



WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF THE BLIND

Opportunity, Equality, Independence
Founded 1935

WCB NEWSLINE

Fall 2020 Edition

“Fireside Nostalgia”

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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 the top publication in the nation for promoting best journalistic practices and excellence in writing.

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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 January and are anxious to read your quality content.

Please send all submissions by November 30.

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

The WCB Newsline is available in large print, digital audio cartridge, and email versions, and can also be accessed through our website. To receive this publication and other important WCB announcements, send a blank email to:

Newsline-I-subscribe@WCBinfo.org

Send other subscription requests and address changes to **theWCBNewsline@gmail.com**, or call 800-255-1147.

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

I have to say, every time I see the theme for this Newsline, I marvel at how appropriate it is for where we, Washington Council of the Blind (WCB) members, are living in the present. This theme, "Fireside Nostalgia," has a feeling of sitting by a summer's end campfire, ready to welcome in the fall.

But it also brings another poignant reality for our WCB family, and that is the memory of Berl Colley. There is a sense of nostalgia in regard to the amount of time, energy, talent and passion he brought to WCB. He left this earth on June 28, 2020, but his legacy and footprint for the council at both the state and national level will live on. Berl served as WCB president for two terms, from 2000 through 2004. Because of his love of and ability with people, along with sincere mentoring capabilities, WCB's membership expanded during his presidency. We'll miss you Berl, and you'll be in our memories forever.

The word for this COVID time is virtual. The American Council of the Blind (ACB) initiated a large national convention event with phenomenal success, propelling the way for WCB and other state affiliates to hold virtual conventions. This year, WCB will hold its annual state convention via Zoom and ACB radio Oct. 29-31. As convention plans develop, there will be information shared on the WCB listserv and via other venues.

WCB members have had quite a bit of experience holding virtual events. On Aug. 1, our summer board meeting, with 48 attendees, was full of information and discussion. On Aug. 29, Guide Dog Users of Washington State held its 2020 Fling, available via Zoom and broadcast on ACB Radio. Also, on Aug. 29, the WCB board held a virtual retreat to provide connection, sharing and future-focused discussions between WCB officers and board members.

WCB holds monthly calls around specific topic areas, and we hope anyone interested will join. The tech chat call happens the third Sunday of each month at 7 p.m. Here's how to join this call: at 6:55 p.m., dial

605-468-8839; when prompted, enter code 316499, followed by the pound sign.

We also have an informational call from our newest affiliate, WCB Diabetics, held the second Monday of each month at 7 p.m. To join, call 712-432-3900, then use access code 694194#.

Our Saturday morning WCB coffee and conversation hour, which was started by ACB Membership Services Coordinator Cindy Hollis, is now being orchestrated by various other WCB members. Thank you to Holly Turri who will be facilitating it, and to Jim Turri and Viola Cruz who will be providing Zoom hosting for this event. I hope many of you can join us for this chat time.

As you can see, though we are experiencing a pandemic, WCB members have shown ingenuity and skill, using modern technology to make sure WCB business continues and people connections still happen.

Julie Brannon President: jbrannon0612@gmail.com

***** Letter from the Editors**

Greetings all,

Are you ready to curl up with a good Newsline? Here are some helpful hints from your editors to get the most out of this issue.

1. Pour yourself a hefty portion of your favorite beverage. Recommendations for a 5-star experience include hot apple cider with a cinnamon stick and a dash of caramel, Earl Grey or orange cinnamon tea, mulled wine or mead, hot cocoa with cinnamon or peppermint, hot buttered rum, pumpkin spice beer, or hazelnut vodka.
2. Wrap yourself in a favorite afghan, quilt or fuzzy blanket.
3. If you have not worn your pajamas all day, go put them on. If you already have them on, good for you! Don't forget your unicorn slippers.
4. Put the kids to bed.
5. Put the pets to bed.
6. If the cat is sleeping in your normal reading spot, don't be afraid to branch out and try some alternatives, i.e., the bathtub, a hammock, the man cave or she shed, or worst case scenario, your walk-in closet.
7. Give yourself permission to indulge in time for yourself, to absorb the memories, reflections, and incredible histories you are about to read.
8. After you have read it, reach out to the author of something you enjoyed and start a conversation with them. Contact information is listed at the end of each article just for you.

We hope you enjoy this issue as much as we have.
Happy reading,

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 finally was able to sit down and listen to the audio version of the summer Newsline today. George did a great job of reading it. If you listen to him on the Stream with the speed turned up one value, he really sounds pretty good.

I thought that both of Carl's articles were great. And if I could pick more than one article as best, I would choose Alan's book column, and Carl's article "Let the Buyer Beware," and the one on Berl, also. The Newsline team continues to do a great job with this jam-packed summer issue.

From Carl Jarvis:

When I look at how far the Newsline has come, I think back to early 1972, sitting in my kitchen in Spokane, telephone to my ear and pounding away on my large-print manual typewriter. My wife, Trish, and I would haul out the old hand-crank mimeograph and crank out that first edition of what was called The WNFB Newsline. Later, around 1980, when the NFB board kicked Washington to the curb, we kept the Newsline name and published under our new name, The United Blind. In 1990, following the merger with WCB, we assumed our current name, The WCB Newsline.

Between that first publication and this last magnificent offering, we had our good years and our struggles. While I'm not especially proud of the appearance of some of those early editions, I am intensely moved by the dedication and devotion given by the organization's members. From our first struggle to keep the NFB from using our Newsline name, we've had the strong support of the membership, understanding the importance of keeping our members informed and close to one another.

It's been a long road we've traveled since 1972, nearly 50 years, since the Newslines replaced the White Cane Magazine. And the Newslines have never been better. Keep up the good work, and when the going gets difficult, know that it is well worth the effort.

Announcing your Readers' Choice nominee for the fall 2020 issue

We congratulate Heather Meares for her excellent essay, "Dreamscape," a whimsical tour of her gardens. It was the runaway favorite. It will move forward with the other finalists for the 2020 award.

In order to include your votes for the fall issue, we are unable to present the award at the convention, as originally intended.

Please vote for your favorite article in the fall issue no later than Nov. 7. We will send out a special edition, including all the finalists for the 2020 Readers' Choice Award. Votes for this award must be submitted by Nov. 30, and will be announced in the winter issue. Please watch the WCB and Newslines email lists for further details.

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

******* FEATURES**

***** Cheshire Cat Interviews #10 The Interview I Never Got by Heather Meares**

In this 30th anniversary year of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), I am humbled and honored to present to you an article from the past, written by Sue Ammeter, 1948-2018, during the time just before the ADA became law. Born blind, Sue made it known from square one that this disability would not slow her down in life. In fact, Sue chose the opposite direction and became a nationally known advocate for the blind and all disabled individuals. This is a glimpse into a young woman

who had the fire to fight for issues that are still relevant to us all today. In a time when those very rights are still being challenged, it is up to us to continue the efforts she started, now and in the future. Her legacy will be with us always.

Remembering Sue Ammeter 1948-2018

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***** She Knows Her Rights and Yours by Sue Ammeter**

I happened to be brought up in a family with three children of which I was the oldest. For whatever reason, I was part of the RLF (retrolental fibroplasia) baby boom. My folks, along with a number of other parents, all formed the Seattle League for Blind Children. It seems to me that because they worked to have us in the Seattle Public Schools, we got a lot of independence by going out into the regular classroom. At home, my folks always challenged me to do as much as I could do and they never set a different standard for me. They let me ride bikes, swim, roller skate, and I had the same amount of chores and other expectations of me as the rest of the kids in our family. Whatever made my parents do that, I don't have any idea. Someone asked my mom about that once and she said, "I was just too busy trying to raise three kids. I didn't have time to worry about raising one differently." To me, a lot of what you learn to be an independent blind person is from the home.

When I went on to the university, my independence led me to start getting involved in the organized blind movement. With the good start at home and then being in the organized blind movement, I believed that blind people could be equal to sighted people. Seeing blind people who were competent and capable made a big difference in my life.

When I started at the university level, I wanted to be a physical therapist. I went through the first two years and took a lot of hard classes: physics, chemistry, anatomy. I really believed that that was what I wanted to do. The faculty at the university really did not want a blind person in the physical therapy program and so I had to be observed for six weeks. They were very critical and put me down as a blind person. Here we were in a big hospital setting and they forbade me to use my cane. Then they criticized me in my final report for falling over things and being disoriented. This happened in 1969 and it was a very demoralizing experience.

That was a terrible experience. After working so hard at those courses, as well as working at the time, I decided to change my major. I got a degree in social welfare. Then I got out of school, and along with all the others with social welfare degrees, didn't have a job. We have to remember that in 1970, there were no laws to protect blind people. If you went to apply for a job and they didn't want you, that was that.

I had planned to go to graduate school right after I got out of college, but I got married and changed my mind about going. So, I started looking for work. That was when CETA (Comprehensive Employment Training Act) had started. I went for an interview with a brand new department in Seattle city government, the Office of Women's Rights. It had been there for about three days when I came. I have no idea why this person who interviewed me gave me a chance. She just said, "You seem like you're smart. I'll give you a job, so start to work tomorrow."

That started me in my civil rights career. Nobody in the office knew anything about it so we all had to learn together. We worked hard.

At the same time, I was very involved in the organized blind movement. I was an officer and because of my involvement in passing the disability legislation, I was offered a job at the Washington Human Rights Commission in 1975. I did general discrimination work for a couple of years. Then they created the first disability specialist position and appointed me to that position. I worked there for another year and a half. Then I worked for four years at the Commission for the Blind, and then I returned to the Human Rights Commission.

I feel I've been really fortunate in my employment opportunities. I just have to say to people: it pays to be involved. It pays to be involved in your community and show that you're active. You have to show at work that you're willing to do more than just shuffle some papers.

At the present time, I happen to be vice chair of our Governor's Committee on Disability Issues in Employment. That is giving me a lot of opportunities and ways in which to grow and to learn. I can't overestimate the value in being involved in one's community and in the organized blind movement or anything else that empowers people with disabilities to advocate for themselves and others.

Right now at my work, we're working on planning and implementing a program for employer training. We're going to be doing workshops at least once a month for 100 employers. That takes a lot of planning. I do the disability segment and also the areas dealing with pre-employment inquiries and those laws. Pre-employment inquiries include what to do and what not to do in health screenings and physicals. Last month, we trained 200 employers in Everett and Spokane. Right now, I'm planning a big disability workshop for October.

Another thing that I do is develop policy and regulations that deal with the implementation of the disability law for our agency. Right now, we're taking a look at the concept of reasonable accommodation, which is part of disability law.

Since last December, I've been serving as the coordinator for Washington, Oregon, and Idaho for the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Because our agency has been very involved in disability

law, we've been selected as one of six agencies in the country to work with the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission to start drafting their regulations and policies pertaining to that act.

Let's talk for a minute about assistance and technology as they apply to me in my job. For a number of years, I had volunteer readers and they came in about four hours a week. I usually get secretarial help to read my mail or phone messages. There is a lot of reading on my job, particularly when I do cases.

About four years ago, I was authorized to hire a work/study student up to 20 hours a week. For our agency, that means they pay a third of her cost. I'm gone a lot so sometimes they just come in and read legal materials or whatever I have when I'm not there. They do a lot of my typing and report compilations.

It was not until recently, in March, that I got a computer of my own. I have a Braille Interface Terminal and Artic Vision speech. Now it is possible for me to type more of my own rough drafts. I have an A.T.N.T. computer, which is IBM compatible. Because a lot of the letters that we receive are very technical or legal, I usually have the letter recorded and from that I do my own drafting. When my reader comes in, she does the final typing of the copy.

My employer allows me to take taxis to and from meetings in order to minimize the amount of time I spend. All the laws that I need to use have been put into Braille so I have ready access to them. The biggest asset has been having the work/study student.

The most important thing that a blind person does have to learn is to be organized. We have to be better prepared than our sighted co-workers, even though we might resent that. It isn't fair, but that's the way it is. If your reader doesn't show up, you have to be prepared to figure out what you're going to do if you have a big report ready for the next day because you don't have many alternatives. I try to schedule my work to be organized enough to have my reader read materials I'll need for a report that is due a week ahead of time. I must go through the mail

when my reader comes. I don't have the luxury of going through my mail like the other workers do while they're in a staff meeting.

I'm a person who makes lists of things to keep on the track of what I want to accomplish. I think you have to be willing to work overtime. It takes longer, sometimes, for a blind person to do some things.

I couldn't function in my job without Braille. I write Braille notes. I have all my speeches in Braille. Even though I have a Braille 'n Speak, I still use my slate and stylus. If you don't know Braille or can't read large print, how are you going to learn to spell? You just must learn all the skills that you can so that when you go to the job, when the employer asks you how you are going to do this or that skill, you can tell him or her how you're going to do it. They don't know.

I get calls every day from employers who do not have any idea how to accommodate a disabled job applicant or a person on the job who becomes disabled. Most of the time, they will call and say they've had a long-time employee who either becomes disabled or their disability is becoming worse. They want to look at how to accommodate the person or, if the person can't do the job anymore, they want to know if there is anything out there that is available for that employee. It might be about someone who has a physically progressive disease like multiple sclerosis.

Some employers have called to find some rehabilitation sources in the community who could properly advise them. That's not always the case. Sometimes they call because they want to know how they can terminate the person. I get a lot of calls from employees who say their employer has found out they are disabled and are trying to terminate them and want to know what they can do about it. We work on ways to write a memo requesting accommodation or getting their employers referred to rehabilitation professionals or whatever is needed to resolve the problem.

It is important for disabled people to know what their rights are. It is equally important to be able to explain how they can do the job so the

employer cannot say he or she didn't know what was needed and it wasn't explained to them.

A lot of the work that I do is on the Governor's Committee on Disabilities and Employment. They provide all the materials in Braille. I chair the Civil and Legal Rights Subcommittee so all the material that is handed out to the other participants is handed out to me. In planning and conducting the meetings, I use my Braille skills all the time. At the last quarterly meeting, my Braille stack was about six inches high, but at least I was able to read through as the meeting was going on, just like everybody else. If needed, they make materials available in large print or on tape. We just have to remember to raise people's awareness at meetings. If I go to a meeting and someone starts writing on the board, I just tell them they have to read it. A lot of sighted presenters depend too heavily on visuals. They sometimes can't explain in words what they're talking about.

The best part of my job is the realization that more disabled people know about their rights and what's available to them today than they did 10 or 15 years ago. The awareness and knowledge of employers are a lot better. The kids of today are more aware. Public education is very important.

Courses that would help you to work in this field are: psychology, sociology, pre-law, or personnel. Then you need to get work experience in personnel or the law area. It is difficult to get in at journey level in our agency.

There is a sense at a lot of agencies in my field of civil rights that people have to be attorneys. Our agency has not felt that was a necessary prerequisite. They look for people with good analytical skills, people who can relate well to the public and work under stress, and people who can sit down and look at a lot of facts and make decisions.

For students in high school or college, it's important to be involved in something other than your studies. As an employer, if you hand me your resume and it is totally blank in the place where activities are listed, I probably won't hire you. You need to participate in some kind of

community activity or work or something. I think, if you do, and people know you're around, your chances of getting employment are going to be a lot better. Employers want people who show initiative.

Editor's Note: The Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law by President Bush on July 26, 1990.

***** Convention Memories As Compiled by Reginald George**

The Newline committee sends a huge shout-out and thank you to everyone who chose to participate in our convention memories contest. Just for entering, the committee chose at random a winner who will receive a \$25 Starbucks gift card. That winner is Andy Arvidson, and he leads off this retrospective look at the memories you shared with us. Long live WCB and ACB!

From Andy Arvidson:

What has been my favorite Washington Council of the Blind convention? Although they have all been memorable, I would have to say the first one I attended in 2015. I enjoyed meeting old friends and acquaintances and finding out that I really do fit in with a blind organization that is about helping others.

A month or two prior to the convention, I received an email from Randy Tedrow, whom I had met on a Guide Dogs for the Blind alumni call. He wanted to know if I would assist him in a Kubaton self-defense session at the WCB convention. He asked this after he found out I was also a martial artist, and I agreed to do it. Having never used a Kubaton, I had to do some quick studying. Randy emailed me about a week prior to the convention and asked if I would lead the session for him. He was starting a new business with the Business Enterprise Program and was not sure in a new position if he could get away. So, I agreed.

At that time, I was president of a low-vision support group, and one of our members suggested that we check out some advocacy and

legislation concerning blindness and low vision. Not being sure where to go, and Randy inviting me to this WCB convention, I googled WCB and started checking it out. I also called the 800 line and Holly Turri returned my call and gave me some valuable information. The closest chapter to me was either Bellingham or Everett. Talking to Holly, and via the website, I found out that I could become a member-at-large for \$10, so I did. My wife, Colette, and I started talking and, at first, I wanted to just go down on Friday afternoon, do the session and come home. But looking at the price of the convention, we decided to attend the whole weekend so we could bring back information to our support group.

After arriving at the convention in Seattle, I ran into Alco Canfield, who had been my Braille instructor; I had not seen her in decades. She told me that it was about time I got there. Then I came across Carl Jarvis, who was my boss for a while when I worked at the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB). He told me later that weekend that he and Alco had talked and were both wondering what took me so long to get to WCB. Also, there were Keiko Namakata, Lou Oma Durand and several others whom I knew from my experience at DSB.

At that convention, I got a bug of interest and wanted to find out more of what WCB was all about. I do not know how to do things mildly or slowly, so I jumped in with both feet and started trying to figure out how to bring all of our local members into this organization. In fact, I convinced one of them to join us at that convention. I immediately came home and started questioning our low-vision support group about becoming a chapter of WCB, and by the WCB August board meeting the following year we were accepted as a new affiliate.

I have never thought that I made a mistake in joining WCB. It is an organization that is there to help vision-impaired individuals reach their goals. Since then, I was invited to and attended a National Federation of the Blind of Washington state convention. I am staying with WCB, thank you. And thanks for accepting me for who I am in this world of wonder.

Beth Greenberg:

For me, my favorite WCB convention was my second one in 2011. I think it was my favorite because our brand new chapter at the time hosted the convention in Vancouver. We were at the convention from start to finish and participated in so many new things and met so many new friends.

From Hayley Agers:

I have been attending Washington Council of the Blind conventions since around 2002. While I have made wonderful memories at all of them, the 2019 convention stands out as my favorite.

It all started with a little idea I had to do something special for the women of WCB, something that would be a way to show them just how much they are loved, valued, and beautiful in their individual ways. I never imagined that a little thing would turn into such a huge blessing.

It began with reaching out to designer Laurie Feltheimer, simply asking for her thoughts. If she had to pick the top 10 items she would never be without in her closet, what would they be? Of course, she inquired why I was seeking this information, and we were off to the races. A full-blown fashion show ensued, showing our WCB ladies how to put together and shine in outfits appropriate for different occasions. To top it all off, Two Blind Brothers got onboard and also donated clothes for the fashion show, for the youth convention, and for the entire WCB membership.

All of this was fabulous and made for a fun convention. But what really made it stand out to me was the generosity of others, their desire to give abundantly without asking for anything in return. Both of these companies not only walk the walk, they talk the talk – Laurie by always striving to encourage women and promote feelings of self-esteem and self-confidence, Two Blind Brothers by standing by their passion to support those who live with vision loss and aiming to be a part in finding the cure.

My heart felt extremely full after this event, and it taught me to never be afraid to ask. Sometimes the answer you get back will be no, and sometimes it will be a much bigger yes than you expect.

From Holly Turri:

The 2020 virtual American Council of the Blind (ACB) convention was my all-time, hands-down favorite. Any other national one will have big shoes to fill. In 2015, I attended the ACB convention, which was in Dallas. It was no fun at all.

As for WCB conventions, I have never been just a participant. For the past six years, I've worked in some capacity at each one. All of them were great, but honestly, they all kind of run together in my mind. Each one had a standout event or moment, but none rang my bell like the virtual one did.

Zoom is an excellent communication tool. So is ACB radio. Both had their place in my life.

It was wonderful to be in a group and participate at will. Zoom made that easy. If I visited a meeting and was bored out of my gourd, I could leave without stepping over a bunch of folks and embarrassing myself. If I arrived late, same thing went.

The radio programming made it easy to do housework and learn. I have attention deficit disorder, I think. If I sit still and listen too long, everything starts to sound like the teacher in the Charlie Brown specials.

President Dan Spoon gave a rousingly appropriate speech on Sunday night. The roll call of affiliates was new and different.

Hearing WCB Newslines get the award for the best publication really was so exciting. Meka's article also was the best one I've read.

Another thing I loved about the virtual convention: no flights to wherever. Although I'm not afraid of flying, I am not comfortable. My

uncle was a commercial pilot for 45 years. He was also an unrepentant alcoholic. Every time I board a plane, I want to ask the flight attendants where the captain was last night and did he get enough rest.

My food was what I wanted and easy to prepare. No guessing at some strange restaurant or paying high hotel costs.

Each night I got to sleep in my own bed. If I didn't like the evening events, I could go off to dreamland and no one but my dear husband would know.

The relieving area for Pima, my guide dog, was easy to get to and use. Hey, I go there every day.

I hope there are more virtual experiences. Enjoy your day.

***** The Summer of '71 by Frank Cuta**

In 1971, I had just turned 21. In Montana, that was drinking age, and my dad didn't hesitate to drag his blind son into his favorite watering hole and initiate me with his standard beverage, a boilermaker. My first legal drink was really not all that exciting, but little did I know that in the next few months my life would get much, much, more interesting.

I had been blind for five years and was nearing graduation from Montana State University. I was doing a lot of gymnastics, judo and swimming, in addition to carrying a heavy load, sometimes as high as 22 quarter credits. After one particularly embarrassing campus incident with a co-ed, I had given up trying to look sighted and was starting to use a white cane. I lacked professional mobility training and was just learning Braille. So, that summer I signed up for the intensive summer training program offered on the MSU campus, which was Montana's version of our Washington Orientation and Training Center (OTC). Without thinking, I had also signed up for one summer swimming course on campus.

The director of the OTC program that summer was a great guy by the name of Bill Gannon. However, soon after I got moved into the center, we discovered a slight problem. The OTC program was a 24-hour-a-day, total immersion training experience, and there was a strict rule forbidding external classes. Bill and I locked horns over this conflict and he eventually had to throw me out of the program. We still laugh about it when we see each other but, at the time, I was forced to find something else to do with my summer.

It was about this time I received notification that I was going to receive the Howard Brown Richard scholarship, the largest national scholarship awarded to a blind person majoring in science or engineering. This would be presented at the National Federation of the Blind convention in Houston early in July. This was very fortuitous because I had also lost an earlier battle that spring with my rehab counselor. A once-in-a-lifetime, intensive, professional, audio-recording seminar was being offered at Brigham Young University (BYU) that very same summer. However, it was considered a technical trade-level class, and he would only authorize me to take courses that would directly apply to my electrical engineering major. Well, now I was set. I had the time and I had the money, so I signed up for the BYU seminar.

The next part of this summer saga involved transportation. For several months, I had been experimenting with hitchhiking. I found that it was relatively easy to use my thumb to get back and forth the 100 miles between school and home. In those years, the blind organization in Idaho was unusually strong. Each summer, the group chartered a bus to take their members to the national convention. So, in late June I picked up my guitar, my Sony 105 reel-to-reel tape recorder, and a few necessities, and made my way out to the highway headed for Twin Falls where I met the bus on its way south.

So far so good. It was a great convention. I felt honored to be awarded the Richard scholarship. I was thrilled to receive my check at the banquet at the conclusion of the convention. As the Idaho bus made its way north the next day, I got off it late at night outside of Ogden, Utah. I hoped to immediately find a ride over to Provo, where the audio seminar was about to begin. There I was, standing beside the highway at about

11 p.m., and I felt for the comforting slip of paper in my front shirt pocket. This check would be my ticket to an extraordinary audio experience, and my summer escape from the bondage of the Department of Services for the Blind. My pocket was empty!

Well, I did not exactly have a plane waiting for me or anything, so I started backtracking and looking along the ground for it. However, I did not have much vision, and it was very dark out. Eventually I found my way to a small police station and some friendly officers found the check out in the middle of the highway. It had been run over a few times but it was OK.

The five-week audio seminar was extraordinary. At the BYU campus, they had all of the best audio/visual equipment at their disposal because it was here that they produced all of the church's promotional materials that are distributed all over the world. I got to play with some pretty nice microphones and learned a lot about audio engineering. At the conclusion of the seminar, we got to record Stan Kenton at a live campus performance.

At this point, I was pretty full of myself and I needed to kill another month before fall quarter started back in Montana. So, I bought a BYU sweatshirt in the student bookstore and went back out on the highway headed for California. I had friends I could visit in Southern California, a sister living in Northern California, and more friends in Oregon that I wanted to see. Before too long, I was picked up by a nice Mormon family and was on my way west.

I never had a bad experience hitchhiking, although that summer I did have two very memorable experiences. The first was on my way to Provo. I was picked up by a drifter who was very drunk. After a few miles, he slowed down and pulled off the road into a dark field. It turned out that he just had to relieve himself, but it would have been nice if he had warned me first.

The second incident was in Oregon. In going north to Eugene, I overshot. I wound up outside of a gas station in Portland trying to get back south at about midnight. Soon, a nice couple picked me up who

were going all the way to Eugene. Unfortunately, as I cringed in the back seat of their car, they recounted how earlier that evening they had been to a Christian tent meeting and had their poor vision healed. In frenzied glee, they had put their glasses on the ground and stomped them into small pieces.

I did have a fun month tromping around the West Coast. On arriving home and getting back into the grind of school work, it was time for me to hire a new reader. I put my regular "reader wanted" sign up in the girls' dorm (boys need not apply). I was soon contacted by an incredibly sharp, shapely co-ed who was also an engineering major. Not only was Judy an incredible reader, but she shared my personal philosophy and interests in plays, poetry, and science fiction. That was the end of '71. Love soon followed, and we were married early in '72.

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***** Then and Now
A poem by Rhonda Nelson**

T'was my first ACB convention, 1983
Could not have even dreamed of all the fun awaiting me.
Upon arrival we received a Braille magazine
At least that's what it felt like, and it really set the scene.
Outlining all the planned events on schedule for the week
Nowadays one volume would seem sparse, back then was such a treat.
Still have that slightly dusty volume on my shelf somewhere
Though many things have changed since then, excitement still is there.
Excitement for convention days, 'cause where else can you find
Good friends and speakers and fun tours, plus tech to stretch the mind.
This year that tech and all the rest is virtually being done
Congrats to those who've made it work, a new frontier has come.
And that frontier has reached us too, right here in WCB
October's end brings our convention, it's the place to be!

***** Raking Leaves with Daddy by Holly Turri**

When I was eight years old, I learned a lesson about responsibility and friendship. Dad was the instructor. My three gal pals grew right along with me.

At that time, I lived on the East Coast, near Washington, D.C. Fall is beautiful here in the Pacific Northwest, but the ones we experienced in my childhood had their own unique magic.

Autumn is my second favorite season. Ever since I was a tiny girl, the part I love best is the leaves. When I touched the branches that I could reach on the trees and noticed how they were drying out, I was totally amazed. Then there was the frost and crisp air that made them turn all those beautiful colors. There's nothing like that smell, and the crunch they made as I walked in them. Best of all, after Daddy raked them, I loved jumping in the big pile and rolling around.

Well, on this beautiful Saturday in October, Marilyn, Joanne, Rachel and I were busily and happily destroying all Dad's hard work. It was really fun, too. We even started playing a game where we'd run, yell, and throw the dry leaves by the handful at each other.

Lunch time came. Reluctantly, we had to go home to eat. After I got into the house, Dad said, "When I raked all those leaves, I hurt my back. It's going to be pretty hard for me to fix the big pile again for the leaf pick-up on Monday." Dad always had problems with that part of his anatomy. It came from his wounds in World War II. Well, I felt as low as a snake's belly in a culvert, and I apologized.

He said, "Thanks for your concern. I have a present for you." Being a typical, greedy kid, I was totally excited – a gift. It wasn't even my birthday, which is in May, and Christmas was a couple of months away.

After lunch, he told me that when my brother was my age, he received a child-sized leaf rake. Whoa! I loved miniature tools. Mom had climbed

up in the attic and brought it down for me. He was going to teach me how to "use it correctly," and construct an appropriate pile.

My brother, Dave, is 7 years older and sighted. No way was I going to make a sloppy mess. Since we all knew he was a perfect son and genius, I had a point to prove.

Getting the hang of the project was dicey. At first, it was challenging to get the rake under the leaves and push them into a firm foundation. Those darn things kept running away, and that danged sidewalk kept biting me.

After I got that down, I learned how to pile them gently on top. Believe me, at first, I missed more than I hit. After a while, this whole thing got rather long, and I became frustrated and discouraged. Being a wise girl, I didn't complain.

Suddenly, my friends came and wanted to try. Marilyn didn't last long. She was too girly to get hot, dirty, and sweaty. However, she was a great cheerleader, and her mom and mine brought out snacks. Finally, the sidewalk supervisor, a.k.a. Dad, gave his stamp of approval. Many hands made light work.

My besties thought the little rake was extremely cool. Everyone took turns using it. They wanted their folks to get them one. For the record, I did most of the grunt work, and they did the fine shaping and trim. We all joked, gossiped, and sang. After the gang of four worked so hard to do a nice job, messing it up seemed kind of juvenile and pointless.

Dad and I entered our house, and Dad told Mom that he was so proud of all of us, but especially me. He wanted to know how I convinced the other girls to join in and help. I mumbled that I had no idea – they just showed up. The best part was he shared that when Dave was assigned my job, he got mad, threw the rake down, and refused to finish.

My father was not big on compliments. If you heard him say "well done," that was a time to celebrate. Score one for the blind kid and the young

women who took one of the first tiny steps on the road toward adulthood.

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***** A Campfire Voice
by Chris Coulter**

In the hurry and flurry of getting ready for the 2020 American Council of the Blind (ACB) virtual convention, I almost missed something on the registration form that turned out to be very special. It was an event that was presented by ACB Families. The program was called "Summer Camp Stories." It was a series of very short, deliciously creepy ghost stories, narrated by Jack Fox, a well-loved narrator for the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled.

Jack began the presentation by making us see him as someone eating hotdogs and very sticky, gooey, and gorgeous s'mores at the campfire. He kept that image at the top of our minds from the beginning, clear through the breaks between stories, and up to the end of the event. There was definitely a sense that we were within the safe circle of the firelight, while all around us was the deep, dark unknown. Jack painted that picture with just his voice. He took us back in time to an even darker and spookier place, somewhere in the 19th century or so.

What is there about a campfire that brings out the two opposite elements: comfort within the circle of light, and creepiness in the darkness outside the circle? What is it that compels us to use our voices around the fire? Even if there is just one master storyteller, who does most of the talking, as we find people clapping and cheering or gasping with horror. At some point, in most campfire scenarios, there is a sing-along. This is another way of keeping the ghosts and goblins at bay. In these contemporary times, someone accompanies the singing by playing a guitar. In earlier days, most campfire singing was done a cappella.

I learned from listening to the camp stories presentation that we should never underestimate the power of the human voice, or of musical accompaniment. Jack didn't lead us in a sing-along; he didn't have to. Somehow, his voice and his imaginative painting of a campfire word-picture did the whole job. Kudos to Jack for a fine presentation, and kudos to ACB Families for putting it all together.

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***** Have Another Spoonful by Heather Meares**

As a child, I always loved visiting my grandparents. I lived in Oklahoma and they lived in Idaho, so I only saw them about once a year or so. When I was 11, we moved to Oregon, and I was able to see them much more frequently. It was great that both sets of them lived in the same town, as well as lots of aunts, uncles, and cousins. Both of my parents were the middle child of five children, so I have fond memories of many large gatherings with both families. My favorites, however, are the times I got to spend alone with them.

Crawling under the covers in a bed made special, just for me, was one of my favorite things at Grandma Lucille's. She started with the softest flannel sheets and fluffy pillows. Then there were layers and layers of blankets and at least one quilt she had made. When I say quilt, I don't mean the fancy ones made of coordinating calicos, intricate stitches, and perfect designs. She did make many of these beautiful quilts and, in fact, had an entire loft for this type of quilting. But these are not what I am referring to. I am talking about the ones made from old polyester clothes, and completely non-matching colors and clashing patterned squares with the little yarn ties holding it all together, and yet another flannel sheet as the back. Let me say this...you have never been warmer or felt more secure and safe than when you are under these quilts. The pure weight of all these layers would protect you from any lurking monster under the bed, and immediately send you into the deepest, silent sleep. The bed I slept in was in her loft and it always felt very magical to me. There was her fancy sewing machine and an entire

wall of fabric bolts organized by color, on beautiful handmade oak shelves my Grandpa Bill made for her in his woodworking shop, which had a sign on the door that said “Wild Bill’s Woodpecker Shop.”

He was a master woodworker, and the creations that came out of his haven were as solid as he was. He was famous for his oak roll-top desks that were so heavy you’d need an elephant to move them. The details were stunning, not like anything you see in stores today. My dad has one, which will be passed down to my brother. He made baseball bats for his grandsons, and the most wonderful dollhouse for my sister and me. It had a shake-shingled, removable roof, a split stairway with handrails, and double-decker porches with railings that surrounded all sides of the house. He also made a heart-shaped bed, kitchen cupboards, and tiny little wooden curtain rods for all the windows. Grandma helped us decorate the interior, using wallpaper sample books and carpet scraps. We made curtains, bedspreads, and tiny little pillows with her fabric remnants, and a kitchen table out of an empty thread spool with a circle of wood from the shop for a table top. My daughter and I did our own next-generation renovations during her childhood. She still has it and perhaps she will have a daughter to enjoy it with someday, as well.

Grandpa Bill was 6’5” with broad shoulders and a thick chest. To me, he seemed like a giant with a teddy bear heart. He was intimidating, and as a young man he was stern and unrelenting with his children, but he was putty with his grandchildren. I loved to make him laugh. I remember one dinner with them that still makes me chuckle inside when I think about it. My parents were not there, so it was just us, kids and grandparents. Grandma had prepared one of my favorite dishes, straight out of their garden –cream potatoes and peas. As I ate them, before I could finish what was on my plate, Grandpa would say, “Heather, have another spoonful!” I obliged him the first time, and maybe even the second time. He started laughing and just wouldn’t stop filling my plate. I couldn’t stop laughing either, and the whole kitchen was in a giant uproar. I can still hear Lucille saying, as she did so often, “Oh, Bill!!!” in a slightly scolding, yet smiling manner. I have no idea how many times he scooped more onto my plate, but I do remember admiring the lovely, antique serving spoon he used.

Grandma Lucille loved going rummage sale shopping on Saturday mornings with her sister, Bernice, otherwise known as Aunt B. They always came home with cute dishes, china teacups and saucers, milk glass bowls, and other treasures. They grew up in the Great Depression and always knew how to find great bargains. I always looked forward to being invited along on these adventures. I watched and learned from the queens. When we visited, she would occasionally put our name on a piece of masking tape and stick it to the back of something we particularly loved. It was a fun thing to do together. Sometimes, she would even send one home with us, wrapped in so much tissue and taped so tightly. These little gifts felt extremely special.

I inherited my love of gardening from both of them. His vegetable garden behind the shop was full of corn, potatoes, green beans, peas, and lots of tomatoes. Lucille would jokingly tell us that she had to tie up the Early Girl tomato with her No Nonsense pantyhose because it was planted too close to the Big Boy tomato. She thought this was very funny. He also had many fruit trees and grapes along the fences, which I loved to pick and eat. All of the harvests were canned, preserved, or made into apple butter, jams, and jellies. She grew lots of iris and roses, and had little johnny jump-ups and hens and chicks all throughout the gravel driveway.

I still have the treasures she gave me, and to this day, I sleep best with heavy layers of blankets. My aunts have passed things down to me over the years, including a white china hot cocoa pot with dainty pink roses and its matching tray, which belonged to my great-great-grandmother. The one that made me smile the most was the spoon my aunt gave me. As she handed it to me, she said, "Have another spoonful!"

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***** LIFESTYLE

*** Book Chat by Alan Bentson

"I like people, but not all people. I'm neither Christian enough nor charitable enough to like somebody just because they are alive and breathing. I want people to interest or amuse me. I want them fascinating and witty, or so dull as to be different. I want them either intellectually stimulating or wonderfully corny, perfectly charming or one hundred percent stinker. I like my chosen companions to be distinguishable from the undulating masses and I don't care how." -- Betty Bard MacDonald, "The Plague and I."

I love memoirs, don't you? We are gregarious primates, and I believe that in every brain there is a little gossipy creature who is insatiably curious about the lives of everyone around us. My favorite kind of memoir is the slice-of-life story by someone, probably not famous, recreating in detail part of their lives. I am convinced that if I sat down for six months with one of those clever ghostwriters to recreate my life, we would only come up with enough to fill a short Reader's Digest article. So, I am impressed by people who can say enough about their lives to fill a whole book.

The memoirist I am most enthusiastic about at the moment is Betty Bard MacDonald, who lived in Washington state. Between 1945 and 1955, she produced four extraordinary books based on her own life. They are: "The Egg and I" (1945, db37151 and BR 2721), "The Plague and I" (1948, DBC7115), "Anybody Can Do Anything" (1950, dbc6923), and "Onions in the Stew" (1955, DBC17001).

"The Egg and I" concerns her life on an isolated chicken farm in the Olympic Mountains in the 1920s. "Anybody Can Do Anything" is about looking for work during the Depression in Seattle as a divorced mother with two young daughters. "Onions in the Stew" talks about her second marriage and her life on Vashon Island during World War II. (Yes, there's WWII again!)

The book I finished reading just now is “The Plague and I,” about her year in a Seattle tuberculosis sanatorium in the late 1930s. When reading about the current COVID-19 pandemic, we often see the word “unprecedented,” but books like this remind us that U.S. history has been full of huge battles against epidemic diseases like influenzas and tuberculosis that required huge efforts on the part of patients and doctors alike. Her harrowing experiences at the sanatorium involved physical deprivation, freezing cold, a surgical operation, being subject to the iron discipline of the staff, and days and days of doing nothing so her lungs could rest. She describes this ordeal with the kind of self-effacing humor that is a prerequisite for a successful memoir and an acute observation of people and their foibles. Despite what she says in the epigraph to this article, she seems to find almost everyone extraordinary and interesting in some way, and she is a master of showing rather than telling. Anybody who has ever been in a hospital or other institution, or who likes fine writing, will enjoy this book.

The first book I read by her for a book club several years ago was “The Egg and I.” I had heard of this book forever it seems, always categorized as “humor,” so I was expecting a feel-good, innocuous book like, say, “Cheaper by the Dozen.” I was reinforced in this expectation by the knowledge that this book was a major bestseller when it was published, and was turned into a Hollywood movie. However, this story is not for the faint of heart. The work on the farm was exhausting and unpleasant, and not terribly remunerative, and the experience was full of loneliness and suffering. Some of the people she meets are friendly and helpful, others are nasty and degrading. She does not describe why her first marriage broke up, but the stresses of rural life seem adequate to end anyone’s marriage. “Onions in the Stew” was about family life, but we are not in Gerald Durrell territory here; the work was hard and money was tight.

At the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library (WTBBL), we have these books classified as “nostalgia,” which is accurate in that they evoke past times, but frankly I’m impressed that Betty survived all this stuff, let alone was able to laugh about some of it. She died in 1958, at the age of 50, leaving the world a better place for her having been in it. She also wrote a number of children’s books, and probably a lot of

journalism. We also have a biography, “Looking for Betty MacDonald,” by Paula Becker (dbc6741, and brC#1796), produced at WTBBL. “The Egg and I” is narrated by Pam Ward. The other three memoirs are narrated quite competently by volunteers at WTBBL, but I think National Library Service should do a set of these all on one cartridge with someone as good as Pam Ward to narrate, say, Jill Fox or Carol Dines. I haven’t read the biography yet or “Anybody Can Do Anything” so I’m glad I have more Betty to look forward to. All of the books mentioned here are available from Audible.com, narrated by Heather Henderson. Bookshare.org has all of these books, plus a book called “Who Me? The Autobiography of Betty MacDonald,” which was apparently published after her death. She’s a great writer by any standard, and reading her books will make you proud to live in the Pacific Northwest.

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***** Angels Everywhere
by Alco Canfield**

Abundance

I trudged down Broadway on my way home. It was snowing straight down as it does when a thaw is imminent. I inched along the snow bank as traffic whizzed by on my left. Sometimes I had to hop up on the snow bank because the cars came so close.

I was irritated – sick of snow, sick of cold, sick of winter. I was in full complaint mode. How was I going to find my house at the end of the cul-de-sac? When should I jump over the snow bank to find it? On and on, negative noise.

Then I was overwhelmed by a sudden realization. I stopped dead in my tracks, taking in the present. I could hear the snow falling on my hood. It was a beautiful moment and I was missing it because I was so mired in a morass of melancholy. Gratitude filled me as I gave thanks for my ability to walk to the house I owned, for just being alive.

Then I heard a woman shoveling and asked her to let me know when to jump over the snow bank into my driveway. She did and I did.

I realized then how much I often miss by failing to embrace the present moment and delight in what it has to offer. Giving thanks for even those things that are unpleasant robs them of their negative energy. Gratitude is a most powerful tool. It teaches us that we walk in abundance.

Try It, You'll Like It

I missed the bus. I had to get to a meeting. I was anxious, annoyed, and frustrated. Traffic sped by, heedless of my stress.

Then suddenly, I had an idea. I started asking God to bless the people in the cars rolling by. I didn't know how many were in each car and, obviously, I didn't know their circumstances. But as I asked God to bless them, my stress evaporated and I was filled with serenity. I chuckled to myself, wondering how they would feel if they knew I was blessing them. After about 10 minutes, someone I knew pulled up and offered me a ride to the meeting I needed to attend.

I learned a very valuable lesson. To this day I ask God to bless those speeding by as I wait for a bus, a cab, or a friend. It fills me with joy and lets me out of my self-centered swamp.

A Stranger's Kindness

It was my third day at work in Seattle. I got off the bus and began to walk. I tripped over an enormous crack in the sidewalk, the result of a tree root. Oh, my shoulder! I guess I can't call it blinding pain, but it certainly temporarily robbed me of my thought processes. I stood up, wondering what to do.

"Can I help you?" asked a kind voice. "Please, take my pack, my purse, and my cane and walk me to the hospital," I said to him. I knew it was several blocks away. I must have been in shock because I do not remember the trip there.

I was immediately helped. I turned to thank my benefactor but he had disappeared.

The doctor said she could wrench my shoulder back in to place. I said, "I know you have drugs, lots of drugs. I don't want to even have the slightest memory of what you are about to do." She did what she needed to do and thank goodness I don't remember it.

Angels are everywhere. We just do not realize it. I hope someday some way I may once again meet the one who helped me that day. I would have suffered so much more without him.

Hopefully, when we see a need, we can also be angels to one another.

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***** What's On Your Plate?
Memories from My Kitchen
by Hayley Agers**

For many, the past six months have seemed to drag on forever. I, too, have had days like that – going from being at home during the day to having my entire family home all the time. I've enjoyed getting outside as much as possible, as being outdoors in nature is where I find my inner peace. During this outdoor time, I have spent many hours thinking about those who have come in and out of my life, wondering where they are now, and hoping they are well. I've reached out to people I haven't spoken to in several years, and friendships have been rekindled. I've also made a lot of new friends and my life feels very full. So, for my recipe sharing in this Newsline, I wanted to look back and acknowledge those who passed them on to me. If you are one of those people who is struggling with all the uncertainty right now, feeling alone, or just looking for something new to cook, I hope these recipes will bring comfort to your heart and stomach.

Here's a recipe I love to make for my mother-in-law when she comes to visit. When the kids go off to school, this is our chance to sit down at the table together, share a meal and a cup of coffee together, and catch up on the happenings in each of our lives.

Cranberry Maple Slow-cooker Oatmeal

- 2 cups steel-cut oats
- 8 cups water
- 2/3 cup cranberries
- 1/2 cup maple syrup
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 3 Tbsp. toasted, slivered almonds

Combine all ingredients, except almonds, in crockpot and cook on low for 4 to 6 hours (I just cook mine overnight). Stir well before serving and top with almonds. This will last in the refrigerator for three to four days. Yields 3/4 cup oatmeal and 1 tsp. almonds per serving.

When I graduated from college and began my job at a school for children with disabilities, our multi-disciplinary team of physical and occupational therapists and speech language pathologists would do a potluck lunch once a week. We all chose which part of the lunch we would prepare. My friend, Kelly, would bring this soup almost every time, per our request. Later on, it was one of the recipes that I taught students at the Orientation and Training Center. Even those students who had sworn off vegetables enjoyed this recipe. I hope you enjoy it.

Hamburger Soup

- 1½ lbs. ground beef or chuck, cut into cubes
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 stalks of celery, finely chopped
- 4 carrots, finely chopped
- 1 can of tomato soup
- 3 cans of beef consommé
- 1 can of water
- 1 bay leaf
- 8 Tbsp. barley
- 1 (28 oz.) can of stewed or diced tomatoes
- ½ tsp. thyme
- ½ tsp. parsley
- Salt and pepper to taste

Brown meat with onion and drain before adding to crockpot. Place meat and remaining ingredients in crockpot. Turn on low and cook 6-8 hours.

When my son, Brayden, was in kindergarten, a classmate's mum made this recipe. When all the other mums were bringing in frosted cupcakes, ice cream bars, or some other heavily frosted cake for their child's birthday, this classmate's mum brought these muffins, as they were her daughter's favorite. Isn't that what it's all about, cooking the things we know will be enjoyed and asked for over and over? Well, this is now my daughter's favorite muffin/cupcake and we love making them together, especially in the fall. Welcome to our home – pull up a chair, pour yourself a cup of tea or coffee, and enjoy a yummy, sweet treat with us.

Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Muffins

- 1 cup pumpkin purée
- 1/3 cup of vegetable oil
- 2 large eggs
- 1 1/4 cups of sugar
- 1 1/2 cups of flour
- 2 tsp. of pumpkin pie spice
- 1/2 tsp. of baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. of baking powder
- 1/2 cups of mini chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix together pumpkin purée, vegetable oil, eggs, and sugar until well blended. In another bowl, whisk flour, baking soda, baking powder, and pumpkin pie spice, until combined. Then add to the pumpkin mixture until well blended. Fold in the chocolate chips. Put muffins in pan, and bake for 25-30 minutes. I also put a few chocolate chips on top of the muffins before baking.

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***** The Benefits of Herbs and Spices — Part One © 2020 by Leonore H. Dvorkin**

About the Author

Leonore H. Dvorkin is an author, editor, and instructor of German and Spanish who lives in Denver, CO. Note: The original version of this article appeared in the October 2008 issue of the Denver publication *Community News*, which no longer exists.

Hello, everyone! The heat of summer is gone, and fall is here at last. It won't be long before it's time to dig out those mixing bowls, heat up the oven, and get to baking pumpkin pies, molasses cookies, and other traditional fall and winter goodies. With that in mind, here's an article on the benefits of some common spices and herbs, from cinnamon to

ginger to thyme to turmeric. So get yourself a cup of peppermint tea, then relax and enjoy the read.

Botanically, herbs and spices are classified as fruits and vegetables. They've been used in cooking and for medicinal purposes in many cultures throughout history. They're high in antioxidants because they no longer contain the water that makes up such a large part of fresh produce. They can add a lot of flavor to food, making it less likely that you will need to add fat, salt, or sugar to make your food taste good.

Their nutritional content can be quite impressive. One teaspoon of ground ginger has as many antioxidants as a cup of spinach. A teaspoon of thyme has as many antioxidants as a carrot or one-half cup of chopped tomatoes. A teaspoon of dried oregano has as many antioxidants as one-half cup of chopped asparagus. There is ongoing research into the ability of herbs and spices to boost metabolism, aid in weight control, and promote satiety (a feeling of fullness).

Black pepper may be common, but it's a standout when it comes to health benefits. It improves digestion by increasing the stomach's secretion of hydrochloric acid. It helps prevent the formation of intestinal gas and helps stimulate the breakdown of fat cells. It's also an antioxidant and supplies manganese, iron, and fiber.

Cinnamon, an extremely popular spice, comes in numerous varieties. I've always loved it; buttery cinnamon-sugar toast and my mother's small, dense cinnamon rolls were two of my favorite childhood treats. But ever since I was diagnosed a few years ago as diabetic, I've appreciated the well-documented ability of even small amounts of this spice, as little as one-quarter teaspoon per day, to help reduce blood sugar levels in people with type-2 diabetes. Other benefits of cinnamon include the reduction of cholesterol levels and triglycerides and some antioxidant activity. Just smelling this wonderful spice can boost brain function and reduce irritability. It also supplies manganese, fiber, and iron. Besides using it in baked goods, try sprinkling it on coffee, toast, yogurt, or cottage cheese. It can give an interesting twist to the flavors of chicken and ground meat.

There is much information online detailing why Ceylon cinnamon is the most healthful variety. I was unable to find that variety in the store, so I ordered some organic Ceylon cinnamon online. It came in a bag, and it is easy to fill an old cinnamon bottle from the bag using a small funnel.

Cloves are the unopened buds of an evergreen tree. They can be used as a pickling spice or to make drinks such as mulled wine. A warming spice, it can help relieve congestion. Clove oil relieves a toothache. The eugenol in the oil is anti-inflammatory and can help relieve the stiffness and pain of arthritis.

Ginger, common in many Asian cuisines, has been eaten for more than 4,000 years and was one of the first spices traded in Western Europe. It can help ease motion sickness and inhibit vomiting; in 1983, the British found that powdered ginger is twice as effective as Dramamine. It can help ease the side effects of chemotherapy. Gingerols (compounds in ginger) also appear to have an anti-inflammatory effect, which can help reduce the pain of arthritis. It also supplies potassium. One ounce of ginger root has only about 20 calories. Try ginger with meats, poultry, sushi, and some desserts.

I enjoy an occasional cup of ginger tea, available in health food stores. On the side of their box of "Ginger Aid" tea, Traditional Medicinals (a brand I've praised in articles I've written about teas) states that ginger tea "promotes the flow of digestive juices." Try this pungent, somewhat spicy beverage with a bit of honey, agave nectar, or liquid stevia.

Here's a list of herbs and spices that can aid digestion: allspice, anise, cardamom, cloves, dill, ginger, marjoram, oregano (effective against Giardia), peppermint, and tarragon (known to relieve gas).

Thyme is one of my favorite herbs. If you have not yet tried cooking with it, don't be put off by the fact that thymol, which is thyme's most active ingredient, is in products like Listerine and Vicks. That's because it has antibacterial properties. When inhaled, thyme oil can help loosen phlegm and relax the muscles in the respiratory tract.

Thyme is a common ingredient in Mediterranean dishes, and it's great with beef, lamb, or pork. Try adding it to stuffing, spaghetti sauce, pizza sauces, or chili. It can enhance any cheese, tomato, or egg dish. Once in food, it releases its full flavor rather slowly, so add it early in the cooking process. When dried, thyme retains its flavor better than many other herbs do, so dried or powdered thyme makes a perfectly good substitute for fresh thyme.

Turmeric is a main ingredient of curry. You can buy turmeric in capsule form if you don't like its taste. It can reduce the risk of gallstones, and it also has anti-inflammatory properties. Like yogurt, it can help re-establish beneficial bacteria in the digestive system after the use of antibiotics. There is considerable evidence that it has anti-cancer properties; Indian men, who eat a lot of curry, have a low rate of prostate cancer.

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******* HISTORY**

***** Twenty-five Years of Learning by Carl Jarvis**

There's an old song that goes, "What a difference a day makes." Well, I don't know about one day, but 25 years most certainly make a difference.

Looking back, we feel as though we can almost touch that day in early January. And yet, as we drove down Highway 101 to our first appointment, 25 years seemed to stretch ahead of us forever. Such an immense length of time.

Peninsula Rehabilitation Services (PRS) began business almost the same day we moved into our new home. Now, nestled on 10 acres near

the village of Quilcene, we were official. We were now one small member of a statewide program, the Independent Living/Older Blind Program (IL/OB.)

Initially, we were to serve Kitsap, Jefferson and Clallam counties, but within a year we added Mason and Grays Harbor counties to our PRS family. Over the years, the state program became known as the Independent Living Older Blind (ILOB) Program. As part of the Department of Services for the Blind, Ed Grant was appointed the program's first administrator. Ed retired in the early 90's and he and his wife, Phyllis, bought a home in Port Angeles. There they began a blind support group at the Park View Villa Retirement Apartments.

On Jan. 1, 1995, we unloaded the moving van and entered our new home. And then we collapsed, figuring we'd take our time organizing stuff – tons and tons of stuff. Early on Monday, Jan. 2, Ed called.

"You get moved in?" he asked. "If you mean is everything out of the weather then, yes, we're moved in," I replied.

It would still be 10 days of waiting for a final inspection before we took possession. Ed said his group met on the second Tuesday of each month, and they would love to meet us, next Tuesday.

And so it began. The world was a bit different 25 years ago. We had no laptops, no GPS, no cell phones, and no online resources. But we did have one big advantage going for us: we were 25 years younger. And we were excited and eager.

We set a heavy schedule, two appointments before lunch and two in the afternoon, five days a week. Remember, we were driving around in Kitsap, Jefferson, Clallam, Mason and Grays Harbor counties from Bainbridge Island to Neah Bay, and from West Port to Point No Point.

On normal days we ate dinner during Jeopardy, and then it was off to the office to enter the day's entries and records, place orders, and call new referrals.

But schedules are made to be broken. One of our first learning experiences was finding out that retired people enjoy being retired. Many new clients were shocked when we suggested we had a 9 a.m. opening. As one sweet lady put it, "My dear, that is the time I'm getting my beauty sleep." Since no one would deny a person their beauty sleep, we dropped the early morning appointment.

Another lesson learned the hard way was the rising cost of doing business. When we first set out, a nice, filling lunch could be had for around \$10 for the two of us. The last lunch we bought cost a bit over three times that amount. But that was just lunch. Everything else went up in price, too, such as the gas and maintenance on our Ford trucks. We wore out three during the 25 years, and then there was the increase in aids and appliances, not to mention shipping costs.

But despite rising expenses, increased accountability, and piles and piles of records and paperwork, we managed to keep our eye on our goal of meeting people's needs – assisting in developing the independent skills that enabled them to live where and how they chose.

Another important lesson we learned was that our clients often knew more than we knew about what they needed. We learned to shut up and listen. It became clear that it was not as important where they lived as how they felt about their contributions to their family and their community. It came to us that, for years, we Americans have been isolating our senior citizens when what they wanted was participation. While we were busy "protecting" our elders, by sheltering them in assisted living facilities, they were feeling excluded, when they still wanted and needed to feel included. More than once, we heard someone complain that their family had parked them in a senior facility in order to be rid of them.

As rehab teachers, there is an assumption that we can relate to our clients. While this may be somewhat true, there's a huge difference between relating to, and living with, the aging process. This lesson is learned when we realize that the heavy grunt was not coming from our client, but is us trying to rise up out of our chair. And that youthful lilt to our step is more like a lurching limp.

And finally, if all the stars are in their proper places, we come to understand that we are not so much teachers as we are learners, all learning together.

For years we grumbled that the ILOB program was like going around putting Band-Aids on open wounds. In hindsight, that has not proven to be the case. Sure, we could have done much more, and served more clients if we'd been given more resources but, in truth, we "done good with what we got." The real rehab was not the gadgets or the coaching, but the simple fact of connecting, the feeling of being worthwhile, to feel needed, and to feel a sense of independence. Twenty-five years could all be summed up simply as by the lady who beamed as she told us, "That watch, that lovely little talking watch. Now I no longer have to go about asking folks what time it is. I just ask my little friend."

One small touch of independence, a turning point, the first step toward taking the next step.

Twenty-five years. Really, not so long a time. But time enough to travel the great Northwest and meet so many good people.

And, as we close the doors and turn out the lights, that becomes our final word as rehab teachers. Whenever the TV and radio and online news become unbearably negative, just pull on your walking shoes and go knocking on your neighbors' doors. There's a whole beautiful land full of beautiful folks just waiting to welcome you into their lives.

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*** History Quiz by Carl Jarvis

In these tumultuous times of the COVID-19 pandemic, Americans can all be thankful for the 1935 establishment of the Social Security Administration by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, including Social Security Disability. It was the same year the blind men and women of Washington State organized the Washington State Association of the Blind, but every bit as important to all Americans is our Medicare and Medicaid program.

Two-part question: Who was called "the real daddy of Medicare," and, in what year was Medicare established?

Answer: In 1948, Harry Truman pushed for a national nonprofit health insurance program in his successful, come-from-behind presidential campaign. When Truman's plan was denounced as "socialized medicine" and "un-American" by the powerful American Medical Association, "Give 'em hell, Harry" stood his ground, defending his proposal as "simple Christianity."

In 1965, when President Lyndon Johnson secured passage of Medicare (and Medicaid), he traveled to Missouri to formally sign it into law in Truman's presence – declaring that "the real daddy of Medicare" was Harry Truman.

Medicare was federal health insurance for those 65 and older, but proponents hoped it was step one on the way to Medicare for all.

Answer credited to the following source: "Time to Give 'Em Hell," by Jeff Cohen, Reader Supported News.

Question: The 1970 decision by the Washington State Association of the Blind to demand a separate commission for the blind had an explosive reaction in the blind community. What was it?

Answer: A number of blind people gathered at Seattle's Roosevelt Hotel in April 1971. Out of this meeting came a new blind organization, the Washington Council of the Blind.

In part, this new organization came into being in support of efforts to keep the Office of Services for the Blind within the Department of Social and Health Services, and in part it was a reaction to the more aggressive methods taken by the Washington State Association of the Blind, an affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind.

For several years, the two organizations stood their respective ground, and the state Legislature used this division as leverage, with the commission bill never coming out of committee. Finally, a compromise was reached. The bill sailed through both House and Senate, and was signed into law.

It took an additional 13 years, and another strange turn of events, before the two organizations came together and merged in 1990, under the name of the Washington Council of the Blind. Next month, we'll learn what that strange event was.

Until then, stay safe, and don't breathe any strange air.

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***** Nostalgia and History by Beth Greenberg**

I have enjoyed Carl Jarvis' emails about the history of Washington Council of the Blind (WCB) and American Council of the Blind (ACB). He had asked the question, "What was the first publication of ACB and who was the first editor?" This intrigued me, so I searched the web for the answer and could not find it. This search led me to the ACB's book about its history, "People of Vision." You can get a small-print, hard copy on Amazon for \$43.95 (before shipping). It is 740 pages. You can also find it on Bard with the National Library System. The audio version is 28 hours. I decided to read the audio version on Bard.

The first part of the book has a history of blind people. I found that to be very interesting. The blindness history led into the formation of the National Federation of the Blind.

Starting around 1959, some discord in the federation had accrued; sides started to be drawn. Members had been kicked out of the federation. A new publication was started, "The Braille Free Press," edited by Hollis Liggett.

From all of this discord, in 1961, in downtown Kansas City, MO, the American Council of the Blind was formed. They renamed "The Braille Free Press" to "The Braille Forum" in 1962.

I am not a big reader. I am halfway through the book. I am only able to read about half an hour at a time.

One negative for me, besides the length, is how much detail there is. For instance, all the correspondence that transpired between different people was too much information.

I am enjoying reading the history of the American Council of the Blind. I tried to find an audible version of the National Federation of the Blind's version of "Marching Alone and Walking Together," but have not found one.

Thank you, Carl for your monthly WCB and ACB history quizzes, and sparking my interest in our blind history.

Beth Greenberg: merribeth.manning@gmail.com

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

***** Technically Speaking by Frank Cuta**

First, you give a resourceful creative person a new, tremendously challenging job. She is to pump some energy into membership involvement and turn the growth curve upside down for a huge national organization of blind people.

Then, a freak health crisis physically confines her so that it is no longer possible for her to travel around the country and work directly with members. But you had better watch out. If enough adversity and constraints are heaped on this female powerhouse, you had better step back and cover your head because it is a fact that something is going to burst out.

Thus, it was out of frustration and adversity this spring that an extraordinary new resource was born, The American Council of the Blind (ACB) Community Events network. This creative way of dealing with the isolation resulting from the pandemic is the brainchild of our past state president, Cindy Hollis. It really deserves a grander title like "The Happening" or "Where the Action Is." Her idea was to utilize the virtual conferencing technology that has been so effective for performing organizational business and expand it to member-support functions like social chatting, small support group discussions, and informational presentations of interest to our members. The response to Community Events has been huge. In a short time, it has grown to almost 100 presentations a week. It has been a bit overwhelming.

So, what does this mean to our average member? Have you been cooped up in an apartment for seven months, constrained by the need to shelter in place? Do you miss getting together for your favorite activities with groups of friends? If you do, then Community Events is something for you.

Some of the social activities include unstructured general coffee chats, special interest chats, and affiliate chats like the one for Washington Council of the Blind.

Some of the special interest groups include widows and widowers, diabetics, gardening, mental health, poetry, meditation and book discussions.

Do you need more exercise? If you do, Community Events includes fitness and yoga classes. Are you looking for entertainment? If you are, Community Events includes lots of games like The Newlyweds and Family Feud redone, with ACB board members and staff members as the participants. Also, purely informational in nature are many shows such as technology tutoring, sports, essential oils, cooking and shopping.

If you are interested in joining the fun, but you feel that you are too technically challenged, your concerns are unwarranted. While many participants do communicate with laptops, smart speakers or smart phones, all you really need to connect to our Community Events is a basic telephone.

It is true that the principle way of distributing the weekly schedules is by email, and not all members have email. However, a great project for one of your chapter members could be to do a group phone chat each week for members who do not have email and just read through the events and the associated phone numbers for them on a daily basis. You can sign up for the email schedule at <http://acblists.org/mailman/listinfo/acb-community-events>

ACB Radio has been very supportive of Community Events as they develop and has now provided a dedicated community channel for the

express purpose of sharing them with even more people. You can listen to Community Events on the ACB Radio Community channel, www.acbradio.org/community, or access them through your favorite Amazon device by saying, "Open the ACB Radio Community skill." If you use a computer, smart phone or Victor Stream, you can listen to Community Event programming in the form of on-demand podcasts.

As Cindy says, "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. Through these community events, regardless of where we each live, we're reminded we're not alone. We truly are a community."

Frank Cuta: frank@cuta.net

***** When Will There Be a COVID-19 Vaccine?**

by Judy Brown, RN BSN

From the beginning of this pandemic, there has been a lot of confusing, contradictory and, at times, misleading information about the treatment and possible cure for COVID-19 disease. And, now, the media is full of reports about vaccines.

Producing a vaccine for any disease is a time-consuming, meticulous process that involves testing, re-testing, trials, re-formulations based on trial results, and many failures. Currently, there are at least 150 companies worldwide that are trying to develop a vaccine. Five companies are leading the way: AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson, Merck, Moderna, and Pfizer. All of these companies are receiving millions of dollars from the U.S. government and other countries to develop a vaccine.

Recently, Russia announced it had developed a vaccine that it was starting to distribute. As of this writing (late August), the Russian government has not released any data to support its claims. There is evidence that Phase 3 trials were not completed prior to the Russian

government making the announcement. There is also evidence that the Russians have begun to distribute their vaccine to other countries. The World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Food and Drug Administration are strongly recommending that people do not try to obtain a vaccine that has not completed Phase 3 trials, that has not submitted data for peer-review, and has not been cleared by the FDA for use in America.

I'm confused with some of the terminology used in reports about vaccines. Let's define some terms:

- Phase 1, 2, 3 trials: Simply stated, the phases are a progression of expanded testing. Each phase depends upon success in the previous phase. Usually, Phase 3 can last one to three years with multiple tests of responses occurring during this time. The vaccine for COVID-19 has been fast-tracked. There may be an early release of a promising vaccine (or vaccines) by the end of this year or the beginning of 2021. We may not fully understand how long the vaccine will be effective prior to its deployment. There may be a need for multiple injections to sustain consistent antibody level.
- T-cells: Specialized “helper” cells that are part of the immune response. They help kill the bad stuff and help stimulate the body to release antibodies.
- Antibodies: Special proteins released by the body that will attach to antigens (invaders or pathogens) and deactivate them. Antibodies are part of your body's complex immune response.
- Antigens: These are the outside invaders – the part of the virus or bacteria that does the infecting.
- Immune response: Your body's total reaction via the release of many kinds of specialized cells and proteins that work together to fight off recognized invaders (diseases).
- Monoclonal antibodies (mAb): These are clones (exact copies) of a single immune cell. As clones, they all target the same part of the antigen (infectious invader) to disrupt it. By targeting a specific part of the antigen, in the case of the SARS-CoV-2 virus the target is the protein spikes, the infection cannot occur because the part of the virus that breaks a cell is rendered useless. This is a different

approach to making a vaccine. This technique is a leader in creating a vaccine in a more rapid fashion.

- SARS-Cov-2: The official name of the virus that is causing the disease known as COVID-19. This virus is part of a larger family known as coronaviruses. These viruses all have protein spikes that enable them to invade a cell to begin the takeover of the invaded cell's internal mechanisms to start making more viruses. It was originally called Novel Coronavirus because it was new to all of humanity. It had never infected humans prior to the fall of 2019. We did not have an immunity to this virus. SARS-Cov-2 is more infectious than the flu. It is more deadly than the flu. It can infect anyone, including children. It is not a hoax.

Ok, but what does all of this mean? When will there be a vaccine?

Luckily, prior to the pandemic, research was being done on many types of coronaviruses (the virus family that includes SARS-CoV-2) but none of this research was advanced to clinical trials due to financial limitations. The COVID-19 pandemic pushed some of the existing research to directly study this new virus and look for an effective treatment and possible vaccine.

Slowing down the progress to a vaccine is the fact that this virus, like all viruses, mutates. Its genetic structure changes based on selective pressures on the virus. Viruses have one mission – multiply, adapt and multiply again.

Stimulating the immune system to create a sustained immune response has been a challenge. There are indications that those who have survived the disease do not maintain antibodies for an extended time. We may need yearly vaccines for SARS-CoV-2.

An effective vaccine must be safe to administer. The people who have the biggest need for a vaccine – the elderly, people with other diseases (co-morbidities), people with impaired immune systems – may be the most vulnerable to side effects from a vaccine. Safe dosing will need to be determined for many diverse populations.

There needs to be enough of the vaccine to treat most of the world. There may be more than one vaccine released with varying levels of effectiveness. Creating worldwide herd immunity will be a huge challenge.

This fight will not be over soon. The most optimistic guess is that a vaccine will not be widely available until sometime next spring. Some early vaccine candidates may appear by the end of this year. The first doses will likely go to frontline workers such as doctors, nurses, paramedics, firefighters and the police.

In the meantime, wear your masks, wash your hands, keep six feet apart when possible. Be smart and stay safe.

Judy Brown, RN, BSN
United Blind of Seattle

Disclaimer: This article is for educational purposes only. Any medical advice on a vaccine and whether the vaccine will be safe for you needs to be discussed with your healthcare practitioner.

***** Introducing My New Friend by Hayley Agers**

Have you ever heard the expression, “You don’t know what you’ve got ‘til it’s gone?” Well, in my case, I’d like to change that expression to, “You don’t know what you’re missing ‘til you find it!” I’d like to introduce you all to my new friend, Victor Trek.

In March, like many of you, I began attending the American Council of the Blind (ACB) community calls. At first, it was just a chance to hear voices that weren’t coming from my house or my own head. Haha! Then I heard about all of the opportunities to learn about technology and brush up on skills you haven’t used for a while. In my case, I was learning from scratch. When it comes to technology, I run in the opposite direction as fast as my legs will carry me. I kept hearing calls about this Victor, and each time I listened, I was more and more

intrigued. I wanted to get to know him better. I asked around a little, and he seemed like he'd be a good friend to get to know.

Fast forward a few months to the ACB auction. By then, I had already decided I was going to take the plunge and invite Victor into my family. This was taking a big risk for me; I was concerned that my confidence and trust would be shattered if he decided he didn't like me and didn't want to be part of the chaos I call life. I got onto the live auction, with my virtual \$1,000 in my hand, confident that I would come out a winner. Due to technical difficulties, Victor (or at least this version of Victor) went home with another. The next day, I placed the call that changed the way I feel about technology, and a week later, Victor showed up on my doorstep, asking if I would give him a chance.

Hesitant at first, but with a little encouragement from my husband and a few good friends who already knew Victor well, I was doing a dance I'd never done before. We took a few steps forward and more steps backwards. Soon I was liking having this new friend in my life. Without knowing it, he was helping heal a part of me that was broken. The first time we went for a walk together, he held my hand tightly, or should I say I held onto him tightly? He was so descriptive in the way he told me which direction we were walking, what streets we'd soon be crossing, and he even took me out for coffee. Yes, that's right. The first place I asked him to take me was to my favorite coffee stand. Now, as patient as I needed him to be, he also required a little grace on my part. You see, he had never been to this coffee stand before, and we missed the correct driveway, but thanks to my keen sense of smell, we made it. We now spend lots of time together reading books, listening to podcasts, and exploring new and unfamiliar routes.

So, everyone, I'm not stingy when it comes to sharing the good life. I'd like to encourage those of you who are looking for a new sense of freedom, and a gentle way to step out of your comfort zone, to also think about becoming friends with Victor. He can help you see yourself in a new light and give you that courage you need to try a new route or get back into reading, or even give you the ability to listen to the latest podcasts. My future is looking brighter all the time, and Victor plays a big part in that.

I know I will need to reach out to those who have more experience with Victor. We may need to take some time apart. New friends will come into my life, and Victor might feel like he has taken a back seat. Just like with any friendship, I'm sure I will raise my voice with him, and we will have power struggles. But there are some friends you just know are worth keeping around. For now, I love this beautiful friendship that is continuing to blossom.

Victor Reader Trek – talking book player and GPS, \$699 from the manufacturer Humanware.com, 800-722-3393.

Hayley Agers: haydav8@comcast.net

***** Worm Farming by Touch by Zack Hurtz**

Why would anyone want to start up a worm farm? The answer is simple: because it provides highly concentrated nutrients for plants, can make fairly easy money, recycles most trash, and can be done without sight.

I had a lot of down time while caring for my dying father, and while he was sleeping, I was Googling and trying to find a way to rehab his backyard. After his passing, I returned to Washington and was so bored and sad I started up a worm farm. I spent \$100, and I'm now on track to make a profit off of a backyard hobby that takes an hour a week.

How do I get started farming worms and is it really that easy?

Worm farms come in many shapes and sizes, but my favorite and easiest to build is the worm tower. This stackable tower can be kept inside or outside and is often found already around the house. You'll need at least two 5-gallon buckets with lids, a drill or way to make small holes, and some sort of fine mesh screen.

The tower works like this: the bottom bucket or reservoir catches and holds all of the water that flows through the tower. The second bucket sits on top of the bottom bucket's lid and contains the worms. This

bucket is where you'll place the worms, their bedding and food. Once this bucket is full, you'll place an empty third bucket on top where you'll start to place food and bedding. Once all the worms enter the top bucket to eat, you'll remove the middle bucket and make worm tea out of the castings (aka worm poop.)

How do I build this tower?

1. You'll leave the bottom bucket alone, only drilling holes in its lid. You need many, many holes for good drainage.
2. Place your screen material on the lid. If you want, glue it down. I just use the top bucket's weight to hold the screen in place. Window screen is a good easy material to use.
3. The top bucket, or worm habitat, needs small holes drilled all over the bottom so water can drain into the lower bucket. A one-eighth-inch drill bit will work perfectly for this. When you think you've drilled enough holes, add about 20 more.
4. In the top bucket's lid, drill some holes to allow in rain and sunlight. The sunlight will keep the worms from crawling up the sides, and the rain will help retain moisture. The holes need to be larger than the ones in the bottom, so use a quarter-inch drill bit. Eventually, once the bucket is full the worms will crawl through these holes, so try to remove jagged edges, etc.

OK, so now I have a tower. What do I do next?

You're now going to collect a week's worth of food scraps, shredded paper and cardboard. Place it in the worm habitat and mix it together. You'll want about 3 inches of material covering the bottom. Wet the bedding and add worms. You want your bedding to have a similar moisture content as a wrung-out sponge.

Where do I get worms?

You can buy worms from sellers, or dig some up out of your back yard. If you'd like to buy them, I recommend Uncle Jim's Worm Farm. The products can be found on Amazon. Uncle Jim's is the most highly rated, affordable worm seller. Once my population is sustainable, I can also send you some.

What can I feed my worms?

Worms will eat almost everything, but try avoiding meats, veggies, and fruits with high acidic ratios like onions, oranges, etc. They love used coffee grounds, paper, veggies, grains, breads, and egg shells. Worms need egg shells for healthy population growth and to keep them strong. If you have a lot of dog feces, you can set up a worm farm that recycles the feces, but that farm can't be used as a garden fertilizer without some extra steps.

I've had my farm for a few weeks. What do I do now?

Once your first bucket is completely filled with worm castings and you've sorted the worms out into a different bucket or let them crawl up into the very top bucket, start making worm tea. Worm tea is the process of turning worm castings into a liquid concentrate used for plant fertilizers. This will be the primary item for sale if you're trying to make money off of the worms. Each quart of tea goes for about \$40, especially if you market it with the right phrases and follow the step-by-step process. I won't go into the process here, but email me privately for a step-by-step brewing process.

You now have a fully functioning worm farm at low cost that will reduce trash, recycle, grow healthy plants, and earn a profit. During the fishing season, you can sell off your over-populated worms as bait. You can sell to gas stations and bait shops, but fishermen will be your best direct buyers. Your trash can earn you some cash.

This sounds great, but I'd rather not build the tower.

Hey, I understand it can be annoying to pull all of the tools together. Email me and I'll send you a kit at an affordable price. I've been working on an easier setup and have made it extremely simple. Included in the kit is your worm tower, your tea brewing system, and bedding, minus the food scraps.

Did you write this article to make money?

If I don't make a dime, it won't bother me one bit. I wrote this to share my hobby with the rest of you and to help keep Earth a livable place.

This can be a fun science project for kids and adults, while producing much needed fertilizer and keeping down pollution. This can be done in an apartment or on an actual farm. No matter what, raising worms keeps working to make Earth healthier.

If you have any questions, please email me at Zackery.D.Hurtz@gmail.com.

******* BRAIN FOOD**

***** Noteworthy Blogs Life of a Blind Girl by Beth Greenberg**

I am always looking for new perspectives on disabilities, especially those that are blindness related.

I found this blog called "Life of a Blind Girl" by Holly x. Holly is a 24-year-old Yorkshire lass, and a York St. John University graduate in England. Holly is a lover of pop music, beauty, fashion, and all the usual girly stuff.

Holly's eye condition is called retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) --- "I can only see light and dark." As cliché as it sounds, her visual impairment has helped shape her into the person she is today and gives her so many opportunities, which inspired her to start this blog. For more, go to www.lifeofablindgirl.com.

Here, with Holly's permission, are some extended excerpts from her latest post about fashion and body image.

An honest chat about disability and body image

... Many of us have spent a lot of time thinking about our bodies, or more to the point, other people's perceptions on the way we look. And in reality, that is doing us more harm than good.

But where does all of this come from?

Firstly, there is a lack of disability representation in the media. Although disability representation is improving, it still isn't good enough.

There is also a lack of disability representation in the fashion industry. We now live in a world that's dominated by social media, so it's almost inevitable that this is a huge factor as well.

All of these things make it so much harder for young disabled people to have a positive body image and love the way they look. They need people that they can look up to, and they need disabled role models.

We need to be encouraging the younger generation to celebrate their bodies, embrace their disability and love who they are no matter what....

Making fashion accessible

There are many simple things that the fashion industry could do in order to be more inclusive – by making their websites accessible, ensuring that their stores have good disabled access, making packaging accessible, and making disability awareness part of staff training. But most importantly, to include disabled people in everything they do.

We need to have these conversations in order to create change, and to strive for equality.

Even though I can't see, I still take pride in the way I look. For many sighted people, it's important for them to determine how they look by the visual aspects. But as someone with no useful vision, I can't do that.

I find my own ways of telling whether an outfit looks good – by the way it makes me feel, or asking people I trust for opinions. I apply my makeup using my own tried and tested methods. I do this by touch and memory. I can't glance at a mirror to check it looks okay.

However, if brands were more accessible, I'd be able to make more judgments on my outfit choices independently, such as finding out the colors of clothing by reading detailed descriptions on websites, or getting information about beauty products from accessible packaging.

My vision impairment and body image

Body image is so much more than the visual aesthetics. Our own views, perceptions, feelings and attitudes all play a part.

For me, some of the perceptions surrounding my body image stem from my vision impairment and the way my eyes look. Ironic, isn't it?

I have often been told that I "don't look blind," and I never quite know how to react to that. I always want to look my best, and I care about the way I look ...

In 2016, I suffered a deterioration in my left eye that changed everything for me. My vision impairment then became a part of my body image, and something I had to learn to love. Truth be told, I'm still learning to love it today. ...

There are many days when my eyes look red, sore, and swollen. On these days, I struggle to open my left eye fully, and I worry about the way it looks. But on the good days, you wouldn't even be able to tell.

It's something I can't control. The more discomfort, the worse it looks. I feel very self-conscious about it, and it sometimes makes me feel anxious, especially when I'm doing certain things like being in a meeting, on a video call or doing a presentation at work.

I know that in the grand scheme of things it's small, and that people probably don't notice as much as I do. But it affects my body image, so that's why I'm talking about it. ...

Do I wish my eyes would go back to the way they used to be, and that I had no problems? Of course, I do. But I'm learning to love and accept them for the way they are. They are part of my body, and they are part of the person I am.

A message on body image and disability

Body positivity is so much more than loving your weight, your skin or your imperfections. It's about learning to love and embrace your disability. ...

There are so many disabilities – both visible and invisible, and we need to recognize that. ... We need to be lifting each other up, not tearing each other down.

Disabled people shouldn't be forgotten or go unnoticed.

Disability and body image can go hand in hand, so we need to have open, honest and judgement-free discussions about it. ...

I hope this post goes some way in sparking conversation surrounding disability and body image.

From sharing a lot of my life with a vision impairment online, I know that it can often be a comfort to read other people's stories and experiences.

Disability and body image aren't spoken about enough, so if sharing my own story and discussing my imperfections helps someone else out there, then that makes me happy.

Holly x

<https://lifeofablindgirl.com/2020/09/06/an-honest-chat-about-disability-and-body-image/>



Beth Greenberg: meribeth.manning@gmail.com

***** Podtastic Casts**

Gifts from the Past: Old Time Radio Podcasts and Stations by Reginald George

Old Time Radio, often known as (OTR), is near and dear to many of us with blindness or low vision. It evokes a world that is receding into the pages of history, like the feeling you get from black and white or sepia tinted photographs, 8 millimeter home movie reels, and trains. Radio wasn't old then...it was just radio! This is the world of our parents and grandparents, where you didn't throw things or people away, and possessions were meant to last. A world where you used your imagination instead of your eyes. It was a place and time at least as cruel as ours is now, maybe even more so, no matter how much we want to romanticize it. Even the old commercials are fun to listen to, certainly a less sophisticated time. Many of the movie stars of the day performed in abridged radio plays reprising their biggest roles.

One wonderful, accessible radio station you can get on your computer, smart device, or Victor Stream is called Antioch Old Time Radio.

<http://www.radio.macinmind.com>

Its format is unique, in that they try to choose shows from the same date 60 to 85 years ago and recreate the feeling of an entire broadcast day.

The station is run by one man, and he has many shows that have never been on the internet. He does a lot of work to provide the best possible audio for these programs. You can lose yourself in the music, comedy, and drama of those days and imagine what it was like then. These shows bring memories to life and help us to see them as real. Many shows contain interviews with the celebrities of the day. It's a living history.

More than that, when you share a show with sighted friends, you have an experience that is unique to you, but the same for everyone. You must suspend your disbelief and let sound tell the story. The pictures are painted in your mind. Sex and violence are implied, not graphic like today. And you quickly learn that Sinclair motor oil cost 25 cents a quart, signal gasoline cost 16 cents a gallon in 1935, and that "Crime Does Not Pay" and "The Shadow Knows." Now we have graphic audio and audio books, but back then the radio and magazines were the only way to let the outside world into our homes. Radio is magical. But how can we find those programs now? How can we step back into "those thrilling days of yesteryear?"

The stories in old time radio inhabit a legal gray area. The copyrights belong to networks that were bought and sold long ago. The shows' creators and actors are long gone. But many of the books from which the stories were made are still under copyright protection. And new channels, like "Radio Spirits," lie in wait to make huge profits from selling these programs that they didn't have to pay for. But I digress.

Fortunately, there are many podcasters keeping the past alive. Here are just a few.

"Brunch with the Brits" is a podcast specializing in British comedy and dramas from BBC radio. Many of them are current. It runs about 3 hours, and there is a new show every week.

Some of these other podcasts I have not had time to check out in detail, but a short list of the most interesting would include: "OTR Detective," "Relic Radio Sci-Fi," "Strange Tales Old Time Radio," "Yesteryear," "A to Z Comedy OTR Podcast," and "Old Time Radio Westerns."

You can find the home of "CBS Radio Mystery Theater" at <https://www.cbsrmt.com>. This was a show in the 70s and early 80s that ran for 1,399 episodes and kept me on the edge of my seat as a kid. It's so good to think about curling up on a cold fall night with someone you love, to feel that shiver of anticipation as you turn out the lights and snuggle up with a good show that you don't have to watch.

Another program I enjoyed was called "First Nighter." It seeks to give listeners the experience of going to an opening night of a Broadway musical or play.

OTR was the original audio description... because it had to be. They found many innovative ways to tell their stories. Nothing lasts forever, so enjoy them while you can still find them. I leave you with a line from a song by the rock group, Kansas: "All we are is dust in the wind."

Reginald George: reggeorge@gmail.com

***** Bits and Pieces Compiled by Denise Colley**

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

Google Docs now easier for visually impaired users to navigate

The biggest change is a new shortcut — Ctrl+Alt+H on Windows, and CMD+Option+H on Mac — to instantly toggle Braille support in Docs, Sheets and Slides. Navigational shortcuts have also been updated so the user can hear where the cursor has ended up. For more information, visit <https://tinyurl.com/y38f7voo>.

New software update available for the BrailleNote Touch Plus

The new update adds the ability to open and read PDFs directly, sign in with Google, user guide updates and more. For more information, visit [Humanware BrailleNote Plus Update](#).

Seeking older adults and/or people with disabilities for survey on changes in travel behavior during COVID-19

The Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access at the University at Buffalo is interested in learning about changes in your travel behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey is open to any individuals 65 and older and/or adults with disabilities. The survey will be open until Oct. 15. As an incentive for taking their survey, you can enter a drawing to win a \$50 gift card. To access the survey, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/covid-travel-change>.

CVS Pharmacy introduces new app feature

Spoken Rx is a free new feature of the CVS Pharmacy app that reads a specific type of label. When the RFID labels are scanned by Spoken Rx in the CVS Pharmacy app, prescription label information will be spoken out loud in either English or Spanish. For more information, and a list of active stores, visit [CVS.com/spokenrx](https://www.cvs.com/spokenrx).

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month

The 2020 theme for National Disability Employment Awareness Month is “Increasing Access and Opportunity” – to celebrate America’s workers with disabilities and remind employers of the importance of inclusive hiring practices. This year, along with NDEAM, the U.S. Department of Labor is commemorating the 30th anniversary of the ADA. For more information, visit www.dol.gov/ndeam.

Accessible COVID-19 Statistics Tracker

<https://cvstats.net/>

This link will allow you to request the audio version of the voter's guide on a thumb drive that is playable on your digital talking book player. <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voters/voters-guide-requests/>

Voter Hotline: (800) 448-4881

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

***** Chronicle of a Happy Warrior #5:
Fireside nostalgia: Strategies for Hope
by Mark Adreon**

Winter is just around the corner. For many this year, perhaps more than in past years, the coming of fall seems out of place, arriving too quickly.

Remember way back in February and March you were hearing about a pandemic that was going to have devastating impacts on all of us. “Shelter in place,” “social distancing,” “masking-up,” and “test/trace” are only a few of the new phrases we have all become very familiar with. The news is never ending, the politic of the nation is tribal and divided, public health and politics became confused, schools closed, people are working from home, many lost employment, and everyone fears contracting the “virus.” Much of the news or conversation is sad, depressing, unbelievable, and lacks hope or resolution. People’s universes were shrinking as we began to disconnect from normal.

For many as spring turned to summer and summer now to fall, the idea of going back to a less complicated time is high on everyone’s agenda as isolating is getting the best of us – back to a time when there was a sense of normal, not fear; challenges were to be overcome, not acquiesced to; and a sense of expectation, not chaos. All these things seem now to be part of your history and not your future.

During the period of 1933 to 1945, Franklin D. Roosevelt served as the 32nd president of the United States. The Great Depression that started

in 1929 continued for two more years and during Roosevelt's first two years as president.

World War II began in 1939 and ended in 1945. The war started and ended during Roosevelt's 12 years as president. Recovery from the Great Depression and another world war had a huge impact on the people of the United States and created many personal challenges and pain for those who were trying to find what their "new normal" would mean for them.

To provide comfort and support, as well as to keep the population informed, President Roosevelt started a series of evening Fireside Chats where families would gather around the household radio to listen, discuss, support each other and feel the strength of their shared hopes and dreams. Together they would get through.

Nostalgia can be defined as a wistful desire to return in thought or, in fact, to a former time in one's life, or a sentimental yearning for the happiness of a former time or place.

I've heard a lot of people wishing for another time, back to normal, a time when you could gather with friends and family, go out to dinner or a club, celebrate life events with parties, hold cookouts, or attend a holiday festival or public gathering – wishing for another time when former happiness is now magnified by current restrictions and concerns.

As we adjust and look for the silver lining of the "new normal," there is a part of us that wants to return to the "old normal," to be in places that seem familiar, even with barriers or challenges that could be overcome.

The fireside can be a fireplace, a fire pit at home, a campfire, the barbecue cooling on your yard, or even LED tiki torches. They bring warmth and dancing light, inducing memories and deep thoughts with the hypnotizing dance of flames.

Your fireside can bring the warmth of the fireside chats, rest, thoughtful introspection, or warmth to a gathering. It could also bring thoughts of another time when everything seemed as it should be. Good or bad, it

felt normal – sitting beside the fire, lost in thought and wistfully thinking about another time and place where happiness was just around the corner. Will it ever be like that again?

Revisiting past happiness can bring strength as you move toward new horizons, or adjust to the new normal. Choosing to revisit those times that bring a smile or a feeling of sentiment will bolster your ability to see opportunities in the “new normal” and strengthen your resolve to keep a life well lived moving forward.

It is not the times that define you, it is how you define the times. Remember facts or thoughts of times past, and use them to help define who you are today.

The fireside nostalgia helps you reconnect to your inner strength, or “fire,” to move forward.

Keep building a future that includes the best of those around you, as well as your thoughts, and the value of resilience will help as you move on.

Think of the warmth of the fireside with the memory of happiness as your guide to the future.

Mark Adreon: mark.adreon@gmail.com

******* AGENCY UPDATES**

***** WSSB Continues Moving Forward by Scott McCallum, superintendent**

There may not be many circumstances more challenging for a specialized, residential school for the blind whose population transitions back and forth each week between their home community and their school community, than a pandemic where close personal interaction with others substantially increases the risk of infection with the virus and associated health risks, including the potential for death.

Those of you familiar with modern-day Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB) know that we have a reputation for embracing technology, particularly as it relates to using it to support and provide instruction. WSSB has been offering a variety of online course options, often math and computer science options, to students throughout Washington, as well as other states, for many years.

Several years ago, WSSB launched a one-to-one technology initiative in which all students on campus were provided a personal computing device, either PC or tablet, and expected to use that device for school work. Additionally, and as should be expected, WSSB made sure to have equally portable assistive technology options available to meet the unique learning needs of our students.

Last spring, when COVID-19 began making its way around the world, WSSB shifted to online and remote learning easier than most. That said, it took significant effort of all staff to make the best of a very difficult situation.

Throughout the spring and leading to graduation, WSSB continued to offer all students continuous opportunities to learn and connect with their peers. I am proud to say that WSSB students didn't miss a single school day because of the pandemic. In fact, WSSB students received additional days of school. Students did miss out on in-person versions of the annual track and field day, prom, graduation and awards ceremony. However, virtual versions of most events were offered. The

spring volunteer appreciation concert was held remotely, as was 8th grade promotion and our senior graduation ceremony. Some might even suggest that the virtual versions offered some improvements over their live or in-person counterparts. Our graduation ceremony was one such event. Principal Sean McCormick did a masterful job video editing the pre-recorded components of the graduation ceremony, which allowed for an accessible presentation that celebrated and honored our graduates. This year, Jennifer Langley, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, hand-delivered diplomas and gift boxes from the Pacific Foundation for Blind Children to each of our graduates. Lt. Gov. Cyrus Habib delivered the commencement address and a special presentation was made by civil rights leader Delores Huerta. Another added benefit of an online graduation ceremony is that you can watch it again and again. If you missed it and would like to check it out, you can find it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjxo6-dwj5Y>.

WSSB, like so many schools in Washington this year, has started with remote learning. We have made significant plans to safely welcome both staff and students back to campus. We are working closely with county and state departments of health to formulate our plans and implement safe routines around campus. Currently, social distancing, masks, and a daily attestation of health are required of everyone on campus. We have adjusted campus routines and procedures to mitigate risk to staff, students, and visitors. Speaking of visitors, no visitors or volunteers are currently being allowed on campus unless they have an appointment to meet with someone from WSSB, the Department of Services for the Blind, or the Lion's Low Vision Clinic. We have planned for a gradual return to campus for students. We are currently welcoming individual students and families to campus for required assessments. We have plans to allow small groups of students, particularly those whose needs are most challenging, to meet during online instruction, to transition back to in-person services once the infection rates and other COVID-related metrics are at more acceptable levels. We remain hopeful that we may be able to welcome all students back to the WSSB campus before the end of October. We know this year will be different, and we are ready to "lean in" to the challenge.

I would be remiss if I didn't take the opportunity to recognize the amazing, creative, flexible, and dedicated staff of WSSB who give so much for the sake of our students and their families. I have been nothing but impressed with everyone's willingness to do what it takes, think outside the box, and support one another. I know we will get through this challenge together. Helen Keller said it best: "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

I agree – together we can, and together we will.

Scott McCallum: Scott.McCallum@wssb.wa.gov

***** State agency serving citizens with visual disabilities receives a headquarters renovation by Allison Mattson: Washington Department of Enterprise Services**

This content is published with permission of the author's agency.



The Washington State Department of Enterprise Services (DES) recently renovated the Washington State Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) headquarters in Seattle (photo above).

The building had a failing HVAC system. The windows had metal frames, making the building frigid in the winter and scorching in the summer. The lighting also needed an upgrade.

For some, this might mean a new building. For DSB, a new headquarters meant moving services for vulnerable clients who needed familiarity. The Washington State Department of Enterprise Services (DES) already managed the building and stepped in to oversee the renovation project.

DES's Energy Program contracted with UMC, an energy service company, to replace the HVAC system and windows, insulate the walls and replace the lighting with new LED fixtures. Now, the building's utility costs are cut in half.

Ron Major, Resource Conservation Manager for DES, spoke with passion about the results: "Lots of good feelings here. We improved the tenant experience by making the building more comfortable to work in. We improved the energy performance of the facility, reduced costs and reduced the carbon footprint. Most importantly, the Department of Services for the Blind can serve their clients in the same familiar location."

The project is an example of DES's Energy Program at work, providing services to those who need it most. The program provides energy project management services to help customers reduce operational costs and make Washington a better place to live, learn and work. The program's services are available to state agencies, cities, counties, tribal governments and other public institutions.

Allison Mattson: allison.mattson@des.wa.gov>

******* WCB HAPPENINGS**

***** Washington Council of the Blind 2020 Virtual Convention**

WCB, Strength Unveiled by Cindy Hollis and Lisa George

Please join us for two and a half days of virtual fun and camaraderie as Washington Council of the Blind gathers for our annual convention: WCB, Strength Unveiled. Many things will be familiar but, of course, some things will be brand new because the convention will be virtual. We hope your experience will be a positive one.

Registration is a great deal at only \$25. This year, for your convenience, you can even pay your 2021 dues, including your local chapter dues. (If this is a success, it may become a regular feature, but hopefully we'll all be back to meeting in person in 2021.)

The registration deadline is 5 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 25.

Register online via the website or call 800-255-1147 to register by phone from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.

Those who register will:

- be able to participate in all discussions and interactive activities of the convention;
- receive important Zoom information to connect to all sessions from Thursday, Oct. 29, through Saturday, Oct. 31;
- have their name placed into the door prize drawings.

All sessions will take place using the Zoom platform, which is accessible through computer, smart phone, and landline phone. With the exception of hospitality each night and parts of the Youth Track, all events of our convention will also be streamed on ACB Radio.

Throughout Friday and Saturday, we will enjoy having our vendors on parade, as well as making their information available on our website.

Don't miss the door prizes drawn throughout the entire weekend; your convention registration is your entry into the drawing.

WCB will also have a youth component to our convention, with blind teens and their families taking part in many of our general activities, as well as some designed just for them.

Daily Convention Highlights

Thursday, Oct. 29:

- First-timers reception – an orientation for those who have not experienced a WCB convention before.
- Welcome lounge – mingle with friends from near and far.
- Pre-convention WCB board meeting – get a first look at some of the items on the agenda for Saturday's business meeting.
- Hospitality – everything WCB is known for.

Friday, Oct. 30:

- Full day of sessions: from accessibility of credit reports and online grocery shopping, to educating ourselves on writing, advocacy, and preparing for college, to a host of technology including iPhones, smart homes, and cutting the cord, and so much more.
- The first-ever live auction fundraiser – silent no more, bidders won't want to miss this chance for a wide variety of items.
- Hospitality will round off the day.

Saturday, Oct. 31:

- Guide Dog Users of Washington State will have both a business meeting in the morning and a lunchtime program they will sponsor.
- Morning session: our ACB national report, our three state agency leaders serving the blind, our always-popular employment panel, learning about National American Association of Blind Sportsmen, and hearing from someone in the deaf/blind community.
- Afternoon session: our annual business meeting where important decisions will be made that set the course for WCB in 2021, including electing officers and directors, passing a budget, voting on resolutions and amendments to our constitution and bylaws, and any other business that comes before our membership.

- 5 p.m. – WCB Youth Event: participants from the Youth Track will organize and host this event.
- Evening: our annual banquet where awards will be presented and scholarships awarded; the banquet address will be by none other than Dan Spooone, ACB president – plus many other surprises.
- Post-banquet: the evening will culminate with a hospitality celebration of karaoke (since we didn't get to showcase our talent this year).

Come join us Oct. 29, 30 and 31 and witness WCB, Strength Unveiled.

If you're curious how our annual business meeting will unfold, read on for more details.

Most of our sessions, including our annual business meeting on Saturday, will take place in a webinar meeting room. However, we will be using regular Zoom rooms for various reasons, and voting is an important one.

When the question on the floor is a yes or no, aye or nay response, we will vote in our webinar meeting room by raising hands. When we are electing a position involving two or more candidates, we will need to use a secret ballot. For our virtual convention, we will be utilizing Zoom Voting Stations.

Each convention registrant who is a WCB member in good standing will be verified prior to the opening of the convention and will receive individual Zoom information to their designated Zoom Voting Station. The link sent to you is the one you must use to cast your vote and should not be shared with anyone.

Once a ballot is opened, members will be instructed to leave the webinar meeting room and go to the appropriate Zoom Voting Station. Use your individual link to go to your Zoom Voting Station. Once you arrive there, you will be placed in the waiting room. Members will be admitted one at a time. Your eligibility to vote will be verified, then your vote will be taken. Those handling the voting will not be involved in any way with WCB.

Once you have cast your vote, you will leave the room. Take a break or return to the webinar meeting room. Most likely, the “Vendors on Parade” recording will be streaming there until all votes have been counted.

Zoom Voting Stations will be regular Zoom rooms and can be accessed by computer, smart phone, using one tap mobile, or a landline.

If you are unable to access Zoom using one of these methods, please contact Lisa George by email at lmwgeorge10@gmail.com or by phone at 816-668-5345 to request assistance.

***** Silent Auction Goes Live by Lisa George and Cindy Hollis**

The annual Washington Council of the Blind (WCB) fundraiser at this year’s convention will be a live auction on Friday night. Expect the unexpected and join the bidding frenzy (we hope!). When available, more details on auction items will be posted on the WCB website and Facebook.

Donations are welcomed from chapters, special interest affiliates, members, and friends. Due to the virtual nature of this convention, we need to have all items by Oct. 12. Contact Lisa George at 509-540-3073 for more details.

Auction for CCTV

An unexpected but very welcome donation in memory of Mary Jean Nicholls has been received and will be going to one lucky bidder. The gently-used Optelec ClearView C with Speech CCTV is in very good condition and comes with both magnification and speech instruction manuals.

The starting bid is \$500. For comparison, a new machine would cost upwards of \$4,000. When you submit your bid, remember that only the top three from the first round will go to the second round. In addition, the

winning bidder will be responsible for a shipping/delivery charge – \$50 minimum, depending on location.

To participate in this CCTV auction, submit your “Opening Round” bid to Lisa George via email at lmwgeorge10@gmail.com or phone at 509-540-3073 starting at 10 a.m. Monday, Oct. 26. Include your name, phone number, email address, and high bid. If bidders submit the same dollar amount, the earliest bid will take precedence.

The top three bidders as of 3 p.m. Friday, Oct. 30, will be contacted, given the top bid amount, and have the chance to submit their final bid. The winner of the Optelec ClearView C will be announced during the live auction Friday evening.

***** Making Real Decisions at a Virtual Convention by Frank Cuta**

Since the pandemic has forced us to take our annual state convention into the Cloud, you might expect that we are dispensing with formal business and going to just listen to informational panels and speakers this year. Even just a year ago, this might have been a reasonable compromise. However, we now have accessible features in our virtual conferencing technology that make voting possible. We expect that most all of our members should be able to remotely fulfill their voting rights and obligations on the acceptance of motions and even to elect new officers for the coming year.

After the Washington Council of the Blind (WCB) board meeting Thursday evening, Oct. 29, our Constitution and Bylaws Committee will hold its annual open meeting. At this time, we have four amendments being proposed for consideration. At this meeting, we will answer member questions, and the committee will then decide to pass the amendments on to the floor with a recommendation to either pass or do not pass each one.

The amendments will receive their first reading on the floor on Friday morning, Oct. 30. Then, at the annual business meeting on Saturday afternoon, Oct. 31, they will be debated and considered for adoption.

Here is a summary of what is being proposed.

There has been some confusion around the acceptance of new members, and Amendment 2020-1 makes it absolutely clear that a person becomes a member of WCB when their dues are received by a local chapter or special interest affiliate or received by the state treasurer, whichever comes first.

The WCB has never had a code of conduct policy. In order to make way for the adoption of a code of conduct, it is first necessary to make it possible for the board to exercise some limited disciplinary authority. Amendment 2020-2 removes discipline and suspension as exclusive powers of the convention but preserves the convention's exclusive authority to expel a member.

Another concern is the preservation of the secret ballot. Unless an organization's constitution expressly allows for voting by electronic transmission, it is very difficult to hold a virtual election with a secret ballot. Amendment 2020-3 provides for us to hold conference call meetings with all manner of alternative voting methods, including electronic transmission.

The last amendment is a reworking of amendment 2019-2 from last year. It proposes an additional requirement that all new affiliates must be registered with the Secretary of State as a Washington nonprofit corporation, and all affiliates must maintain an active status. It allows a 3-month grace period before the affiliate becomes inactive, a formal notification giving another 3-month period before the affiliate is on probation, and an additional year before the affiliate's charter is revoked due to non-compliance with any of the requirements listed.

By the time you read this article, the complete language for each of these proposals will be available on the general WCB email list. You may also request a copy by contacting Frank Cuta, 509-967-2658.

***** Hats Off**

Compiled by Rhonda Nelson

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

- Anne Ridenour, who celebrated her 99th birthday in September.
- Dorothy Bryant, who celebrated her 95th birthday in September.
- Bill Hoage, who celebrated his 80th birthday in October.

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**

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

On Saturday, Aug. 29, GDUWS held its virtual 2020 Fling via Zoom. The event was open to members and non-members alike. Not only were there 40 participants in Zoom, but it was streamed on ACB Radio. It was recorded, and is or will be in the ACB Community podcasts. A temporary link to the recording is available at <https://bit.ly/33TiOrL>

There was a short section regarding our annual business meeting, with a discussion of the officers up for election and a proposed constitutional amendment.

Then, we had a featured presentation, "Pet First Aid," presented by Rebecca Minelga. She covered signs and treatment of heat stroke, how to treat wounds, how to check for dehydration and many more items. There was even time for a Q&A session. Rebecca did a fantastic job. She was also able to tell us a little bit about raising Primrose, who was one of the pups featured in the original "Pick of the Litter."

Thanks so much to all who attended, to Deb for running the session, and to Daryl for streaming it on ACB Radio.

Looking forward to next year's Fling.

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

We continue to hold our general meetings via Zoom, and we have quite the turnout. Not having the sidebar conversations with people during breaks is a loss. However, hearing the voices of our members and how they are doing is always joyful.

Like other chapters, we use strategic ways to include members on the Zoom platform. Andy Bacon, vice president, brings on four to five

people with him to ensure everyone can be present. We are appreciative of David Edick, who hosts our Zoom meetings with such ease and expertise.

Our president, Cathy Wilson, has offered different creative strategies to bring our membership together. We have had interesting guest speakers, such as Leslie McNeil on Non-24, and Matt Santelli with Pierce County Aging and Disability Resource Center.

Cathy's newest idea is to quiz our members, starting September, on the WCB's Newsline articles. This effort requires getting all our members signed up for the WCB Newsline, and we are looking forward to our first Newsline competition.

We are also honored to have our statewide-known retired DSB counselor, Linda Wilder. She was featured in last quarter's issue and has been asked to participate in an interview for the 100th anniversary of the Rehabilitation Services Administration. We are proud of her dedicated work for our chapter and the state. With her background, knowledge, and dedication, she keeps us moving forward and on our toes. Our hats off to Linda.

We continue to improve our website. We are getting input from outside agencies in the hopes of providing resources and answers to common questions regarding blindness. Our vision is to provide information to blind individuals, sighted friends, families, and other agencies – for example, the dos and don'ts and misconceptions, and information about blindness for families, friends, and others.

We are not finished just yet, but we continue to work toward our vision, bringing in the traffic from anyone who wishes to learn about blindness.

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

It is inherently obvious to me, in my definition, that “normal” is what most people do most of the time. Is this distancing and mask wearing going to be our new normal? What about doing business without personal interaction via phones and Zoom meetings? As most chapters and affiliates are becoming aware, for now this is the new normal, and our chapter fits into the scheme of things.

We are meeting twice monthly and having smaller meetings at times. But, lo and behold, I invited Jeff Bishop to visit our meeting and talk about Microsoft accessible technology, and it was our biggest meeting in the past few months. It appears to me that we have a large number of talented individuals who would generously take time to make presentations at our chapter meetings if we just ask. Washington Council of the Blind has a wealth of information to share and we, at this unprecedented time, may want to reach out and see what can spark a light in our chapter members and inspire them to jump to action.

We have also invited legislators to visit us and were excited to know that prior to their visit they searched the WCB website to see what we were about. That was an inspiration to me. Our visitor was Dave Paul. In his role as a legislator, he works on transportation and education issues, which includes Washington State School for the Blind, and that is pretty cool.

We are having someone from the Northwest Association of Blind Athletes come to speak at our September meeting. We all need to stay healthy any way we can in this pandemic time, and none of us know how long it will last. On Aug. 15 it was nice and hot, but we still walked 5,000 steps on the Skagit Cascade Trail with our wonderful, heavily-panting dogs, my current Guide and retired Guide. We sure do live in a spectacular part of the world.

We, like many chapters, are looking at our constitution concerning our voting process and officers’ terms. More will be revealed in the future.

***** South King Council of the Blind
by Danette Dixon**

SKB is marching forward through these trying times. With all the uncertainty, we have made the choice to check in with everyone each Saturday. So, each week President Meka White has a Zoom meeting with members and friends present. In order to get to know each other better, Meka selects a breakout question for us to answer. When everyone gets a chance to answer the question, then all get to say how or what they have been doing, or even something they have been looking forward to. To make sure all can attend these Zoom meetings, members conference in those who cannot log on or dial long distance so that they can participate.

We had author and psychiatrist Shawn Johnston join the call. Shawn has written some detective books, which some SKB members are in the process of reading. We are planning for more speakers soon.

Many of us are involved on the community calls each day and enjoy the connection with others. These SKB and ACB calls are making me feel like I have extended my support team and like I'm a part of an exceptionally large family. Yes, we are looking forward to when we can meet in person, but we are staying connected each week.

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

Like so many chapters, our chapter continues to have our meetings via conference calls. Besides our regular meeting, we have had a little fun along the way.

We were all feeling a little down when we were unable to have our annual picnic this summer. So, I decided that I needed somehow to make that picnic happen. I thought a lot about it and came up with a plan. We would be able to have social distancing in place, and we would not have to wear masks. So, we had our picnic via conference

call. Once we were all on the call, I offered virtual hamburgers and hotdogs to our members, along with a choice of beverages. We each had a chance to talk and share with one another. Later in the call, Carol Brame offered each of us a virtual slice of pie. She had several choices. We all had a really nice time.

Since this check and connect kind of sharing was such a hit, we are going to have an ice cream social in September. I have now recruited others to assist in the planning phase. We will have ice cream cones, ice cream bars, anything ice cream at our virtual ice cream social. If you listen closely, you might even hear the ice cream truck. Oh yes, did I mention there will be games and real prizes, not virtual prizes, to win? This will be a fun and exciting experience.

At the ice cream social, we will be celebrating three very special birthdays. Pat Whitlow will be 79, Shirley Sharmer will be 86 and Dorothy Bryant will be 95 in September. These three ladies are very special to our chapter. Carol Brame will also be celebrating her birthday in September. Happy birthday to all September birthdays. God bless you all.

***** Spokane Council of the Blind**
What's In A Name?
by Debby Clark

With so much time on our hands, we of this chapter decided to vote in a new name for our group. We are now Spokane Council of the Blind. Out with the old (United Blind of Spokane) and in with the new. Some things about life you just cannot change, but we found one we could. We are expecting new destiny along with the new name.

We do have some other good news about members. Vivian and her husband have now been married 29 years, Cindy and her husband 47 years, Debby Phillips and her husband 20 years and Jeff and Debby Clark 51 years. We are just that stable of a group, and you can depend on us. I was tempted to say we are just plain old, but that is not the positive spin that we all want and need, especially for Jeff and Debby.

We have been meeting by phone for several months now, and it is working. Aside from the monthly meeting, we are also having a weekly coffee hour to discuss things that are important to us. We have talked about BARD, Bookshare, Allied Learning and other information sources. This has given us more time to stay connected and get to know each other better. Isn't this the American way? It is my opinion that there is only one way we can now go, and that is up. We take hard times and hard things and use them to become better, wiser and better adjusted to our community and to our world.

***** United Blind of Tri-Cities
by Janice Squires**

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, UBTC members are doing our best to keep most of our activities up and running. We hold our chapter meetings, book group and tech group via conference call, and are so pleased that a good number of members are participating in these activities. Our chapter actually amended our constitution to make it possible for us to hold a virtual regular business meeting, which includes the voting process.

The book group will be discussing two books this month, "Flying Blind" and "Hawaii."

It is just amazing to me how much our members can learn from our monthly tech group. We share such a great deal of valuable information. From low tech to high tech, there is something for everyone.

We were very excited to have WCB President Julie Brannon join us for our August meeting. She discussed how we could help the organization by joining one of the various WCB committees. She also talked about the upcoming virtual WCB convention and explained the many ways we could all be a part of this year's conference.

Thanks to the Steve Vandecar Memorial Fund, we were able to award Heidi Jackson a \$500 college scholarship. Heidi is a Richland resident and is in her second year of college at Trevecca Nazarene University in

Nashville, TN. She has a double major in commercial music/music theory and composition. Heidi was able to join our August meeting call and told us of her college journey and her exciting dreams for her bright future.

After many months of issues and uncertainties, our Edith Bishel Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (EBC) is back on its feet again. Sheila Turner, independent living specialist, and our very own member and former EBC office manager, Shanna Larter, are the two employees who are working hard to get the center open by Sept. 1. All of the state guidelines will be followed. UBTC members are simply overjoyed about all of this very good news.

Stay safe, and happy fall.

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

As I write this update, the lyrics to the song “Turn! Turn! Turn! (To Everything There Is a Season)” by The Byrds keep turning around in my head. It is not always easy to stay motivated and hold things together in a time when everything seems so discombobulated. Let’s be real and just admit that having meetings via conference calls will never be as good as being in the same room with the members of our chapters and connecting on a more personal level. We all miss this and are doing the best we can to not just “phone it in” and do the bare minimum.

“A time to build up, a time to break down
A time to dance, a time to mourn
A time to cast away stones
A time to gather stones together.”

Although we are not able to meet in person yet, our chapter is still taking care of business.

In August, JoJo Smythe from Northwest Association for Blind Athletes joined us as a guest speaker to talk about the free classes they are holding via Zoom, which include some low- and high-level workouts.

In September, Adam Klein, a civil engineer from the City of Walla Walla, met with us to discuss sidewalk repairs in our community to start bringing them up to ADA standards. Several of our members gave some great input regarding the biggest problem areas they have encountered. They are meeting with him on those specific streets to help identify what the issues are and what some possible solutions might be.

The nominating committee and constitution committee have been busy preparing for elections in November and making any necessary changes to our constitution for the upcoming year. Our treasurer, Vivian, will be working on our budget for next year to present in November, and our secretary, Joleen, has kept us current with the Secretary of State, as well. Even though these things are not as fun as in-person picnics and social events, they are still things we have to do to keep our chapter running smoothly.

"A time you may embrace
A time to refrain from embracin'

To everything (Turn! Turn! Turn!)
There is a season (Turn! Turn! Turn!)
And a time to every purpose under Heaven."

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

Despite the hanger-on called COVID-19, we have had a busy and fun few months way up here in Whatcom County. It's amazing how creativity flowers after the chips are down.

Zoom is such a lifesaver. It brings company to the lonely, knowledge to those willing to learn, and fun meeting activities to all. Thanks to Beth Marsau, who shares her account with us.

In June, a rep from Vanda Pharmaceuticals came to discuss non-24. It was a most informative presentation, done by a nurse. Some of our UBWC members have experience in the nursing profession, and asked good questions. In July, we attended the virtual American Council of the Blind (ACB) convention. Afterwards, we held a gathering to discuss it. August found us with the pleasure of hosting one of the Washington Council of the Blind and ACB scholarship recipients, Isaac Heiman. He outlined his education and life in general.

Our social committee has been active. We have enjoyed everything from virtual birthday bashes to Independence Day picnics. The book club recently read "The Pioneers" by McCullough. It was a bestseller, and it's not hard to figure out why.

***** WCB Diabetics
by Danette Dixon**

WCBD keeps marching forward with communication. Our treasurer, Kim, has made sure we are a non-profit with the State of Washington. There is still one more step to make WCBD a charitable organization.

We have a conference call the second Monday of each month. On the even months of the year, we have an open conversation after the business portion, and on the odd months we will have a speaker.

In July, we had a representative from Dogs for Diabetes and we learned all about the different types of training they do. Yes, it is true, they are training some of these dogs to find the Coronavirus. These days, this was remarkably interesting to all. If a dog does not make it through the training to sniff for diabetes, either a high or low blood sugar, they do have a couple other trainings they put it through.

Also, if a puppy does not make it through the guide dog training at Guide Dogs for the Blind, they may try out the program to see how successful it is at Dogs for Diabetics. On a personal note: My guide dog, Mr. Mayor, does let me know when my blood sugar is getting low, even before my low blood sugar alarm goes off. This is not part of his guide dog training; he is just that sensitive to know when it is too low.

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

YAKITY YAK FROM YAKIMA

We here in the Yakima Valley like to visualize the glass as half-full, rather than half-empty. No restaurant dining? We'll just eat at a table in the parking lot. No movie theaters open? Who needs them when we have all our books (plus Netflix). No bowling? Well, that one is quite a bummer, but we're hanging in there until that glorious day will come when the all the balls will be rolling and all the pins will be knocked down at once.

One very special reason to celebrate, even while we mask up and try to keep our social distance, is Anne Ridenour's 99th birthday. She got surprisingly "flocked" with 99 flamingos in her front yard, courtesy of the Georges.



Photo to left:
Reg, Anne and Lisa share a laugh while surrounded by pink plastic flamingos. Anne is wearing a shirt gifted to her from her great-grandchildren, declaring “You always shine, even at 99!” in high-contrast black type on a yellow shirt.

Our business-as-usual, conference-call meetings are going well. One of our newest members, Tom Douglas, told us of his fishing adventure with the North American Association of Blind Sportsmen. He and his wife, Donna, had a great trip to the lake and came home with plenty of steelhead, along with some fond experiences.



Photo to left:
Mark (the owner of the charter service), Tom and Donna have their hands full of steelhead as they pose by the lake on a beautiful sunny day.

Due to the virtual convention this year, our chapter decided to revise our Savings Match program. All members who are interested in participating in the 2020 WCB convention will have their registration paid for by YVCB. We’re looking forward to the great program we know the

Convention Committee has put together, and we're hopeful that the live auction will be a successful fundraiser for WCB.

Happy fall to everyone and best wishes throughout the holiday season.

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

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

(NOTE: You are invited to a scheduled Zoom meeting. Join WCB for coffee and conversation each Saturday at 10 a.m. The virtual parlor will be open and waiting just for you, so come and take part in this social connection, which is much better than social distancing.)

OCTOBER

1-2 – WASILC meeting at Alliance of People with disAbilities office in Seattle

12 – WCB Diabetics call at 7 p.m.

15 – Deadline for submitting letters of interest to be considered for 2021 WCB officers/board positions to the nominating committee

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 president's call at 7 p.m.

29-31 – WCB virtual annual convention

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 president's call at 7 p.m.

25 – WCB committee leaders' call at 7 p.m.

30 – Deadline to submit articles for the WCB Newsline 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 president's call at 7 p.m.

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