relationship is Herbal Essence, which is now making accessible shampoo bottles. You can access short video stories and transcripts of volunteers and users from a tab right in the app.

When you first launch the app, you are informed that there are over 2 million volunteers available, and around 100,000 blind people on the platform. You must agree to their privacy policy and terms and conditions for using the free service. Once you are signed in and everything has been explained, when you open the app you are prompted to either choose the first available volunteer, or use specialized help. Specialized help contains the companies I mentioned. You must create an account to use the service. They state they will only share your data or video streams with third-party providers that have agreed to remove any personally identifiable information, and not sell the data. In the next sentence, they state they are not able to edit the videos. To me, this indicates that someone could view personal information if you are not careful what content you film in your session. I believe their intentions are good, but users beware. The trade-off in privacy is worth it to me to obtain instant answers with a human touch. They state that most calls are answered within 30 seconds. This was my experience the several times I used the app.

The other day my computer decided to stop speaking. As a computer semi-professional who is supposed to know what he is doing, this embarrassed me greatly. I quickly determined I could not easily recover my sound without sighted help. I decided it would be a wonderful experiment to see if I could get it up and running again just by using my iPhone with Be My Eyes. I spoke with Keith from Illinois, and I was his first completed call as a volunteer.

This young man was very good at the computer, and he would tell me to move the phone in and out, or left and right, until he could read whatever he needed to see for me on the screen. As one hour stretched into two, my hands began to ache. I had the mouse under one hand while holding the phone steady in the other. I had to start switching arms. Sometimes he would not see where the cursor was until I moved the mouse to bring focus to the window we were looking at. I had to put the phone down to type in commands, and then let Keith read the screen to determine if they worked. Someday, smart glasses will be inexpensive and there will be some that will work with this free solution. That way my hands could be free and he could keep his focus on the screen. For the geeks, I am not going to pretend it was easy. However, our call ultimately was successful. I was able to get my sound back by enabling all Windows background services.

There is one product that would have made my experience easier. It allows you to wear your phone around your neck with the camera uncovered, and then you can turn your body as needed and keep your hands free. It is Universal Silicon Adjustable Cell Phone Lanyard for Wearing Your Phone Around Your Neck.

https://harboltcompany.com/Universal-Silicon-Adjustable-Cell-Phone-Lanyard-for-Wearing-Your-Phone-Around-Your-neck-Great-for-Aira-Explorers.html

From a recent Be My Eyes newsletter, here are a few tips to keep your information and identity safe that should work well on any similar service:

1. Protect your personal and financial Information.
2. Report all inappropriate or unsafe behavior.
3. Do not share information about your medication or health conditions.
4. Do not use Be My Eyes for anything that can put you in danger.

Please share your comments with us, and we will include them next time in “It’s Your Newsline.”

## Assistive Technology Can Change Your Life: Learn About How WATAP Can Help

by Naomi Namekata

When someone experiences a loss of function, they may wonder how they are going to be independent again. Assistive Technology (AT) can help with many daily tasks. From a smart speaker to operate a microwave hands-free, to a sock aid to help you pull on your socks if you can’t bend over, there is a wide range of high-tech and low-tech AT devices available.

The Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP) provides free and low-cost Assistive Technology services to all Washingtonians. Its goal is to help individuals make the best decisions possible in purchasing and using AT. Studies show that AT abandonment rates range from 10-85 percent, likely due to the fact the AT purchased was not appropriate for the person’s needs.

**Device Demonstration**

We offer free demonstration of any device in our inventory. Consumers receive impartial demonstrations of device and product features through hands-on guidance by knowledgeable and experienced AT specialists to help accomplish tasks at school, work, home, and in the community. This free service is offered by appointment to individuals with disabilities, their family members, and support providers at our Seattle location. Requests from outside the Seattle area are filled based on staff availability.

**Borrow a Device**

Try any device in our website inventory for a nominal fee. We ship devices to you anywhere in Washington state and include a UPS return shipping label and instructions for returning the package. Software and apps are pre-installed and shipped on laptops or tablets. The loan period is 21 days, with an option for short extensions, depending on device demand.

Create an account on the loan website, browse our inventory and request a loan at <https://myatprogram.org>. If you have any problems navigating the site or questions about our inventory, please contact us for assistance.

**Consultation and Evaluation**

We offer free consultations over the phone or email to answer your AT-related questions and discuss whether you may benefit from any of our services or programs. We are also available to perform in-depth assessments and provide individualized recommendations for school, work and home accommodations. This service is provided through the UW Center for Technology and Disability Studies as a fee-for-service.

We are also available for free presentations and hands-on AT demos at conferences and community events. Please contact us for availability.

**Financial Assistance**

We partner with the Northwest Access Fund, which provides Assistive Technology loans to purchase any device that helps improve the functioning of a person with a disability. Business loans can be used to purchase equipment needed by entrepreneurs and employees with disabilities. They also offer financial coaching to improve credit, build savings, and navigate debt-relief resources, etc. Another service available is the Individual Development Account, or matched savings account. Every dollar a person saved is matched by a dollar.

<http://www.nwaccessfund.org>

Toll Free: 1-877-428-5116

Email: [info@nwaccessfund.org](mailto:info@nwaccessfund.org)

**Device Reuse**

The Evergreen Reuse Coalition is a statewide network enriching lives through effective reuse of assistive devices across Washington. Our reuse partners provide affordable, quality, low-cost options for obtaining needed, durable home medical equipment, hearing aids, and CCTVs that support independence. Each year, member organizations’ combined efforts lead to the redistribution of thousands of pieces of equipment. Visit the website to learn more about reuse activities and partners across Washington state: <http://watap.org/device-reuse>.

**iCanConnect Program**

This program provides free distance-communication technology and training to individuals who have significant combined vision and hearing loss. The program is funded by the Federal Communications Commission and is available in every state, as well as some territories. The program helps individuals access phone calls, video calls, text messaging, email, Internet and social media by providing technology and training to access these forms of communication. Examples of the equipment provided are: amplified phones, iPhones, iPads, laptops, desktops, Braille displays, screen readers and screen magnifiers, signaling devices. Individuals who qualify for the program will receive an in-depth assessment to evaluate equipment and training needs. WATAP has several trainers around the state to provide personalized hands-on training for any equipment provided. If you are interested in learning more, please visit the iCanConnect website or contact WATAP. [www.icanconnect.org](http://www.icanconnect.org)

Learn more about WATAP or contact us at:

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

800-214-8731

[watap@uw.edu](mailto:watap@uw.edu)

## Bits and Pieces

Compiled by Reginald George

This column is presented for your information and enjoyment. Inclusion of information, products, and/or services does not constitute endorsement by the Washington Council of the Blind. If you have items for inclusion, email: TheWCBNewsline@gmail.com and put “Bits and Pieces” in the subject line.

**The Microsoft Accessibility Series of webinars** features monthly presentations on getting the most out of Windows, Office, and other Microsoft products with built-in accessibility. The next one, featuring our own VP Jeff Bishop, is June 19, and a recording will be available if you register in time. Learn more at [aka.ms/AccessibilityWebinars](http://aka.ms/AccessibilityWebinars)

**How did Louis Braille,** a young man living in the 1800s, create his namesake system enabling those who are blind to read? In this edition of Today in Technology, Microsoft President Brad Smith and Communications Director Carol Ann Browne visit Braille's childhood home in Coupvray, France. They explore the circumstances that inspired his invention, before returning to Microsoft’s headquarters in Redmond, where their developers are building on the past to help create a future with more accessible technology. <https://youtu.be/GPC3R5JMNOQ>

**The American Foundation for the Blind** is seeking individuals to participate in a transportation research study, conducted through a telephone survey, entitled “Project VISITOR: Visually Impaired Seniors’ Independent Travel Opportunities and Resources.” To participate, you must be 55 or older and should be blind or low-vision, or experiencing significant vision loss such that you are no longer able to drive. The survey will take about 30 minutes. Call the research team at 888-800-7704 or email us at [visitor@afb.org](mailto:visitor@afb.org) to indicate your interest in the research. Let us know your name, the best phone number to reach you and the best days and times for you to participate in a survey. You can also leave any questions you have about the research.

**The National Library Service** (NLS) is changing its name to more accurately reflect its mission. This will not affect Washington Talking Book and Braille Library’s name or services directly. “Beginning Oct. 1, our name will change officially to “National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled,” though we will continue to be referred to by the abbreviation NLS.”

# HISTORY

## The Missing Link: What Good Are Memories If They Are Not Shared?

by Carl Jarvis

“This news just in. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt is dead!” I stopped in my tracks. Just ahead of me was a man detailing his 1939 Buick, while the news blasted out of his car radio. He looked up at me and sadly shook his head.

It was April 12, 1945, the day before my tenth birthday, and I was doing my paper route, the Seattle Star. Did you know there was a Seattle Star? It went out of business later that same year.

Nearly three quarters of a century has passed since that fateful announcement of the death of our four-term president. What amazing changes, and what a different world we live in today. If you're over 30, take a moment to think of the world you lived in when you were 10 years old, then see how many differences you can think of between then and now. If you're under 30, you might ask your parents what they see as the major changes since they were 10.

But for me, as I said, 1945 was my tenth year. And what a year. Not only did I turn 10, but World War II ended. And best of all, my grandma Ludwig mailed me a home-baked angel food birthday cake from Spokane.

Back in the ‘40s, we were still digging out from under the Great Depression. One big difference between then and now was that very little was cast aside. Folks used everything until it was worn to the nubbin. People were forced to be creative. I remember my dad picked up an old electric motor and a pulley and turned my mother's trundle sewing machine into one powered by electricity. Dad had a desire to create a better life for himself and his family. Along with his full-time job at the Bremerton Shipyard, he spent weekends and evenings operating a radio repair service. And that is another huge change.

Back then, every town and every neighborhood had repair shops. Need new shoes? Instead, have new half soles and heels put on the old pair and get them buffed up. Enterprising fixer-ups opened shops offering everything from lawnmower sharpening to bicycle repair. From automobiles to zippers, most everything imaginable was built so it could be fixed. With a spool of wire and a soldering iron, the handyman was king. I recall a reweaving shop in the University District named Sally Mender. She could make a tear in your best suit coat or a rip in your favorite gown disappear as if it had never happened.

What resourceful people we were back then. Eventually, those times came to be known as “the good old days.” And they were. But they were also some of our worst times. Still, we did our best to forget the hard times, singing songs like “You Gotta Accentuate the Positive, Eliminate the Negative, Latch onto the Affirmative...” or “Happy Days Are Here Again.” We simply focused on the good times and forgot the rest. Every penny counted and got spent at least twice before it left mother's purse. Unlike my sisters, as the only son, I never worried about wearing hand-me-downs, but growing like a weed out of control, I usually ended the school year with what they called high-water pants. They came about three inches above the ankle, and my shirtsleeves were three inches above my wrists. Forget trying to tuck the shirttail into my pants. I felt that I was doing something wrong, growing so fast.

Those days were very different from today. While there were many families living on, or close to the poverty line, Seattle had no homeless camps -- not since Roosevelt's New Deal replaced Hoover's “Trickle Down” policy, and the Hoovervilles with their cardboard shacks were abandoned. That brings up another huge change between then and now. At 9 and 10 years of age, I walked to the bus stop on Queen Anne Hill, paid my nickel fare, asked for a transfer, and rode downtown, five minutes away. I walked the two blocks to the YMCA where, for one dime each week, I took swimming lessons. During much of the year it was dark, especially on my trip home, which I could do on that same nickel transfer. But never during those two years did anyone ever hassle me. Downtown Seattle streets were clean and free of panhandlers.

Well, not quite true. There were the two blind men and one blind couple. All three men played the accordion. One should have tried a different instrument, but one was pretty good. The couple dressed in high style. The man wore a tux along with a top hat, and his wife wore a fox stole, a fine hat, gloves, nylons and heels. She was sighted, but wore dark glasses, and kept a keen eye on his tin cup. When it began to fill, she would tip it over into her purse. He was truly an accomplished musician. Back then, he was called a blind beggar, whereas today he would be a street troubadour.

As I left my swimming lesson, I sometimes had an extra nickel. In the lobby of the YMCA were two vending machines. In one were big fat candy bars, five cents each. Next to it was a new refrigerated machine filled with cold Delicious apples, also for a nickel. As tempted as I was, staring eyeball to eyeball with the candy wrapper, the apple always won out because it lasted me all the way home.

The war came to a close in August, and the months that followed were soon called “modern times” because they were so different from those days just weeks before the war ended. The world depicted by Norman Rockwell, of small town America, was fading away as the boys came marching home. Many were reluctant to return to the farms and villages. They enrolled in colleges under the GI Bill of Rights, moved into the sprawling cities and became members of a growing middle class. It would not be long before we could no longer pack a picnic basket, load up the “family bus” and drive just beyond the city limits to a spot on the Cedar River or along the shores of one of the many lakes north of Seattle, and spend the day swimming and fishing and eating.

As I poke about, trying to dredge up more memories from my tenth year, I wonder to myself what value there is in storing these memories if I don't share them. And before I answer that, there is the question of who cares. The worst scenario could be that I am the only one who cares. But chances are that my children and grandchildren and great grandchildren will care, at least a little bit. For certain, if I don't set down some of my early memories, they will be lost forever when I die.

One thing about being a Rehab Teacher is that we get pretty good at giving advice to others. Maybe we should consider taking some of it to heart. When an elderly client can no longer see to write, and has no computer skills, and is beyond wanting to try learning Braille, we suggest that they might use a small handheld recorder (which we can provide) and correspond by speech. In this way, they can share with their family members memories that will connect generations in the future. This could be a challenge to myself and others, too -- just a few minutes each week. My dad told me more than once that we are the latest link in an unbroken chain that began with the appearance of life. Well, I most certainly don't want to become the missing link!

## History Quiz

By Carl Jarvis

Some of the information we pass along in the form of our History Quiz is familiar to many, but for others it is a new and uplifting glimpse of our beginnings and who we are, and why we need to continue building WCB.

We (the History Committee), want to make the point that organizations that are aware of and celebrate their history are stronger and better directed because of it. Nations teach their children history in the belief that this will help build national pride because the longstanding attitudes toward blindness have been quite negative, And, because we blind people come from all walks of life, and at all ages, we have no proud history of the blind -- just a foggy past. And yet, we have our heroes and our "great moments," our trials and tribulations, and our victories. Building an awareness of the achievements of blind people in past generations gives us encouragement when we are faced with the mounting concerns confronting blind people today.

Our Washington Council of the Blind has established itself as a leader among state chapters in the American Council of the Blind. This leadership is no chance happenstance. While our organizational roots go back to 1935, it did not appear out of a vacuum. Emerging from the depths of our nation's darkest depression, blind men and women in our state rose to the challenge of bettering life for all blind people. Whether members of the state organization or not, WCB owes our existence to the farsighted dreams and efforts of our early pioneers.

**Question:**

Who was Robert Irwin?

**Answer:**

(From an article By Dean and Naomi Tuttle)

Robert Irwin (1883-1951) was born in Iowa. When he was 5 years old, he became blind as a result of an eye inflammation. He attended and graduated from a "School for Defective Youth," which was later renamed the Washington State School for the Blind.

After graduating from the University of Washington, he attended graduate school at Harvard University where he received an M.A. in 1907 and stayed for two more years to concentrate on the education and welfare of the blind, as well as on government and history.

Robert Irwin began his career in 1910 as supervisor of the classes for the blind in the Cleveland Public Schools, where he also organized classes for partially-seeing children in 1913. Assisted by Dr. Goddard in 1914, he was the first to adapt Binet intelligence tests so that they "might be used more appropriately with the blind."

In 1923, Robert Irwin was called to New York to become the Director of Research and Education of the American Foundation for the Blind. During this time, he developed an efficient interpoint Braille printing machine that reduced the bulk and cost of Braille books by about 40 percent.

Another significant contribution was to bring Edison’s idea to fruition by using 33 rpm long-playing records, long before they became commercially accepted, as Talking Books and by promoting a nationwide system of library services to supply them to the blind in the United States.

During Robert Irwin’s tenure as executive director of AFB from 1929 to 1949, he built it into one of the most important agencies in work for the blind.

An early concern of his was the achievement of better international cooperation on behalf of all the blind in the world. To promote this cause, he organized the World Conference on Work for the Blind, which met in New York in 1931. In 1946, Irwin’s interest in international work for the blind resulted in organizing the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, later renamed Helen Keller International.

His legislative efforts led to the program of Aid to the Needy Blind under Title X of the Social Security Act and a bill allowing the blind an additional exemption on their federal Income tax. He was instrumental in the passage of three laws that became a great stimulus to the employment of the blind: the Barden-La Follette Act, the Randolph-Sheppard Act, and the Wagner-O’Day Act. When World War II required special provisions for war-blinded, he wrote and secured the passage of the bill recognized as "a bill of rights for blinded veterans."

Many honors have been bestowed on Robert Irwin: President of AAWB for four years, named Alumnus Summa Laude Dignatus by the University of Washington, made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor by the French Government, and awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Western Reserve University in Cleveland "in recognition of his local, national, and international service in behalf of the blind."

**Question:**

In 1935, what events led up to blind people organizing existing local guilds into a statewide organization?

Can we compare today's economic events with what we know about the mid-1930's?

**Answer and discussion:**

Nothing happens in a vacuum. By 1935, the nation was nearly six years into its worst depression ever. Blind people who had organized guilds in several of Washington's cities prior to 1900, in order to provide mutual support, found local resources becoming scarce. The comparative prosperous times prior to the stock market crash of 1929 came to an end. The blind, many of whom were barely making a living by crafting and selling handmade items, were left with little or no income. Local churches that had provided meals and volunteer assistance to blind people were no longer able to cover the growing needs.

Below is a section from “A Brief History of the Organized Blind Movement in Washington State"

THE WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF THE BLIND

In the 1920s, blind people in this state were feeling that the only way that they could gain recognition of their special needs was to express themselves through groups of blind people speaking together. Groups were formed in places like Spokane, Vancouver, Everett and Seattle. By the middle 1930s, it was apparent that blind people needed a larger voice to advocate for such things as library services, maintenance of the state school for the blind, and a raise in the Public Assistance. In 1935, the Washington State Association of the Blind was formed with three chapters, in Seattle, Spokane and Tacoma. The group grew larger with the addition of new groups in Everett and Yakima.

**For Chapter Discussion:**

How many services are available to blind people today that did not exist prior to the blind organizing at the state level? What services or opportunities should WCB advocate for today?

**Question:**

Do you know the name of the national organization for the blind that was founded in 1921? And what famous blind person is closely associated with it?

**Answer:**

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia: The American Foundation for the Blind, with the support and leadership of M.C. Migel, a philanthropist who was moved to help the large number of veterans blinded in World War I, was formed in 1921 to provide a national clearing house for information about vision loss and a forum for discussion for blindness service professionals. Made official at the convention of the American Association of Workers for the Blind in Vinton, Iowa, AFB's founding was also intended to spur research and represent the needs of people with vision loss in America's government.

AFB's early accomplishments include taking the lead to standardize the English Braille code and establishing the first professional publications program for teachers and administrators of programs for people with vision loss.

In 1926, AFB’s Directory of Services for Blind and Visually Impaired Persons was first published.

In 1932, AFB engineers developed the Talking Book and Talking Book Machine and set up studios for the recording of books. AFB played a major role in persuading the federal government to include talking books in the National Library System for blind people operated by the Library of Congress.

Today, through Talking Book Productions, AFB remains the largest American producer of talking books, with fully digital recording studios in New York City. AFB has made significant forays into the commercial recording arena, as well.

AFB's advocacy efforts have led to the passage of significant legislation for people with vision loss. AFB was instrumental in creating and passing the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and more recently worked on the renewal of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to ensure that it contained provisions to meet the specific needs of children with vision loss.

For many years, AFB designed, manufactured and sold products that were made specifically for people with vision loss, such as Braille writers, magnifiers and audio blood-pressure monitors. AFB also works with technology manufacturers at the design stage to develop products that can be used by everyone — sighted or visually impaired. Especially since the advent of digital technology, AFB believes that working to establish universal design practices among technology producers is the most promising and cost-effective option for making all products accessible in the long term.

AFB is the organization to which Helen Keller devoted her life. Keller worked for AFB for more than 40 years and was instrumental in the foundation of the Talking Books Program, among many others. She remained with AFB until her death in 1968.

Under the terms of her will, Helen Keller selected AFB as the repository of her papers and memorabilia, which AFB maintains in the Helen Keller Archives of its New York City headquarters.

# ADVOCACY & LEGISLATION

## My Thoughts on Advocacy

by Sheila Turner

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I have been giving a lot of thought lately to the concept of advocacy. OK, not just lately. It is always at the top of my mind. The reason I do the work I do is because I believe in teaching people to be independent freethinking advocates for themselves. I want people to know that they are more than just their disabilities. And I want them to help convince others that they are, as well. I have mentioned before that my mother was the biggest advocate I had growing up. Still, though, if you told me as a child that I would grow up to work with blind people, I would have laughed in your face. Even though I had a lot of help and support when I was growing up, it took almost half my life to accept the fact that I am blind. Meeting others like me and being given the chance to help them has made so much difference in my own personal journey. Advocacy begins when we learn to stand up for ourselves. I can remember as a child, almost every time someone was trying to help me with something I would angrily shout, “I’ll do it myself!” Unfortunately, this was usually when we were running late for something and my mom would get more and more irritated with me. She taught me how to try things until I could do them and not just to rely on someone else for help. She also taught me how to ask for help when I needed it, and for me this is what advocacy is all about — when you finally realize how to ask for what you need and turn down anything you do not feel you deserve. This can be hard to do because it is a fine line to walk sometimes. What if the person you ask for help from says no? What if they ignore you or even laugh at you? What if you aren’t in need of the help that is offered to you? All of this is natural. No one is required to help someone if they don’t want to. It is their choice and that is OK. I have found most people will be happy to help someone; they just might not know how. If you are polite and respectful when you do have to ask for help, most people will treat you the same way. Some people won’t. But I always say “thank you” no matter what. If someone is offering to give you assistance that you do not want, it is your right to politely decline their offer. You won’t be rude, just assertive. I don’t know about you, but when someone asks me nicely for something and thanks me for something, it only encourages me to want to give to the next person. It encourages me to pay it forward. Just remember, your attitude demonstrates more about your disability than your words. The more you advocate for yourself and interact with other people, the more confident you will become. And the more independent you will become. Others will learn by your example, and you will change how some people think about those of us with disabilities. If you are interested in learning more about advocacy, I urge you to contact a national consumer group for more information. Visit the websites of The National Federation of the Blind at www.nfb.org or the American Council of the Blind at www.acb.org

# AGENCY UPDATES

## DSB Director’s Update

by Lou Oma Durand

**Looking for leaders**

You may have heard that Julie Brannon will retire from managing the Orientation and Training Center (OTC) this fall. The OTC is DSB’s intensive residential training program that brings people from across the state to Seattle to learn adaptive skills of blindness and to get ready to enter the workforce. The OTC is a showcase for the importance of adaptive skills and the wide capabilities of individuals with vision loss. DSB is currently recruiting for the next OTC manager so that Julie can provide training and pass the baton.

We are also looking for a manager for the Business Enterprise Program, as Bobby McCalden has recently made a career change. This position is responsible for establishing, growing, and guiding food-service operations that are owned and operated by blind or legally-blind individuals across the state.

For more information on these or other DSB job openings, visit <https://dsb.wa.gov/about/careers.shtml>.

**Employment outcomes and the waiting list**

DSB’s Vocational Rehabilitation program is focused on helping our customers reach their career goals. Last year, 157 people gained or retained a wide range of good jobs. Visit <https://dsb.wa.gov/about/dsb-outcomes-and-results.shtml>

Unfortunately, recent changes to our VR funding have made it necessary to place new applicants for adult VR services on a waiting list. However, we are removing people from the list gradually and activating services as resources become available. Those with an active employment plan are still receiving the full range of individualized and comprehensive services. If you, or someone you know, are interested in receiving DSB services, please do not hesitate to apply. We will provide the services you need as soon as possible.

**Independent Living**

The good news is that DSB gained additional state funding from the Legislature for Independent Living this biennium. The challenge is that we are losing a major IL service provider that has served King County and North Puget Sound for many years. We are currently working with other partners to ensure continuity of services. Provider development will be a priority for IL this coming year.

**Youth Programs**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) has allowed us to expand our youth pre-employment programs across the state. Over the past few months, we have conducted workshops on topics including situational awareness and personal safety, college application and financial aid preparation, exploration of professions in the arts, environmental sciences, hospitality and tourism, and more.

Now, we are preparing for the start of our summer programs, including eight weeklong skills workshops across the state, the YES 2 summer internship program, and the Bridge and SWAG programs for college students.

We highly value the support and mentorship WCB members provide our youth during these programs and throughout the year. You are developing the future leaders for our community.

Wishing you all a lovely summer!

## WSSB Update, It is a great time to be a Lion!

by Scott McCallum

A lot has been going on at the Washington State School for the Blind. As we wind down the school year, we look back on a very eventful and positive school year. Before we get too far into looking back, we should acknowledge the Washington Council of the Blind members who contribute to the leadership of WSSB through their service on the WSSB Advisory Board and Ex-Officio Board. Thank you to Joleen Ferguson for your many years of service as the WCB representative on the Ex-Officio Board. WSSB would also like to recognize WCB members Berl Colley, representing Congressional District 10, and Reginald George, representing Congressional District 4, on the WSSB Board of Trustees. Thank you for your service.

WSSB began the school year on an incredibly positive note. We welcomed back all staff in the late summer with a special showing of our new video, “We Love Our School.” The video highlighted the on-campus programs and featured mostly students in our effort to share what makes our on-campus programs and environment truly amazing and positively impactful for our students. You can watch “We Love Our School” by accessing the video through the WSSB website at [www.wssb.gov](http://www.wssb.gov).

Most recently, WSSB welcomed Lt. Gov. Cyrus Habib to our campus for a tour and an opportunity to meet with students. Lt. Gov. Habib spoke to the students about his experiences growing up as an Iranian American and as someone who is blind. Several students from WSSB attended a more formal speech from Lt. Gov. Habib at Clark College the next day.

One week after his visit, WSSB hosted our annual track meet. The 2019 track meet proved to be one of our agency’s largest in recent memory. Including staff and volunteers, over 500 people attended this year’s event. More than 130 students registered for the event, and the day did not disappoint. Throughout the day, the weather hinted at rain and even offered a few sprinkles. However, the day proved to be an awesome day for competition and fun. During the track meet, a film crew from Florida was present to work on a short documentary film about WSSB through the lens of our track meet. The film will be aired on national television as part of the television series, Information Matrix, hosted by Laurence Fishburne. WSSB was also honored by a visit from First Lady Trudi Inslee. She met and engaged with several students, family members, and staff of WSSB. Overall, it was a marvelous day for everyone involved.

Finally, a brief budget update since the 2019 legislative session has officially come to a close. WSSB was granted several funding requests above and beyond our typical adjusted allotment. WSSB will, as a result of recent legislation, be seeking to hire a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. The new social worker will provide counseling to WSSB students needing additional support related to mental health. Additional funding was provided to WSSB to support long overdue salary increases for teachers and specialists, as well as a required migration of data from our onsite data servers to the state cloud-based data servers. WSSB is incredibly grateful for the wonderful support from Gov. Inslee and members of the Legislature.

It has been an amazing year and I have only just touched on some of the positivity surrounding WSSB. Thank you, WCB, for your continued support and collaboration. If any WCB members are ever in Vancouver, please be sure to visit us at WSSB. Be well.

# WCB HAPPENINGS

## WCB Convention Sneak Preview

by Heather Meares

The convention committee has been working on some very exciting program ideas for this year’s WCB convention. Of course, we will not reveal them all. However, here are just a few of the things you can look forward to when you attend, as well as the details of what it will cost, so you can start planning now.

We will be having a variety of break-out sessions to choose from, including topics such as essential oils, technology workshops, amateur radio, and DIY home tips. There will be local authors, a presentation on everything you ever wanted to know about tandem bikes, and another fantastic youth conference. We look forward to seeing you there.

Here are things to know when planning your trip to the convention. We will continue to update you as the dates get closer.

**Convention Details**

Dates of convention: Oct. 24-26, 2019

Location: Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Seattle Airport  
18740 International Blvd.  
Seattle, WA 98188  
206-246-8600

Guest rooms:  
All in the tower.  
$102 per night (single and double occupancy), plus tax  
$10 extra per each third and fourth person.  
Complimentary WiFi  
Self-parking: $10 day and overnight

The following was approved by the WCB board:

Registration Rates  
\*\*\* Early Bird registration (by Sept. 15):  
. $35 - Registration only  
. $70 - Registration plus Friday meals, Saturday meals (breakfast and lunch only), or banquet  
. $115 – Registration plus meal package (up to five meals)

\*\*\* Pre-registration (by Oct. 10)  
. $55 - Registration only  
. $90 - Registration plus Friday meals, Saturday meals (breakfast and lunch only), or banquet  
. $140 – Registration plus meal package (up to five meals)

\*\*\* Registration (Oct. 11 through convention)  
. $75 - Registration only  
. $110 - Registration plus Friday meals, Saturday meals (breakfast and lunch only), or banquet  
. $175 – Registration plus meal package (up to five meals)

\*\*\* Vendors: $100 per table, max two based on availability.

\*\*\* In answer to the problem of non-registered drop-ins for exhibits and the talent show:  
. Exhibits fee: $5 (18 plus)  
. Showcase of Talent fee: $5 (18 plus)  
We’ll use a stamp on the back of the hand at the door.

Raffle and Silent Auction combo fundraiser  
We will make a downloadable list available in the room and send it out on the WCB email list. We’ll provide more help in the room with describing items and bidding.

Hospitality: for registered attendees only; nametags will be required.

Cindy Van Winkle  
360-689-0827  
[Cindy.vw@gmail.com](mailto:Cindy.vw@gmail.com)

## Attention First-timers

by Danette Dixon

The First-timer Committee is now accepting letters of interest to win a scholarship to attend the state convention.

Where: DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Seattle Airport

DATE: Oct. 24-26, the night of the banquet

Requirements:

1. A member since April 24 (6 months prior to convention)

2. Member in good standing (no outstanding WCB loans)

3. Available to attend the entire convention -- Thursday night board meeting through the banquet.

What WCB will do:

1. Pay for your room, double occupancy

2. Pay for registration

3. Pay for banquet

What you need to do:

-- Send the First-timer Committee a letter of interest, at least 100 words in length. What have you done at the local chapter level, state and national level, your community level? What would you expect to get out of attending and where do you find yourself fitting into WCB?

-- After the convention, write an article for Newsline about your experience.

-- Include your first and last name, complete mailing address, email and phone number.

Timeline:

To be considered, your letter of interest must be received by email by midnight Aug. 10. Send to [Danettedixon63@gmail.com](mailto:Danettedixon63@gmail.com).

Winners will be selected and informed before the end of August.

## WCB Awards – Nominations Needed!

by Danette Dixon

The WCB Awards Committee wants you to put on your thinking caps and consider nominating the perfect person for the following awards to be given out at the 2019 WCB Convention:

**A new award:**

Teacher of the Year Award, for any teacher who instructs either children or adults who are blind or visually impaired

**Internal Awards:**

Award for Outstanding Service to WCB

Chapter of the Year Award, given to a chapter that has demonstrated actions of outstanding community outreach

Outstanding Advocacy Award

**Awards given outside WCB:**

Employer of the Year Award, going to an employer who has employed blind/visually-impaired persons along with allowing for access and upward mobility, which isn’t in the rehab/blindness field.

Business of the Year Award, given to a business that has provided outstanding customer service to blind/visually-impaired persons.

One-World Award, given to a person or entity who has assisted in minimizing the impact of blindness in some way.

--Your submission for award considerations shall include your reasoning for the nominee deserving the award, must not exceed 350 words, and please include contact information for both you and the recipient.

--Your submission must be received by email by midnight of Aug. 31 to be considered as an award nomination. Please send your nomination to [Danettedixon63@gmail.com](mailto:Danettedixon63@gmail.com).

If you have any questions, please contact me. The committee and I just know this will be the largest nominee pool ever. So, please put those amazing minds and thinking caps together and send in your nominations.

Danette Dixon

WCB Awards Committee Chair

(425)238-4560

[Danettedixon63@gmail.com](mailto:Danettedixon63@gmail.com)

## WCB Families: Growing Fast, Having Fun, and Moving Forward

by Hayley Agers

The WCB Families Committee continues to be very busy, reaching out around the state. Lisa George recently attended the PNWAER Conference in Ellensburg. While working a table, she was able to inform attendees about who we are, and collect their information so we can reach out to them in the future. On April 14, we hosted our very first Beeping Easter Egg Hunt. We were joined by the Everett Central Lions Club and we ended up having many more families than we anticipated. In all, we had 12 families participate, totaling 28 children.

Colette Arvidson and I have also been doing a little traveling around our neck of the woods, participating in events hosted by the Department of Services for the Blind. In March, we attended a Pizza and Pups event in Bremerton, and in April an informational evening in Lynnwood. Both events serve as a way to connect with and be a resource to local families. The events are attended by DSB, WCB Families, TVI's, O&M instructors, and VR counselors. We are meeting some fantastic families and looking forward to getting to know them better. On May 16, Colette Arvidson and Hayley Eddick went to WSSB to attend its annual track and field event. Lori Allison and Cindy Glidden are continually keeping us posted on events in their local areas, as well as being instrumental in getting out the word, via brochures and other methods, on who we are. The committee is also busy planning for the next Youth Conference to be held in conjunction with the WCB Convention Oct. 25 and 26. Thank you to all for your contributions to this committee. If you would like to know more about how you can help us spread the word or would like to inform us of upcoming events in your area, please contact me, Hayley Agers, at [haydav8@comcast.net](mailto:haydav8@comcast.net)

## Membership Memo Number 4

by Julie Brannon

On April 13, the United Blind of Seattle chapter completed a very successful annual Friend Day membership recruitment event. This has been taking place for UBS for approximately 20 years, with some years being more successful than others. Because this happened so recently, I realized it might be beneficial to share this event in case you were interested in trying this membership recruitment tool.

Below is a short outline of activities to prepare for an event like this that I hope might assist:

Responsibilities for Friend Day

**I. Place location:** (Accomplished five weeks before event)

A. Contact places in the area that are centrally located to the city, if possible no charge, with room for at least 30-40 people.

B. Give them two suggested dates, and then give them an alternative date.

C. Find out if they have kitchen facilities. Also, find out what responsibilities would be yours, such as unlocking and closing the building, clean-up, etc.

**II. Public relations:** (Begin five weeks before event and have completed two weeks before event)

A. Calling and emailing organizations in your area involved with blind/visually-impaired persons about the event.

B. Calling or emailing some previous attendees who haven't continued with membership.

C. Calling or emailing chapter members closer to the actual Friend Day to remind and encourage them to invite at least one person.

D. Develop flyer about the event in electronic form.

E. Locate agencies that service blind people in your area to see if they will be willing to send out the electronic invitation.

**III. Event Program:**

A. Invite persons to speak about various levels of the organization.

B. Choose a facilitator.

c. Choose a person to greet guests as they come in the door.

D. Choose people to sit at a table outside the door, taking names and phone numbers of guests (if they are interested in sharing).

E. Develop a follow-up committee to contact guests to get their perceptions of the day and encourage them to come back.

**IV. Treats:** (Have decided what you will purchase and from where at least two weeks ahead of time. Have transportation arranged that day to pick them up and deliver them.)

A. Decide what treats will be served.

B. Choose someone to purchase them, along with tablecloths, table decorations, paper products and utensils.

C. If you want, develop a little take-home item at each place setting. (One year, we had little rocks from the dollar store).

D. Who will be responsible for setting up, serving and arranging food and drink?

**V. If you choose, have print/audio materials:** (Accomplished three weeks before event).

A. What print/audio items do you want for guests to take home to help educate potential members about our organization? These items might include membership packets, Newslines, WCB pamphlets, or WCB Braille alphabet cards.

Each chapter can decide how large and elaborate you want this event to be, but it truly is a good way to provide a membership focus to potential new members.

## Leadership Weekend 2019

by Heather Meares

This year, the leadership training weekend was focused on giving our chapter presidents some new perspectives, skills and knowledge about WCB and our membership. Andy Arvidson facilitated a great weekend full of many different sessions, led by our Leadership Committee members.

Frank Cuta taught us all about our state history as an organization, how we came to be who we are today, and the controversial, difficult path we took to get here. He also taught a session on constitutions, policies, procedures, and oh so many more exciting...well, maybe not so exciting, but extremely informative and tedious things we should all know about as presidents of our chapters.

Julie Brannon educated us on membership retention and recruitment, giving us many useful ideas and concepts to incorporate into our local chapters. She also discussed the different styles of conflict resolution techniques and when to best use each one.

Kathy Wilson inspired us with some ingenious fundraising ideas, and Jenny Anderson gave us all the details of 501c3 organizations.

We also had a wonderful session with our WCB President, Denise Colley, full of lots of questions, answers, and troubleshooting on specific topics that were brought up along the way.

The experience of spending time getting to know other presidents from all over the state and sharing with each other our strengths and struggles as leaders in our organization gave us all a sense of support and helped us realize we are truly not alone. The leadership banquet ended with each person breaking a board with our hand, which was a bit scary at first, but left us with a sense of empowerment and accomplishment.

On Sunday, all the presidents attended the WCB board meeting and were all active participants in the process. It was the perfect culmination of what hopefully will be the beginning of a new way of looking at how we mentor our membership and foster the growth of our organization as a whole.

## WCB Board Lights the Way as They Glow in the Dark

by Frank Cuta

On April 7, 30 members attended the WCB spring board meeting, which was held in Richland, the Atomic City. We did not actually radiate many answers, but we generated a lot of good questions.

The meeting started with a serious discussion of several financial issues. Although our investment portfolio is holding steady, our income from our principle fundraising source continues to decline. We continue to whittle away at the expense side of the budget but it’s getting more difficult to find things to trim. Some current financial concerns are a convention loan that is in default after two years and several chapters that are having trouble submitting dues on time. We discussed alternatives to our expensive toll-free phone system and the need to identify a new treasurer for the organization in preparation for Deb leaving that position at the end of this year. Another financial concern is our current lack of a process for maintaining ongoing communications with our donors.

The board decided to decrease the amount allocated for equipment loans from $40,000 to $20,000. This fund is not getting much use, and if demand increases we can easily put the money back. The board also authorized travel stipends of $300 for members who qualify and are attending the ACB convention in Rochester.

An ad hoc committee is being created to address the apparent trend of decreasing financial and training support for members and chapters.

Denise reported on her trip to the presidents meeting and shared her belief that the legislative seminar in Washington, D.C., is just as important as the national convention. She suggests that we might reconsider the structure of our first-timer program to alternate support between the two meetings. In addition, she wants us to identify local contacts in the chapters that can ensure that our national legislative initiatives are personally carried to the associated congressional offices in each of the 10 districts around the state. It was also suggested that we provide more legislative training for members.

After losing our second website developer and a recent switch to a new hosting service, our website is slowly recovering. Security, backup and encryption concerns have been addressed, and the new scholarship form is now live. A contact person, probably the president or membership chair, should be identified in each chapter to send updated meeting and contact information for the website to Jeff Bishop.

All committees reported progress, including convention, families, Newsline, advocacy, crisis, membership, history and scholarship.

Denise is looking for members willing to serve on the finance committee, and on a committee to update the affiliate president's handbook.

We discussed the best way to raise the funds necessary to see that the names of Sue Ammeter and Marlaina Lieberg are added to the ACB "Angel's Wall." We decided to cover the cost with personal donations, but then submit them in the name of WCB.

## HATS OFF

compiled by Reginald George

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

**Chris Higley** (Member at large - Vancouver) is graduating from Clark College in June with a degree as a Media Assistant

**Joleen and Cliff Ferguson,** UBWW, on their 45th wedding anniversary

**Jeff and Debby Clark,** Spokane, on 50 years of marriage

**David and Hayley Agers** on the occasion of their 25th wedding anniversary

**Diana Turley** on her new female, yellow lab guide dog, Garnet, from Guide Dogs of America

**Meka White** on her new female, yellow lab guide dog, Treble, from Guiding Eyes for the Blind

**Wendy David** on her new female, black lab, guide dog, Okra, from Guiding Eyes for the Blind

**Happy birthday to the UBTC members** who have recently reached the 70-year-old milestone: Sherry Dubbin, Frank Cuta, Karyn Vandecar, Bob Squires and Janice Squires

**Jessamyn Landby** on graduating from Olympic College in Bremerton with a degree in Accounting Technology

**Jim and Holly Turri’s son Michael and his wife Kari** on adopting three foster children

**New appointees to the board of Washington Assistive Technology Access Program** for this year include WCB members Heather Meares and Reginald George

**Cindy Van Winkle** on her new position with American Council of the Blind as their Membership Services Coordinator starting June 10

## A WCB Beacon Has Left Us Remembering the Person and Work of Peggy Shoel

by Julie Brannon

It was in the early ‘90s when a former WCB president, Sharon Keeran, encouraged me to visit the local Seattle chapter of the Washington Council of the Blind, the United Blind of Seattle. The president at that time was Peggy Shoel. She ran the meeting with passion, while making sure everything ran in a structured form. I remember thinking, “This lady truly knows a lot about the organization and has a passion I’d like to someday develop.”

In the coming years, Peggy took me under her wing, helping me understand all aspects of the council, the organization she loved with a passion. I eventually found myself as president of UBS, and often thought of Peggy’s mentoring, educating and friendship as I maneuvered this new role.

Along with holding several positions for WCB, Peggy took great pride in a role she held for many years, ending in 2007, and that was as the editor of WCB’s publication, the Newsline. She did an excellent job. Things were done in a timely fashion and new ideas were brought forth to be added to the publication, helping it become the award-winning publication it is.

Peggy shared with me many times her gratitude for learning about the council. Peggy had lost vision due to type 2 diabetes. She had a long career at the Seattle Veterans Hospital in a medical records position, and shared that joining the council had brought substance and meaning to her life after the realization she was losing her vision.

Peggy was born on July 13, 1933, and passed away on March 23, 2019.

Peggy, thank you for your part in making WCB what it is today. Many of us benefited greatly from your insight, strength, passion and mentoring.

# AROUND THE STATE

## 

## Capitol City Council of the Blind by Alan Bentson

The Capitol City Council of the Blind has found a new meeting place at the Bird’s Nest Cafe in downtown Olympia.

We mourn the loss of longtime friend and chapter member Pat Bryant who passed away March 3.

We miss our treasurer, Berl Colley, who is staying with is family in Eastern Washington.

We welcome the return of our president, Gloria Walling, who has returned from a long trip to New Mexico. Vice President Zandra Brown has been doing a good job presiding at meetings in Gloria’s absence. We congratulate Zandra on her quick recovery from her recent surgery.

Our support group is starting a book club. They will be having their third meeting at Zandra’s house June 1.

At our most recent meeting, our guest speaker was Bryan Johnson, discussing how to get supplemental care if you receive Medicare and Medicaid.

## Skagit and Island Counties Council of the Blind by Andy Arvidson

On April 19, we went to the Tulip Town Festival to visit the wonderful fragrances of the flowers. Skagit Transit helped arrange the travel with their Paratransit System and included a trip to La Conner for lunch. Jenny Anderson and friends from Snohomish County Council of the Blind joined in the fun. We are going to try and have outings with other chapters in the future to make blind people more visible in the community.

In May, along with my Lyons Club, we celebrated White Cane Day over Memorial Day Weekend.

On June 8, we had our monthly meeting at the Padilla Bay estuary, which included bird watching. The bird watching is put on by the Audubon Society. They have done this before for our group and it is wonderful.

Hope you all have energy and vitality in your chapters to get out and do some fantastic things this summer.

## South Kitsap Council of the Blind|

## by Kim Moberg

WOW, it is time for another Newsline article already! The South Kitsap Council of the Blind has been busy having fundraising events and planning spring and summer chapter” events.

On May 4 we had a fundraising luncheon at Outback Steakhouse. We gathered door prizes and sold tickets. We didn’t have a big crowd but one of the most memorable and cool things was that we had so many door prizes that every person that attended this event went home with a door prize. It was fun and we raised a little money for our chapter as well.

Every so often we as a group go to lunch after our meeting together. In April we went to a place called “That One Place”. It was a cool little hamburger and sandwich joint. The decor was all about cars, traffic lights and road signs. It was fun and I think everyone had a great time.

Our summer picnic is coming up at the end of July. It is always a fun event. The chapter provides hamburgers, hotdogs and bottled water. Chapter members bring side items and desert to share with everyone. Anybody is welcome to come join us. We would love to have you.

One of our members, Jessamyn Landby, our treasurer will be graduating from Olympic College in Bremerton Washington with a degree in accounting technology. It has been a tough road for her because of so many technology issues along the way. The college and publishers have been less than cooperative along the way. But Jess has been quite the trooper and is ready to graduate in June in spite of all the issues. I for one am so proud of Jessamyn! She will be quite an asset to whoever hires her in their company.

Kim Moberg will be heading off to Rochester New York for the ACB convention. She was chosen as the WCB First-Timer to the ACB convention. This is a wonderful and exciting opportunity. So stay tuned for a report about the convention when I return.

## Snohomish County Council of the Blind by Jenny Anderson

Our chapter is very busy, both past and present tense. Marilee Richards is now our vice president. She is also our care person. We are excited to announce that we have four folks who will be applying for the first-time award for the convention. We have had the pleasure of having Kevin Daniels from South King County to come and be our guest at a meeting, and I attended theirs.

In the meantime, SKC and SCCB will do a one-day retreat together, and Pierce County Association of the Blind and SCCB will share a picnic. Kevin has also offered to bring us to spotlight in the June 23 beet ball game. This summer, SCCB will be in two parades, on July 4 for downtown Edmonds and July 20 for Snohomish KLA-Hhya-Days. We have special permission to sell See’s Candies during the July 20 parade in Snohomish, and we also have special permission to sell them at the city of Edmonds information booth at its annual fireworks display. This never happens. So as everyone can see, SCCB is really busy, and we like it that way. Don’t we gang!

## United Blind of the Tri-Cities Janice Squires, UBTC Member

The word of the day for the United Blind of the Tri-Cities is “outreach.” President Sherry Dubbin is constantly working hard, along with the UBTC members, to reach out to those with vision impairments in our community. We participated in the Senior Expo Fair, in which 600 to 700 people stopped at our booth.  Frank and Janice are on a speaking tour, talking with approximately 30 of the participants of the Senior Companion program. Also, we demonstrated Braille and visual aids such as iPhones and Victor Reader Streams to a sixth-grade technology class. Of course, Frank showed an array of his unique and unusual gizmos and gadgets that totally fascinated the kids. We also sold candy at our local Fred Meyer store and made so many good contacts. Thanks to Pat Johnson, we all now have newly designed UBTC T-shirts to wear when we are out and about. We are going to join in the Edith Bishel Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired first-ever “Community Blindfold Walk.” The UBTC members will be staffing a booth with brochures and membership information and will also be demonstrating beep baseball.

Rose Shenk is our new sunshine lady, and she is doing such a great job contacting people to let them know we are thinking of them, and sending cards to cheer them up. Karyn Vandecar is scheduling our monthly lunches, eating such a fun variety of foods from Chinese, to American BBQ, to Southern chicken shack delights. The revived book group is actually discussing the books that we have read. Our books included “Last Train to Memphis” and “Sold on a Monday.” On March 31, we attended the described play, "Night Watch," and thanks to our new board member Jennifer Soltis for being our new narrator. The last play of the season will be "Girls of the Garden Club."

Thanks to the WCB for bringing the leadership conference to the Tri-Cities this year. Our president said it was so informative and she learned so much. Happy summer!

## United Blind of Walla Walla by Heather Meares

Greetings from the beautiful wine country of Walla Walla. It feels like spring arrived and is disappearing with the wind right in front of our noses. The fragrance of the lilacs is perfuming the air right now as a reminder that summer is almost here. Grapes are beginning to grow on the manicured vines all over the valley, and we in the United Blind of Walla Walla are doing some pruning and manicuring of our own to foster our growth as a chapter. We have recommitted to dotting the i’s and crossing the t’s with our budget and constitution processes, and have been working together to divide responsibilities to keep us organized and focused on our future and the things we want to accomplish.

We had a guest speaker talk about transportation issues, creating awareness for us all. It was a very informative presentation and we were able to discuss our concerns and the best ways to advocate regarding these issues.

We recently added a Facebook page and partnered with Delta Gamma at Whitman College to create a new, fresh logo and motto. It was a wonderful collaboration. The Delta Gamma’s did a great job of implementing our vision. We came up with the motto “New Directions,” which complimented the logo featuring four hands in a compass leading all directions. They also hosted a basketball tournament fundraiser with us, which has become an annual event.

We selected Joleen Ferguson as our membership representative and she has been working with her team to train them on using their phones to make calls and do more outreach as we grow.

Over the summer months, we will be strengthening our partnerships with the VA and the Walla Walla Valley Disability Network. Some of us were able to attend a town hall meeting with the GCDE and some wonderful ideas came out of that meeting. It was great to see so many members of our community show up and voice their experiences and concerns in a positive, safe environment.

All these things reinforce the concept that none of us should have to deal with things on our own. We need to support each other in our chapters, community partnerships, and state organization. Even the grapevines need support systems to grow on and handle the heavy loads of the delicious fruits of the harvest.

## United Blind of Whatcom County by Holly Turri

What a fun and interesting time we UBWC Bellinghammers have been enjoying. Wish you all could come wa-a-a-a-ay up here to join in.

Our book club met to discuss the title “Push Me,” which was about a guy in a wheelchair who takes a trek through Spain with his best friend. The next title we are delving into is “When Books Went to War.”

Once again, we are selling coupon books. These are awesome because they contain all businesses in Whatcom County. It’s always great to buy and support locally.

We’re working with the Whatcom Transportation Authority to test its audio and large-print stop announcements. Also, we’re testing a special card for them.

In April, we all joined together for a musical Friday. Everyone brought an instrument or a snack. During March, we had lunch together at the rusty wagon, which is a local cowboy-themed eatery.

During the summer, we’re visiting a Braille touch garden, an apple orchard, performing in the Lynden farmer’s day parade, and having our picnic. Have a blessed season.

## Yakima Valley Council of the Blind by Sally Mayo

Hello from the sunny side of the state. The Yakima Council of the Blind has been busy. In April, we had our social meeting at Good Samaritan Nursing Home. It was a bring-your-own-burger visit with our longtime member Bill Smedley. We had a grand time listening to the music of the Beach Boys. We as a group decided to do this once a quarter since Bill is not able to attend our meetings at the Cornerstone Community Room. On May 1, Lisa and Reggie George and Sally Mayo presented at the Yakima Lion’s Club board meeting. We thanked them for all they have done in supporting us over the years. Lisa read a letter written by Ann, our oldest member. Sally shared all the things we were able to do with their generous support -- for example, purchasing of equipment for members and blind students in our local area, and all the years of bowling that allowed us to have enough members to charter our club. Reggie played a recording he made during the April social meeting, with Bill Smedley and the group expressing their gratitude.

On May 8, Reg George, along with Don and Sally Mayo attended the Yakima Transit’s Citizen Advisory Board meeting. We were able to give input to the things that are changing for transit. Reg volunteered to test the accessibility of the new transit app, which should be up and running by August.

Our May social meeting was in the Tri-cities, attending a play that is being audio described.

Our business meetings are the second Saturday of the month, and the social meeting is generally the last Saturday of the month. We meet for bowling at Nob Hill Lanes every Friday at 11 AM unless the bowling alley has other things scheduled.

Lisa George and Sally Mayo, in partnership with the Vision for Independence Center, are establishing a Low Vision Support Group at the Harmon Senior Center at 10 AM monthly on the second Tuesday.

Once again, YVCB will host our Hospitality Jail Fundraiser at convention. Like last year, we will donate half of the total raised to WCB. Our intent is for everyone to have fun, so there have been refinements to our process that we hope will work for all. Jail will be in session all three nights. “Get out of jail free” cards will be available for the low cost of $5. There is now a limit on frequency and length of incarceration. Anyone who does not want to participate in the fundraiser just has to give their name to the sheriff, who will keep a list of names. This year, we challenge all chapters to help us raise the most money for WCB. If anyone joins us, WCB wins.

# 2019 WCB Calendar of Deadlines and Events

Monthly Tech Chat with Reg George and Frank Cuta, 3rd Sunday 7PM

**JUNE**

19: ACB Board of Publications Candidates Forum using Zoom, 6 PM Pacific time

23: Washington Caucus using Zoom, 2 PM

**JULY**

5: Opening Session of the ACB Conference and Convention, Rochester, NY.

11: Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC) public meeting Vancouver 9 AM-4 PM

21: Mariners game

28: Deadline for submission of articles for the fall 2019 issue of the WCB Newsline

**AUGUST**

3 WCV board meeting 9 AM Pacific time, using Zoom.

10: Deadline for applying for a first-timers scholarship to the WCB state convention

31: Deadline for submitting WCB awards nominations to the WCB Awards Committee

**SEPTEMBER**

5: WCB president’s call, 7 PM

10: Convention pre-registration deadline, Technology Forum call, 7 PM

13: State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Department of Services for the Blind public meeting, 9 AM-3 PM, Seattle

15: Early bird convention registration deadline

**OCTOBER**

3: Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC)  
Public Meeting 9 AM-4 PM

3: WCB president’s call, 7 PM

8: Technology Forum call, 7 PM

public meeting 9 AM-4 PM Wenatchee

19: Washington Talking Book and Braille Library Public Meeting Seattle 9 AM-12 PM

24-26: WCB Annual Convention, DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Seattle Airport

**NOVEMBER**

7: WCB president’s call, 7 PM

12: Technology Forum call, 7 PM

**DECEMBER**

5: WCB president’s call, 7 PM

6: State Rehabilitation Council public meeting, 9AM-3PM Seattle DSB

10: Technology Forum call, 7 PM

14: State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) public meeting 9AM-3PM