



WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF THE BLIND

Opportunity, Equality, Independence
Founded 1935

WCB NEWSLINE

Summer 2020 Edition

“Discovering Brilliance through Resilience”

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WCB Newsline is the 2011, and now the 2020, winner of the Hollis Liggett Braille Free Press Award, presented annually by American Council of the Blind to a deserving affiliate for promoting best journalistic practices and excellence in writing.

WCB is a 501(c)(3) organization, which means your generous contributions are tax deductible. To make a donation electronically, please send PayPal payments to TreasurerWCB@gmail.com. Checks made payable to Washington Council of the Blind may be mailed to the attention of our treasurer, Lisa George, at PO Box 675, Yakima, WA 98907-0675.

Visit our website for more information at <http://www.WCBinfo.org>, or call us toll-free at 800-255-1147.

Calling All Members

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

Please send all submissions by August 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 or refuse submitted content, including author contact information, unless you explicitly tell us not to.
- All opinions expressed are those of the authors, not Washington Council of the Blind or WCB Newsline staff.
- We do not accept anonymous letters.
- Articles may be up to 1,000 words.
- Chapter updates may be up to 350 words.
- Please submit in Microsoft Word format when possible.
- Send all submissions to:

theWCBNewsline@gmail.com

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

How very well this Newsline's theme, "Discovering Brilliance through Resilience," describes how Washington Council of the Blind (WCB) members have been functioning during this time of coronavirus protections with the stay-at-home order in place.

We held a moment of silence at our May 23 board meeting in remembrance of WCB members who passed in April and May of this year: Joanne Hunter, member of Peninsula Council of the Blind; Mildred Johnson, member of Pierce County Association of the Blind; Lori Allison, member of Pierce County Association of the Blind; and Joan Lord, longtime member of United Blind of Seattle.

Our committees thrive in this difficult time by continuing to meet and accomplish their goals. Committees and their work are truly the heart of WCB. Some committees are finding themselves in a strange space, not sure what kind of planning can be done in either the near or extended future due to the constraints of the virus. However, people are handling the unknown and uncertainty with patience and grace.

During this time of not being able to meet in person, chapter presidents have truly rallied to meet the need to connect in alternative ways with chapter members by having Zoom and phone meetings, often more than once monthly.

Zoom conferencing training is being addressed in a variety of ways among WCB chapters and members. This allows WCB and chapter functions to happen via this platform.

Our Finance Committee is forging ahead with strength, for the first time allowing WCB to be involved in the statewide GiveBIG fund that raises donations for non-profit organizations throughout Washington state. Monies were raised for Lori Allison's Angel tribute via ACB, for various

chapters that took part in the process, and for WCB itself. For more details, read Lisa George's note on the results later in this issue.

Chapter presidents are working hard on the development of a connecting/mentoring process. We realized, who better to support and advise, mentor and share with each other about the ups and downs of these very important roles within our organization than presidents themselves.

Much connecting with one another within Washington and around the country has been possible via the American Council of the Blind's community events, organized and orchestrated by our own WCB member Cindy Hollis, now serving as ACB's Membership Services Coordinator. Read her article "Connecting the Dots." Many people have shared how these events have provided much needed connection and structure.

So, as you can see, WCB is truly surviving and thriving brilliantly and with resilience during this unique and difficult time in our lives.

Julie Brannon, WCB President: jbrannon0612@gmail.com

*****Letter from the Editors**

Greetings all,

For all intents and purposes of this letter alone, we will refer to our organization as Washington Council of the Brilliant (WCB), because that is exactly what every single one of you are. Observing the resilient efforts and accomplishments you have achieved has been compelling to say the least – some on a national level, hosting community event sessions and serving in crucial positions for American Council of the Blind (ACB), some dealing with educating your children at home, some educating yourselves in new ways through online classes and webinars, some trying to keep local chapters strong, some giving so many hours of time to fundraising efforts and committee work, some keeping in

communication with those of our members who are struggling with medical or other situations, and all of us finding new and diverse ways to get through every single day. All of us are dealing with the loss of loved ones and supporting each other in the best ways we can find.

We would like to take a moment to say thank you for all you have contributed to the Newsline. It is because of your excellent submissions, feedback, committee efforts, and support that your WCB Newsline has received the 2020 Hollis Liggett Braille Free Press Award, presented by ACB's Board of Publications for promoting best journalistic practices and excellence in writing. Congratulations, and may we keep serving you as your Newsline editors to the best of our abilities.

With sincere gratitude and best wishes,

Your Editors,

Heather Meares and Reginald George: TheWCBNewsline@gmail.com

*****It's Your Newsline, 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 Newsline you can't wait to read. Opinions expressed are those of the individuals, and not those of WCB.

From Frank Cuta:

I continue to be amazed by the quantity and quality of the articles being contributed to this publication. Boy, you guys really know how to bare your souls! I can feel the enthusiasm of the students learning Braille, the desperation of those finding love, and the frustration of those struggling with uncooperative computers.

From Julie Brannon:

I just completed the reading of this quarter's entire Newsline, with a cup of coffee alongside as I listened. Excellent, as always. Since the content is fresh for me, I'd like to vote for my reader's choice article for this issue, an article by Mark Adreon, "Are You Socially Relevant?" This is because Mark dared to deal with a topic that has been an issue for many blind persons when being alone in a crowd.

Such good content. You really do a marvelous job at pulling in very involved and not-so-involved WCB members for article submissions.

From John Ammeter:

I want to say this is the best Newsline I've ever read. All the articles written "from the heart" were so interesting. With the loss of my wife, Sue, I'm not daily reminded of blind issues. But, this Newsline has brought so many memories of what daily interaction in blind issues meant to both of us.

If I had to pick one article, it would have to be the one by Andy Arvidson. It was so much "from his heart" and he opened his history for all of us to understand how he dealt with blindness in his life and overcame many troubles. I've met Andy and know what a good man he is. I didn't know his history in this much detail and I'm so happy he has found happiness and success in both his marital and business life.

Thank you, and all of the contributors to this issue.

From Holly Turri:

The best article in the Newsline we just got is Andy Arvidson's. It takes a brave man to write what he did. His honesty, transparency, and darned good writing are why I vote for him.

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

This was an interesting one. We actually had a tie between Andy Arvidson for his article "Building Relationships," and Mark Adreon's Happy Warrior column, "Are You Socially Relevant?"

We believe that our readers have great taste, and we appreciate your participation. Both are in the running for our Reader's Choice Award for 2020, which will be presented at the WCB convention.

Please vote for your favorite article in the summer issue. Deadline for all votes and article submissions is Aug. 31.

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

*******FEATURES**

*****Cheshire Cat Interviews #9 "The Good, the Wild, and the Lovely" by Heather Meares**

So many of us spend our whole lives searching for that special something we are meant to do in life. Whether it is volunteer work, careers, or creative endeavors, we try a variety of options along the way and hopefully grow into a more well-rounded person throughout the process. If we are honest with ourselves, we know that process is never really done, even after retirement or moving on to the next chapter. There are those people who figure it out at an early point in life and are able to contribute their gifts for a very long time.

Linda Wilder is one of these gems. She worked for Washington Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) for more than 30 years as a vocational rehabilitation counselor and has been retired for the past three years, but is not slowing down in the least bit.

Linda says, "I had my dream job for 30 years. I loved every day of my work. It was so rewarding to assist people who were newly blind, or had been blind all their lives, helping them get to the goals that they wanted to reach. It was always interesting to work with people because they are so different in their attitudes. No one's blindness is exactly the same. I cared greatly for each one of them. It was rewarding in the sense that just giving them a little information, or a signature guide, something to get them started thinking 'I could actually sign my own name,' or with a talking watch, 'I don't have to ask other people.' I loved seeing them light up with the smallest devices and moving on from there."

"I miss the clients. I don't miss getting up at 4:00 in the morning. In my retirement, I don't need as much structure. I immediately got involved with Pierce County Association of the Blind (PCAB) and am on the Public Relations Committee. It was an easy transition from being a counselor to being just one of the members of PCAB, and I like that a lot. We have done Spaghetti in the Dark the past three years, which is a fundraising event and also creates awareness about what blind people can do. I can't tell you how much fun it is doing all that cooking. When Lori Allison was alive, (PCAB member and Washington Council of the Blind board director, who passed earlier this year), I would go over to her house and we'd do all the chopping, dicing, and cooking together. We also baked a lot of cookies for the rest stop at Federal Way. We served coffee and hundreds of cookies as another outreach and way of fundraising."

"I was just asked in January to join the board of the Hope Vision Foundation. We are developing a website and a Care Provider's Handbook for family members or loved ones who are losing their vision, that together will serve as a guide with really great information. I've written eight articles for it, and another couple has written at least that

many. It has answers to questions people might ask about topics like etiquette for dining, personal hygiene, reading, writing, low-vision equipment, how to make your home safe, and emergency and disaster situations, with great resources for every article."

"I have a fairly large family, including three sons, who have given me 11 grandchildren and one great granddaughter. My sons are quite successful, and I'm really proud of them because they weren't always. My kids were heavily into drugs. My youngest was a heroin addict, and spent half of his life in prison. He has been clean and sober now for seven years, is married with kids, and has written two books. Talk about a 360-degree turnaround. That man has done it. He owns his own business on Whidbey Island. My middle son lives in Olympia, has five sons, and owns the Olympia Mattress Company. My oldest son lives in Sedona, Arizona, and he's a massage therapist and does everything in the world with plants and gardening and that sort of thing. I really enjoy life, people, and traveling. My husband and I spent a month in the British Isles and it was incredible."

Heather: "How have you been handling the shelter-in-place times and what have you been doing to get through it all?"

Linda: "My husband and I are both avid readers and I've probably read about 30 books in the last three months, sometimes two or three at the same time. The author I have really gotten into is Wilbur Smith, from South Africa. He has over 50 books and I haven't read them all yet. Stephen White is another one I enjoy. Sometimes my husband and I will read the same book and then compare notes. Reading is a huge outlet for us. I have also been attending a lot of webinars.

I am on the State Rehab Counsel for the Blind, which meets every three months and, of course, is now meeting by phone. I am also on the Families Committee for WCB.

One of my big things is fashion. I'm going through my closet now and it's disgusting how many clothes, purses, shoes, and jewelry I have. Oh, my goodness!"

Heather laughs and replies: "You and I have that in common."

Linda: "I kind of have a reputation of being well-dressed and in fashion, so last year at the WCB convention, I was asked to talk to the youth about fashion. It was wonderful and so much fun. We talked about what to wear on a date, to school, and to a wedding. We had all this clothing for them to put outfits together and describe them, and tell us why they chose them. They really got into it. It was interesting to see how excited they were."

At the age of 28, Linda was struck with a disease that affected her entire body. She said goodbye to her significant other who was leaving for a trip, and woke up in the hospital two days later, deaf, blind, paralyzed from the neck down, no sense of smell or taste, everything was just gone. After being in the hospital for four months, she still had a positive, upbeat attitude, knowing she would eventually get out and back to her kids. As it turned out, her previous husband and his wife had to take custody of her children, all except the youngest one. It was the most horrible thing that had happened in her life. She spent years feeling so guilty that she had lost her boys, who were moving around different Naval bases, including Virginia, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, even though she was able to visit them.

The best part of the story is that she started at DSB's Orientation and Training Center (OTC) in 1976, even though she couldn't walk well, and she was able to regain everything except her vision. She took a taxi every day, first to the babysitter with her 1-year-old, then to the OTC and back. In 1979, Linda went to school, first getting her AA degree, then a degree in vocational counseling. She was then hired by DSB, which saw the importance of hiring her.

Linda says, "Blindness is not something I would wish on anybody and I'd love to be able to see my kids, but it has not been horrible for me. I learned good skills. I've never been able to read Braille, though, which has been a deficit, because I have a nerve condition, Raynauds, in my hands. I'm so impressed with people, like Julie Brannon (WCB president and former OTC director), who reads Braille faster than some people can read print."

"Have you heard of the Kubler-Ross stages of grieving: denial, anger, and the rest? I've added something to the end of that. Live a happy, full life. Don't let anything stop you."

Heather: "It sounds like you have done exactly that."

Linda: "Yeah, I think so!"

Heather Meares: hdmeares@gmail.com

*****Solitaire Scrabble and Simulated Spades by Rhonda Nelson**

I'm a big fan of getting together with family and friends to play Scrabble and cards. Too bad for her, you may be thinking; stay-at-home mandates have eliminated that fun. Oh, maybe think again. Though not ideal, with some modifications, the games have gone on.

For those of you who have not yet experienced the joy, and sometimes frustration, of Scrabble, this board game involves forming interlocking words, cross-word fashion, using letter tiles of different values. Players compete for high score by taking advantage of letter values, as well as premium squares on the board.

In my solitaire version, I simply play the game as usual, drawing tiles, forming words, and keeping track of the score. One advantage is that if a play I make sets up a nice opportunity for a high score on a

subsequent turn, I know the opportunity will remain mine and not be grabbed by an opponent. My scores have varied, the highest being 805 points. A pamphlet included with one of my long-ago acquired print/braille Scrabble sets says that in a two-handed game, a good player scores in the 300- to 400-point range. So, pretending there were two of me, we played pretty well that particular time.

A game that doesn't appear to lend itself to a solitaire version is Spades. In this card game, the players' goal is to accurately bid on the number of tricks they will take in a given hand, get points accordingly, and not lose points by overbidding. Tricks are taken by playing the highest card in the suit led or a card from the trump suit. Typically, spades is trump, thus the game's name, but my friend Mike and I have modified that a bit.

Mike is one of the people who taught me Spades a long time ago and with whom I have played many in-person games over the years. Somewhere during the new stay-at-home normal, he had the idea that we could try Spades over the phone. We did, and it worked! We spoke the number and suit of cards as we played them, as is our usual procedure anyway. The main change from an in-person game was that we each played with a full deck... of cards at least. This created the potential, if not likelihood, that there could be duplicates in any given hand. What would we do if we, in fact, played the same card in a particular turn? This could be especially pertinent if that card happened to be a good one, such as the ace of spades. We decided that whoever played the card first would get the credit, thus perhaps causing the other player to lose a counted-on trick. I can't put the blame there, but in our telephonic experiment, I played horribly while Mike played very well. Our final score was Mike 276, Rhonda negative 5. While these modifications have been fun, I look forward to the time when in-person get-togethers are again an option, and to the camaraderie and good food that come therewith.

Rhonda Nelson: rhonels36@gmail.com

*****Resilience and Altruism by Andy Arvidson**

In the past couple of months, during the coronavirus pandemic, life has taken on a new meaning for me. It has brought me to a new realm of altruism, more giving of oneself for the benefit of others, without asking for reward. How did all of this happen?

Remembering back to my childhood, when things were all about me, “I am not much, but I am all I think about,” just does not fit my lifestyle today. It has been a long journey, but a worthwhile one. I cry at sad movies, feel sorrow when things happen to others, turn the other cheek when I am attacked verbally or physically, and smile whenever possible.

My wife Colette and I decided to buy a new car, realized what they would probably offer us on a trade-in, and decided that we weren't willing to let our beloved Prius go that low. Therefore, we put our thinking caps on and looked at who could use a nice car for a reasonable price. Lo and behold, my son Andy Jr. needed a car.

Colette said, why don't we sell it to him for \$1? No, I said, let's sell it to him for \$10. **The state has made it impossible to gift a car to family members.**

When I told my son, he was pleased. I explained the conversation that Colette and I had about the price and asked him to choose. He picked \$10 instead of \$1. Brilliant choice, I thought.

In the past, I would have been upset at the car dealership and stormed out of there with a bad temper, but not this time. Calmly, I was able to say thanks, we will just not do a trade-in and will give the car to one of our children. The salesman said are you sure, and we both said yes. It is a good car and my son is always in need of wheels.

There's another story about my son and vehicles. Thirty years ago, he was going to take my truck without permission. This was near the end of my driving time. Anyway, when I found out, I kindly explained to him that I would have had him arrested if he had done that. He said, but you are my dad. I replied yes, I am, but if you steal from me, you are a common criminal, son or not.

He was shocked, but later he thanked me for the lessons I taught him. In fact, at one point I asked him if he'd rather I be his dad or a friend. He said he would like me to be his dad and not a friend, and that has worked well for us. We have learned a lot together.

He taught me how to communicate with one of my daughters. I told him she would not return my calls, and he said most people don't talk on phones anymore, they text. So I learned how to text, and she responded immediately. Wow!

Speaking of communication, we had purchased several Echo Dots, and at our chapter meeting asked if anyone would be interested in receiving one for free. Out of the blue, one of our older members said that she would. She was the last member that I believed would take one. I was blown away, as she has always backed off of technology.

Early the next day we drove to her house and dropped it off on her porch. Her son and his family came over later that day and set it up for her.

The same evening, she left us a voice-mail, overly excited and elated that Alexa was playing "Danny Boy" for her, as she is from Ireland.

If I had not come to the point of being resilient in these times, and learned how to be altruistic in nature, neither of these events could have occurred.

Andy Arvidson: arvidsonandy@gmail.com

*****Crackerjacks and the Pandemic by Alco Canfield**

"What do you want when ya gotta eat somethin', and it's gotta be quick, and it's gotta be a lot, and ya gotta have it now, what-do-ya-want? Crackerjacks!" Guaranteed to be savory, sweet, and salty; best of all, a prize at the bottom, a reward for loyal indulgence. "Candy-coated popcorn, peanuts and a prize. That's what you get in crackerjacks."

This little ditty summarizes our culture. We want, got to have, a lot, now, whatever it may be! We assume that whatever we want will be at the grocery store, toilet paper to Clorox. Lately, our routines and our assumptions have taken a hit.

I am not unmindful of the grief, fear and suffering stalking so many people along with Covid-19. But perhaps this time spent staying at home or in forced distancing may provide us with an opportunity to reflect about what's really important. I heard a woman remark that she had been so busy that she had lost track of her priorities. Spending meaningful time with her family was something she had been missing without realizing it.

The pandemic has called forth extraordinary goodness and generosity from people in our country – from selfless medical personnel risking their lives to treat patients, to individuals stocking shelves in grocery stores and delivering groceries to those who can't or shouldn't go out. I am heartened by the resilience of so many people who have lost so much personally and economically.

With the din of advertising in our ears goading us on to gluttony and other forms of unbridled consumerism, we might also hear a kinder, gentler, compassionate call to a genuine caring for those inside and outside our immediate spheres.

What do you get when you want to give something, and it's gotta be quick, maybe not a lot, and you want to give it now? What do you get? Not candy-coated popcorn, or peanuts, but the prize of contributing to the community of which we are all a part. A phone call, a letter, or financial contributions are a few examples of the many ways we can show our concern. The opportunities to give that present themselves will further our equality and independence, and will give us the satisfaction of knowing that, in small and great ways, we CAN make a difference.

Alco Canfield: alcocanfield@gmail.com

*****Striding Down Route Covid-19 by Holly Turri**

When the coronavirus slunk onto the stage of our lives, I was scared to death. "Could this be the end? Are we all going to die?" These were just some of the many things I prayed about and, frankly, worried over.

Then one day it hit me. We all have to climb this mountain. Whether we like it or not, each of us must join the hike. While we are on the journey, we can decide to sing or whine. This is a conscious choice. Although I will hurt your ears, I choose the song route.

For 32 years, my commute to my place of gainful enjoyment was either a 2- or 4-hour roundtrip. What a pleasure it is to sit in my house and obey a proclamation discouraging me from going somewhere.

Resiliency is the ability to adjust to difficult situations in a creative and timely manner. Blind people naturally have this in our makeup. Learning and adapting are things we have done since toddlerhood. Getting groceries with Instacart, talking on Zoom, and cooking with different foods are just some of the ways this excellent trait has been manifested.

In many ways, my sighted friends find this whole thing daunting and discouraging. It's just our lives.

What if this virus situation occurred in the dead of winter? Can you imagine how hard it would be to deal with all these changes in the cold, wet, and darkness?

God has given us the gift of spring. Even if we can't leave our homes, we can sit on the balcony or open the window to appreciate the beauty all around us. He dressed up our world. Even at a distance, it's our job to host his party.

Even though we have to wear masks, yuck, people have designed attractive and interesting ones. I've heard of cat, dinosaur, floral, smart sayings, and many other kinds. We've got a new way to express ourselves. Yay team! Now, if they'd only come up with one that didn't make me sweat like a pig. Walking with my guide dog, Pima, and wearing mine is a sight to see.

Meetings should always be held online. Look at all the fossil fuels we are saving. Ditto church. Sorry if that offends someone or other. Sitting on my couch with a cup of coffee causes me to feel so much more in touch with Jesus. Also, since I don't actually have to sing, I have had a chance to really listen to and ponder the words of our songs and hymns. Yes, it will be wonderful to go back, but I'm not in a super hurry.

Creativity has been shown in so many ways. My granddaughter, Nina, celebrated her 7th birthday. Her best friend and her mom drew a 6-foot-long "happy birthday" banner with the usual greeting, plus pictures of all the things my angel loves to do. Then they drove by the house with it. What a wonderful idea.

So many people have created corona parodies. Truly, laughter is the best medicine.

Most importantly, my chapter, WCB, and ACB all care. Although I'm a member of other groups and organizations, nothing like what we are experiencing has been forthcoming. Our entities have and are taking steps to keep us together. All the online discussions, like the local and national coffee meetings, have helped me get to know absolutely amazing and fascinating people. We can learn with groups about technology and books. Romance and dating are covered. We mustn't forget computer games. Meetings for cancer survivors and recovering alcoholics have just been added. The healthy benefits with essential oils, as well as yoga, are offered. Our chapter is throwing a virtual May Day party. Frankly, if I chose to, I'd be on Zoom all day and part of the evening. All this is free. Thank you Cindy for being the force behind this amazing concept and for making it so.

A famous hurricane forecaster and researcher named Isaac Cline lived by this maxim: "Time is our most precious gift. Wasted hours can never be reclaimed." Heartfelt thanks to all those who are so generous with this commodity.

My heart hurts for the unemployed and hungry. I do what I can to help. We all should. However, anything we try ought to be given with a glad spirit. From sadness and trouble, we have chosen to enjoy opportunities of which we have never dreamed.

Holly Turri: holly.turri9@gmail.com

*****Virtual is the New Reality for These 2020 Graduates
by Lisa George**

It's a tradition. It's a rite of passage. It's a celebration of the hard work and achievement of a major goal in a young life. What is it? High school graduation, of course.

This year, six Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB) graduates experienced the same unusual situation as many other students, when the pandemic shut down schools across the country. Demonstrating

their resilience, they were successful in their academic endeavors and will have a unique story to tell about their high school graduation.

Rather than the on-campus gathering of family, friends, and well-wishers, the ceremony in 2020 was literally a production, put together as a YouTube video, complete with audio description. It allowed each graduate to speak from the heart, faculty and staff to share their best wishes, and all those watching to get a front-row seat to the festivities.

Both WSSB Director of On Campus Programs Sean McCormick and WSSB Superintendent Scott McCallum gave their remarks to the graduates before commencement speaker Lt. Gov. Cyrus Habib.

Lt. Gov. Habib shared his experiences with WSSB activities and encouraged the graduates: “We know that we will continue to have to change to do things. As blind people, we’re in a good position to help others adapt. We have strategies, we’re creative. You have a special responsibility to be leaders, you have earned that right. Behind you are all your memories; ahead of you are all your dreams; beside you are all who love you; within you is all you need.”

Civil Rights activist Dolores Huerta also had a message for the graduates: “Resilience is your muscle that will get stronger.”

The WSSB Board of Trustees Award was announced by Nancy McDaniel, chair, and awarded to two recipients this year: Alex Murillo-Collins and Quincy Vague.

Without a physical stage for this commencement, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Jennifer Langley “took the stage to the graduates” and traveled across the state to capture those moments. With balloons flying, tassels swinging, and smiles all around, each student received his or her diploma, and also got the chance to ring a handbell for each year spent at WSSB (the tradition which understandably had to be transformed for this road show).

Congratulations to the WSSB Class of 2020!

- Tristan Freckleton, Portland
- Katrina Manalo, Camano Island
- Alexander Murillo-Collins, Moses Lake
- Damian Parra, Olympia
- Nolan Schaffer, Monroe
- Quintin “Quincy” Vague, Friday Harbor

If you'd like to watch the WSSB 2020 graduation ceremony, go to <https://youtu.be/qjxo6-dwj5Y>

Lisa George: lmwgeorge@yahoo.com

*****LIFESTYLE

***Book Chat by Alan Bentson

Now, where were we? Oh yes, we were talking about World War II and how it still casts a giant shadow over our world and our books. I have been reading “Hidden Figures: the American Dream and the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped to Win the Space Race” (db86835), by Margot Lee Shetterly.

It is a bestseller with a movie to go along with it, so I'm probably the last person in the world to get around to it. If you've read it, you will remember how during WWII the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) -- later to become the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) -- was very short of computers to help them design and test the planes. Lots of this work was being done at Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory in Hampton, VA, a southern city with a pool of African-American women teachers who were greatly overqualified for their jobs.

The computers the agency was looking for were not machines, but people to do the endless calculations involved in the work of building the planes. In the old days, “typewriters” were the people who did the typing, not the machines, and the same is true for computers. These women might never have been hired if the men had not been off to war and if there had not been such a huge amount of work to be done because of the war. This book provides many examples of women who thrived at this work, changed and grew as the years went by, and came to program the computers instead of being computers.

This postmodern era in literature is known for blending genres, and this book is a great blend of social history, individual biography and scientific study of the development of aeronautics into astronautics.

Our author was lucky to have a wealth of examples, but after a while I had a hard time remembering who was who, since their careers were so similar. This is not the author's fault, really. As much as I love history, I often have a hard time keeping track of everyone.

Shetterly seems more concerned with what the work these women did was like than with what they were doing, but to this uneducated eye, her descriptions of engineering challenges do seem right on the money, clear and concise.

Those wishing for more descriptions of the problems of rocketry, and a more detailed history of the early space program, may wish to try “Rocket Men: The Epic Story of the First Men on the Moon (db69775), by Craig Nelson.

This book also has a long opening section about WWII, focusing on the German rocketry program and the hardships visited on the forced labor who largely staffed the project. “Hidden Figures” is narrated by Emily Ellet, and she is particularly good, precise without being mechanical,

and yet conveying a lot of warmth for the people in the story and excitement about their accomplishments.

“Rocket Men” is narrated by Lou Harpenau, one of the veteran American Printing House for the Blind guys. If you have ever read Newsweek or The Reader's Digest, you know what a good narrator he is.

Would there have been a space race or a moon landing without WWII? Would there have been a modern women's movement or a civil rights struggle without the impetus of WWII? Possibly, but the war lit a fire that encouraged these events, and none of them would have happened as quickly or as dramatically. I certainly hope we do not have to put on another major war to promote progress in space exploration or in advancing human rights.

I seem to be reading a lot about war lately. I read a book from audible.com called “Storm and Fortress, the Clash of Empires in the Eastern Seas, 1809,” by Stephen Taylor, that brought the Napoleonic war at sea to life.

Narrator James Adams from Blackstone Audio vividly recreates a world of wooden ships and endless sea voyages, men fighting other men, but also taking on hurricanes in order to bring saltpeter from thousands of miles away in India to make gun powder for the war in Europe.

The author points out several characters that have fictional counterparts in the famous Captain Aubrey series by Patrick O'Brian, and he frequently uses “Pride and Prejudice,” by Jane Austen, to illustrate the dilemmas of the characters of ladies in the story.

I just cannot imagine willingly boarding one of those awful, cramped, leaky ships to travel very slowly halfway around the world. Think of all the parents who put their children aboard these same ships to travel by themselves an unimaginable distance just because an English education was thought to be superior.

I also read "St. Patrick's Battalion," by James Alexander Thom, about the Mexican War (1846-1849) in which we conquered a large part of our present country. Mark Ashby narrates this novel and if all you have ever heard him read is magazines, I think you will find his rendering of this story a true revelation of talent. This book also inspired a movie.

I have not seen Hidden Figures, but I have seen St. Patrick's Battalion, and it is good, if nothing else than for the music provided by the Chieftains.

This book seemed especially gruesome, even for a war story, as it depicted the sufferings of both sides in a world of poor medicine, poor sanitation and downright bad food. The "battalion" was made up of Irish soldiers in the American army who deserted in the face of very prejudiced treatment from their officers, and a desire to fight with fellow Catholics rather than Americans who did not appreciate them. It is a sad and thought-provoking story that makes you see this war from a different point of view.

Hope you are all finding good things to read in this era of staying home. Be safe.

Alan Bentson, Readers' Advisor: a.bentson@comcast.net

*****Dreamscape
by Heather Meares**

Whenever I move to a new home, my head immediately fills with ideas of what I could create in the outside spaces. Even in small apartments, I somehow can't keep myself from filling the tiniest patio with many plants and unique accoutrements to transform it into a place of refuge. I have owned my past three homes, which allows me to think big and design long-term landscape plans. My current residence has been the most challenging in the sense that it has been the first one done from a

completely blind perspective. It has also been the most powerful and rewarding one. Not only have I considered the visual beauty others will behold, but I have incorporated functionality and accessibility to garden independently if I so desire. That's all well and good, but what I really want to show you is the magic. Take a walk with me through my garden paths and let them cast a spell over you, if even for a moment.

As we exit the front door, we land on "The Front Porch of Happiness." First, we have to say hello to Henry, the pot person. His body is an upside-down clay pot painted with green overalls and a yellow shirt. He has two smaller pots as arms connected with a rope, and a right-side-up pot as a face. He has had many different hairstyles, but is currently wearing hens and chicks as a man bun and dreadlocks. He has an antique wooden toolbox he has cultivated with verbena and other annuals. Most of the things here came with me from Denver and were given to me by friends near and dear to my heart: an apple cider press; an old wooden and wrought iron bench facing the crabapple tree in the front yard; a giant 3-foot urn, given to me by my great Aunt B, topped with a blooming fuchsia basket. The blossoms hang upside down, with tiny threads dangling from the center of a ruffled, puff ball, wearing four pointed petals as a collar. The buds start as fragile little berries that explode into magnificent showers of flowers. Hundreds of dainty little lobelia blossoms, no bigger than a pea, peek through the fuchsias and cascade down the sides of the basket. As you sit on the bench, you hear deep, echoing chimes above your head in the key of C, which is a very happy key, indeed. The clicking of several hummingbirds surrounds you, accompanied by chirping birds and chattering squirrels, all finding the gifts provided for them. You set your drink on a table that is actually an antique iron and thick glass window, rescued from an old, historic brick building that had been torn down. The window rests on two sets of cement blocks with lots of annual flowers spilling from the tops on both ends. The combination of the raw hard materials with the softness and color of the plants is quite intriguing. The sweet, heady perfume of jasmine and vanilla-scented heliotrope consumes you, making you wonder if you may actually be dreaming.

Next, you step down onto a quartz crystal stone step leading into “The Secret Courtyard of Contemplation and Conversation.” As you step down one more time, you hear the crunching of very small, round river rocks that cover the entire area. Here you must stop for a moment and reach out your arms in both directions. On the left you find long, 5-foot-tall grass-like foliage that is actually a brilliant, colorful daylily. The giant, star-shaped trumpets are a tropical shade of coral red that grow on spikes much taller than me. On your right, you feel soft pine needles and tiny pinecones beginning to form. Below these, as you walk along a path of stepping stones, on either side are old apple crates filled with several varieties of mint. Apple-, mojito-, and strawberry-scented on one side, orange, ginger, and chocolate on the other. There are also two flats of the most minuscule and surprisingly potent Corsican mint, which is used to make Crème de Menthe liqueur, and the softest wooly thyme, waiting to be planted between the stepping stones. They release their fragrance every time they are walked on and I am sure the fairies dance on them at midnight, too. Of course, you must bend down and feel, taste, and smell them all. This will clear your head of any troubling thoughts for sure. Straight ahead is an inviting table and chairs, placed under the natural umbrella of a large pine tree. The rain begins to fall, but you don’t even get wet. You sit here listening to the droplets singing their quiet song in gentle harmony with the crickets, as a squirrel has taken over the bamboo birdcage hanging behind the table. This makes you chuckle a bit. On the table, you also notice a pot of orange thyme and a larger pot of silver posey-thyme that is so fluffy you literally cannot quit petting it. The teardrop-shaped leaves lightly dance under the palm of your hand and tickle your fingertips, leaving their fresh scent on your skin. When I say this is a secret courtyard, I am only being half-truthful. It is currently enclosed by brand new cherry laurel hedges that will eventually grow to be about 12 feet high. This will completely block the side garden area from the neighbors and front yard – unless you enter it through the old antique door nestled in the hedge. For now, the hedges are not very tall and the door is still in the garage, but we can imagine, right?

Now that we have enjoyed our glass of wine, we must continue back to the stone path because it has one more room to lure us into. There is a beautiful wrought-iron archway, covered in sparkling crystals in many different colors, reflecting the sunlight passing through them. Before you enter, you must stop and smell the roses. And by roses, I don't just mean any old roses. These are two identical, lollipop-style tree roses on each side of the arch. But wait...there's one more secret. They are a graft of two different varieties. The first is a lovely yellow Julia Child rose, and the second is a delicious magenta-purple clustered rose called Ebb Tide, and it is quite intoxicating. The two contrasting colors emerging from the same plant are like stunning parasols, standing about 5 feet high, a convenient height for taking in the aroma as you pass through the arch into "The Rainbows and Roses Destiny Garden."

This garden is a straight, symmetrical pathway, lined on either side with one of my favorite lavender varieties, Grosse Bleu. A riotous rainbow of roses and perennials create a menagerie of all shapes, sizes, colors, scents and textures, including blue delphiniums, poppies, peonies, black-eyed Susans, ornamental onions (which are so adorable I could not leave them at the nursery), lilacs, blue hydrangeas, blue salvia, lupine, forget-me-nots, and lots of potted herbs and heirloom tomatoes. In the center of this glorious path is a simple yet beautiful fountain that just so happens to be outside my bedroom window. Well, perhaps I do not actually have the "Fountain of Destiny" yet, but I can hear it there already, trickling and bubbling, attracting the butterflies and bluebirds to come take a dip, dream a bit, and reflect upon their own destinies.

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*****A Walk through the World of Essential Oils by Alco Canfield**

I have always loved fragrance. As a child, I remember the pungent smell of incense at midnight mass, sure to keep one awake. As an adult, I purchased one of those incense burners and had a glorious time lighting the charcoal and dropping the odoriferous powder on top of it.

My mother gasped when she saw the blackened urn. I lit stick incense for a while, but was always afraid some stray ember might cause a fire.

I have just recently begun my journey into the world of essential oils. I had no idea there were so many different vendors. New Directions Aromatics is a wholesale company selling essential oils, soap, hair-care products, and supplements, to name just a few items. doTERRA is a multi-level marketing company, but one can sign up to buy wholesale without being hounded to do more. I know some members of Washington Council of the Blind are involved with Scentsy.

Some oils are safe to use internally while others are not. The literature promises they do all kinds of things, from calming to improving focus and energy. Each individual will need to decide which oils work best for the desired effects.

Many diffusers are on the market and I have had difficulty finding one that carries the fragrance throughout the room. I thought perhaps I was not adding enough oil. There are pipettes available, which allow one to squeeze the oil in drop by drop. I just shake and guess. I bought some diffusers from Amazon and Target. I am still looking for the perfect one.

I am excited to see so many possibilities in the world of essential oil fragrance. Placebo or not, using essential oils just makes me feel better. However, I am still learning.

There is a wealth of information about essential oils on YouTube and the material on many company websites is very accessible.

I hope you venture into this land and have a good time smelling the wonderful oils from the beautiful plants created for us to enjoy.

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*****Offerings by Hayley Agers**

Almost 15 years ago, I decided to give up my career as an occupational therapist to start a family. I've known since I was a young girl that I wanted to be a Mum, and I had big ideas about what that would look like. I had already been through three miscarriages. I wanted to be a Mum more than anything.

When Brayden was born, and then three years later Sydney, my life changed in the most amazing ways. I've spent the last 15 years devoting my life to being the best Mum I could be. I gave up many things I enjoyed because the joy of motherhood was greater.

My children are growing up now, and need me differently than in the past, which leaves me wondering what I have to offer. I questioned whether or not I'd want to go back to being a therapist. I lacked computer skills and was convinced I had nothing to offer an employer.

It wasn't until my dear friend Cindy asked me if I would be interested in hosting an American Council of the Blind (ACB) call discussing essential oils that I wondered if I had something else to give. Self-doubt crept in. Would people want to hear what I had to say? All it would have taken was a low turnout on that call, and I would have been convinced what I had to offer was only valuable to me.

This was not the case. More than 20 ACB members from around the country joined me that first week, listening as I spoke about oils, and sharing how they've helped me deal with health concerns in a natural way. Many have returned week after week, sharing their own stories and needs. I have been blessed to meet some amazing people. Some have purchased oils to try and some simply join us for the company. Both reasons are fine with me. I never dreamt I'd get this response.

From the beginning, my intention was to share myself with others, reach out a helping hand, and spread hope in such uncertain times.

Here is my new truth: Because of this opportunity, many have joined my team, purchased oils, and attended classes. I never intended this to be a business, but that's what it has become. Does it mean my intentions have changed? No, not at all. For the first time in 15 years, I am making my own money, and it feels good. It's not much, but no longer do I have to turn to my husband for money so I can go out for coffee with a friend, or buy that new dress. I can now buy my husband a 26th anniversary present.

I feel a renewed sense of purpose. Who I am, and what I have to offer is enough. I am so grateful for good friends who believed in me before I believed in myself, and for the new friends I have made. I am thankful to ACB, where everyone has a place they can belong.

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*****Masks Unmasked
by Holly Turri**

Earlier today, my guide dog and I walked to the community food co-op to pick up a few groceries. The new rule in Bellingham is that if we are outside, masks must be worn at all times. Suddenly, I had one of those amazing thoughts I get far too infrequently. When wearing our face coverings, blind people have the advantage over our seeing counterparts. Here is why.

Sighted people process most of the information from interactions with others through vision. "No duh," you say. Think about it. The face is covered. Facial expressions can't be seen, so they are uncomfortable and can have trouble cluing in to conversational nuances. Does this sound familiar? Often they say the same thing about us.

Emotions are challenging for them to decipher. That danged mask gets in the way. For all our lives, we've gathered information through vocal inflections. Sighted people never learned to do this well.

Do you think we should teach them some tricks? Or should we let them learn the hard way?

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*****What's On Your Plate? by Hayley Agers**

Summer is here, yes that's right. Although, right now the days seem to run into one another and we wonder if outside picnics, family gatherings, and parties will ever exist again. I'm here to tell you they will. When they do, you'll want to try these easy recipes.

Cheesy Rigatoni Pepper Bake

Yield: 6 to 8 servings

- 1 lb. rigatoni pasta
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 onion, finely diced
- 2 28-oz. cans of diced tomatoes
- 1 6-oz. can tomato paste
- 2 8-oz. balls of fresh mozzarella, cut into cubes (or use 4 cups of shredded)
- 9 tbsp. grated parmesan cheese
- 1 1-lb. bag of mini sweet bell peppers (you can use large, too)

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the rigatoni according to the directions on the box, about 10 minutes. Drain and set aside to cool.

2. Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and cook until the onions are golden, about 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes and tomato paste and mix until everything is combined. Add salt and pepper and simmer for 15 minutes.
3. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
4. Spread a thin layer of the sauce in the bottom of a 9x13 baking dish. Layer in half of the cooked noodles, half of the cubed or shredded mozzarella, 3 tbsp. of the grated parmesan, and half of the diced bell peppers. Top with half of the remaining sauce. Repeat the process with the remaining noodles, mozzarella, 3 tbsp. parmesan, sweet peppers and the last of the sauce. Top with the 3 tbsp. of parmesan cheese you still have remaining. If making ahead, cover with tinfoil and place in the refrigerator.
5. Cover and bake until the sauce is bubbling and the peppers are cooked through, about 40 minutes. Let sit 10 minutes before serving.

If you are a meat lover and must have some meat in this dish, add in some Italian sausage such as Jimmy Dean, along with the onions and garlic. Continue on with the rest of the recipe as instructed.

Parmesan Balsamic Vinaigrette

Yield: 1 cup

- 2 tbsp. white balsamic vinegar
- 1 lemon, peeled and halved
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 tsp. salt
- 4½ tsp. fresh basil leaves, chopped
- 1½ tbsp. fresh thyme leaves
- ¼ cup grated parmesan cheese
- ¼ tsp. ground black pepper
- ½ cup olive oil

Blend all ingredients in a blender and serve over a bed of greens. You may want to add additional vegetables if serving by itself. But if serving it with the above rigatoni recipe, greens alone will work just fine.

Aguas Frescas

A delicious blend of fruit and herbs to cool you down and hydrate you during hot summer days.

- 1 cup roughly chopped fruit (strawberries, cantaloupe, peeled cucumber, pineapple)
- 1 cup water
- ½ medium lime, juiced
- 1 tsp. agave or sweetener of choice
- Optional, 2 large mint leaves, perfect with the cucumber

1. Combine all of the ingredients and blend until smooth. Taste and, if necessary, add more lime or sweetener and blend again.
2. Serve immediately over ice.

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

*****Chronicle of a Happy Warrior #4: Discovering Brilliance through Resilience by Mark Adreon**

The future looked daunting and depressing. Why did I have all this happen to me and continue to expand like dominos, one after the other?

What a nice day, until I severely and violently broke my leg. The ride to the hospital was excruciating with the emergency vehicle hitting every pothole and me without any pain medications. Three hours of surgery, notable loss of blood and recovery in ICU. After three days, transfusions

were needed to bring blood pressure from 70 to a normal range. On day three, waking up and not being able to take a breath with the oxygen being normal, anxiety attack with medication causing hallucinations. X-rays revealed pulmonary edema, meaning blood clots on air sacks in my lungs, which immediately required a Heparin drip. My blood sugars were out of whack, and pain medications were creating a fog.

Yea, time to be released from the hospital after eight days to a rehab center to begin the long journey to walking again. Packed and ready to go, oh, the available bed was no longer there. Yea, time to go again – what, no bed? After realizing that the rehab centers were afraid to have a blind patient for rehab, it was time to launch a strong and targeted advocacy plan to hold rehab centers accountable to the policies of Swedish Hospital.

This story continues with challenges of equity at the rehab center, making gains on mobility, and having them disappear after additional incidents. Working part-time from home, then full-time. Having additional issues like carpal tunnel, rotator cuff pain and weakness, and the outside of my left leg completely numb. Every limb was now having an issue.

The definition of resilience as a noun is: Ability to recover from adversity, depression or sickness.

As an adjective, the ideas of rebounding or springing forward, leaning in, or fighting the obstacles around us defines it.

Staying engaged, staying focused on the positive outcome and maintaining enough strength to keep moving forward while feeling everything is moving the opposite way.

If making it through without giving up is resilience, does this make it brilliance? How does resilience become a pathway to brilliance?

Brilliance as a noun can be great brightness, luster, splendor, excellence or distinction, eloquence.

Surviving or making it through adversity does not necessarily mean it was eloquent, brilliant, excellent or distinctive. It does mean you made it through to the other end of adversity. This has high value and should be celebrated.

We have all heard the stories about the person who lost their vision and started climbing seven of the world's highest mountain peaks. The person who loses both their legs and, with prosthetics, runs a national marathon. These stories are certainly excellent, distinctive, and an example of brilliance. Does everyone need to climb mountains or run marathons to be considered examples of brilliance? The answer is no.

There are many ways to achieve brilliance through your personal resilience. Staying positive, fighting for resolution, supporting others as you support yourself, finding how your experience is bigger than yourself and the fight is for your community.

Brilliance can be the perception of how you see the situation. Is it about banding together or standing alone?

Brilliance is personal and defined by you. Is it a goal or an outcome?

Does brilliance provide incentive for others to stay in the moment and stay strong in the face of adversity? Are you modeling or mentoring? Are you an example to support others? Or is the focus personal?

All the above can be signs of resilience, and pathways to brilliance. Choose your own path and walk with others to the mountaintop.

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*****Birth of the ADA
by Frank Cuta**

Access denied! rights stripped! ripped off! outraged! dreams shattered!
righteous wrath!
Shackled! cast aside! special treatment! smothered! bitter pill! lynch
mob math!
No ramps! no trial! no rights! no Braille! no doubt no clout! legal rape!
hell fire! hurt bad! endured forever, fuse ignited! now fire inside, verdant
state!

Rallied round, ground swell, byte it off, out in front! fears ironed out!
must not fail!
Not diverted! not divided! not denied! determined, directed pressure will
prevail!
Nineteen ninety pulled it off, glorious new world! give us wings!
everybody wins, sweet victory!
Revered prize, red rockets ablaze! blue bunting, awesome all American
alabaster!
A! D! A!

*******HISTORY**

*****Let the Buyer Beware
by Carl Jarvis**

P.T. Barnum said, "There's a sucker born every minute." And then he
set out to prove it.

It's true that there are users and scammers swimming like sharks in the
pool. But they are very small, both in numbers as well as in social
responsibilities. We have become accustomed to being "entertained" by
our mass media, with the wicked and evil happenings, as if they were

what we all are about. Tragedy and violence, according to those experts who keep score, appear to sell more product than do the average activities and kindnesses that go on daily. This is why diversity and history are both so important if we are going to make sense out of today's events and protect the gains and advance forward in our struggle as blind people to become equal members of society.

Diversity: In the sense that we need to be open and involved in conversations of all sorts, weighing and considering the information that makes sense to us, and which meets the needs of our fellow blind, as well as our own needs.

History: Because we need to know where we have been and what has worked and what has not worked. Knowing our history and how it fits into the larger history of our nation should give us guidance and hope as we plan our future.

We can no longer afford the luxury of saying, "I'm not political." We all are political, whether we like it or not. It's part of life. And if we plan to live life, we are all a part of the body politic, we are teachers. All blind people are teachers.

Again, regardless of whether or not we want to be, our very existence is observed and impacts how others believe they understand blindness.

It's difficult to understand that a position of no action is actually an action. By not speaking up when confronted with discrimination, we are giving silent support. As blind people, far too often we shrink back in fear of drawing unwanted attention to ourselves.

First, we need to identify and understand the basic issues. We need to become aware of all sides of the issue. We need discussion among our trusted friends, understanding their views. And finally, once we have arrived at a position, we must answer the call to action. In other words, we become political beings.

I point out this rather obvious thought because too often we shrink back from current events, fearing that if we speak out we could jeopardize our favored status. But this current favored status is the result of hard struggles by the blind. From the street beggars, to the alms houses, to the sweatshops, to the organized blind, we have fought our way to our present place.

Still, we are just on the edge of society. If we are to become part of society, then we must take the plunge and become active citizens.

It is no accident that in my 55 years as a blind man, we have moved from being seen as patients being treated, to being clients being served, to being participants taking an active part in planning our future.

We are on a road that goes two directions. We can continue becoming active participants, and move forward, or withdraw and go backward.

Years from now, I would hope people looking back on today's events will say, "They rose to the challenges of the times, and did what was necessary."

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*****The Story of Charles Abbott
by Peggy Chong**

(Reprinted with the kind permission of the author.)

(Biographical Note: Peggy Chong is known as “the blind history lady,” as her work over the years has brought about her books and articles about people in history who were blind and nearly lost until Peggy dug up the articles and stories from relatives and schools to breathe some life into the lives they lived. Currently, Peggy lives in Aurora, CO, and is actively working to preserve the history of the blind of Colorado.)

Charles Abbott was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in December of 1864, to William and Lizzie Abbott. He was one of the youngest of at least twelve children. His family can date their roots in Sommerset, Maryland back to the late 1600's when his Gr., gr., gr., gr., Grandfather, John Bounds, moved to Sommerset from Virginia.

At about the age of 8, Charles went blind from an undocumented illness. He was sent to the School for the Blind in Baltimore, MD, where he learned the skill of piano tuning and studied music. It may be that the illness that blinded him, also took the life of his parents as they both died near the same time in 1871 when Charles was blinded. The Abbott children went many separate ways at that time.

When he was 15, he went to stay with his brother-in-law, William Taylor, only 17 himself, who was working on a farm as a servant. Charles was not working there, rather, staying with William that census year and most likely attending public school during the winter months. There is no evidence that Charles attended a school for the blind.

In 1890, Charles traveled across the country and took a job at the Iowa College for the Blind in Vinton Iowa where he taught piano tuning classes in their Industrial department. In 1895, about the time the college stopped focusing on full-time instruction for blind adults, he left the school and moved to Black Hawk County, Iowa.

After leaving Vinton, he kept his tuning customers from outside the school, traveling back there several times a year to build up and maintain his tuning business. Charles Abbott was soon well-known as the totally blind man who worked as a musician and a piano tuner in the Webster City, Laporte, Iowa Falls area. He was known to be an enthusiastic, intelligent man who made friends easily wherever he traveled.

Mr. Abbott built his own house in Iowa Falls, just north of the, then, Ellsworth College, no longer at that location. It was a small two-story home that served his needs as a bachelor and as a business location to

house pianos in need of much work. By the spring of 1904, he owned it free and clear.

As a piano tuner, he would travel with his heavy wooden tuning tool case by railroad, from town to town, by himself. Other than asking for directions of passers-by from time to time, he walked the streets without assistance, to earn his living. When he had some extra money, he would place an ad in a local paper, but many times, just leave a hand-written flyer on a board at a local post office, as was the custom of traveling salesmen at that time. To help him organize his appointments, he would have those looking to have their piano tuned leave a message with a shop owner or at the post office where he had an agreement in the town. Charles would check in when he got to town with his local contact. Then he would walk to the customers' homes or business. He would either tune the piano that day or make an appointment to do so while in town, or on his next visit if extensive work was needed.

When Charles traveled to a town where he had arranged an appointment to tune a piano, if he got to the community early, he would drum up other business for himself, by going door-to-door, networking with those he knew in town and just asking around. Sometimes, this might result in a concert at a local church or meeting hall, to earn a few extra dollars. Often he stayed for several days on a canvassing trip in a local hotel or boarding house.

His memory was very good. He could remember the street layout in many communities as well as the locations of his clients, where they lived and some about their lives. He enjoyed conversing with folks in his high-pitched voice, at the local businesses gathering tidbits of news to open conversations with strangers in town.

Abbott taught private classes in piano and violin. Mostly, his music students were in the community that he was living in at the time. His

classes were advertised and announced in local papers. At times, this was the majority of his income.

In late December of 1903, Charles went down to the train depot in Webster City, where he was working at the time, to board the midnight train to his home in Iowa Falls. A trip that he had done many times by himself. He purchased his ticket and waited for the train. At midnight, the Illinois Central train pulled in and Mr. Abbott started to board the train. A new conductor stopped him and asked if he was blind and was there any sighted person traveling with him to take care of him.

Charles responded that, no there was no one traveling with him, but that was not a problem. He was quite able to travel by himself and had done so hundreds of times on the trains and in many towns in Iowa for many years.

The conductor said that it did not matter. There was a rule on the Illinois Central Railroad that a blind person could not travel alone and that he could not let Mr. Abbott on the train.

No matter what Charles said that night, he was unable to convince the conductor to let him on the train. There was no one at the depot that night who knew Charles who could help him or another passenger that he knew who would vouch for him. So, Charles went back to his hotel for the night.

The next morning, he told many of his friends in Webster City what had occurred the night before and how he needed to get to Iowa Falls to celebrate Christmas with his family. A friend of his said that he would help, but he could not take the time to ride all the way to Iowa Falls and back because of the holiday. So, the two men set out to the train depot to catch the noon train. His friend pretended to be in charge of Charles. Charles bought their tickets. They boarded the train, and just before the train pulled out of the station, his sighted friend jumped off the train. Charles proceeded to Iowa Falls alone and without incident and was able to get home and celebrate the holidays with family.

But Charles could not let this matter drop. Immediately, he telegraphed the Illinois Central Railroad office and asked if there was such a rule about blind persons being unable to travel without a sighted person. He received a telegraph from the railroad, saying that, yes, there was such a rule in place. The rule was over a year old and that the railroad had every intention of enforcing the rule. The home office wholly supported their conductor in refusing to allow Mr. Abbott to ride, unattended.

Such an unknown and unwanted rule regarding the blind would cause Charles Abbott and other blind persons who frequently traveled alone on the trains of Iowa, a great hardship. As an independent piano tuner, Charles could not afford to pay the way of a sighted person to travel with him, nor all the other costs such as lodging and food in requiring a person to travel on the trains.

Charles had been traveling across the state and even the country by train for many years, most of his trips by himself. He had never had an accident or fallen on a train. To ban him from riding, just because he was blind was wrong.

Charles hired an attorney, D. C. Chase, of Webster City to file a lawsuit in district court, against the railroad. In July of that same year, the lawsuit was settled. Mr. Abbott was given \$100 to cover his expenses of having to bring a sighted person along on his travels with the Illinois railroad before the court decision. He also got a pass that allowed him to ride the Illinois Central Railroad at no cost, but most of all, Mr. Abbott was able to force the Illinois Central Railroad to drop that unfair rule requiring blind persons to be accompanied by a sighted person when riding their trains.

In the Waterloo newspaper for July 21, 1904, it was reported that Charles had won his case. Not only could he and any other blind person ride the Illinois Central trains without a sighted person necessary to accompany him, but the article also documented that he also got to

ride the trains for free as part of the payment for the embarrassment they had caused him, not because he was blind. He won a substantial monetary settlement as well. The amount was not disclosed.

Money did not make times always good for Charles. In 1900, he married Esther Bowman, from Webster City, and the couple had two children, a boy and a girl. Just after Thanksgiving, of 1904, Charles was attacked by his wife after an argument over the punishment of the children.

According to newspaper accounts, Mrs. Abbott's sister, Mrs. James Kepler, told Charles, when he got in one Saturday night after work, that Mrs. Abbott had struck the couple's 2-year-old with a whip, nine times. Mr. and Mrs. Abbott argued over the punishment. Charles said it was much too harsh. Mrs. Abbott hit and scratched him on his face severely. She even physically attacked her own sister several times. Mrs. Abbott pulled a gun on the family. Charles and his sister-in-law barricaded themselves in the bedroom. Mrs. Abbott was trying to break down the door by using an ax and a hatchet. By the time the police had arrived and broke up the fracas, neighbors could hear the whole event. No one went to jail.

Charles left the home and went to live in the Cooper House Hotel in town, that night and for weeks to come. The next day, when his friends saw his scratched-up face, they asked him what had happened. When telling his story of how his wife was a very angry woman and very abusive to him and his children, friends took his side. Charles said that he never struck back as he was not the kind of man that would hit a woman. He also did not believe in divorce.

A few weeks later, Charles tried to file a bill for a separation from his wife and to gain custody of his two children. He also wanted to keep the money from the financial settlement from the lawsuit with the Illinois Railroad for himself. The petition claimed that his wife was cruel and inhumane. But the courts would not allow the separation under those circumstances, leaving his wife with no money. Charles had to file for

divorce. As this could cause him to lose custody of his children and his savings, the couple stayed married, but rarely lived together.

At the end of 1906, Charles had turned inventor. Not only did he teach music, tune pianos and perform music at many functions, but he, as many of his neighbors did, raised chickens. Charles needed a non-visual way to regulate the heat in the pens so that his flock would continue to grow and thrive. He designed a heater regulator that had a bell that sounded when the temperature was falling below the desired temperature or went too high for the chickens. When the temperature changed, it would break a circuit, causing the bell to ring and sound the alarm. He filed letters and papers for a patent in 1907.

Charles Abbott died in January of 1924. His obituary appeared in many Iowa papers for weeks after his death.

Peggy Chong: <https://theblindhistorylady.com/>

*****History Quiz**

by Carl Jarvis

Question:

What do the following organizations have in common?

Washington Council of the Blind (WCB)

Patron Advisory Council for the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library (WTBBL)

Governor's Committee on Disability Issues on Employment (GCDE)
State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Accessible Communities Advisory Committee (ACAC)

Disabilities Awareness Starts Here (DASH)

Jefferson County Council of the Blind (JCCB)

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Answer:

Sue Ammeter!

These organizations are among those for which Sue Ammeter volunteered her time and expertise. And then there were the myriad of committees and boards that were necessary in keeping the work going. And of course, in addition, Sue worked full time during most of the 50 years she was involved in community service.

Back around 1969-70, I was taking training in the Business Enterprises Program (BEP) in the training stand at 3411 South Alaska Street. We'd been putting in a great amount of time attempting to breathe life into the Washington State Association of the Blind (WSAB.) Ken Hopkins had been appointed director of the new Idaho Commission for the Blind, and he and Mary would drive from Boise to Seattle to help organize. Berl Colley and Bob Sellers traveled back and forth from Olympia, and Sue Anderson, a college student at the University of Washington, along with me, formed the core group. So when Sue Anderson began dating this young outspoken (opinionated) fellow, we worried. Already it was plain to see that Sue had leadership qualities. But here was this man in her life, and we were concerned that he would not want Sue to continue being so deeply involved in the Blind Organization.

Well, we called that one wrong! They say that behind every great man there is an even greater woman. That works the other way, too. John Ammeter became a mainstay in the state organization, as a sighted partner at first, and then as time rolled along he became a strong force in his own right. John and Sue became a team.

We who have been fortunate enough to have such partnerships know how much better two heads are than one. I know everyone knows this, but I just didn't want John's contribution to be overlooked.

Following our 1990 merger, President Sue Ammeter appointed Jim Eccles to head a committee with the task of developing a new, much needed committee.

Question:

Can you name the committee and the person who first chaired it?

Answer:

The name of the new committee was the Crisis Committee. This new committee would provide grants to assist blind people in our state. The board allocated \$5,000 to fund this new program. Each chapter would have a representative on the Crisis Committee.

Shirley Taylor was appointed chair by President Sue Ammeter. After getting established, the program gave out four grants by the November 1990 convention.

Question: Who was the last president of the United Blind of Washington State (UBWS), and, who was the first president of the Washington Council of the Blind (WCB), following the merger of those two organizations in 1990?

Answer: If you said, "Sue Ammeter" then you are absolutely correct. It was primarily through Sue's diligent efforts that UBWS and WCB came to the table to begin talk of a merger.

Following Sue's Celebration of Life on April 29, 2018, our History Committee suggested we take time to talk about the contributions of one person, Sue Ammeter, nationally and across our state. Also, what were the influences she made in our personal lives?

And now here we are, two years later. A bit of time has passed, but not so much as to cause us to forget. Just enough time for us to reflect upon how our own lives have changed because of our good fortune to have walked together.

Carl Jarvis, History Quiz Master: carjar82@gmail.com

*****ENTREPRENEURSHIP, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY

***Technically Speaking by Frank Cuta

I am excited that after nine years of depending on the Russians, we are finally again launching spacecraft from American soil. However, as great as the live video coverage is, it has been very difficult for me to find satisfactory descriptions of what is going on. After putting a little extra effort into it, here is what I have learned.

The Falcon 9 rocket is slim and sleek. Where the old Apollo Saturn V was a massive space truck 360 feet high and 33 feet in diameter, the Dragon Falcon is a white speedster 230 feet tall, just 12 feet in diameter.

The Saturn slowly lifted off of the launch pad, but the Falcon virtually blasts off, pulling the crew into their seats with over 4G of force. The nine engines in the Falcon rocket's first booster stage get the Dragon payload out of the atmosphere.

After 2.5 minutes, it is going at 2,000 mph and three things happen: The main engines cut off, the first stage drops off, and the rocket engine on the second stage ignites. The first stage then uses its remaining power to return into the atmosphere where it independently descends and lands aboard a drone ship that is waiting 350 miles off the coast.

The single engine in the second booster stage carries the Dragon capsule and crew the rest of the way into space and, 10 minutes after liftoff at a speed of 17,000 mph, this second stage is discarded and the capsule is released into low Earth orbit.

At about 12 minutes into the flight, the nose cone opens, exposing a docking port, guidance and navigational instrumentation, and the four forward bulkhead engines. It is these thrusters that are then ignited

periodically in order to enable the vehicle to chase the international space station (ISS). Depending on the respective positions and velocities of the Dragon and the ISS, it will take the Dragon capsule two or three orbits over the next 17 to 24 hours to catch up with the space station.

The Dragon 2 vehicle is 27 feet long and has two parts. The lower cylindrical trunk service module holds cargo on the inside and has aerodynamic fins on the outside. The front side is black and covered with solar panels, and the back side is covered with a white heat radiator.

The crew cabin is a white conical capsule with black trim that sits on the top of the trunk. It has four oval windows installed around its perimeter. The nose cone on the end hinges open to expose the docking port. Just below it is the parachute hatch, and below that is the black crew entry hatch, which is centered between two of the window ports. This hatch also has another window mounted in it.

There are no less than 30 rocket engines mounted in various places on the Dragon, and four legs for emergency landings. Painted on its side is an American flag and the word "Dragon," surrounded by a line drawing of a winged serpent. There is blue lettering that spells out "SpaceX."

Several hours before launch, the crew takes an elevator up 255 feet to the crew access arm. Just before they step onto the arm, they have at their disposal a standard land line telephone that is traditionally there for astronauts to make any last-minute goodbyes. The crew enters the Dragon capsule through the side hatch. Inside, they find an efficient modern interior that lacks all of the dials and knobs of past spacecraft. There are four custom contoured seats side by side. They face an uncluttered control panel that is dominated by three large touch-sensitive screens.

Each of the crew wears a striking custom-fitted, white spacesuit accented with shiny black accents, silver grey gloves, and elbow pads. It is tailored to strongly suggest a two-piece uniform. There is a reverse American flag on the right sleeve in the military style, and a NASA patch on the left sleeve. Below this patch is the word "SpaceX." Red lettering on the chest spells out NASA.

Unlike the baggy U.S. space ware of the past, the design is intended to be inspiring. The resemblance to Star Wars is not accidental. The helmet is much cooler than the old shuttle headpiece. It is a real helmet with a faceplate that swings up. Functionally, the suit is a mechanical and electronic extension of the Dragon capsule. But it is just a pressure suit and is not enough protection for spacewalks.

Unlike all previous U.S. space launches, the crew of Dragon boards before the fuel is loaded. At 2.5 hours before liftoff, they get seated. After another 1.5 hours, the hatch is closed and they wait.

The explosive rocket fuel is not loaded until the last 35 minutes. Theoretically, this is much safer and, very quickly after the tanks are topped off, the rocket blasts off.

After its approximately 20-hour journey, the Dragon catches the ISS and parks exactly 60 feet from the docking hatch. Six arms then extend from the nose port of Dragon, supporting a soft-capture ring assembly. This is soon followed by 12 hard-capture hooks.

After a 2-hour re-pressurization process, the crew passes through three hatch doors and enters the ISS.

To return to Earth, the Dragon undocks and proceeds to re-enter the atmosphere. Its protective nose cover rotates back into place, and it discards the cylindrical trunk assembly, which exposes its heat shield.

With this as the new protective nose of the vehicle, the friction with the atmosphere and a sub-orbital burn soon reduces the speed from 17,000

mph to less than 700 mph. Its four chutes open and further slow it down before it splashes into the ocean. The capsule is removed from the water with a net before the hatch is opened, and the crew finally get a breath of fresh air.

Frank Cuta: frank@cuta.net

*****Coffee Magic at a Price by Reginald George**

Let's start with this little-known fact: Seattle is the official coffee capitol of the universe. Everett and Vancouver are right behind.

This is my article, and I say it's true, so you should just believe whatever I write. In case you doubt, Wikipedia says "Seattle is regarded as a world center for coffee roasting and coffee supply-chain management. People in Seattle consume more coffee than in any other American city, one study stated."

So how far are you willing to go for a good cup of Joe that is easy to make and pour? For myself, I'm finding it's pretty far. The \$15 coffeemakers out there are not cutting it anymore for my exacting requirements. My Keurig is eight years old and, besides, it's sadly stuck waiting for me at my office. I needed something at home to help me stay alert while working.

I had spent about six months obsessing over finding just the right coffeemaker, when one day my co-editor, Heather, walked into a Bed Bath and Beyond in Walla Walla and walked out with what must be one of the most stand-alone, accessible, blind-friendly units available. It's not perfect, but it's close.

I have always been a fan of one device to rule them all. My iPhone reads me my books, takes me on walks, wakes me up and puts me to sleep, and if I could get it to make coffee, I would.

I was originally fascinated by what are called grind and brew coffeemakers. What I really wanted was a machine that would sing sweetly to me in the morning; accept whole beans, ground coffee and K-cups of any brand; give me hot water on demand for a cup of soup, tea, mulled wine, or cider; make a pot or cup of the size I specify; and do it all automatically. I don't ask for much, do I?

The Keurig K-Duo Plus is an incredibly well-designed, compact machine for around \$220 before discounts, which, with the exception of singing and grinding whole beans, checks all those boxes for me. I learned that most grind and brew coffeemakers need to be cleaned every day, and tend to break down. It's better to find a good, dedicated grinder, so I gave up on that part of the dream for now.

There is a version of this coffeemaker called the Keurig K-Duo Essential at Walmart for around \$100, but it lacks many of the best features. More on that later.

The Keurig K-Duo Plus comes with a removable 60-oz. reservoir, or tank, that is supposed to make a 12-cup coffeepot. If you believe, as they do, that a cup holds five ounces, you might even buy this ridiculous claim. The big, round, insulated, stainless-steel pot that comes with the machine is easy to pour from, and it keeps the coffee hot for up to two hours without burning it. This replaces the typical heating plate underneath your coffee, which tends to make it too hot and causes bitterness over time. Life can be bitter enough without bad coffee.

The water reservoir has the unique ability to be rotated on a platform to either side of the machine or behind it. This lets you adapt the Duo Plus to your environment, and it should fit nicely under most cabinets.

The K-Duo Plus takes standard paper filters, and comes with a reusable gold filter and a long, disposable charcoal filter that slips into the tank to keep the water tasting sweet and pure. This also keeps minerals out of

the machine and will extend its life, so it's a good idea to change this every three months or so.

The main controls are individual push-buttons that circle around the brew button in the center with a large raised letter K on it.

Starting at the bottom of the dial between five and seven o'clock, you have two buttons that specify either carafe or cup. Then, moving clockwise around the dial are the buttons for choosing your sizes, which are 6, 8, 10 and 12 oz. or cups, depending on if you are making one cup with a pod, or brewing a pot of coffee.

The differences with the less-expensive Walmart version include:

- Only three sizes: 8, 10 and 12.
- Not programmable.
- You can't move the tank, as it's in a fixed position behind the machine.
- No button for a stronger brew.
- It comes with a glass carafe that must be heated on the plate underneath.

Still, if this meets your needs, it's well worth the price.

There is much more I could say about these models. One downside is that there is no beep or signal built in, so singing is out of the question. However, if you are listening, you can hear when the machine turns on and when the coffee has finished brewing. A beep would have been helpful to know if it's low on water or if some error has occurred. But as long as you follow the steps in order, you will have excellent results.

My old Keurig stayed on all the time to keep the water hot, so coffee was ready very quickly. To save energy, this machine automatically powers down after five minutes, so it takes a little longer to boil the water, but you don't have to wait to start the process. You can put in your pod, hit the power, choose your size, press the strong button if

desired, then press brew and walk away. In a few minutes, you come back to a perfect cup or pot of coffee. You can also operate the machine with no pod and have just straight hot water.

When you first plug it in, you are asked to set the time and, of course, this isn't very accessible. It can be done if you know you are starting at midnight, and count the taps to the correct time. The timer remembers the last time it was set, and this makes it difficult to set without sight, but this feature was not important to me.

If anyone has any thoughts on the best grinder to go with this, or anything coffee-related, you can write to me or the Newsline, and we can all enjoy your comments together, over the hot beverage of our choice, in the next issue.

Follow this link to experience a high-fidelity stereo demonstration of this best in class Keurig coffeemaker:

<https://tinyurl.com/y9lt2a9w>

Reginald George: reggeorge@gmail.com

*******BRAIN FOOD**

*****Noteworthy Blogs Blind Abilities by Reginald George**

Today, we feature the Blind Abilities Blog, or is it a podcast or an app, or is it interviews with influencers in the world of blindness? I'm confused! Actually, it's all of these, and so much more. There are more than 620 podcasts, a newsletter, and lots of great content to inspire advocates and activists of all ages to "be the change they wish to see in the world."

Blind Abilities is really Jeff Thompson of Minnesota, but he keeps a pretty low profile. His blog and podcasts are peppered with famous and not-so-famous people from around the world who have a lot to say. He speaks to everyone who is trying to find their way in this life of visual impairment, quietly sending the message: do everything! You can achieve all your dreams from the simple to the fantastic.

Jeff is blind himself, and he recorded a community story worth hearing for the Be My Eyes app in which he discusses how and why he started Blind Abilities. Jeff originally introduced Be My Eyes to the United States on his podcast, and it has now grown to over three million volunteers. You can listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1weNqeWhqE>

The following excerpt comes from the Blind Abilities “About” page, and speaks to their mission much more eloquently than I can:

“When we share what we see through each other’s eyes, we can then bridge the gap between the limited expectations and the realities of Blind Abilities.

“The free Blind Abilities app is the quickest way to reach your high school students, college-bound students, and those seeking information about blindness.

“All of our podcasts and blogs are created by fellow blind/visually-impaired people who have or are breaking down the obstacles and sharing their experiences.

“From accessing the voice-over features on the iPhone or iPad to cleaning a bathroom with alternative techniques, Blind Abilities draws from the community of members who not only share their experiences, but listen and offer advice when needed.

“We work with developers of software, apps, and devices (including Android and Alexa) on getting accessibility right. We interview designers and blindness advocates to share their developments and initiatives. Blind Abilities’ focus is aimed at building skills and confidence, transitioning to college and the workplace, and is here for the individual experiencing vision loss, and for the role models sharing their stories. Counselors and educators can share and learn from the library of podcasts and blogs on the Blind Abilities app and on the BlindAbilities.com website.

“Whether you use the app yourself or have clients that could enhance their opportunities, the Blind Abilities team is working for you.”

Jeff has built something special from the ground up. He continues to infuse it with fresh content, and asks for nothing in return. It certainly qualifies as a "Noteworthy Blog."

<http://www.blindabilities.com>

*****Podtastic Casts**
**"How Being Blind Made Houston’s Christine Ha
a Better Cook"**
by Reginald George

The title of this article comes directly from an episode of a podcast produced by Houston Public Media called Houston Matters. The show airs daily for an hour on many Texas public radio stations, and covers a wide variety of topics of local and national interest. This particular segment is interesting to me because it is an interview from last year with Christine Ha, legally blind winner of Master Chef's 3rd season in 2012. Last year, she opened a restaurant in Houston, serving modern Vietnamese fare, called The Blind Goat.

Without giving too much away, I can say that her family came over as Vietnamese refugees, and she was born in the year of the goat.

Christine lost her mom to lung cancer when she was 14, but she credits her mom's cooking, her own strong memory, and her exceptional palate, as a huge part of what made her a good cook.

According to an article in The Houston Chronicle, "Ha gradually lost her vision between 1999 and 2007, due to an autoimmune disease called Neuromyelitis optica."

Christine was teaching herself to cook in her 20's, while she was losing her sight. Every time she lost more vision, she had to re-learn how to use her tools and create new techniques so she could continue to become a better chef. In this short, 10-minute segment, she tells the story of how she lost her sight and how she learned to find her way around the kitchen. Christine states that she is a very determined person. I can only imagine. She would have to be. The interviewer is quick and thorough, and asks insightful questions, not fluff questions. Even the ones that some might find to be a little questionable, Christine has great answers for. It will be worth your time to visit the following link from your phone or computer, and take a listen to this interview with someone who has chosen to experience everything, do it without fear, and embrace her mistakes.

Listen using the accessible player at the following link:

<https://tinyurl.com/yd6rppt3>

For more background on Christine Ha, you can read The Houston Chronicle article at the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/yabyj7lr>

Reginald George: reggeorge@gmail.com

*****Bits and Pieces**
Compiled by Reginald George

PayPal Giving Fund

Did you know that you can donate to WCB anytime directly from your PayPal account? On the Summary page in your account, you'll find a button "Set your favorite charity" which allows you to search for a charity so you can "give to a cause you love with PayPal Giving Fund." Search for Washington Council of the Blind and click the button to set it as your favorite charity. You can then donate now, or return to account summary. When you check out with PayPal in the future, you can also donate to WCB.

All donations made go to PayPal Giving Fund, which is a 501(c)(3) charity, who then distributes the funds once a month to the directed charities. PayPal covers all the fees. You have the option to share your name and email with the charity you selected or remain anonymous.

This is how to request the audio version of the voter's guide on a thumb drive that is playable on digital talking book players:

<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voters/voters-guide-requests/>

Many WCB chapters are using this little public address system to assist their members with hearing challenges. It is relatively inexpensive, light, rechargeable, and requires no wired connections. We use ours at all chapter meetings and picnics.

HISONIC HS122BT-HH Portable PA System with Dual Channel Wireless Microphones (two handheld), Lithium Rechargeable Battery, Bluetooth Streaming Music From your Cell Phones, Black:

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00YTB3U8U/ref=cm_sw_r_em_api_ic_w9pQEbWKJGG6Y

This column is presented for your information and enjoyment. Inclusion of information, products, and/or services does not constitute

endorsement by the Washington Council of the Blind. If you have items for inclusion, email TheWCBNewsline@gmail.com and put “Bits and Pieces” in the subject line.

*******AGENCY UPDATES**

*****Department of Services for the Blind by Michael MacKillop**

Since March, Washington State Department of Services for the Blind staff have been providing services remotely. DSB has been busy providing quality services in an alternate manner.

Youth Services is replacing our usual in-person summer programs with a multi-week, virtual, work-readiness and career-exploration program consisting of instruction in five career-related topics and offered two hours per day. Youth can also enroll in our weekly STEM program where students will complete STEM projects at home and – in a live, interactive, Zoom call once a week – discuss the past week’s activity and interact with new friends from all over the state. The array of panelists the Youth Services team has gathered to speak to students on a range of professional careers from a blindness perspective is so exciting to me. If you were part of connecting us to these panelists, or will be one yourself, thank you!

The Orientation and Training Center and DSB field staff have also developed new techniques, using remote technologies, to continue to help participants develop the mobility, independent living, and technology skills needed to succeed in the changing workplace.

Even in the midst of COVID-19, there is some good news: DSB has been able to release all cases off the Order of Selection wait-list, and has opened all categories for immediate vocational rehabilitation

services for all individuals who apply for and are eligible. We are excited that, for the first time since October 2018, we are able to serve all who are eligible without delay.

However, although we are excited to open up all categories of the wait-list at this time, we are cautious, as well. Order of Selection will continue to remain in place as a tool, as a way to manage future fiscal challenges. The post-COVID-19 economy will be bumpy, and we may need to reinstate a wait-list and delayed services.

That bumpy, post-COVID-19 economy is already presenting itself. The state is implementing drastic measures to mitigate the economic impact during the month of July. Due to the downturn in revenue, Gov. Jay Inslee announced that state employees will be furloughed one day per week for the month of July, and one day a month until year-end.

This is in addition to the freeze on hiring, equipment purchases, and personal-service contracts announced in May. At that time, Gov. Inslee also asked all Washington state cabinet agencies to participate in a budget exercise to identify areas of potential cost savings to address the budget shortfall created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even with all of these challenges, DSB will strive to continue to provide services with minimum changes to our usual service schedule.

While we continue to tackle current challenges, the state of Washington and DSB are looking to the future. Businesses are returning in a measured and data-driven manner, and so will state agencies.

DSB will follow the Governor's Safe Start reopening guidance and adhere to the following guiding principles as we reopen:

- Emphasis on safety of employees, participants and, more broadly, customers and stakeholders of the agency.

- Relying on the best public health and safety practices, and knowing that the understanding of those practices may change over time.
- Minimizing risk, maximizing spatial distancing, and prioritizing those in-person services and tasks that can't be accomplished in a remote manner. For many of us, remote work will continue to be a big aspect of our work.
- Considering the unique aspects and prevention strategies in providing adaptive skills of blindness.

We do not yet have a specific go-live date for returning to in-office and in-person services. But, as mentioned earlier, “No in-person services” doesn’t mean “no services” and we will continue to provide effective services remotely.

Finally, the weeks since the death of George Floyd, and the protests in response, have sparked a national movement highlighting the necessity of upending targeted systemic racism toward Black Americans and people of color.

DSB supports the meaning and need for action behind the Black Lives Matter movement. As an organization committed to issues of equity in the context of disability, DSB strongly aligns with the sentiments and the call to action to change the course of discrimination in all its forms. DSB stands with tenets of this movement and condemns racist practices and policies in our workplace and workforce.

This truly is an incredible time in our state and world. We knew that we would have challenges ahead when the world shut down in March. DSB has weathered challenges before, and we will again. We will use all of our skills and creativity to continue to meet the future need for job readiness for individuals with visual disabilities to be able to meet the needs of the post-COVID economy.

Michael MacKillop, Acting Executive Director:
Michael.mackillop@dsb.wa.gov

*****Washington Talking Book & Braille Library
by Danielle Miller**

On Thursday, June 4, Gov. Jay Inslee approved a waiver for the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library (WTBBL) to begin providing limited services. We are able to send out books and equipment and are thrilled to be back serving our patrons after being gone since March 25. We can receive mail, so books and equipment can be returned and circulation can proceed normally. We are looking forward to having the rest of our staff return and getting back up to full operations as King County moves into Phases 2 and 3, but we do not have specific dates. You can watch our website, social media, and voicemail for updates.

During the shutdown, we have been checking and responding to voicemail messages, email messages, supporting BARD and BARD users, as well as assisting more people to sign up for BARD. Staff have been working from home on projects supporting the WTBBL mission, continuing to edit local audio and Braille books in production, uploading books to BARD, and also doing professional development training.

Thank you to everyone who helped advocate to get us back to WTBBL and circulating books. Your support is so valuable, and your voice makes a difference. We know what a vital service WTBBL provides and are grateful to be able to serve you.

Danielle H. Miller (she/her), Director & Regional Librarian:
danielle.miller@sos.wa.gov

*******WCB HAPPENINGS**

*****Chicago: The Greatest Convention That No One Attended by Frank Cuta**

I spent the first week in July attending the 2020 national convention of the American Council of the Blind (ACB), but I never left the comfort of my living room. We were supposed to be in a hotel in Shamburg, IL, but COVID-19 hit just as arrangements for the in-person convention were being finalized. With just four months' notice, our leadership miraculously shifted gears and took the convention into the Cloud. Over 1,500 members and friends connected online or dialed in to actively participate in this first virtual ACB convention.

Of course, nothing can replace an honest-to-god, face-to-face convention, but there are definitely advantages to virtual meetings. For example, no lines, no pileups at the elevator, no hotel bill, and no need to jump out of bed and get dressed for an 8:30a.m. session.

Meeting in the Cloud enabled us to open up convention attendance to lots of members and prospective members who otherwise would not have attended. I heard many attendees report that, for this reason, this was their first convention. Many others commented that health issues would have prevented them from going to Chicago.

It is not surprising that most of the regular general session presentations translated easily to this virtual format. However, it was interesting that even more active activities such as the fundraising walk, the live auction, the fitness sessions, the showcase of talent, and the question-and-answer sessions also translated smoothly. You might anticipate that a conference-call meeting would be less exciting than an in-person meeting, but ACB cheerleaders Dan Spoon and Cindy Hollis kept us on our toes all week long.

This convention seemed to be more conversational and interactive. I particularly appreciated the community calls each evening where we were able to share our favorite experiences with one another.

Just as with our in-person conventions, there were as many as five program presentations going on at any given moment. At a physical convention, it is very difficult to jump around from one event to another, but at this virtual one it was just a matter of electronic channel hopping.

I enjoyed the presentations on smart-home technology, the deaf/blind Randolph Sheppard vendors, amateur radio, cutting the cord to your TV, and accessible Legos.

At our in-person conventions, the tours are always a big draw for attendees. But a physical tour involves a serious time commitment, and I can usually only justify one a year. This year, there were a total of 17 virtual tours offered. Because they were electronically on demand, I was able to listen to all of them. I especially enjoyed the Helen Keller, the Wright Brothers, Mount Rushmore, and the Holocaust tours.

The scholarship award winner presentations are always impressive, and Past President Denise Colley co-chairs this program. Early in the week, Meka White was awarded the Ned E. Freeman Award for excellence in writing, and then at the banquet, we were all proud when Reg George and Heather Meares were presented with the Hollis Liggett Braille Free Press Award for producing the best newsletter in the country.

This virtual convention was a rip-roaring success, and it could not have happened without the technical advances that have been made in just the past few years. Kudos to major technical assistance provided by WCB members Jeff Bishop, Deb Lewis, Rick Lewis, Meka White, Viola Bentson, and Cindy Hollis.

Check out all of the great audio from this year's convention available from the following link: <http://www.acbradio.org/acb-convention>

Next year we are planning to be in Phoenix for a regular face-to-face convention. However, we learned something very valuable this year: A virtual component is not only possible, it is invaluable. And I expect that from now on it will continue to be an important part of our annual conference and convention.

Frank Cuta: frank@cuta.net

*****Path to the Future: Reflections on a Virtual Convention
by Julie Brannon**

As I listened to the infamous American Council of the Blind board meeting via ACB Radio Mainstream in March when the decision was made to hold a virtual convention, I had mixed feelings as many did. We were disappointed because we had to cancel our plans to travel to Illinois after having to miss last year's convention, but we also felt some relief from our concerns for our potential safety due to the virus and being in large crowds.

As I got off the emotional roller coaster, my rational mind took over with thoughts such as: how on earth can they do that? And, there's no way the many typical convention events can be presented in a virtual framework.

None of these concerns and doubts came to fruition, as the capable, skilled, talented and hardworking people behind the scenes did magic.

And it came to me, with member virtual convention costs being so minimal, many more people would have the opportunity to experience an ACB convention than may otherwise not have been able to do so.

We found ourselves with one Zoom session open on a computer, and two Alexa ACB radio streams playing at the same time because there was so much to take part in, and we didn't want to miss anything.

For example, one station would be playing tours, another station carried exhibits, and on the computer, we would be using the Zoom software to participate in a presentation. What an answer to the often-frustrating inability at the in-person convention to get to everything when you find three or four events you'd like to attend occurring simultaneously.

It's difficult to say what my favorite sessions were from the 108 options available. The transportation sessions, Microsoft and Braille presentations, and the excellent legislative boot camp full of advocacy how-to's were all at the top of my list.

The exhibitors' recorded presentations were exceptional and done so professionally. They were filled with information and practical applications for their products and/or services with details as to how to obtain them.

And I can't forget the tours with their audio descriptions. They were outstanding, filled with riveting details and phenomenal descriptions of all aspects covered. I particularly enjoyed the tours of Mount Rushmore and the White House.

And I can't forget the banquet! The audio describer's speech by Roy Samuelson was informational, entertaining, and revealing regarding the skill and artistic genius involved in the process. But the true exhilaration came for me when Washington Council of the Blind got placed on the ACB map. Both the Newline publication and First Vice President Meka White won BOP awards.

Because of the ability to interact via Zoom, and listen to so many offerings, I personally felt more connected at this convention than many others; and what a treat, not having to spend so much time and concentration to look for room and event locations as is often the case at in-person conventions.

As has been said already by many, hurray and congratulations to ACB for pulling off a never-before-attempted virtual large venue as this year's 2020 convention.

Julie Brannon: jbrannon0612@gmail.com

*****Connecting the Dots**
by Cindy Hollis, membership services coordinator,
American Council of the Blind

(Editor's Note: Reprinted from ACB.org with permission of the author.)

I can remember as a little girl trying to color pictures that were dot to dot. The premise was to assist one in drawing the prescribed picture. Of course, I could never see the dots well enough to color the picture to look like anything recognizable, no less what it was supposed to be. But this was during a time in my life when we lived in a neighborhood of young families. Kids played together, schooled together, and grew up together. When a family was on vacation, others watched their home. When kids were playing outside, one of the parents watched through a window. Birthday parties, sleepovers, sharing meals, and yes, even the occasional quarrels occurred in that neighborhood. But we were connected by location, schools and Scouts, age of children, and an unspoken sense of belonging.

Now let us talk about the American Council of the Blind (ACB). Our neighborhood is made up of 68 affiliates spread out all over the country and covering a myriad of interest areas. Annually, a representation of those affiliates join at the Conference and Convention, but many aren't able to travel to those in-person events for whatever reason. When we are there, however, we feel that sense of connection, as a picture of ACB is drawn in that week-long moment in time.

And then a pandemic hit, and our world experienced an upheaval. Suddenly, local groups who normally met on a regular basis in person could no longer do so. Our annual event was changed to a virtual one, and many of our members have been confined to their living quarters – human distancing.

But we are a resilient bunch. We're used to finding creative ways to do things, to clear obstacles on our pathway, to charter new territory. We're also accustomed to talking on the phone and using technology. The government says we need to distance ourselves from one another, and so we abide. Then we create ways to connect via different avenues by using tools known to us.

In mid-March, two conference calls were held by ACB for affiliate leaders, exploring ways to stay connected with our membership. Ten weeks later, those calls have turned into 40 to 50 calls each week, covering a variety of topics, several social in nature. A weekly schedule is sent out to members and friends of ACB, and there is an email list where the daily schedule is shared each morning. Over 1,000 people join one or more of these community events each week, and several people have come forward to facilitate or host these calls. ACB Radio has supported these events along the way and has now provided a dedicated community channel for the expressed purpose of sharing them with even more people. Listen to our community on the ACB Radio Community channel, www.acbradio.org/community, or access through your favorite Amazon device by saying, "Open the ACB Radio Community skill."

Today, members of ACB from all over the U.S., and often guests from within and outside of our country, are becoming active members of a community not connected by streets and sidewalks, but rather by hearts and passion. The dots on ACB's proverbial coloring page are the hearts of our members, the lines are the events we join in on via Zoom, and the connection takes place each and every time we meet. Through these community events, regardless of where we each live, we're reminded we're not alone. We truly are a community.

If you have not yet joined us for one of these calls, we are ready to welcome you. The first step is to subscribe to the ACB Community Events email list so that you, too, can receive your morning email with that day's schedule of events: <http://acblists.org/mailman/listinfo/acb-community-events> Next, join us!

*****WCB Board Meets in the Cloud by Frank Cuta**

On Saturday, May 23, we all tuned in and turned on to our second totally electronic Washington Council of the Blind (WCB) board meeting of the year. President Julie Brannon chaired a very effective online meeting, assisted by Viola Cruz, Jim Turri, Jeff Bishop and Cindy Hollis, who were operating the Zoom conference controls.

We lost four of our members this spring. Julie called for a moment of silence for Mildred Johnson, Joanne Hunter, Lori Allison and Joan Lord.

Treasurer Lisa George reported that she has received dues from all affiliates. This quarter, she paid our insurance and the Morgan Stanley fees. We are operating within budget for our 2020 expenses. Since Lisa has taken on the bookkeeping, this former expense has been reduced to zero. At the advice of the Finance Committee, the board took action to make adjustments in the management of our considerable investment portfolio.

Julie has been requesting written reports from each committee in advance of the meeting. This has resulted in an expedited board agenda. However, we did hear from a few committees who wanted to highlight their activities or had questions for the board.

Denise Colley reported from the Advocacy Committee that there is a serious concern with the compromised medical benefits at Kaiser Permanente due to their use of an inaccessible staff kiosk. The board

authorized a letter to be written on behalf of WCB to bring attention to this issue.

Lisa reported from the Finance Committee on the completion of our Give Big fundraiser. This year, each chapter was encouraged to set up their own Give Big websites and share in the profits. The board passed a motion to remove the original monetary threshold restrictions, and to share all profits with each chapter regardless of how much was raised by each site. We received 48 donations, and we are already planning how to participate in an even bigger way next year.

Sheri Richardson reported from the Government Affairs Committee that it is taking on the serious problem of the inaccessibility of our state's mail-in ballot system.

Julie is creating an ad hoc working group to revive the strategic planning effort that was performed by our leadership in 2018. Sheri will co-lead this effort, and the group will have a total of 10 members. The group will include officers, board members, and old and new members of WCB to bring as much diversity as possible to the project.

Julie is matching presidents of chapters in pairs in an effort to promote connection and mutual support for one another.

Jeff Bishop reported from the Communications Committee that Rick Lewis is updating our WCB list-serve memberships. Jeff and Deb Lewis are providing advanced Zoom management training to Viola Cruz and Jim Turri. Our WCB website has recently been updated to reflect our officers and board member changes. Also, the affiliate list and the scholarship application have been updated.

We had just \$200 in the budget for our support of all American Council of the Blind (ACB) convention activities. Several members offered to make personal contributions to the ACB auction in the name of WCB so that the entire budgeted \$200 could be allocated for door prizes.

Danette Dixon came to the meeting with a request for the board to approve the chartering of a new special-interest affiliate, WCB Diabetics. The charter officers are Danette Dixon, president; Andy Arvidson, vice president; Jim Turri, secretary; and Kim Moberg, treasurer. They currently have 11 members, and have fulfilled all of the associated requirements. Their application for affiliation was unanimously approved by the board.

A motion was also passed to reallocate \$500 from the chapter visits budget line item to this new affiliate as a startup stipend.

Julie announced that we have raised the \$500 in personal donations required to make Lori Allison an ACB angel. Cindy Hollis suggested that we make the presentation at next year's ACB convention.

Cindy also reported that the current channels on ACB radio are being reorganized and that, at her request, a new channel for ACB community has been created to promote membership and social interactions. This new resource has been an immediate and overwhelming success.

Frank Cuta: frank@cuta.net

*****Results of GiveBIG Washington 2020 by Lisa George**

In what we hope will continue to be an annual tradition, old friends and new supporters of Washington Council of the Blind (WCB) came together and contributed over \$3,000 during the short timeframe for this online fundraiser. We're ecstatic to report that WCB had 20 first-time donors. Our heartfelt thanks to all who made donations, all who shared the links with their family and friends, and the chapters that joined in raising funds. (See the back page for more details on donors.)

When all was said and done, WCB had 48 donations totaling \$3,009.21, which included 44 who covered the corresponding fees. The net donations received were \$2,876.37. The eight chapter pages generated

\$1,023.55 as their 50/50 share. The page to make Lori Allison the newest ACB Angel netted \$590.40. WCB's share of the chapter pages and donations directly to the WCB profile page resulted in \$1,262.42. Lots of give-a-little added up to GiveBIG!

Lisa George, WCB Treasurer: treasurerWCB@gmail.com

*****Announcing WCB Diabetics:
A New Special-Interest Affiliate
by Danette Dixon**

I am so excited to introduce a new special-interest affiliate, WCB Diabetics. Before I get into details, I would like to tell you why I am deeply passionate about this new affiliate.

I have been a Type 2 diabetic since 2000. My diabetes was controlled by a twice-daily pill until 2017, when I became insulin dependent. Just the thought of taking insulin really scared me. I reached out to a couple of WCB members with diabetes, who suggested American Council of the Blind Diabetics in Action (ACBDA). At first, I just listened because I needed support. But at the 2018 ACB national conference and convention, I became second vice president. Last year, I went to the national convention as an ACBDA delegate, and currently I am vice president.

Last November, I sent an email to the WCB email list-serve, checking to see if there was an interest in Washington in having a special-interest affiliate concerning diabetes. To my surprise, there is a huge interest, which is very exciting for me. One of my passions is to support and educate those with diabetes.

WCB Diabetics (WCBD) was formed, and has been accepted as Washington Council of the Blind's newest special-interest affiliate. We are here to support those who are borderline Type 1 or Type 2 diabetics, and those who have friends or family members with diabetes. WCBD has a monthly meeting/call on the second Monday. We are

planning speakers and topics such as nutrition, exercise, fitness, and accessible apps to count carbs and calories.

If you are interested, please contact me at danettedixon63@gmail.com.

A goal of mine for WCB is to eventually be part of ACBDA. As you can tell, I am deeply passionate about diabetes and what we can do here in Washington.

*****Aging and Blindness
by Holly Kaczmarski**

We on the Aging and Blindness Committee (WCB) are revising our brochure, "Living with Fading Vision," as well as creating a Spanish language version.

This brochure will be distributed widely throughout the state to agencies, doctor's offices, senior centers, assisted-living facilities, state prisons, and other places where people gather and need information on blindness as people age. All WCB chapter presidents will receive 25 copies of the brochure to distribute.

We are also updating our resource list to provide information for people who need to know about, and have access to, state and federal resources.

We welcome questions or comments sent to our committee at hollykaczmarski58@gmail.com

*****Remembering Berl
by Carl Jarvis**

I learned yesterday morning of the passing of Berl Colley following a long illness. Among his many activities, Berl was former Washington

Council of the Blind president and longtime active member in the blind community. I sent the following note to the WCB chat list:

“Berl, my friend, I am sure going to miss you. Time can be so fickle. When we're young, we think we have so much time that we too often waste it. And if we hang around long enough, time has a way of turning us old.

“It's been more than 50 years since you and Bob Sellers began making the trip from Olympia to Seattle, to play a major role in organizing the blind students into, if my memory serves, what we named the Youth Association. There were some 32 blind students enrolled at the University of Washington, with only a scattering of blind students in other colleges around the state. You and Bob were attending the Olympic Vocational Tech, and after we had organized the students, I think Greyhound should have named a bus after you for all the trips you made. But it paid off big time.

“By that July, we all showed up in Hoquiam for the 1971 Washington State Association of the Blind convention, and we ran members in every position except one. Cecil Phillips was re-elected president. We've come a long way since those distant days, in great part due to your steadfastness.

“The other trouble with time, other than the fact that it seems so long when looking ahead, but so very, very short when looking back, is the fact that as time passes, we begin to wear out. And just about the time we're smart enough to do all the stuff we weren't smart enough to do way back then, we don't have the energy to do anything about it.

“But just so new members know what a tireless and committed person you have been over the years, I'll tell you, Berl, without your energy, along with Sue Ammeter, this organization would not be what we are today.

“So while I'm going to miss the heck out of you, I want to say, thanks for the memories.”

Carl Jarvis: carjar82@gmail.com

*****HATS OFF**
compiled by Rhonda Nelson

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

- Shirley Gray, on the wonderful occasion in June of her 100th birthday, with a family celebration via a “window visit.”
- Carl and Cathy Jarvis, for 25 years of bringing hope and support to over 3,000 blind and low-vision seniors in five counties, through Peninsula Rehabilitation Services, which closed June 30.
- Tim Schneebeck, whose second great-grandchild, Julie Ann, was born in May.
- Julie Harlow, on receiving her master’s degree in health-and-wellness coaching, with a minor in herbal medicine, from Maryland University of Integrative Health.
- Andrew Nance, receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in sociology, with a minor in psychology, from Eastern Oregon University.
- Alexann Turemann, accepted into the Eastern Washington University social work program.
- Meka White, winner of ACB’s 2020 Ned E. Freeman Excellence in Writing Award, for her article “Shrimp, Drinks, and the Bill: A Moment of Accessibility.”
- To WCB Newsline, your 2020 award winning publication, recipient of the Hollis Liggett Braille Free Press Award, presented by American Council of the Blind, for promoting best journalistic practices and excellence in writing.

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
- Birthdays 75 years and up in 5-year increments (yearly after age 90)
- Marriage or wedding anniversary 25 years and 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

***** **AROUND THE STATE**

*****Yakima Valley Council of the Blind
by Lisa George**

YAKITY YAK FROM YAKIMA

YVCB is trying to stay connected to our members with our conference-call business meetings and our "Newsline Live" calls during the usual Friday bowling time. We've made it through the Spring 2020 edition (great job, Newsline team!) and we're looking forward to the next issue.

We were excited to participate in the GiveBIG Washington 2020 online fundraiser, and pleasantly surprised that we were able to get some donations to WCB that will be split 50/50. We're definitely hoping that GiveBIG 2021 will be available to us so we can improve on our process to share the opportunity.

Our hope is that everyone reached by this magazine stays safe and healthy throughout these crazy times.

*****United Blind of Whatcom County
by Holly Turri**

Even though the corona virus is stalking the land, UBWC has been busy. Due to Beth Marsau's enthusiastic encouragement, our members are now familiar with both Free Conference Call and Zoom meetings.

In April, we had a speaker from AARP who discussed and described Internet fraud. Particularly interesting were his warnings of COVID-19 tricksters.

We are conducting a coupon book fundraiser. We've had other ideas, including a May Day party, Easter celebration, and another virtual party.

Although we are far apart in distance, through electronics we are close in hearts and minds.

*****United Blind of Walla Walla
by Heather Meares**

When we chose our motto of "New Directions" last year, I don't think any of us could have predicted how drastically this concept would be tested. Finding new and creative ways to stay strong as individuals and as a chapter has been our main goal the past few months, and I have to say I am honored to be a part of such a determined and resilient group.

One of the ideas we implemented was creating small groups of two to four people with our member list to help check on each other during these times when it is so easy to feel isolated. Our meeting for May was

conducted via conference call, and was anything but smooth due to lots of technical and logistical issues. For June, we decided to do more of a hybrid-style meeting in which all the officers met in person, in an open outside area, six feet apart, and wearing our masks. Each of us used our phones to connect with members, and used a PA system, which was quite successful. We passed a constitutional amendment to allow us to meet and vote via phone or other methods in the future and encourage you all to do the same. Our meeting was a mini version of a tech call with Reg and Frank so, of course, it was lively and full of lots of great questions, comments, and friendly banter.

As for our future, we are going with the flow and continuing to thrive in our community. The city is currently making plans to build a roundabout and remove traffic signals. Our chapter has had some preliminary discussions with the city and will continue to do so to ensure an accessible solution is considered and hopefully implemented. Roundabouts are not only new directions, they are all directions simultaneously, and extremely challenging to navigate, even for sighted drivers. For the disability community, they prove to be a nightmare, at best. We will keep you all in the loop about the loop and the final outcome.

Also on the horizon is a new partnership with a local plant ecologist who contacted us via our website. She is teaching online courses for Shoreline in Seattle and currently has a blind student needing techniques for plant identification. We are working on this together and are also talking about a future accessible demonstration garden project in our community, possibly for next year.

Walla Walla is slowly coming back to life, with openings of restaurants and outside expanded seating areas marked with orange tape, and live music is beginning to be heard again. The UBWW is staying as active as always.

*****United Blind of the Tri-Cities
by Frank Cuta**

It has been getting into the 80's here in Benton County and soon will reach the 90's. Those of us who can are taking advantage of the cool mornings to work in the yard or are going for walks in small groups.

We are grateful that the COVID-19 crisis hit us just as we were winding up our annual candy fundraiser. All of the chocolate that was stored at Sherry's home has been turned into cold hard cash, and it's in the bank where it should not melt.

No electronic virtual meeting can replace the camaraderie of a face-to-face get-together with your friends. However, we feel very lucky that the current crisis has come at a time when phone conference-call technology is a functional alternative to physically meeting.

In April and May, we held our monthly chapter meetings by phone. On our April program, Reggie demonstrated his new coffee maker and in May, Janice, Lisa, and Reggie told us about the new Apple iPhone SE.

Most members report that they are just sheltering in place and not taking any unnecessary risks.

The conference-call line has also made it possible for us to continue to hold our monthly book group and tech group gatherings. This allows us to at least talk with each other several times a month and monitor how everyone is doing. Most recently, we participated in the WCB GiveBIG fundraiser. We expect that this fundraiser will grow to be a valuable annual activity.

*****South Kitsap Council of the Blind
by Kim L. Moberg**

With the impact of COVID-19, life has surely changed, and in one aspect, it is for the good. We are a chapter that is spread out across our county. For some, finding transportation to get to the meetings is difficult. At the moment, there are no issues with transportation and that is a good thing.

Staying connected has been a big goal for all of us. Conference calling has become a way of life. Socializing, church, and our chapter meetings are all done by conference call these days. What would we do without our devices and computers?

We did not hold a meeting in March, as we were busy figuring out how to notify all members and help them learn how to access the system that we would be using to conduct meetings. In April, we had our first chapter meeting by conference call. It turned out to be a really good meeting. I am also happy to report that we even had a new person join us. Welcome Jan Johnson. This meeting was a wonderful time for all of us to touch base. We did not get a lot of business taken care of, but that is OK. The main purpose was to see how everyone was managing during this pandemic.

Our members are coping as well as can be expected during this time of lockdown. We have been staying well-connected as a group, as family, and as friends. Committees in this chapter are very eager for this social distancing to end. They have much work they would like to get started and moving forward. The Food Committee is especially eager to share what they have lined up for us. Please stay well and healthy.

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

Hello WCB, we here in the counties of Skagit and Island hope you are staying healthy and safe through this coronavirus pandemic. We have

decided to meet twice monthly to keep in touch. On our normal schedule, we had decided to take the months of July and August off, and this year we are going to meet during those months to keep up with each other.

The Summer Newsline theme of Discovering Brilliance through Resilience fits into our chapter's plan of action for the current times. Most members have never met using conference calls before. And, we offered free Echo Dots to our members, and some of them jumped right in and took one. We have a group of people who shy away from technology and are stepping up to try new things. One of the ladies was so elated that she called and left us a very gratifying voicemail. We are inviting state legislators to our meetings, and Vanda Pharmaceuticals has reached out to do a presentation on Non-24 for us in June.

We are a blessed lot, and glad to be part of a bigger picture by being members of WCB and ACB.

*****Pierce County Association of the Blind
by Julie Harlo**

Every year, the Pierce County chapter struggles to find a space to hold our Christmas party. We have a large group, and facilities are limited with access. So we had a Ringing in the 2020 New Year in late December, rather than a Christmas-only party. It was a great turnout, and we all had a good time. During this event, we honored Arnold Kammeyer for his dedicated service to Pierce County Association of the Blind and WCB.

After canceling our March meeting due to COVID-19, we regrouped and began to get our members acquainted with Zoom. We held a practice session, and we have held the past two months' meetings using Zoom, with a high turnout.

April was an incredibly sad moment for our chapter as we lost two of our members. We lost Mildred Johnson, 94, on April 9. She was a member for more than 35 years. She had been treasurer, secretary, and at the end she was our Sunshine Committee chair. Mildred volunteered to call and remind our members every month of our upcoming meetings. We had been ready to present Mildred with a gift for her dedication to the chapter, a beautiful clock and plaque. Luckily, a week before she passed, another member brought her the gift, and she had it on her side table to enjoy before she left us.

Then on April 24, we lost Lori Allison, who is so very well-known throughout WCB. She did so much for our chapter and WCB alike.

These two losses left our group sad and struggling to regroup, with two noticeably big holes to fill. They will be very missed. Thanks to many from WCB, we were honored to add to contributions to have Lori Allison placed on the Angel wall of the American Council of the Blind. Thank you to all who have contributed with our chapter.

We will continue to work with our members and get them engaged with Zoom, and we are actively working to keep our membership engaged with each other during this difficult time. We had to cancel our fundraising event in May and our BBQ in July. We have all had to create new visions due to this pandemic, and we are all going to persevere with new ideas and creations. We had a third member, Kitty Cummings, who we also wanted to honor, and had her gift delivered recently. We do not know when we will be able to meet face to face again, so we are trying to make sure we can carry out what we started. We have been planning for many months to honor the sighted members who volunteer their time and dedication to our cause. From us to them, we thank you.

***** Jefferson County Council of the Blind
by Carl Jarvis**

We are traveling in strange times and wild, uncharted waters. In mid-March, per Gov. Inslee's request, the JCCB board met via telephone,

and cancelled our March 27 meeting. This was followed by cancellations of our April, May and June meetings. Since we normally hold a picnic in July or August, we also decided to cancel any plans for a group event. This means our next scheduled meeting will be the fourth Friday of September.

We will continue to stay in close contact with our members by email or telephone. During this downtime, we will seek ways of conducting business via long-distance methods. Rather than declaring that we are a chapter in trouble, we are looking at developing new ways to assist the blind and low-vision people in our area, and to advance skills training and community services. Finally, we are open to any suggestions from around WCB.

*****Guide Dog Users of Washington State
by Vivian Conger**

GDUWS had to postpone its 2020 Spring Fling. Since things are still totally up in the air, we are looking to have a membership call/virtual meeting in August, which hopefully will contain some of the items we had originally scheduled for the Spring Fling. Please look for more information as time goes by.

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

For more details on events listed, call WCB at 800-255-1147

JULY

26 – The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) turns 30!

27 – WA State ADA 30th anniversary celebration event at 11a.m. with a rebroadcast at 7p.m, and on demand access from the online archive later. This can be viewed on cable, or live on TVW, Washington State’s accessible Public Affairs Network at the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/y2wdfjq>

27 – WCB Presidents call at 7 p.m.

AUGUST

- 1** – WCB summer Board Meeting Zoom call from 10 a.m. to noon
- 10** – WCB Diabetics call at 7 p.m.
- 16** – 3rd Sunday Tech Chat with Reg and Frank at 7 p.m.
- 24** – WCB Presidents call at 7 p.m.
- 26** – Washington Talking Book and Braille Library (WTBBL) Patron Book Club call at 2 p.m.
- 31** – Deadline to submit articles for the fall Newslines issue
- 31** – Deadline to submit WCB awards nominations.

SEPTEMBER

- 11** – State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) public meeting from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (meeting will be virtual)
- 14** – WCB Diabetics call at 7 p.m.
- 20** – 3rd Sunday Tech Chat with Reg and Frank at 7 p.m.
- 23** – WCB Committee leaders call at 7 p.m.
- 25** – Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB) Board of Trustees meeting
- 28** – WCB Presidents call at 7 p.m.
- 30** – Deadline for dues to be received by the WCB Treasurer for members to have voting privileges at the annual business meeting

OCTOBER

- 1-2** – WASILC meeting at Alliance of People with disAbilities office in Seattle
- 12** – WCB Diabetics call at 7 p.m.
- 15** – White Cane Safety Day
- 17** – WTBBL Patron Advisory Council call at 9 a.m.
- 18** – 3rd Sunday Tech Chat with Reg and Frank at 7 p.m.
- 26** – WCB Presidents call at 7 p.m.
- 29-31** – WCB Annual Convention at DoubleTree by Hilton Seattle Airport

NOVEMBER

- 9** – WCB Diabetics call at 7 p.m.
- 13** – WSSB Board of Trustees meeting
- 15** – 3rd Sunday Tech Chat with Reg and Frank at 7 p.m.
- 23** – WCB Presidents call at 7 p.m.
- 25** – WCB Committee leaders call at 7 p.m.
- 30** – Deadline to submit articles for WCB Newslines Winter 2021 issue

DECEMBER

- 11** – SRC public meeting from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (meeting location to be determined)
- 14** – WCB Diabetics call at 7 p.m.
- 20** – 3rd Sunday Tech Chat with Reg and Frank at 7 p.m.
- 28** – WCB Presidents call at 7 p.m.

Washington Council of the Blind

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