



WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF THE BLIND

Opportunity, Equality, Independence
Founded 1935

WCB NEWSLINE Spring 2020 Edition “The Art of Being Socially Significant”

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Calling All Members

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

Please send all submissions by May 31.

Digital cartridges must also be returned to Audiobook Ministries by this date for re-use in the following issue.

Publication Guidelines

- All submissions will be edited for brevity and clarity.
- We reserve the right to publish submitted content, including author contact information, unless you explicitly tell us not to.
- All opinions expressed are those of the individuals, not Washington Council of the Blind or the WCB Newsline.
- We do not accept anonymous letters.
- Articles can be up to 1,000 words.
- Chapter updates can be up to 350 words.
- Please submit in Microsoft Word format when possible.
- Send all submissions to:

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Table of Contents

“The Art of Being Socially Significant”

President’s Message by Julie Brannon.....	5
Letter from the Editors	6
It’s Your Newline, Just Say It!	7
Announcing your Readers’ Choice nominee for the Winter 2020 issue	8
..... FEATURES	9
Cheshire Cat Interviews #8 Merrily, Merrily by Heather Meares	9
Dance, Soar, and Make a Great Roar by Christmas Frahm.....	12
Hotel Saguaro: A Poem by Christmas Frahm.....	13
Building Relationships by Andy Arvidson	14
The Grease That Makes the World Go Around by Holly Turri.....	17
In a Good Place by Chris Coulter	18
..... LIFESTYLE	21
Book Chat – All This and World War II by Alan Bentson	21
Notes from a Nomad by Alco Canfield.....	23
Life-long Learning Soliloquy by Lynne Koral	25
Attending Physically Active Events While Blind by Bob Cavanaugh	27
Growing in Community by Chris Coulter.....	28
Immune Boosting Recipes by Hayley Agers.....	29
Why I am giving up elected office and joining the Jesuits by Cyrus Habib, Lieutenant Governor.....	32
..... ADVOCACY AND LEGISLATION	35
Chronicle of a Happy Warrior #3: Are You Socially Relevant? by Mark Adreon	35
Pictures without Access to a Thousand Words by Hayley Edick.....	37
Council Charges Capitol Hill by Frank Cuta	38
Making Connections on Capitol Hill by Julie Brannon	41
..... HISTORY	45
History Quiz by Carl Jarvis	45
..... ENTREPRENEURSHIP, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY	47
Selling Knowledge as a Service by Nathan McCann.....	47
Technically Speaking by Frank Cuta	48
Three Little Words: A Poem by Alco Canfield.....	50

..... BRAIN FOOD	51
Noteworthy Blogs: Grieving on the Dance Floor with a Total Stranger by Robert Kingett	51
Podtastic Casts: From Looking to Taken with Blind Love by Reginald George	54
“See,” the New Apple TV Series by Frank Cuta	57
Bits and Pieces compiled by Denise Colley	58
..... AGENCY UPDATE	61
We Know You Know: There have been a lot of changes at DSB by Michael MacKillop	61
..... WCB HAPPENINGS	64
It's the Little Things by Hayley Agers	64
Scholarship, Scholarship, Scholarship by Kim Moberg.....	68
Around the State	70
Hats Off compiled by Rhonda Nelson	79
2020 Calendar of Deadlines and Events.....	80

*****President's Message**
by Julie Brannon

As I look back at the first months of my presidency, I marvel at how much I've learned about the people, processes and practical workings of Washington Council of the Blind (WCB). I am more aware than ever of the importance of being a continual student who is willing to learn and grow to the best of one's ability.

The primary work of our organization happens within our committees. If you didn't choose to join one yet, or you haven't indicated where your interests lie, feel free to either connect with the chair or vice chair or myself. Committees are looking for people with passion and a willingness to work. Chairs and vice chairs will be meeting bimonthly to discuss roles and goals and learn about various aspects of leadership. All committees have agreed to develop actionable goals, which will assist in tracking and achieving their accomplishments.

The mid-year American Council of the Blind board meeting and legislative seminar was held the last week in February, with a record six WCB members in attendance. Please check out the Newline article in this issue entitled, "Making Connections on the Hill."

We have an exciting leadership training emerging, entitled Emerging Leaders Summit. It will be held Aug. 7-9 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in SeaTac. It's a thrill to see a record number of applicants apply, which means our members are hungry for training.

We are hitting the road running, with continual work on our established goals and looking ahead at where we're going in 2020.

Julie Brannon: jbrannon0612@gmail.com

*****Letter from the Editors**

It is with a sense of great irony we bring you this issue, “The Art of Being Socially Significant,” in a time when we are all forced to practice “The Science of Being Socially Distant.” Although at first, this may seem like poor timing, it, in fact, has never been more relevant. Now more than ever, we are all feeling the need for social interaction, and are finding new and creative ways to do so while still staying safe. Smart phones are evolving into, well, actual phones, as we reach out and talk to people we have been thinking of. Common interest groups are being formed online to fill the gap of in-person gatherings. The once-convenient platforms and apps, such as Zoom, WhatsApp, Marco Polo, and so many others, are now essential and even crucial for our business and personal communication. Physical exercise, yoga, meditation, and entertainment venues are now offered as live video feeds so that we can still practice the things that keep us centered amidst the chaos.

One thing we know about humanity is that we are strongest and most resilient in times of crisis. We help each other out in previously unimaginable ways and we, as persons with a variety of disabilities, in particular, are extremely adaptable. It is how we have always survived.

In this issue, you will find a diverse compilation of stories about the ways we go forth into the world and make our presence known. Our uniqueness is what gives us the power to stand up, change our own lives, and have a true impact on the world around us. It is our hope that as you read each one of these articles, that you will be able to put yourself in the author’s place, even for just a brief moment, and feel their experiences from their perspective, especially if they are completely different than your own. You also might be so moved to reach out to the author with the contact information we are now providing at the end of each article, to start a dialogue with them regarding their writing. Maybe social distancing will be the key to becoming one with each other.

Sending you all virtual hugs and well wishes,
Heather Meares and Reginald George, Editors
theWCBNewsline@gmail.com

*****It's Your Newslines, Just Say It!**

We are pleased to present your very own section to express 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 Newslines you can't wait to read. Opinions expressed are those of the individuals, and not those of WCB.

From Frank Cuta:

In the Winter 2020 issue, I liked best the historical articles and the Podtastic feature.

It was a treat having so many different voices contributing to this issue's theme, and to the coverage of the convention. The convention is such a huge part of what we do that it should never be left up to just one individual to cover what 200 people take away from it.

In addition, the inclusion of the In Memoriam list is something that is way overdue. It does not fit well in the general convention article or the minutes, but having it here at the end of the winter issue of the Newslines is absolutely the perfect place for it. I am afraid that for most years the convention recording is the only record we have of the In Memoriam presentation.

From Carl Jarvis:

Newslines, bigger and better than ever! Wow! Reginald George and Heather Meares. What a team!

The Newslines actually began when our older half was still the Washington State Association of the Blind in 1972, but in all its 48 years, the Newslines has never looked better. Thanks to the Dynamic Duo, Reg and Heather.

*****Announcing your Readers' Choice nominee for the
Winter 2020 issue**

Congratulations to **Julie Harlow** for her article, "My First Aira Experience." She had the most votes for that issue, and her article will move forward to be placed in nomination for our Readers' Choice Award. The winner will be announced at our Washington Council of the Blind convention in October.

Please remember to vote for your favorite article in this issue by the deadline for our next issue, which is May 31.

Send all votes, feedback, and submissions to theWCBNewsline@gmail.com.

*****FEATURES

***Cheshire Cat Interviews #8

Merrily, Merrily

by Heather Meares

Once in a while, as we plunder through our daily trivialities, we stumble upon someone unexpected. It might be a name we don't recognize from one of the groups we are involved with, a person we run into frequently around town but have never actually met, or a comment we come across randomly in social media that intrigues us to the point of saying to yourself, "I really need to meet this person and learn more about them."

This is how it was when I read postings from Beth Greenberg on the Washington Council of the Blind (WCB) email list. I thought the topics she wrote about or forwarded were always thought-provoking, and felt she was someone we all might want to know better. When I posed several questions to everyone regarding the theme of this issue, "The art of being socially significant," she submitted answers to all of them.

So, without further ado, here is a glimpse into who Beth is, and her musings on the issues of interacting as a visually impaired person in a social world. I asked her first to tell us about herself and then shared my questions, followed by her answers.

Beth: My first name is Merribeth, but I go by Beth because most people say or spell the Merri wrong. I am originally from Massachusetts. Washington is the fifth state I have lived in. I have lived in Vancouver for 15 years and worked as a hotel operator at the Hilton Vancouver Washington for 14 years. I have one biological sister, Chris Higley. We both have the same eye condition, a hereditary one, congenital aniridia (no iris). Chris's daughter is the first girl in five generations not to have this eye condition. Chris and I have been a part of WCB since 2011.

Heather: How do you compete with others at a job fair or mingling situation when you don't have visual cues other people do?

Beth: When I applied for my current job 14 years ago, job fairs were not really a thing. Mingling-wise, I can be a little shy and don't usually approach people. When they approach me, I talk with them.

Heather: What are some challenges you have faced dating and what were some methods you used to do so successfully?

Beth: I didn't like the apps or dating websites. I have found, for myself, meeting people in everyday life is good enough. I met my ex-husband in Denver when he was attending the Colorado Center for the Blind. My current husband and I met on the city bus. In everyday situations when I meet people, sometimes it is more obvious I am visually impaired/blind, and other times it eventually works its way out in a conversation.

Heather: What experiences have you had going to unfamiliar places by yourself to try and meet new people?

Beth: I don't know if I have tried going somewhere to meet new people. If I am interested in doing something, I will find a way to do it. For instance, a lot of people were upset about a bike project affecting our neighborhood. The city decided to create an advisory committee about the project, so I applied. A lot of the neighbors were concerned about street parking and I wanted to make sure transportation accessibility was addressed. I was accepted to be on the committee. There were bike riders, other neighborhood members, and one other disabled person on the committee. It was definitely a new experience for me. Although, the meetings were at city hall, next door to the hotel where I work, so I did not have to learn a new route to a new place.

Heather: When something awkward or embarrassing happens in a social environment, how do you handle it?

Beth: The last time I remember being embarrassed was more for being fat than for my blindness. I went to a KISS concert with some friends at the Clark County Amphitheater. The seated areas are a plastic, stadium-type seat to withstand the outside weather. The seat I sat in broke and they had to bring me a plastic folding chair to sit in. I was on

the fence about having weight-loss surgery, and called the clinic the next day to schedule an appointment. That was 7 years ago.

Heather: How does social media affect your life in a negative or positive way?

Beth: I don't do many social media sites. I stick with Facebook. I like that I am able to keep in contact with people from different times in my life, and family that is all over the country. I enjoy celebrating the victories and trying to comfort in the sorrows. As far as the negatives for myself, I can get too into pics – sharing pictures, memes, and GIFS that others have shared. I am considering stepping down on social media for Lent.

Heather: Are perceptions we have about each other reality or based on false judgments and how do we seek truth and learn from those who are different than us?

Beth: Interesting question. I feel like as a kid you learn things from the adults around you and how they perceive or treat others. As you become an adult and learn about things on your own and talk with others outside the core group of people you were raised around, you develop your own perspectives, views and opinions. I was raised in National Federation of the Blind and told negative things about American Council of the Blind. As a young adult, I witnessed some unpleasant situations in NFB. I have always been curious about ACB. Then, in my 30s, WCB was coming to my town and my hotel. I wanted to learn more. Now, in my 40s, I feel like both organizations are great. They both have their strengths and weaknesses, just like people. I try to find the positives in people, as well as in life. I try to find a compromise wherever possible.

Heather: How do you deal with family members or friends who are too helpful or not helpful enough, and where exactly do you draw this line?

Beth: I grew up with blind parents. One thing I learned is to ask when you need help. Being a partial, I still get asked by my mom and stepdad

to read things. Even as a person with partial sight, people are not quite sure if I need help. I think every situation is different and you can choose how to respond to each accordingly. If someone tries to do something I don't need assistance with, my approach is, "Thank you, auntie, for your help but I can do that myself."

I know each one of us can relate to at least one of these answers and appreciate the braveness and honesty with which Beth shared herself with us.

Heather Meares: hdmeares@gmail.com

*****Dance, Soar, and Make a Great Roar**
by Christmas Frahm

I can't catch a person by the eye, but I can get their attention with my voice. I can snag a friend by saying a brave "hello" to the air and seeing what happens by sticking my neck out, strong and proud, saying my piece out loud. First, I have to be confident in me, in my own skin, comfortable with the me within. Dancing to my own beat, swaying deep and strong, stepping to my own dance, I sway along. Then to others I can step out and say, "Hey, my name is Christmas, how is your day?"

Christmas is my chosen name, not the name I was given at birth. This is one of many things I have chosen for myself since moving to Washington State, the Evergreen State. I have met multitudinous people here, more than in Kansas where I moved from, and people here seem more inclusive and outgoing. But, then again, it's partly me because I'm making the effort to stick myself out there – going to concerts, dancing my own free-style strange way, singing solos, doing poetry, being uncompromisingly myself.

Yet, taking a true interest in others and what makes them who they are is an equally important effort. What are their interests and hobbies? Where do we intersect and what makes us different?

All these things are important and make us part of the stew, which makes us part of the human race. We are all connected, this I do believe. We all breathe the same air, drink the same water, and need food to sustain life. With these general commonalities in mind, we can't be too different, person to person, but we seem to erect differences betwixt us instead of building one unity through community.

How can we do this? Observe the keystone cactus of the saguaro in the desert. The Gila woodpecker makes its home in the spiny branches and raises its young in the upper reaches of the tree. Vacating the excavated hole for wood rats, lizards, and other animals to inhabit, they get shelter and the cactus gets disease control. The woodpecker finds another home as other animals and birds move into its once-used residence.

If humans could implement that kind of communal mutuality in their own lives instead of stubborn individuality, what a world of difference it would make. For example, all the disabled communities could get together and fight for disabled rights as a whole, not just rights for people living with blindness vs. rights of people experiencing deafness vs. rights of those living with physical disabilities. We could use our collective voices to make a great roar. Then we'd be too large for anyone to ignore.

As a friend told me once, "just be," which I found to be good advice, indeed.

Christmas Frahm: moonsinger1980@gmail.com

*****Hotel Saguaro
A Poem by Christmas Frahm**

No vacancy reads the sign,
or so it might for once.

The Gila woodpecker carves its boot-sized bore into the spiny trunk.

It makes a home for itself,
and so many others living there.

To raise her young, she patiently sits on her egg,
then teaches her young ones how to fly,
and says goodbye to the old cacti.

But after she leaves, the hole has just begun
its journey for warblers, cactus wrens, lizards that scuttle and scurry,
wood rats that skitter and hurry.

Pygmy owls and bluebirds that flap and fly,
and other animals that flit and flutter.
All float and scutter into the hole,
to eat insects that would gut the cacti,
and would disease the tree.

Making mutuality for the tree protects the creatures,
from the hostile heat and brutal cold,
and the animals keep the tree alive.

Its ecumenical harmony abounding,
surrounding this keystone tree,
keeping everything in balance and in unity.

Christmas Frahm: moonsinger1980@gmail.com

*****Building Relationships**
by Andy Arvidson

Remembering back to my early life concerning this issue's theme –
“The Art of Being Socially Significant” – really makes me think about
where I am today. A friend says, “You can't get here from there without
help.” My life has taken many turns, and being in relationships did not

come easy for me. I was raised by two drunks who thought that it was okay to have affairs with the neighbors and throw parties to express their – might I say – lack of knowledge about how to create a family.

I was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes shortly after my eighth birthday and I remember my dad saying, while I was in the hospital trying not to die, “He will never be a real man.” Wow, what love he had for me.

As I grew up and tried to create relationships with women, it was very difficult. I got married the first time at 19 and tried to start a family with the typical dream of a two-bedroom house and white picket fence. Boy, that did not work out well. From childhood to adulthood, I had no idea how to love and care for others. And this ended my marriage. Also, I thought that having a wife and a girlfriend at the same time was normal; I found out later that is not what the idea of a relationship is meant to be.

Let’s jump to wife number three. This marriage is when I started losing my sight due to diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma. I had also been diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy and was told I was disabled and did not have to work again. I was only 30. This was a disaster in my life. Not knowing what to do, I signed up for Social Security disability as directed by my doctor. A few months later, I was denied benefits and my bank account was running almost dry. My wife said that if the check didn’t come in the mailbox after I finally received my acceptance letter, she was going to leave me. The check was in the mail somewhere, but not in the box at our house, so she left.

I not only had this blindness and neuropathy going on, but I was also a raving drunk just like my parents had been. “You can’t get here from there.” This was August 1983. In May 1984, I started a recovery program. In September 1984, I went to Seattle to Department of Services for the Blind and attended the Orientation and Training Center. With these two rehab choices in my life, I started making some changes.

Although relationships were still challenging for me, I continued to try. Two more failed marriages, and I could not figure out how to do this relationship thing. A friend of mine helped me determine what I was doing wrong in my previous relationships, which was a real eye-opener for me.

As the fifth marriage was ending, I met Colette and we became friends. She was in a relationship, and I was ending a marriage. She was unaware that my relationship was coming to closure. The word “friend” was a new concept for me. I did not know how to be friends with females without benefits. I had tried this and so far it had not been successful.

Looking at my wrongs in relationships showed me that I didn’t consider my marriages as real family building. I began to see that my marriages were more search and rescue – although I’m not sure who was rescuing who. Boy, that was a shocking surprise for me.

Even after becoming friends with Colette and with my marriage in the past, I was afraid to try to start something new for fear of failure, or maybe even fear of success. A man who helped me see my wrongs encouraged me to take a leap of faith with kindness and carefulness. So, forward I went.

After several months, Colette ended her relationship and we started seeing each other more often. We fell in love, with trepidation at first. We decided that we would put our relationship ahead of everything, and not forget that we come first. We built our relationship on the premise of service to others, and loving each other no matter what – which does not allow any discrepancies in our marriage. We are true to each other 100 percent of the time.

Because I am writing this around Valentine’s Day, I have to say Colette is my one true love. As we approach our 29th year of marriage, I hope we can do 29 more. Thank you, WCB, for helping us grow closer together through service to others, and allowing us to be honest with all of you.

Andy Arvidson: arvidsonandy@gmail.com

*****The Grease That Makes the World Go Around**

by Holly Turri

The two social strategies that have been my besties through life are listening and laughter. Each of us need to feel that we are important and appreciated. These two tools level my playing field.

People-watching is my favorite activity. When I used to go out to dinner with my folks, who were often disagreeing and using the silent treatment, I had plenty of opportunity to listen to conversations three tables away. It fascinated me how different families interacted and what they considered great conversational material. To this day, I still do this.

When I meet a new person, I love to get them to talk. Learning about their families, jobs, goals, and other things really makes my day. My husband is always amazed by what I've gleaned.

When people can tell you care about what they are saying, it makes their day. So many times, we only hear enough to get the last word. Asking questions of sincere interest can make anyone feel important.

Laughter is the best ice-breaker. I don't mean corny jokes. Have you ever noticed how many men have a huge stock of these? If someone brings up a subject, usually I can tell a short, funny incident relating to their comments. Most often, they are at my expense.

At Thanksgiving, we went to my friend Carol's for a festive holiday dinner. She made real mashed potatoes from volunteer ones growing in her garden. Now remember, I'm a city girl. I wanted to know how much she paid for her vegetables. She explained that these were ones that just grew up where they had not been planted. She picked them and we ate them and, man oh man, were they delicious. I asked her if I could see one sometime. I figured it had to look different than the kind I purchase at Fred Meyer.

The next week, before Sunday School, she walked in and plunked this thing on the table. It was a raw potato with all the Mr. Potato Head pieces stuck on it. She even made a Mrs. Potato Head, as well. She

looked at me and said in a serious voice, “Now, here are your volunteer potatoes.” I’ve never laughed so hard.

Although I’ve been attending that church for over six years, people have been nice, but after I had my hysteric and they figured out why, there’s a whole different relationship between me and the ladies. It’s wonderful.

I love potatoes and Carol, too.

Holly Turri: holly.turri9@gmail.com

*****In a Good Place**

by Chris Coulter

In April of this year I will be 70 years old. During my life, I have worked out my relationships with many people. Some are blind, some are sighted, some are people who were children when I knew them and others were very old. Many of them liked me and, as a little girl, I thought the world was a place where everyone saw me as beautiful, gifted, and talented beyond anyone else. I don't quite know where that self-concept came from. I'm going to show you how I arrived at the bedrock of truth that is my life on the threshold of 70.

Let's start at the beginning. Like many babies who were born prematurely in the 1950s, I learned early that I was blind. I lived in a situation where there were no barriers between blind and sighted children. I knew I wasn't an athlete or any good at coloring inside the lines, but I was taught that there were sighted kids who couldn't do those things either. In my mind, I was a beautiful little girl, and I lived in a world that loved me and accepted me wholeheartedly. None of the blind kids in my circle of friends were actually spoiled, and that included me. We were good kids and we loved our parents. My parents loved me and, as far as I knew, everyone around me was happy. I still think most of them were happy, at least most of the time.

When I was 12 years old, my family moved to the big city of Seattle, where even the blind kids seemed loud and tough. They seemed much older and more knowing than I was. It was a shock to my system, and I didn't handle it well. At the end of 7th grade, I made the choice to go to Washington State School for the Blind. WSSB was more like the good place I had known in my childhood. Sure, like every other school, it had rules that none of us followed all that well, but deep in my soul I knew that some of those rules were landmarks that kept me from spending my life daydreaming or crashing around in the wild world of adolescence.

By my graduation from WSSB at the age of 18, I had learned many things. I was beginning to find my voice as a singer and beginning to have a good connection with my sisters. I was learning that somewhere in myself I had a compassionate heart, and I wanted to let it be my guide. But this was the beginning of drugs, sex and rock and roll, as well as student demonstrations, and even louder, tougher and more profane life among people my age than I'd known in our classrooms when I was 12. I hated it, and gradually I began to retreat into a quiet place of boundaries, books and beauty.

At 24, I thought I had a vocation as a nun. The Anglican Church does have a few monasteries and convents. I began the process of doing what I needed to do to go into the convent. At the point where the Sisters needed to deliberate and pray about my vocation, they went into prayer and discussion and the answer to my life's choice was "no." They assured me that it wasn't a cut and dried case of my blindness being the sole issue on which their decision hung.

I sang and played piano professionally after that. As usual in the world of music, when the work was good, it was very, very good, and when it was bad, it was horrid. My employment history was just as checkered as the resumes and histories of most blind people. I didn't worry about it, though, because most of the sighted musicians I knew were in the same boat. I didn't see blindness as a deterrent in my life and when a sighted person occasionally felt uneasy about my blindness, I could put that person at ease.

The time came in my 40s when musical styles were changing, and the way musicians presented themselves went through a big change. I sang and played in piano bars. The piano bar was being replaced by karaoke and loud metal music. I enjoyed karaoke when I went out with my friends, but I knew no one did it professionally. Something had to change.

At the age of 51, I got married. I had known Jon as a good friend for a couple of years and we came to the realization that we truly loved each other. Jon sees me in ways that only my birth family ever could see me, but they usually kept quiet about what they saw, believing I would have to come to those insights myself. That was a wise choice on their part, but I seemed to be blind in more ways than one.

Today I am very aware of myself and my truth. I am no longer hidden behind a smooth, but fake quietness. I know now that my sense of humor is quirky. My take on everything from politics to blindness issues doesn't always go along the channels of propriety. Sometimes I watch the world in stillness before I speak out. I still can't stand the violence and division in our country.

I don't present myself as a carefully created woman of calm, but I am at peace. I have made peace with blindness, with the fact that there is nothing conventional about me and that in some small way I will be of some help in the repair of our fractured country.

Chris Coulter: forestelf2@comcast.net

[Editor's Note: You can check out Chris singing and playing "Up a Lazy River" at the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/ulxq3th>]

*****LIFESTYLE

***Book Chat – All This and World War II

by Alan Bentson

Readers' Advisor, Washington Talking Book and Braille Library

Seventy-five years since it ended and we're still fighting World War II. If a person wanted to, they could spend the rest of their lives reading about WW II and still not even begin to run out of books. I look at the brand-new books as they come in at my desk, and literally everyday there's something new about the war. Many recent bestsellers such as "All the Light We Cannot See," "The Nightingale," "Unbroken," "Tattooist of Auschwitz," and "Beneath a Scarlet Sky" use WW II as a backdrop. Harry Turtledove and Taylor Anderson have even used WW II as a setting for a space opera.

There are lots of reasons for this, I know, but one certainly is that WW II is a nifty plot device. It's like regency England, or the Old West, or Arthur's Camelot – the author only needs a few words to place the reader into a detailed background that she already knows something about.

I was reading a young adult novel recently called "Summer of My German Soldier" (DB36625 and available from Bookshare.org and Audible.com). In young adult fiction, concision is important, as teen readers want to get to the story right away. In a few deft sentences in the first chapter of this story, Bette Greene places us on the home front in Jenkinsville, AR, where a contingent of German POWs is arriving. Like many first novels, this one is very autobiographical. The author grew up in a small town in Arkansas where she was a member of the only Jewish family in a very fundamentalist Christian environment. The family ran a store, as does the family in this book, but I bet they were nicer people than are depicted here.

This book was published in 1973, in the era of the "problem" novel in young adult fiction (think Judy Blume, S.E. Hinton or Paul Zindel), so

naturally all the characters have problems. There is Patty Bergen, our narrator, who is a bit of a brat, over-talkative and prone to lying whether there's any need for it or not (think Huck Finn). There is the mean-spirited, ill-tempered father and the only character in the story to use bad language – that's how you know he's the villain. There's the mother, too preoccupied with the business and her personal life to pay much parental attention to Patty. There is the ever-so-cute six-year-old sister who everyone seems to prefer to Patty. Her principal ally is Ruth, the African-American cook and housekeeper, who does a lot of substitute mothering.

Feeling isolated and relatively friendless, Patty has a crush on the German soldier who comes into the family store. It's a little jarring that she does what she knows is the dangerous thing by hiding the escaped soldier in the family garage when she only knows him from this one encounter. It is also jarring when he hangs around this small town where everybody knows everybody's business. I would think he would have hightailed it right away. Ruth finds out about the secret, of course, and during these few days the three of them have several dialogues about relative cultural and religious values. The themes of race, class, family dysfunction and child abuse seem more like things people were worried about in the 1970s. During the war, I think most people were struggling to keep food on the table, gas in the car and hoping their loved ones would return.

I may be making this novel sound worse than it is. The author does a good job of showing us, rather than telling us, what life was like in the 1940s, and the plot moves along with many exciting incidents. By the end of the story, all I was worried about was what was going to happen to Patty, and that's entirely how it should be. I'm glad there's a sequel, "Morning is a Long Time Coming" (DB43661).

This book was narrated by Carol Jordan Stewart, who did a good job of reading with warmth and vivacity without overdramatizing. There is a 1978 TV movie of this book starring Kristy McNichol that I'd love to see, with audio description, of course.

My next book was one I got from audible.com, called “The Fort” by Aric Davis, a suspense novel set in 1987. Most of the major characters are young adults and their families. It was a marvel of concision, only a few pages longer than “Summer of My German Soldier.” There are life lessons, as in all good young adult fiction, but they were implicit rather than explicit.

This book probably had a little too much violence and bad language (again used by the villain) to make most young adult book publishers feel comfortable. I really think that teens of any gender, even reluctant readers, would like this book, and teachers would find it just as useful for class discussion as “Summer of My German Soldier.” But nowhere on any website did it say this book had young adult appeal. Go figure.

Categories are tricky things, we have a WW II book that really isn’t about WW II, and a young adult novel that doesn’t admit it is one. I urge you not to think too much about categories when you begin a new book. Just open your mind and heart and take it as it comes.

Happy reading!

Alan Bentson: a.bentson@comcast.net

*****Notes from a Nomad**

by Alco Canfield

I love change – not the process, but the result. I enjoy new people and surroundings.

Back in October 2016, I was thinking about this as I flew from Walla Walla to move to San Antonio. After going on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, I decided I wanted to experience a different community and a different culture.

San Antonio, though part of the United States, has a culture all its own. Steeped in centuries of history and connected to the military, its ethnically diverse population gives it quite a cosmopolitan air.

Now, once again, I hear the beckoning of the Northwest and, as every nomad does, I answer. San Antonio is no longer where I need to be. I will miss its sunny, warm winters and its thunderstorms. I will remember the birds here. There are so many different varieties. I will never forget the 99-year-old lady I visit next door and the other friends here. I will miss being a lector in the most accepting and welcoming parish I have ever had the privilege of attending.

When I have only a few days left in my space, I will sit with it and honor it. It is a form of closure for me. I am writing this on a Saturday evening. On Monday, my life as I know it here will end as my belongings disappear and my space becomes a husk because nothing remains.

So, you may ask, why don't you quit moving? To me, moving is a form of death and resurrection. Seeing everything re-emerge in a new place is always exciting. I lighten my load with every move and am forced to evaluate my possessions. "When did I use THAT last? What IS that?" I am sure many of you have had these conversations.

I might have stayed in San Antonio, but the difficulty with transportation and my allergies have made my relocation to the Northwest a good option. I think that after my move back to Spokane, my next move will be to the cemetery.

I look forward to seeing you all when I am finally clothed and in my right mind.

Onward.

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*****Life-long Learning Soliloquy**

by Lynne Koral

In the fall of 2019, I was in a chorus for a humanistic Jewish congregation my dad belonged to in Sarasota, FL. I had just attended Candle in the Windows' retreat, which I had looked forward to for some time. This is a non-profit organization of blind and visually impaired people who provide a retreat to share ideas and skills to help ourselves and the larger community. It was here I became inspired to write. I was told I should write a book, which I am still considering, but have been distracted by other endeavors.

I was waiting for transportation one day, when the chorus director was talking to me about my book and said, "Don't you want to get that ultimate degree?" She meant that I should enroll in the same Ph.D. program she was enrolled in online. She had attained two master's degrees, which I also had done. I thought it was a foolhardy idea. I checked with my dad, and started to make inquiries about Walden University, which is an online university and very accessible for people with disabilities.

I first spoke to an enrollment advisor and she told me about the program. Though I had two master's degrees, only the Public Administration degree would fit their 10-year rule and that meant I could be given credit for three courses that aligned with their 10-course program. I liked that it was on the quarter system. I had to get my transcript and document my disability.

One of the unique things about Walden is that there are four residencies. I went to one such residency for a four-day visit in Baltimore, MD. But first, I attended a women's music workshop with our chorus, along with a local women's singing group. We performed two songs for the assembled group. Then, I went to Tampa to catch the plane to Baltimore for my first of four residencies.

Another great thing Walden does is they have a sighted guide to assist with getting around the very big convention centers. The woman who helped me was fabulous. We had to check in and only had two hours to do so. It took a long time to find out where I had to go for Residency 1, for the Public Policy and Administration cohort. They had cohort meetings when we were together in our small group. There were larger meetings where they spoke about what the dissertation would be and the rest of our schooling, as well. We met with student success advisors, and the library also had tips and tricks that we learned about, to keep track of articles that might help us in our dissertation.

We learned about formatting documents and proper citation and other style issues. The faculty discussed how to not get stressed out, and how to take care of ourselves. They said we needed a lot of support from family and people around us. I also spoke to someone about my possible research topic, and he said I needed to pare it down quite a bit. I have been working on that since then.

I took six months off because moving to Washington has been extremely stressful. There are things I cannot find that were sent here. I have learned that it does not matter much what we have, but who we are as human beings. I love Walden University because it is all about social change. During the residency, one person said that I was “seasoned” and another called me “professor.”

I love to continually learn and challenge my brain. Walden University has a great disability services component. They are able to purloin the required books I need from Amazon and make sure they are accessible in either .rtf or .pdf formats. If I have trouble with a library search, I can always get assistance. I am in my sixth course of 11 and then comes the dissertation. After my second master’s, a professor in Alaska encouraged me to go for a Ph.D. However, I did not want to at that time. Now, I am really enjoying this process.

I encourage any of you to keep learning, either informally or formally. We are never too old to become informed and learn about others. It requires us to have an open mind and think outside of the box.

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*****Attending Physically Active Events While Blind**
by Bob Cavanaugh

I like to attend events that feature some sort of physical activity. They come with their own set of challenges, but when everything works properly, it can result in a wonderful experience. A perfect example of a successful event for me was the winter retreat for the young adult group at my church. The leaders were faced with an unexpected venue change, but I made it clear when we got there that I wanted to do everything available. The only reason that didn't happen was because, well, there simply wasn't time. That being said, the leaders made sure I was able to participate in all the activities, and many lasting memories were made. This is typical of my experience with social events.

Another successful experience was just before Christmas. I wanted to go swimming at a local pool, and I finally made it happen with some friends. This pool has a lazy river, a hot tub, and two water slides. At one point, one of my friends asked me what I wanted to do, adding that I was in charge. This made me feel really good.

While a successful event makes me feel quite good, one that does not go well makes me feel equally bad. When plans fail to materialize, it's usually because of transportation issues.

People often have safety concerns about my participation, but in general things work out fine. For instance, I decided to attend a river-tubing event I discovered through Meetup.com. When I arrived, they requested that I buy a lifejacket. This made me feel singled out, but it's also basic water safety, and I felt perfectly comfortable wearing it. Once

the day was over, I considered it a success. I still have that lifejacket and have worn it to several events.

Until one rainy January afternoon about three years ago, I didn't realize how many activities I enjoy that require some level of sighted assistance. When I first joined Meetup, I was hoping it would make things easier. I really wanted to visit my favorite trampoline place more often, but wanted someone to join me. I posted it on Meetup, and got a couple of responses. I also asked a friend to go but she backed out at the last minute. I went by myself, and when I arrived, despite all my planning, no one was there. Fortunately, the place was deserted, so the staff was able to help me out. This is when I realized just how many of the activities I enjoy actually do require some level of assistance. That being said, the person I choose to go to an event with is a friend first, and an assistant as needed. With a few small exceptions, that has worked quite well.

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*****Growing in Community**

by Chris Coulter

I joined Washington Council of the Blind (WCB) in June 1999. That was just a smidge past 20 years ago. During that time, my thoughts on how our organization could be a strong community have evolved as my own role within the organization has changed. Certainly, COVID-19 has shifted my beliefs.

In the beginning, I saw the organization as mostly that of being a huge support group, which there are elements of, but that's all I thought we were because that was what I was looking for.

When several of my bowling buddies, along with Jon and I, began building a new chapter of our own, I saw it as a place for teaching and educating each other.

Now that my role in WCB is no longer that of a teacher, but as a friend and listener, I realize that talking through and listening to the opinions, questions, answers, tips, and tricks of our members is a huge part of our story.

It is my hope that each of us will consider the many talents we can bring to our roles as advocates, educators, WCB family members, wise counselors, and good friends. I don't yet know what my role is in the day-to-day life of the season of COVID-19. I'm feeling my way in this new regimen, just as all of you are, but I will keep exploring and listening to everyone's concerns. I'd love to do what I can, even if the best I can do at any given moment is to bring a smile or a giggle into our rather strange coronavirus days.

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*****Immune Boosting Recipes** by Hayley Agers

With time feeling so uncertain right now, and many of us wondering how to fill the time while stores close, events are cancelled and many are fearful of becoming isolated, let's find ways to enjoy this time and to take care of ourselves and the relationships that are important to us.

Some things our family will be doing are: getting the garden ready for spring planting, trying out new recipes and cooking them together, picking up a new book or two and spending some time reading, and taking long walks or hikes together.

All of these things need to start and end with healthy, easy food. A healthy breakfast, packed with protein will help get us off the couch and ready for the day. A dinner that will cook on the stovetop while we enjoy a movie or book will provide a variety of healthy super foods to build our immune systems and sustain us.

I recently saw these recipes being made on the Today Show and couldn't wait to try them. They are very easy and ones I hope you will enjoy as much as we have the last few days.

2-minute Egg Omelette

Ingredients:

- 1 egg
- 2 egg whites
- 1 heaping Tbsp. finely diced red onion
- 1 heaping Tbsp. bell peppers, red, yellow and orange
- ¼ cup chopped baby spinach leaves
- 2 Tbsp. crumbled feta cheese (or grated cheddar)
- Pinch of kosher salt
- Pinch ground black pepper, or more to taste

Preparation:

Mist the inside of a 12 ounce ceramic mug with olive oil spray. Add the egg and egg whites and whisk together with a fork. Mix in the rest of the ingredients (red onion, bell pepper, spinach, cheese and salt and pepper) until well combined.

Place the mug in the microwave, uncovered, and cook on high for 45 seconds. Remove and stir contents with a fork. Microwave for another 45 seconds. Remove and stir again. Microwave one last time for 30 more seconds, stirring at the 15-second mark and checking for doneness. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and enjoy!

Superfoods Lentil and Vegetable Stew

Ingredients:

- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 cups small diced red onion
- 2 cups small diced carrot
- 2 cloves garlic, minced or grated
- 2 cups small diced bell pepper (red, orange, yellow)
- 2 cups sliced shiitake mushrooms (may swap in cremini or button mushrooms)
- 1 cup small diced celery (about 2 stalks)
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- 2 Tbsp. tomato paste (or 1 cup tomato puree)
- 1 lb. green lentils
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tsp. dried thyme
- 1 quart vegetable broth
- 6 to 8 ounces baby spinach, washed and patted dry
- Ground black pepper to taste

Preparation:

In a medium to large pot, add the oil and warm over medium-high heat. Add the onions, carrots and garlic and sauté for 3 or 4 minutes. Then add the peppers, mushrooms and celery. Season with salt and sauté until the veggies begin to soften, about 4 to 5 minutes. Add the tomato paste or puree and stir to coat the vegetables.

Add the lentils, bay leaves, thyme and broth. Bring to a boil, cover the pot partially with a lid, and simmer for 30 minutes, until the lentils are firm, yet tender (al dente). Stir in the spinach and let it wilt into the hot lentil stew. Add black pepper, and additional salt to taste.

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*****Why I am giving up elected office and joining the Jesuits**

by Cyrus Habib, Lieutenant Governor

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Earlier today, I announced that I will not be running for re-election as Washington state's lieutenant governor and have decided to enter the Society of Jesus. This decision follows two years of careful and prayerful discernment. But because that process has been almost entirely private, I realize that this will come as a major surprise to my constituents and supporters. Many will be wondering why someone who has spent the last eight years climbing the political ladder and who has a not insignificant chance of acceding to the governorship next year, would trade a life of authority for one of obedience.

I was elected as state representative in 2012, state senator in 2014 and lieutenant governor in 2016. My reasons for running for those positions and my priorities in office were firmly rooted in Catholic social teaching, which places the poor, the sick, the disabled, the immigrant, the prisoner and all who are marginalized at the center of our social and political agenda. I knew from childhood what it was like to be excluded for being a blind kid from an Iranian family, and I have tried to use the power I have been given by the voters to ensure that we move urgently toward that day when no one will feel left behind or left out in our society.

I have felt a calling to dedicate my life in a more direct and personal way to serving the marginalized, empowering the vulnerable and healing those who suffer from spiritual wounds.

That is why, as a legislator, I introduced legislation to establish statewide paid sick leave and why I sponsored the Washington Voting

Rights Act to make our elections more equitable. And that is why I made access to higher education the top priority in the office of the lieutenant governor and why I am thrilled that through the legislation we have authored and the programs we have launched, we have removed obstacles to college for countless Washingtonians who will be the first in their families to even contemplate pursuing post-secondary education.

But over the past couple of years, I have felt called to a different vocation, albeit one that is also oriented around service and social justice. I have felt a calling to dedicate my life in a more direct and personal way to serving the marginalized, empowering the vulnerable, healing those who suffer from spiritual wounds and accompanying those discerning their own futures. For me, this is rooted in my faith in Christ's Gospel. But my desire to encounter something greater than myself by walking with the poor and abandoned of this world will be familiar to those of many different spiritual traditions. I have come to believe that the best way to deepen my commitment to social justice is to reduce the complexity in my own life and dedicate it to serving others.

Finally, and most important, I want to thank all of those who made it possible for me to serve the public in elected office – all the volunteers, donors, staff and colleagues who have accompanied me on this journey. I treasure our shared accomplishments more than I could possibly reduce to writing here. Elected office and government service are deeply noble pursuits, and the people I have worked with have only deepened my respect for our form of government.

Thank you for what you have done and what you will continue to do for our country.

I ask you all to keep me in your prayers as I travel this new road; you will, of course, be in mine.

And, from a Facebook post by Zac Davis, also with permission:
Born to Iranian immigrants in Maryland, Cyrus Habib is the first and only Iranian-American to hold statewide elected office.

He is also a three-time cancer survivor and has been blind since the age of 8.

The lieutenant governor has been a prominent actor on the national political stage as a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and is serving on the Democratic National Committee. He is a Rhodes Scholar, a Truman Scholar, a Soros Fellow and a Rodel Fellow at the Aspen Institute.

Raised by what he calls “generically-but seriously-monotheistic” parents, Mr. Habib converted to Catholicism at the age of 25 while studying at the University of Oxford, after meeting Timothy Radcliffe, O.P., and the other Dominicans at Blackfriars Hall. (His mother, Susan Amini, who is a product of Catholic education in Tehran and is now a King County Superior Court Judge, would later also convert to Catholicism.)

Mr. Habib's movement toward discerning the priesthood began when he learned his father, Mo, was diagnosed with cancer.

Frustrated by his prayer life in the face of personal crisis, he went to his spiritual mentor, the longtime pastor of Seattle's St. James Cathedral, the Rev. Michael G. Ryan, who handed him James Martin, S.J.'s *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything*, which introduced Mr. Habib to the Jesuit charism in a deeper way.

Mr. Habib did not seriously consider a vocation, however, until his father passed away in 2016, just a few weeks before he was elected lieutenant governor.

“In that year or so after my father died, [I said to myself], I feel like I'm accomplishing things, I know what we're doing is so important in this political moment...but am I personally deriving a sense of joy from this life?” Mr. Habib said in a phone interview with America.

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*******ADVOCACY AND LEGISLATION**

*****Chronicle of a Happy Warrior #3: Are You Socially Relevant?**

by Mark Adreon

Has this ever happened to you or something similar: “This is a great gathering and so well-attended. Let me find you a place to sit and I’ll go and get us something to eat. Here is a wonderful table, out of the way and back here in the corner of the room. You can sit here and I’ll be back.”

So, there you are sitting in the corner, by yourself with no attendees near and no social interactions. This is when you pull out your smartphone and start reading Facebook. You have been deemed a potted plant and placed in the corner to be out of the way.

This gathering might be a wedding, a fundraiser, or a work-related networking event like a conference or convention. The event is not important, as the dynamic of isolating you to “make” you feel comfortable, protected, safe or easier to “take care of,” in fact, does socially isolate you and make your attendance irrelevant. This example of being placed to be socially insignificant is not only demoralizing, it is unconscious bias to exclude you from the social interactions being enjoyed by everyone else.

How does it make you feel? How do you change the situation so you are part of the social interaction? How do you anticipate and ensure you aren’t put in this position? Let’s explore some strategies that, through self-advocacy, will anticipate and ensure you can participate at the level of social interaction you want.

One of the strongest and first strategies is to be pleasant, clear and firm that you want to be a full participant in the gathering or event. As you enter with friends or companions, be discussing with them a great place to participate – such as, “This table looks like a great place to sit, kind of in the middle of things, close to the bar and buffet and it seems like a great place to meet up with people.”

Socially participating in where you and your group sit makes you socially relevant from the beginning. Don't let others talk you out of your opinion on this. However, if you prefer to sit away from the crowd and want less social interaction, stand up for that, as well. Everyone has their own comfort levels.

If you are attending an event by yourself, such as an employer-related conference, convention or other event, your strategy would look different than if you were attending with a group. If one of your goals is to meet other people or network, sitting or standing in the back of the room might not accomplish your goals and will, in fact, make you socially irrelevant. Here are some ideas to put yourself in the middle of things.

- Find someone in the room who seems to know a lot of people or is having a lot of interaction with various groups. Start by hanging out where they are, close enough to say hi and for others to associate you with that social magnet. Sounds strange but it does work.
- Be somewhere where a lot of people might pass through. Often, I sit where people might be ordering beverages from the bar during a conference happy hour. Starting a conversation here is much easier.

The bottom line here is that to feel socially relevant, it needs to start with you feeling that you are, in fact, socially relevant. If you are unable to have conversations with people you don't know or prefer to have a wall at your back, you are doing what you need to do to feel comfortable.

It's difficult to be a social butterfly if you are a private and observational person. There is a difference in choosing to be more in the background vs. being "forced" to be socially irrelevant. Know the difference and choose the behaviors that match who you are. When you feel you are relevant, you will be. **Mark Adreon: mark.adreon@gmail.com**

*****Pictures without Access to a Thousand Words**

by Hayley Edick

I knew that I wanted to submit another article to this awesome Newline publication, but I just did not know what I should attempt to write about regarding involvement in the community until I was browsing Facebook and came across an event near my home that I thought would be great for my family to attend. This opportunity seemed fantastic since there would be activities to entertain our two kids who love to have fun.

I was slightly disappointed when I found that there was a contest to win “something big,” but the instructions on how to enter were possibly embedded in the picture that was posted. Since I could not see the picture, and my screen reader could give me no indication as to what it was, I determined I needed to get more information.

In my experience with current social media, these pictures are not uncommon and seem to be almost the expected find. I wanted to see if I would get a response from anyone if I simply explained in the comments that I am blind and could not access the text for the event contest. I tried to be sure that my writing in my request was not condemning in any way and asked if someone could type out the instructions.

As I have seen other times when making such a request, one person posted a copy of what I can only assume was the picture already posted, maybe bigger, I have no idea. I smiled, because I almost expected someone would think that I just meant that I was blind, in my mind, and I should have been more descriptive of blindness in my eyes. But I didn't even know that I would get a response.

Next, a person posted the information I was requesting. I then saw a comment from the original poster thanking those who commented, thanking me for my request, and confirming that they wanted to be inclusive of everyone.

I sent a private message to the posting party, explaining that I did not want to call them out for leaving me out of accessing their event and that I would love to collaborate with them on how to be more inclusive of people who use alternate ways of accessing the web. I got a positive response.

I really hope to have a chance at the secret prize and did follow the steps required. I would like to be able to help them obtain the resources to tag their pictures with text that says the written words within the pictures, and would love to thank the person who took the few minutes to give me the information I needed.

I love it when issues like this are resolved in such a positive way. Having run into a barrier, I asked for the information needed. The issue was resolved with help from someone I did not know. The event host wants to be inclusive of everyone, and I hope to help them with that process.

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*****Council Charges Capitol Hill**

by Frank Cuta

Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., consists of the Capitol building with the three large Senate office buildings to the north of it and the three large House office buildings to the south of it. Below is my account of how our small group of Washington Council of the Blind (WCB) raiders took the Hill on a day late in February 2020.

The American Council of the Blind (ACB) legislative seminar actually consists of three intensive days of interactive presentations that lead up to the trip to the Hill to petition Congress. There is a one-day ACB board meeting, a one-day state presidents meeting and one day of legislative prep. On the fourth day, you marshal your troops and head for the Hill.

The legislative seminar is held every February, and if you ever get a chance to go, you should not skip the first two days. This is where you really learn how the board operates and learn what is happening on the national level of our organization. I also look forward to the experience because, although it is definitely intense, it is slower. It is a lot friendlier and less stressful than the annual national convention in July. There is more of a sense of talking with and relating to the people who are leaders in ACB. The hotel is smaller, and there is only one activity going on at a time.

We relied almost exclusively on Uber and Lyft for transportation in Alexandria and D.C., and this is how we got from the hotel to the Hill on Tuesday morning. We left early because it was stop-and-go traffic on the freeway and we had a 10 a.m. appointment with Sen. Maria Cantwell's staff. We were definitely impressed when they were already familiar with most of our issues. They seemed very receptive and I felt they listened to us with interest.

Unfortunately, we met with roadblock after roadblock getting an appointment with Sen. Patty Murray, so Sen. Cantwell was our only visit on the Senate side of the Capitol.

Before I go further, let me say a bit about logistics and navigation. Each of these buildings is, of course, protected by heavy security. You do not want to carry much in the way of extra bags. Check twice and make sure you have your ID with you before you leave the hotel. Once you get into one Senate office building, you can use basement passages to bypass security and get to the other buildings on this side, but unfortunately these passages are hard to find and not even all on the same level. You will find this same arrangement when you get to the House buildings, but you may need to go outside in order to get from the Senate side to the House side of the Capitol. At various times, we used AIRA, Braille signage, partial vision, security and the Internet to stay on course.

With just the one stop on the Senate side, we were happy as clams when Nick, one of Sen. Cantwell's interns, offered to ferry us on the underground trains that drive themselves through the marble-lined

inner-catacombs of the Capitol building itself, all the way over to the basement of the House building complex. These pathways are normally reserved for authorized staff only.

In the House, we had our work cut out for us because Washington has 10 congressional districts. Logistics are crucial because you do not want to waste time moving back and forth between buildings. Our first appointment in the office of Rep. Denny Heck was in the Rayburn building, but then we had appointments with the staff for Rep. Dan Newhouse and Rep. Pramila Jayapal in the Longworth building. This latter meeting was one of the most productive that we experienced with any office, since it seems that disability issues are an important part of her mission on the Hill.

With our formal appointments completed, we began our withdrawal. But as we retreated, we continued to search for the offices of congressmen with whom we did not have appointments. We finally were able to leave pre-prepared materials with Rep. Derek Kilmer's office, Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodger's office, and Rep. Kim Schrier's office in Longworth before we gave up on getting back to the Rayburn building, packed our weary frames into an Uber, and made our way back to the hotel. This experience was not only fun and exciting, but it helps WCB and ACB build priceless contacts with Congress. For this reason, we must continue to send representatives to the legislative seminar each year. We need to not only keep sending new people, but keep in mind that it builds the strongest rapport with the congressional staff to send a few key people back several times in a row.

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*****Making Connections on Capitol Hill**

by Julie Brannon

As I thought of the theme for this spring Newsline, “The art of being socially significant,” I realized how very much the legislative work done at the American Council of the Blind (ACB) mid-year seminar in Washington, D.C., is truly an overriding umbrella allowing for blind and visually-impaired people to be socially significant in a variety of arenas. We visit our legislators to engender their support for legislative imperatives, which protect our right to accessibility and a variety of freedoms enjoyed by many.

This year, a record number of Washington Council of the Blind members made the long trek to D.C.: Denise Colley, Deb Cook Lewis, Frank Cuta, Joel Valdovines, Cindy Van Winkle and myself. Unfortunately, due to a nasty bug that got many of us while we were in D.C., only four of us were able to make it to the Hill, but we felt we got quite a lot accomplished. This was my first experience going to the Hill, but I was fortunate to be with some veteran lobbyists, calming my nerves a bit.

We had appointments scheduled with representatives from the offices of Sen. Maria Cantwell, 4th district Rep. Dan Newhouse (Frank and Joel’s district), 10th district Rep. Denny Heck (Denise’s district) and 7th District Rep. Pramila Jayapal (from my former district).

We also left information about the legislative imperatives at the offices of three representatives with whom we did not have appointments: 8th district Rep. Kim Schrier, 6th district Rep. Derek Kilmer, and 5th district Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers.

By now, you might be wondering what imperatives ACB recommended we put forth. Keep in mind that these imperatives inevitably lead to other topics, creating a marvelous springboard for discussion.

1. ACB calls on Congress to support H.R. 4129, the Medicare Demonstration of Coverage for Low Vision Devices Act of 2019, which would measure the various costs and benefits of removing the Medicare eyeglass exclusion.

For more than a decade, Medicare has refused to cover the cost of low-vision aids due to an eyeglasses exclusion that prohibits the purchase of any durable medical good with a lens. While the regulatory exclusion was seen as cost-saving by not covering eyeglasses, it has had a negative impact on those who, through the use of special low-vision aids, could significantly increase their independence in the home.

This legislation would evaluate, through a five-year national demonstration project administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, the fiscal impact of a permanent change to the Social Security Act that would allow reimbursement for certain low-vision devices that are the most function-rich and would sustain daily independent living. The devices would be considered durable medical equipment. This bipartisan legislation is a smart approach toward finding workable solutions that help seniors age in place.

2. ACB calls on the 116th Congress to move forward with autonomous vehicle legislation that ensures equal access for people who are blind and visually impaired.

We are now at an exciting technological place with regards to transportation. The potential for the use of autonomous vehicles for people who are blind is closer than ever. Such vehicles are already being put to the test in multiple cities. However, it is critical that these cars remain fully accessible, and that individuals who have the most to gain through such technology are not left behind.

3. Congress must reauthorize the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act by September 2020.

The FAST Act fulfills the constitutional directive that dictates that investment in transportation and infrastructure is a core federal responsibility. It oversees the development and maintenance of roads, bridges, public transit, and rails. As the language of the new bill is developed, language that would positively impact the transportation options and safety for the blind community must be included.

Specifically, ACB calls for the inclusion of language that will require the installation of accessible pedestrian signals (APS) at all intersections that utilize leading pedestrian interval signalization (LPI).

Time to define terminology: APS provides for audible signals at intersections and other access enhancements. The installation of APS would ensure that pedestrians who are blind and visually impaired have more time to safely cross intersections.

Leading pedestrian interval (LPI) signalization provides pedestrians several extra seconds to begin crossing in the crosswalk before vehicles get the green light to enter the intersection. This promotes the safety of pedestrians because, once a person has entered the intersection ahead of the cars, he or she becomes more visible to turning cars.

Through orientation and mobility training, blind and visually-impaired people learn how to cross a street independently by listening to the traffic patterns of an intersection. However, there is no easy way for a blind pedestrian to take advantage of LPI signals because they cannot be detected by listening to the flow of traffic.

But, if an intersection with LPI signalization includes accessible pedestrian signals, the increasing number of Americans with vision loss may equally benefit by knowing when it's optimal to cross. For

this reason, Congress should require the installation of APS whenever LPI signalization is utilized.

The bill should also include language to govern the responsible use and parking of micro- and shared-mobility services, such as e-bikes and e-scooters, so they aren't left in the path of pedestrians.

Finally, the bill should encourage paratransit services to evolve toward on-demand transportation services similar to ride-share services like Uber and Lyft. This would allow paratransit users to schedule same-day trips, along with many other advantages for riders and service providers.

You can see the very important imperatives and issues facing us now and in the future that we had the privilege to share with our senators and representatives. The experience was a bit daunting, particularly for this first-timer, but oh my, truly enlightening and exhilarating. I appreciate having this opportunity. But it doesn't stop with our day on the Hill. Please feel free to take these imperatives and contact your local representatives. The more voices the better.

Julie Brannon: jbrannon0612@gmail.com

*****HISTORY

***History Quiz

by Carl Jarvis

Question: Who was the blind Seattle attorney who helped found American Council of the Blind?

Answer: Arnold Sadler, a past president of Washington State Association of the Blind, who was instrumental in opening up new fields of employment for the blind. He also helped found American Council of the Blind, as well as American Blind Lawyers Association.

In 1962, Sadler founded Northwest Foundation for the Blind, which provided scholarships, personal aid and other needed services for the blind. Sadler lived his entire life in Seattle's Rainier Valley. He graduated from the University of Washington School of Law in 1940 and was admitted to the bar in 1941.

Sadler devoted his life to furthering opportunities for the blind in the community, as well as involving himself in many technological innovations that improved the lives of blind people. While throwing rocks at beer bottles when he was 4, Sadler's eyes were injured when broken glass flew into them. By the time he was 14, he was totally blind.

Sadler made the news when he decided to make a point. Disturbed by the number of hunting accidents involving hunters with poor eyesight, Sadler went to the hardware store and applied for a hunting license. He left the store in possession of his very own hunting license, accompanied by his guide dog. Sadler was totally blind. To the best of our knowledge, Sadler never fired a single shot.

Question: In 1970, Washington State Association of the Blind (now merged with Washington Council of the Blind) met in Hoquiam. A resolution was presented and passed that shaped the direction of the organization for many years. Can you name that resolution? Does anyone remember some of the many events which followed?

Answer: The resolution became known as the Commission for the Blind Bill. The resolution laid out WSAB's concerns over the quality of services to blind citizens, as well as concern over Gov. Dan Evans' decision to move the Office of Services for the Blind into the new Department of Social and Health Services. And, the resolution called upon the state Legislature to establish a separate state agency, a Commission for the Blind. For the next seven years, WSAB organized and campaigned for this separate state agency. Finally, in 1977, the Legislature passed a bill calling for the establishment of a Commission for the Blind and Gov. Dixy Lee Ray signed the bill into law.

Question: As members of Washington Council of the Blind, do we ever discuss why we became members of the council and talk about our many successes and accomplishments?

Answer: This question has no wrong answers. The intent is to stimulate thoughtful discussion around the potential power generated through group participation. To get discussion underway, your chapter president might point to some of our many WCB committees and their accomplishments over past years.

Accomplishments include such things as the White Cane Law, the Jury Duty Bill, the establishment of a separate agency for the blind, the Braille Bill, our strong support of our Washington State School for the Blind, the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library, as well as the many other ways WCB members are reaching into the general community.

You might have your chapter members list and discuss these past achievements and the impact they've had in their individual lives. And of equal importance, keep looking forward to issues needing our involvement as an organization right now. Think of how we might involve your chapter members and each other more deeply in such issues.

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*******ENTREPRENEURSHIP, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY**

*****Selling Knowledge as a Service**

by Nathan McCann

The last few articles in this series have been primarily about selling objects of various kinds, but there is another important thing you can sell – services. One of the main benefits of selling a service in the modern age is that many services can be sold digitally. This expands the potential customer base for your business to almost anywhere in the world.

The big question to decide is what sort of service would you like to sell. One area of great demand is tutoring in a wide variety of skills. There are countless worried parents, and studious (or not so studious) children who need help studying for subjects of all kinds – history, economics and, of course, science and mathematics. There also many adults who want to expand their understanding of various subjects, both for reasons of personal enrichment and in order to improve their career prospects. If you are blessed with the gift of mathematical skills, there are many people who would pay to have you help them learn that subject.

Perhaps the most in-demand skill globally is something you are already very familiar with – the English language. There has been a tremendous increase in demand for English-language teachers for adults and children in China. There are, in fact, more English speakers in China than in the entirety of the United States. The downside of this is that you may be required to teach during hours which are outside of normal business hours in the United States. But if you are willing to adjust your schedule, you will never lack for students willing to pay for your expertise.

Another area is to share your knowledge of very specialized skills. If you have specialized knowledge that not many people know about, you may find there is a market for these skills, as well. Consider which skills you

have that others might be willing to pay for. Perhaps you have a detailed knowledge of engineering, or knitting, or healthful practices of various kinds. With your potential customer base being anyone with access to an Internet connection, you'll find that the potential customer base for an in-demand skill is functionally limitless.

Sharing knowledge is not just a way to earn money but a meaningful way to help others. If you can find students willing to pay for lessons you can offer, you will also gain the benefit of being able to share knowledge and enrich people's lives in a way that is truly priceless.

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*****Technically Speaking**

by Frank Cuta

Here are the major ways that you can pick up malware and/or open your computer up to hacking, and some solutions to consider.

Problem: You pick up a free promotional thumb drive at a conference and take it home and plug it into your computer.

Solution: If you want to ensure that you are not tricked in this manner, stop this risky behavior, or set up an old laptop with a good program like Malwarebytes and run it offline as a dedicated security-scanning system for removable media.

Problem: You casually open links in email messages and browse the web on a computer with out-of-date system software.

Solution: Stop clicking on links in messages on your computer. Always open them using the email app on your iPhone. You can also do most of your web browsing with your phone but if you must do it on your computer, keep your operating system and anti-malware software up to date.

Problem: You open attachments in email messages.

Solution: Stop sending attachments and stop opening them. Anyone can send you a perfectly normal message that looks like it comes from a friend that you trust and send it with an infected payload attachment that gets you into serious trouble. Your friends can learn to put normally attached text content in the body of the message where it is safe to read. Unless you know how to check the Internet header options on every message that you receive, avoiding clicking on attachments and links is the safest and most sane method for protecting yourself.

These are simple preventative measures that you can take to prevent becoming a victim. But keep in mind that if you have something that someone wants badly enough and they have advanced hacking skills, there is nothing you can do to protect yourself. If you have something on your computer that others desire to have, it's best to encrypt your hard drive, run a virtual private network and use dual factor authentication. But we used all three of these in my workplace, which was a federal lab, and our firewall has been hacked three times in the past 15 years. The good news is that most of us do not have anything on our hard drives that would make this kind of effort worthwhile. All we need to do is follow the first three measures.

Speaking of updating, I want to rant a bit about how aggravating it is to be constantly told by my iPhone that it's time to update to their latest and greatest version of software. It is not so bad that I am constantly reminded to update from something that is working just fine to something that is broken, but in order to get past this cyber fiction, I am then forced to click on the button labeled "remind me later." What happened to the "do not remind me later" button? Or how about the "please quit annoying me, quit badgering me, and quit harassing me" button?

Dear Apple:

Perhaps you believe that you know what is best for Frank and, if you hit me enough times, someday when I am half-awake I will hit the wrong

response and, presto, my phone will slide down that irreversible slippery, slimy sewer line and become “current.”

Apple, why don't you get on the ball! Even Microsoft is considerate and reasonable enough to provide a “do not bother me again” alternative.

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*****Three Little Words A Poem by Alco Canfield**

“Forgot your password?”

When I see this message, depending on my mood,
I imagine someone asking that with a snide sneer,
or a sympathetic smile.

I answer, “No, I haven't forgotten my password.
I just enter nonsense to mess with you,
and make you repeat that silly question.
My three failed log-in attempts should give you a clue,
don't you think?”

I always vow that
I will write down a password when I create it.
But then arrogance or laziness assure me that
I will remember it.

So it usually does not get written,
and I provide job security,
for the robot or person posing the question.

It is fortunate that we do not need a password to live.
Forgetting your password could be fatal.

“Forgot your password?”
I hope not.

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*******BRAIN FOOD**

*****Noteworthy Blogs**

Grieving on the Dance Floor with a Total Stranger

by Robert Kingett

[Editor's Note: Robert Kingett self-identifies as a gay blind journalist. He is also an accessibility advocate. He writes fiction and nonfiction and is often involved in many accessibility projects and campaigns.]

My body is gyrating to the music blaring from the giant speakers in the packed house. My moves don't quite match the music, but I keep on dancing because I am incredibly lonely, and I am here to satisfy some desire I can't get rid of, let alone identify. The music takes my mind off friends who've lied about how much they care about me. The happy couples dancing remind me that the shooting I was at a week before, where two college students died on Chicago's North Side, has not affected everybody. People are still alive in my world. The people dancing beside me are way better at it than I am, and possibly carry less baggage than I do, but I am a man who does metaphorical things because I read a lot.

When the dancing stops, I make my way through the party to meet and greet various people of various statuses. There's a guy who's in a relationship, but he's here because his sex life is dull, and besides, his husband will never know. Not to mention, they have an open relationship because, of course, they do. There's a lesbian who thinks I am straight and asks me what on earth I'm doing at a gay party. I am here at this party because there has to be someone who will not let me down. Friends have let me down so often in the past week that I figure going to bed with a total stranger might solve all of my problems.

As I make my way into the kitchen, I spot a very tall guy in a yellow shirt playing with his phone at a table. I sit across from him, wishing I had a mobile phone to play with. His ebony finger massages the screen with such speed; I assume he's playing a modified version of Flappy Bird.

“I figured you’d sit down eventually,” he says. “I’ve never seen anyone dance so much in my life.”

“I was dancing because basically I’ve had a bad couple of weeks and I just needed to let go of a few things in my life.” He puts down his phone and folds his buff arms on the table. “I hear you, dude. I came here because the same thing happened to me. My whole family was killed a few days ago, and so I figured the best thing to do would be to do the dumbest thing possible and go to a party where nobody knows me and I can be whoever I want to be.”

“Are you serious? Like, shouldn’t you be in mourning right now?”

“That’s the thing. What if I don’t want to grieve right now? What if I want to be somewhere where nobody can see me even though I am standing in the same room as them?”

“You’re weird,” I say, and he laughs. I don’t know why I feel the urge to treat him like any other person, why I’m not saying I am sorry for his loss, but I get the sense that isn’t what he wants or even needs right now.

Mark introduces himself, and soon we are connected by sorrowful chemistry. Losing his mother and 8-year-old sister in a drive-by shooting on Chicago’s South Side is so much worse than friends letting me down, so we figure what better thing to do than make the worst jokes possible. We joke about the nice things people say but never mean at funerals. We joke about religion — he’s an atheist, too — and the afterlife, but we do not joke about the dead. With so many dead police officers and fellow members of the LGBT community, somehow this seems like the best kind of medicine we can give each other.

Then Mark asks me why I am single and I tell him I have no idea.

“Why do people always say you will find the one you need if you just do your own thing and never look?” I blurt out. “Sounds like a poor excuse. Maybe there really is nobody out there.”

“I disagree,” Mark says, fixing me with his intense brown eyes. “There’s someone out there for everyone. You just have to try a little more. You know?”

“But if I try, I’m not doing my own thing, right? I’m searching. Isn’t that what people always say we shouldn’t do?”

“Some people, yes, but you have to understand that there’s a personality type for everybody. You just have to be aware of that and keep your eyes or, in your case, ears open.”

“Do I have fat ears?” I ask suddenly. He comes over to me, holding me close as he studies my ears with mock intensity.

“Nope. Your ears are cute!” Then a slow song starts and we look at each other.

“Since we bonded by making fun of funerals, do you want to do something normal, like slow dance?” he asks.

“Sure!” I say. He guides me into the living room. There are non-dead couples dancing beside us, swaying to the song that’s playing. It’s about some guy who ran over some woman’s dog, but she still loves him. We dance, Mark’s arms wrapped tightly around me. I feel as if I am his life support tonight. The longer the song plays, the tighter he holds on to me. Just as the song is about to end, I feel something wet hit the top of my head. I think it’s rain at first, so I don’t react, until I lean my face up to kiss Mark. When I see the streak of tears on his face, I take him into my arms and wipe away his tears as another song fills the room. He doesn’t need to say thank you. His embrace is enough.

Robert Kingett

<https://blindjournalist.wordpress.com/contact-this-blogger/>

*****Podtastic Casts**
From Looking to Taken with Blind Love
by Reginald George

One of my favorite semi-weekly podcasts is the Blind Bargains cast. Joe Steincamp and J.J. Meddaugh from Blindbargains.com started it to cover technology news, interview industry leaders, demonstrate new products, and discuss other topics of interest to the blindness community.

However, one particular episode is something special. The podcast topic is a documentary called Blind Love, made by a company called Independent Lens. The documentary follows the stories of four millennials who happen to be blind and who are spreading their wings and finding their way in the dating arena.

All four people featured in the documentary participate in this episode of the podcast, along with the director, Patty Zagarella. Meddaugh is the host of this episode, and he does a good job of staying out of the way and letting the conversation take its own path. Below are my brief notes about the podcast and show. I hope they pique your interest enough to look it up, because it is worth your time.

Joni Martinez, from Texas, comes across as very confident and independent. Dance is very important to her – ballroom, Latin, and more. She feels like she is better at dancing than at relationships. Dancing, or at least the willingness to learn to dance, is non-negotiable in a partner.

Solomon O'Leary, from Ocala, FL, says he is no different than everyone else wanting to find love. Solomon had only been blind for a year and a half when the movie was made. Online dating didn't work well after he would reveal his blindness. He would go out with friends and spend a whole evening with a girl and they would put him in the "friend" zone.

Mario Bonds has children, and likes participating in things that are mission based. He feels the show will help to dispel preconceived notions of blind people. He says blind people can be just as shallow and superficial as everyone else. Mario interests me because he chose to hide that he was blind until he met the women in person. He considers that to be an insignificant small detail. Mario's best friend, Lamar, always tells him, "You can't just be showing up blind." I laughed hard at this because it's true. He explains why he does this, and it isn't from fear. He just notices how differently they treat him after he breaks the news. Mario is the funniest guy, with lots of charisma.

Simon Isakov, the youngest at 24, got outside of his comfort zone and grew the most as a person. He is the only one who was born blind, but in many ways was the one who was the most dependent on his family. In the podcast, he discusses discovering speed dating and enjoying attending heavy metal shows. Simon never had the patience for online dating. When speed dating, he had about 3 minutes with each person to see if they had chemistry. Host J.J. said speed dating takes a whole different kind of confidence.

Patty, the British director, is interested in creating projects that break down stereotypes, educate while entertaining, and create awareness. She says that love and dating are the perfect equalizer.

The podcast is good, but the documentary is even better because we get a deep glimpse beyond the surface and into their lives. It may sound like it, but this is not your typical reality show.

Patty was asked how they went about filming, and it was different for each person. With Mario's dates, they used hidden cameras and told them later. Patty was surprised by how willing people were to be included in the filming. With Solomon, he would go to the pub with his mates and the film crew just hung back and watched what happened.

Patty said her initial questions about blindness quickly fell by the wayside and turned to their passions, dreams and desires. Their disabilities faded to the background, which is how it should be.

Blind Love is available free from YouTube and PBS digital. It consists of seven approximately 10-minute episodes, tied together by a playlist, that make up the entire documentary, and it is quite humorous. It moves quickly, and their personalities pull you into the story. The podcast will make you want to learn more, and none of them tell you how it all turns out. So, the only way you will know is if you watch or listen to the documentary. Even though they all come from different parts of the country and had never met before, you will sense the love and comradery between them that comes from working on the project together for a year.

The documentary was released on Valentine's Day and is free to view. The link below is to what YouTube calls the video-described version.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgmdcFUtPtXWMHvcpMJAeuQ1HX3CSsNPT>

Find the podcast here:

<https://www.blindbargains.com/bargains.php?m=21568>

Reginald George: reggeorge@gmail.com

*****“See,” the New Apple TV Series**
by Frank Cuta

We are TV curmudgeons in the Cuta household. When TV moved from analog to digital 10 or 20 years ago, we did not make the transition. I have never watched most of the popular TV shows now advertising their 12th season.

However, there is one series now starting its second season that I was curious about. It's called “See,” a science fiction fantasy being produced by Apple TV for their TV network. My interest was further piqued when Joe Strechay, co-producer of “See” on Apple TV+, spoke to our American Council of the Blind leadership seminar in Washington, D.C., on “Moving Toward Inclusion for Blind and Visually Impaired Actors.” He is blind and is there specifically to consult and direct the actions of the actors. This is important because all of the actors are supposed to be blind.

The premise of the show is that the world is savaged by a terrible virus that kills nearly the entire population of the Earth and leaves the few survivors, all blind. Centuries later, the idea of vision exists only as a myth. To even speak of it is considered heresy. In the first show into this unfriendly world, two sighted children are born.

Apple has done a lot here that I admire. They hired a blind consultant and have a story that portrays blind people as just people. They are actively hiring blind and low-vision actors. I like this show and I suggest if you like this kind of adventure drama that you take a look at “See.”

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*****Bits and Pieces**
compiled by Denise Colley

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

GiveBIG Fundraiser

The Finance Committee has been working hard to identify fundraising ideas to support WCB's mission. Our first opportunity in 2020 is GiveBIG, an online fundraising activity that will now be a two-day event on May 5 & 6. Early donations start April 15. Please, please share with your network! Contact Lisa George lmwgeorge10@gmail.com or Steve Fiksdal steve@fiksdal.com if you wish to create a FUNdraising page on WCB's behalf.
<https://www.givebigwa.org/washingtoncounciloftheblind>

American Printing House for the Blind (APH) announces new 2020 line of products

APH is announcing a new line of Braille displays, embossers and tactile graphics designers for the productivity and education markets. As yet, prices for these devices have not been released.
<https://www.blindbargains.com/b/21562>

NLS Bard for iOS introduces new features

On Feb. 13, National Library Service released a new iOS version of Bard, its popular Braille and talking books app. The new version introduces many new features for users of the service, including simultaneous downloads, airplay, and Braille display autoscroll.

Heads-up! A collection of free audible for kids and everyone

At stories.audible.com, you will find hundreds of our titles available completely free with no login or credit card required. The collection has been handpicked by our editors and is a mix of stories to

entertain, engage, and inform young people, ages 1-18. These stories offer a screen-free option that we hope may help break up the day for families with students home from school.

There are selections for our listeners in English, Spanish, German, French, Japanese and Italian. To access the free titles, just visit stories.audible.com from any web browser. Then just click, stream and listen.

HUD issues guidance on reasonable accommodations under the Fair Housing Act relating to assistance animals

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced the publication of guidance clarifying how housing providers can comply with the Fair Housing Act when assessing a person's request to have an animal in housing to provide assistance because of a disability.

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing against individuals who have disabilities that affect a major life activity. The act requires housing providers to permit a change or exception to a rule, policy, practice, or service that may be necessary to provide people with disabilities that affect a major life activity an equal opportunity to use and enjoy their home. In most circumstances, a refusal to make such a change or exception, known as a reasonable accommodation, is unlawful.

This new Assistance Animal Notice will help housing providers in this process by offering a step-by-step set of best practices for complying with the act. This includes assessing accommodation requests involving animals, as well as information that a person may need to provide about his or her disability-related need for the requested accommodation, including supporting information from a health-care professional.

Follow the link below to the press release:

[https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/ HUD_No_20_013](https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/HUD_No_20_013)

New Accessible Products Hotline

Consumers with vision loss will no longer have to spend hours searching for products that fit their unique accessibility needs, thanks to the launch of the first-of-its-kind Accessible Products Hotline by Envision. The hotline is staffed by trained customer service representatives who are blind or visually impaired.

Call the hotline at **316-252-2500** or learn more at

<https://www.workforceforall.com/Accessible-Products-Hotline>

Rides and food delivery without a smart phone

Consider using a service called GoGoGrandparent to schedule Uber or Lyft rides without a smartphone. Sign up for this service by calling **855-464-6872**.

If you're already signed up with GoGoGrandparent, you may want to also sign up for their food-delivery service called GoGoGourmet. The food delivery uses DoorDash, so that must be available in your area. You would call the food delivery service and they will help you with the menus, schedule the delivery, and track it for you. Sign up for this service by calling **855-754-5328**. You have to be signed up with GoGoGrandparent to use GoGoGourmet.

Denise Colley: colleyd1952@gmail.com

*******AGENCY UPDATE**

*****We Know You Know: There have been a lot of changes at DSB**

by Michael MacKillop

You may have noticed that Lou Oma Durand, who has traditionally been the writer of this piece for years, is not the person behind the keyboard for this issue. That's the first of big changes within the agency we want to discuss with you.

After 43 years in public service and 15 years as executive director of Department of Services for the Blind, Lou Oma retired. As executive director, she led the agency to national and local recognition as a government organization providing services to people with visual and other disabilities.

Another dedicated member of DSB's executive team, Arlene Itou, also retired Jan. 1. Arlene joined DSB in 1973 as an orientation and mobility specialist. Over the years, she applied her knowledge of vocational rehabilitation (VR) and the agency to take on numerous positions, most recently as assistant director of operations since 2011. Lou Oma and Arlene worked to develop a stable environment and extraordinary work culture for DSB, and we are grateful for what they have done for this agency. They will be missed.

These high-ranking retirements have created some vacancies – and big shoes – to quickly fill. Lisa Wheeler will now serve as assistant director for VR and workforce, and Tricia Eyerly will take on the role of assistant director for HR and training. The agency's search for a senior fiscal officer also was completed successfully, and we welcomed Jeannie Brown to the agency in mid-February. Michael MacKillop (the new person behind the keyboard for this article) was appointed DSB acting executive director by Gov. Jay Inslee as of Jan. 1.

The agency will next be recruiting to fill the two now-vacant regional area manager positions in the north and east regions. We may also be looking to evaluate potential changes in roles and responsibilities across the agency, but the main goal is to find some stability amongst all the change. As we move forward towards new future directions, we will continue to gather stakeholder inputs to help guide us.

With all of these changes, you may have missed the news that we are emerging out of the “order of selection” waitlist situation for our VR program. A waitlist has been the only way the agency is able to manage scarce resources. The agency was successful in gaining additional state funds through the last biennium legislative budget cycle and, therefore, we were able to capture additional federal funds. These funds have enabled us to move many customer cases off the VR waitlist and into active status. By the end of 2019, we were able to serve 73% of the people who had been on the waitlist. We are working to move the remaining cases off the list and into service as soon as possible.

Employment outcomes were less robust for 2019 because of the order of selection waitlist, but the quality of results for these individuals is strong:

- The average wage was \$22/hr.
- 3% of our employment outcomes were individuals over 55 going to work in competitive jobs.

Additionally, our youth programs are robust and growing. Through the work of the dedicated in-house youth services staff, effective partnerships and collaboration of efforts have flourished, engaging with Washington State School for the Blind, consumer groups, and a number of other organizations across the state. The agency remains committed to maintaining pre-employment transition services for youth as early as age 9. DSB is one of only two blind agencies in the nation that offer these career-exploration services at such an early age. We believe all agencies should also do so, as the earliest career exploration and

engagement lays a strong framework for a greater sense of independence and self-belief.

Our independent living (IL) resources have become more stabilized this past year as a result of our success during the biennial legislative cycle and other efforts. Our strategic focus now is to build service-delivery capacity, and we are currently recruiting and onboarding new service providers. A fun fact is that this past year the IL program served 13 individuals over age 100.

As you can see, change is the one constant in the DSB universe. Regardless of the significant changes in 2019 that the agency experienced, everyone at DSB works to continue to move our mission of “Independence, Inclusion and Economic Vitality” ever forward in 2020 and beyond.

Michael MacKillop: Michael.MacKillop@dsb.wa.gov

*****WCB HAPPENINGS

***It's the Little Things

by Hayley Agers

This year, the Washington Council of the Blind (WCB) Families Committee partnered with Washington Talking Book and Braille Library (WTBBL) to host our beloved Braille Challenge. We not only held the regularly scheduled Seattle challenge, but also an event in Cheney.

While it's always nice to see familiar faces at the Braille Challenge, the part I enjoy the most is getting to know new families. As I sat talking and catching up with some old friends, I noticed that more and more people were filtering in for this year's Seattle Braille Challenge, held at WTBBL, and I was eager to find my way over to them and introduce myself. Okay, eager to meet new people might be the truth, but navigating a crowded room is not one of my favorite things to do. Nevertheless, I grabbed onto Farley's harness and we were off.

At the first table we came to was seated a young lady by the name of Angie, who was one of seven students who joined us from The Washington State School for the Blind. Usually, they conduct their own Braille Challenge, but this year they joined us. It made for a bigger group with more opportunity to connect with new people. Angie was quiet at first, but it wasn't long before our own Hayley Edick came over and started a conversation in Spanish with her. This made Angie feel very comfortable, and the two connected immediately.



Photo to left:
Students gather round a guide dog puppy between tests at the Braille Challenge, held at Washington Talking Book & Braille Library in Seattle.

Braille Challenge participants interacted with guide dog puppies from Guide Dogs for the Blind, learned self-defense techniques taught by Andy and Colette Arvidson, and had a chance to relax, let loose, and socialize during lunch. And, of course, they all were anxious to do the Braille testing itself. New friendships were formed, parents talked about unanswered questions, and many who attended are now looking forward to possibly being present at the October state convention. Each year keeps getting better and better. I am honored and blessed to be a part of it.



Photo to right: Andy Arvidson demonstrates a hold to one student as others wait for a turn.

Here are some of the comments from those who attended.

Debby Phillips, volunteer, Spokane, shares her reflections on the event in Cheney:

“It was a cold, rainy morning as I waited for paratransit to pick me up for my trip to Cheney Middle School for the 2020 Braille Challenge. My mind danced with all the possibilities of what could happen, and true to form, my worry level heightened as I rode along. First, would the icebreaker we planned work? Would everybody find their way to our meeting place? And on a personal level, would I be able to contribute, or would my shyness cause me to withdraw into silence, as sometimes happens?”

“My thoughts were stopped by our arrival. From then on, things began happening. I started chatting with the librarian, John Buckmaster, whom I knew from being on the Patron Advisory Council for WTBBL a few years earlier. I cut donuts in half as we renewed our acquaintance. All my worries proved to be unfounded.”

“As everyone arrived, conversation flowed easily with the parents of the two students taking their tests. We mingled and soon were exchanging ideas and sharing our experiences growing up. As it turned out, I was the only person who had been blind from birth. We didn’t need our icebreaker because we just naturally fell into conversation.

“When the kids got finished with their tests, we all ate pizza. I was interested and excited to listen as Andy and Colette Arvidson began teaching the kids self-defense. They were eager and did well and were even able to break some boards.”

Libby McCalmont, parent, Issaquah, says:

“As a parent, I love this day. I enjoy seeing all the kids work really hard. And I also love chatting with all the other parents of visually-impaired kids. I don’t get an opportunity to do that often so it’s always nice to get advice and compare stories with them.”

Eli McCalmont, 14, Issaquah, tells us:

“I’ve been doing this for 6 or 7 years now and I love seeing how I compare to my previous years. I’d love to make it to the finals in California someday.”

Li Ling Joosten, 13, Auburn, commented:

“One of the things that I really liked about the Braille Challenge was learning about guide dogs and the impact they can have on a blind person's life. I loved being at the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library and meeting so many other blind people. What I loved was that the people were so generous and were very empathetic to other people. I am so glad that I got to be a part of the Braille Challenge. This has been one of the best Braille Challenges I’ve ever been to. I had such a fun time and I would love to go to this Braille Challenge again.”

Do you ever wonder if what you do really makes a difference?

I think **Cindy Glidden, volunteer, Spokane**, sums it up nicely when she says:

“What an amazing opportunity to be involved in our WCB Families Committee and this Braille Challenge and to experience the excitement

of seeing both the parents' and the kids' reactions to the activities and environment around them. The kids were so proud of their competition successes. They enjoyed the opportunity to meet the guide puppies and their raisers, and the excitement of learning blind self-defense."

The parents were equally thankful for the chance to talk to other parents, hear relevant experiences from adults further along in the blindness journey, and to see their children in an environment that both challenged and accepted them no matter the background or degree of blindness.

Whether a youth participant, a parent, or a volunteer for this event, these two days were filled with moments that will forever hold a special place in our hearts – for different reasons maybe, but for reasons that are significant to that individual and for reasons that made that individual feel significant.

Hayley Agers: haydav8@comcast.net

*****Scholarship, Scholarship, Scholarship by Kim Moberg**

Do you have a dream of going to college for the first time, or finishing a degree you have already started? If so, read on. You should also read on if you have a friend who might benefit as a result of taking action after reading this article. Your friend does not have to be a member of Washington Council of the Blind. WCB scholarships are open to all who qualify and apply. They will be awarded at the WCB annual convention on Oct. 31, 2020.

Speaking of qualifying, here's how:

1. The applicant must be a resident of Washington state. A resident of Washington is an individual who has physically resided in the state for a period of 12 consecutive months at the time of application.
2. The applicant must be enrolled or have been accepted to enroll in an accredited vocational school, college or university located in the United States.
3. The applicant must be legally blind in both eyes. Legal blindness is defined as visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the corrected eye and/or 20° or less visual field in the corrected eye.

Last year, WCB awarded scholarships that ranged from \$3,000 to \$4,500. So, put in your application, provide six required documents, and do a phone interview with a scholarship committee member. Then have patience while the committee does the scoring and notifies you of your status.

Unlike many scholarships that you might apply for, this one can help cover a lot of different kinds of expenses as long as they have to do with your education, helping you follow your dream. Past scholarship winners have used the award money to help pay for tuition, books, and transportation. Some have either updated their computers or purchased new ones. Others have even used it for child care, because that is the part of going to school that is a struggle for them. So, as you can see, if

you want to go to a college, university or vocational school to pursue your dreams, you can! Apply for this scholarship now before it is too late.

Here are the details that you need to know. By the time you are reading this article, the application should be live and you can apply for the scholarship. You will need to provide the following documents with your application:

- Two letters of reference: These need to be professional references. The only personal references that we will accept are ones where you have done volunteer work and a friend or family member was in a supervisory position and is able to outline your leadership.
- A current eye report, which needs to state that you are legally blind.
- A transcript from the 2019-2020 academic school year.
- An essay, which needs to be no more than 1,000 words. Introduce yourself to the scholarship committee. Tell us about some of the leadership roles you have taken. Tell us why you should be awarded a scholarship.
- A copy of the acceptance letter from the college/university or vocational school that you will be attending for the 2020/2021 academic school year.

If you have questions or are having issues uploading documents, please send an email to Kim Moberg, Scholarship Committee chair, at scholarshipwcb@yahoo.com.

All applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. June 1, 2020.

Kim Moberg: goofeybabbysitter@gmail.com

*****Around the State**
Capital City Council of the Blind
by Alan Bentson

In November, Capital City Council of the Blind held elections. Our new treasurer is **Terry Atwater**, **Alan Bentson** will continue as secretary, **Zandra Brown** will continue as vice president and **Gloria Lopez** remains president.

On Dec. 7, CCCB held its annual Christmas party at the Bird's Nest Restaurant in the Elks Lodge in downtown Olympia, which is also our new meeting place.

Our president originated a fundraiser over the holidays – she bought bags of coffee wholesale through her restaurant business, and the chapter sold them at retail, all profits going to the chapter. This seems to have been a modest success, so we may repeat the effort.

We held our first meeting of the year on Jan. 25, with Alan presiding since Gloria had a family emergency and Zandra was out of town. It seemed like half the chapter or their relatives had birthdays in January. Have any of you noticed this phenomenon?

Guide Dog Users of Washington State
by Vivian Conger

Guide Dog Users of Washington State participated in an open conference call March 9 regarding the proposed regulations for the Air Carrier Act. Concerns and possible comments were discussed. This is a very important situation, as some of the proposed rules are troublesome to guide dog handlers when flying. We urge everyone, whether a dog handler or not, to make comments on the proposed rules.

Our Spring Fling, unfortunately, had to be postponed this year. It was supposed to take place in Vancouver, WA. This is always a fun and informative time for all who attend. Stay tuned for updates.

Jefferson County Council of the Blind

by Carl Jarvis

Late last year, members of Jefferson County Council of the Blind raised concerns that we were not getting our message out to the community. President **Nancy Villagran** called for discussion at our December and January meetings. Several outreach proposals were made. After deciding that we would try taking our organization's message to the public, we began making plans to hold our February meeting at the Avamere Senior Apartments where, we were assured, many residents were dealing with declining eyesight.

Sharing the platform were three organizations. Presenters were Pat Teal, director of Disabilities Awareness Starts Here, Miranda Nash with Jefferson Transit, and **Carl and Cathy Jarvis** with Peninsula Rehabilitation Services. As we listened to the presentations, we were reminded of the truly great number of resources available in our rural county, and yet how few people know of them.

Our efforts at spreading the word resulted in only 14 people attending our meeting. Still, we did connect with five new folks with whom we shared helpful information. One neat thing about information is that the sharing flows both ways. For example, we learned that Avamere has a world-class baker who shared with us the most amazing cream puffs and brownies ever tasted this side of heaven.

And so, with visions of sugar plums dancing in our heads, we will return to our home base, the Highway Twenty Roadhouse restaurant for our next meeting, where we will begin planning new ways to reach out to our community.

King County Chapter

by Linda Wickersham

Hello and welcome from the King County Chapter. We are especially looking forward to the warm, sunny days of spring, hoping for a little less rain.

Our officers are **Tim Schneebeck**, president; **Linda Wickersham**, vice president and treasurer; and **Heidi Campbell**, secretary.

I am pleased to announce that our two members who were hit by cars are doing well. Both are home and recovering. **Kathleen Carson** was able to attend our February chapter meeting and we are hoping that **Darlene Hilling** will be up to joining us in March.

In February, we celebrated **Julie Miller's** 21st birthday. Ha-ha. I am sworn to secrecy as to what her real birthday is.

We had a wonderful Christmas party in December. Last fall, we had a speaker from Uber. We have tried and tried to get someone from Metro or Access to update us, with no success. Any suggestions would be appreciated.

Have a wonderful spring.

Skagit and Island Counties Council of the Blind

by Andy Arvidson

We held our monthly meeting Feb. 8. We talked about Washington Council of the Blind's Newsline, and we read the article "The Cheshire Cat Interviews #7, Walls, Windows and Doors," by Heather Meares. It inspired members to be more into what the WCB Newsline and state organization are all about.

We also talked about the Emerging Leaders Summit, applying for the First Timer's awards at WCB and American Council of the Blind, and how important it can be to attend these events.

We were then joined by new WCB President **Julie Brannon** by telephone. Julie gave us a great presentation on her vision for the future of WCB. She also mentioned the creation of the new committee on outreach to enhance our potential of reaching and educating more people and professionals about who and what we are.

The end of our meeting was turned over to **Donna Pitcher-Oakland**, our activity chair. We got to create Valentine's cards. She did a great job of preparing tactile material so all could participate.

The highlight of this event for me was the excitement of our youngest member, who is 52 and had never made a Valentine's card. Earlier, she had mentioned her nephew as a person who has autism and does not understand exactly how the world functions. Her excitement was great, as often she is very quiet at our meetings.

After our wonderful meeting, eight of us went out for a tasty late lunch to extend our conversations about our chapter and how we can let the world know that we can have fun and participate in normal life activities, even though we cannot see.

We are building relationships in our chapter and community one step at a time. The restaurant that we usually eat at understands that we are just like all of the rest of their patrons and they treat us accordingly. It might be because we act courteous and treat their help graciously. If you want to be respected, you have to do respectable things.

South Kitsap Council of the Blind

by Kim Moberg

Wow, 2020 is starting out to be a busy and exciting year for the South Kitsap Council of the Blind, with many wonderful things happening. We have formed committees to deal with all that we want to get accomplished this year.

We are looking into fundraising ideas. One such idea, which has not been done in several years, is to sell candy bars. I think we are all looking forward to doing this project and am hoping that it is something that can be done throughout the year. We also have plans underway for both our upcoming Christmas party and our summer picnic. Different people in the chapter are involved to make this happen. Each year, things are going to be bigger and better, and this year is no exception.

Jessamyn Landby, one of our members, is now doing an internship with a company called Skookum. She has many wonderful skills to offer them. We all wish her the best in this and are praying that at the end of the internship the company feels they cannot survive without her and they hire her permanently.

We have recently decided to add an extra hour to our chapter meeting time. So, I bet you are wondering what on earth we are going to do with that time. Well, our members are quite spread out in and around South Kitsap. It is hard for us to do things like a book club or a techie group. We may even play cards and just have a chance to visit. This is going to be a great time to get to know each other a bit better.

Jane Ulrigg had cataract surgery in January and ankle surgery in February. Hope you are doing better real soon.

United Blind of Seattle

by Dorene Cornwell

Recently, United Blind of Seattle decided to hire a web designer. President **Darryl Roberts** spoke to **Gaylen Floy**, who recommended a young web designer named Adam Woodworth. Adam is visually impaired and has recently completed a web design program and is working to get established professionally. So far, there have been learning experiences for both UBS and for Adam.

UBS assembled a committee of people who use a variety of technologies to talk about the work and what we need to know:

- What do we, as a chapter, need to do to make a good agreement, have a reasonable budget, get good value for our money, get what we want out of the work, and then deal properly with things like tax issues?
- What costs will there be for domain name registration, web hosting, and ongoing maintenance?
- What are our requirements as far as accessibility standards and practice?

- What do we want our website to do?
- How much do we need to specify upfront vs. after other steps get worked out?

From Adam's side, he also needs:

- A good contract, clear guidance about chapter preferences and priorities.
- A system that works for him about tracking time he can bill for and time that is the work of any small business.
- A way of breaking the work down into phases and a sign-off process.

UBS encouraged Adam to get a business license, a separate business checking account, and some members spoke from experience about reporting requirements. Adam also researched web design contracts online and presented a contract for review at our second in-person meeting. We as a group reviewed the contract clause by clause and will share comments by email between meetings. The UBS website committee has now met in person with Adam twice, and work has begun. Stay tuned for our next report.

United Blind of Spokane

by Debby Phillips

January found us beginning the new year with a new president. It will take the chapter some time to adjust to different styles of doing things. We had a nice meeting getting to know each other better.

In February we restarted doing our 50/50 drawing. I promise it wasn't rigged, but I won. There was a lot of good-natured ribbing as I pocketed my share.

I also formed some committees. We have a bylaws committee now, as well as a fundraising committee. We also talked about possible future events, and had a door prize.

We were looking forward to our March meeting which we had to cancel because of the COVID-19 virus. I am sure I speak for the whole chapter when I say that I am looking forward to the time when we can meet together again.

United Blind of the Tri-Cities

by Janice Squires

Well as everyone says, "Out with the old and in with the new." This is definitely the 2020 description of UBTC. With 20/20 vision, we are looking forward to a fabulous year.

Sherry Dubbin has handed over the gavel to our new president, Frank Cuta. Sherry, as our immediate past president, has taken on the important roles of candy sales, narrated plays, Facebook and outreach coordinator.

It has been 22 years since **Frank Cuta** has been UBTC president and we welcome him back with open arms. Frank has been the heart and soul of this organization since its inception. He has been our mentor, leader and dedicated and devoted member since the early days of the organization.

Bill Hoage is our returning first vice president, and has now accepted his new position as president not only of the local Lions Club but also of the Edith Bishel Center Board.

My intention of not being on the UBTC board for many years was to encourage others to pick up the challenge and become more active in our group. Well, now back as second vice president, I hope to continue working with the book group and remaining as our "Marian Librarian," downloading books for so many of our members.

For 11 years, **Brenda Vinther** has served diligently as our treasurer, and those reins have now been turned over to **Holly Kaczmariski**. Holly also is our birthday lady, spreading good wishes to our members on their special day.

Karyn Vandecar has taken over the role of secretary, but has kept her duties of luncheon and Christmas party lady. She says, if you feed them, they will come.

Thank you to **Diana Softich** as our newest board member. Diana also takes care of our card group and is now chairman of our membership committee.

Last but not least, our second board member, **Bernie Vinther**, is turning 75 this year. And, since he is now semi-retired from his business, he has more time to serve UBTC.

United Blind of Walla Walla

by Heather Meares

An early spring arrival has blessed us with budding trees, flowers popping out of the ground for their first hellos and blustery winds to keep everything moving in all directions.

Our chapter has been blossoming in some beautiful ways, as well. More members are attending meetings, getting involved in committees, helping decide the directions we want to focus on, and supporting each other in many ways. We have had some great discussions about community involvement ideas, fundraising possibilities, and the things we want to accomplish this year.

Just like the wind, we are mixing things up in all directions: inviting guest speakers to talk about transportation and voting issues, setting up training classes for our members, and doing some outreach in our town. It is an exciting thing to watch the enthusiasm of this chapter as it continues to explode, just like the flowers on the trees, and to see the slow and steady progress happening, as the long-awaited gardens emerge from the ground. All the hard work of last year is now bringing forth an abundant and ever-blooming chapter.

United Blind of Whatcom County

by Holly Turri

This has been a time of both happiness and sadness for our chapter. In January, we had speakers from the Bellingham Central Lions Club. We hope to forge a long-term relationship with them. In the spring, several of us have volunteered to participate on various programs with them.

In February, we heard an interesting presentation from **Betty Sikkema** who had just returned from Guide Dogs of the Desert with an adorable male poodle named **Harmon**. We also enjoyed a fun Valentine's Day celebration.

Due to COVID-19, we are all now learning to use the Zoom platform for our conference calling needs. Until we are free to meet in person, we will be gathering this way.

Once again, we are having coupon book sales.

Finally, it is with great sadness that we report the loss of two of our long-time members in January. **Barbara Crowley** and **Diane Kirscheman** both were remarkable women in their own ways.

Yakima Valley Council of the Blind

by Lisa George

Happy spring, everyone! All around us things are growing, including our chapter. We have four new members in our group, all of whom are getting involved and bringing new ideas and fresh perspectives. Welcome to **Tristen Breitenfeldt, Donna Douglas, Tom Douglas,** and **Ashley Trenkenschuh.**

We continue to work on our fundraising and outreach, and will offer our savings match program again this year to encourage members to save money and plan to experience our awesome WCB convention.

Our business meetings are now on the third Saturday each month, and we continue our outreach each Friday morning for bowling. Just as other chapters are experiencing, we now have our meetings via conference call and have to make an extra effort to stay connected while we can't gather together at the bowling alley.

Looking forward to the time when hugs don't have to be virtual and we can be together to share our beverages in person!

*****Hats Off**

compiled by Rhonda Nelson

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

Julie Brannon, on her appointment to the State Rehabilitation Council at Washington State Department of Services for the Blind.

Reefa Dahl, whose 90th birthday celebration included a stretch-limo ride to her favorite restaurant.

Reginald George, for his appointment to the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment.

Holly Kaczmariski, on receiving her master's degree in special education, with an emphasis in blind rehabilitation and assistive technology.

Jessamyn Landby, who started an internship program at a company called Skookum in January.

Betty Sikkema, who returned home Feb. 8 with an adorable male guide dog named Harmon. He is a black poodle from Guide Dogs of the Desert.

Bernie and Brenda Vinther, who will celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary May 5.

If you or someone you know has something for inclusion in Hats Off, email **theWCBNewsline@gmail.com** with “Hats Off” in the subject line. Those items that may not meet the criteria listed below may still be very appropriate in your local chapter’s “Around the State” article. The following are reasons for inclusion in this column:

- Birth of a child, grandchild or great-grandchild
- Birthday 75 years or more (in 5-year increments, yearly after 90)
- Marriage
- Wedding anniversary of 25 years or more (in 5-year increments)
- Graduation from high school, college or vocational program
- New job, career promotion, or retirement
- Partnering with a dog guide
- Appointment to a city, county, statewide, or national board or commission
- Exceptional recognition or award

*****2020 Calendar of Deadlines and Events**

April

- 15: Early donations begin for GiveBIG fundraiser (online)
19: Tech Chat with Reg George and Frank Cuta, 7 p.m.
27: Presidents conference call, 7 p.m.

May

- 5-6: GiveBIG fundraiser (online event)
17: Tech Chat with Reg George and Frank Cuta, 7 p.m.
23: WCB Open Board meeting via Zoom call, 10 a.m.
25: Presidents conference call, 7 p.m.
27: WCB committee chairs/co-chairs conference call, 7 p.m.

June

- 1: Deadline for submission of WCB scholarship applications
12: State Rehabilitation Council public meeting, 9 a.m.,
Department of Services for the Blind, Seattle
14: Washington State School for the Blind Commencement,
9:30 a.m., Vancouver

- 14: WSSB Board of Trustees meeting, noon, Vancouver
- 21: Tech Chat with Reg George and Frank Cuta, 7 p.m.
- 22: Presidents conference call, 7 p.m.

July

- 3-10: ACB Conference and Convention, online only
- 19: Tech Chat with Reg George and Frank Cuta, 7 p.m.
- 22: WCB committee chairs/co-chairs conference call, 7 p.m.
- 27: Presidents conference call, 7 p.m.

August

- 7-9: WCB Emerging Leaders Summit, Crowne Plaza Hotel, SeaTac
- 9: WCB Board Meeting, Crowne Plaza Hotel, SeaTac, 9 a.m.
- 16: Tech Chat with Reg George and Frank Cuta, 7 p.m.
- 24: Presidents conference call, 7 p.m.

September

- 11: State Rehabilitation Council public meeting, 9 a.m., Department of Services for the Blind, Seattle
- 20: Tech Chat with Reg George and Frank Cuta, 7 p.m.
- 23: WCB committee chairs/co-chairs conference call, 7 p.m.
- 25: WSSB Board of Trustees meeting, 11 a.m., Vancouver
- 28: Presidents conference call, 7 p.m.

October

- 18: Tech Chat with Reg George and Frank Cuta, 7 p.m.
- 26: Presidents conference call, 7 p.m.
- 29: WCB Board Meeting, Crowne Plaza Hotel, SeaTac, 7 p.m.
- 29-31: WCB state convention, DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Seattle Airport

November

- 13: WSSB Board of Trustees meeting, 11 a.m., Vancouver
- 15: Tech Chat with Reg George and Frank Cuta, 7 p.m.
- 23: Presidents conference call, 7 p.m.
- 25: WCB committee chairs/co-chairs conference call, 7 p.m.

December

- 4: State Rehabilitation Council public meeting, 9 a.m.,
Department of Services for the Blind, Seattle
- 20: Tech Chat with Reg George and Frank Cuta, 7 p.m.
- 28: Presidents conference call, 7 p.m.

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