



WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF THE BLIND

Opportunity, Equality, Independence
Founded 1935

WCB NEWSLINE

Fall 2021 Edition

"Words are a lens to focus one's mind"

-- Ayn Rand

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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 full 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:

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President's Message
by Julie Brannon
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Some mornings with August nearing its end, I would come out from an early morning outside venture with Mozart, Nathan's guide dog, and announce, "Fall is in the air!" Hard to believe that summer 2021 is behind us, and my favorite season of autumn is here. There is so much to focus on in regard to holidays in the fall: Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

WCB Convention

Another celebration is, of course, our annual WCB convention, this year Oct. 28-30.

As you will note from Merribeth's article, both programming and behind the virtual scenes convention committees have been hard at work. Since I'm on the convention committees, I can share with certainty that you have a lot to look forward to. It's always a joy to hear from various subject matter experts and speakers, and to learn who will be presented with college scholarships and WCB awards. Hopefully, more members than last year will be registered to enjoy what the convention will be offering.

Upcoming WCB Positions

Another very important happening at our WCB convention is that of elections. This year, we will be voting on president, first vice president, treasurer, and three 2-year board positions. This year, the nominations committee is being chaired by Second Vice President Sheri Richardson. You will be seeing information from Sheri and her committee about expressing your interest in running for a position. I hope we have a lot of members interested in these positions for the coming year. I believe I can speak for WCB officers/board members that serving in this kind of leadership capacity is personally enriching, personally stretching and personally rewarding, along with the reality that your service very much benefits the organization.

American Council of the Blind (ACB) Convention

During the writing of my previous Newline message, we were getting ready for the 2021 ACB convention. Guess what -- it happened! It was held July

16-23. This was another great virtual convention that allowed for the taking in of a multitude of events simultaneously. This year was the first year for ACB to enact virtual voting via a company called Vote Now, and it was a much smoother process than many of us worried about. Thanks to my partner in crime, First Vice President Andy Arvidson, we were able to collect WCB member votes and calculate our correct percentages. I was a bit surprised more members didn't vote. Maybe next time more of us will take advantage of this process.

WCB Brag

Continuing on with my discussion of the ACB convention, I just have to brag about our affiliate being firmly adhered to the ACB map. Congratulations go to Deb Cook Lewis being elected for her first term to the office of first vice president, to Denise Colley being re-elected to the office of secretary, and to Jeff Bishop being re-elected to a director position. Go WCB!

A New Affiliate is Born

We held our August board meeting on Saturday Aug. 7. Please see Secretary Alco Canfield's article for details.

The important announcement of this meeting was that thanks to the vision and hard work of President Bob Cavanaugh, with the support of First Vice President Andy Arvidson, a new WCB chapter has been born – the Clark County Council of the Blind. Welcome to our Southwest Washington neighbors. Please help spread the word far and wide that this chapter is now open for membership.

So, as we move into fall, ending this calendar year and moving ahead to 2022, let's move forward with progress, perseverance and passion for WCB and the blind of Washington.

Letter from the Editors

Embark upon a wondrous journey,
Of limitless imagination,
Over here, and where is there?
By blue buttercups and flaming red hair.

Of musical cats, and cats who eat birds,
And much ado about so many words.
A chat with Homer, some prose, a sonnet,
An apple sliced, with fruit dip on it.
What is that stench I cannot handle?
'Tis only the aroma of a garlic candle.

Learn what true love really is,
with a boy and his parrot,
Or is it a rainbow chicken, or cookie, or
advocate?

Light waves and sound waves,
And water under a swinging bridge,
Inner peace, and peace of mind,
And how much light is in the sound of time?
That place where memories play,
And melodies ring,
And monks in abbeys voices sing.

As mothers watch the ships at sea,
We hear a bit of history.
So gentle readers, forge ahead,
And don't forget the oolong tea.

Your faithful scribes,
Heather Meares and Reginald George

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

Compiled by Reginald George

Here is your opportunity to speak out, express your 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. Thanks to everyone who voted in our Readers' Choice contest.

Readers' Choice

The winning article for this issue is "Flow Like the Water, Move with the Wind, Dance in the Fire," by Becky Bell. It will be moving on to the finals.

Voting for your favorite poem, story or article from this fall issue must close by Oct. 31, so please get your vote in early. Once they are tabulated, watch for our special email edition in early November containing the four winners for the year. Your vote will decide the 2021 Readers' Choice Award for your favorite article.

As always, we appreciate and thank you, our readers and authors. We could not continue to do this work without your writing contributions and ongoing support.

Poetry Contest

Our winning poem is "Sonnet on Red Hair," by Frank Cuta. This was not an easy choice. You will find that we have a plethora of fantastic poetry of all styles sprinkled throughout this issue.

To vote, provide reader feedback, or to submit your much-needed content for our next issue, send an email to TheWCBNewsline@gmail.com.

Our "WCB Newsline Unleashed" podcast continues to grow. Read the Podtastic Casts column for details on our latest endeavors. You can ask your phone or smart speaker to play it, or go to the direct feed at the following link: <https://wcb-newsline-unleashed.pinecast.co>

Reader Feedback

From Frank Cuta

In the summer issue, I was moved by Carl's historical remembrance as I, too, was drawn into the movement by listening to the tenBroek lectures from 50 years ago. My vote for best article goes to Becky Bell for her great piece "Flow Like the Water, Move with the Wind, Dance in the Fire," but I have to admit that I really, really liked Holly Turri's title, "The Thrill of Throwing Things."

From Janice Squires

My choice for the best article for the summer Newsline is "They Make It With Mud," by Frank Cuta. To me, not only was the article the most interesting, but ever so well written. It, too, brought back so many wonderful memories of sharing pottery classes with so many friends and UBTC members, of which some are not with us today. Thank you for this great Newsline and for all the work you do in making it absolutely excellent.

From Chris Coulter

I have read every article in this issue and it was hard to pick someone, but, as usual, I found someone to give my vote to. Alan Bentson is a brave man. First, he confessed at the beginning of his article that he doesn't really care much about art. But then, in about the next paragraph, he bravely and generously recommended a bunch of books about art for us to enjoy. How cool is that.

Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of Newsline staff or Washington Council of the Blind.

FEATURES

Cheshire Cat Interviews #14 Shaping Our Own Destiny, Then and Now

by Heather Meares
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As a person who has had to learn about being blind and what that really means as far as advocacy, in the past four years of my life, I have looked to certain people as leaders and mentors. Denise Colley, former president of Washington Council of the Blind (WCB), and currently secretary for American Council of the Blind, has been a big part of this process for me. She had faith in me from the beginning and helped me see my potential in things I never would have dreamed I would be doing, one of those being co-editor of the Newline. That being said, I also know that mine is just one of so many lives in which she has made a difference. Her work in blindness consumer organizations here in Washington, in legislative and advocacy roles, and her passion for training and developing others is monumental over the scope of her life. Soon, she will be moving to Texas, to be close to her family. I felt we needed to hear from her before she begins her new journey.

Denise: "I grew up in Spokane and attended public schools. I went to college, at Whitworth the first two years and then Eastern Washington University, where I got my degree in social work. I worked for a couple of years as a volunteer for Senior Citizens Performing Arts Project as their scheduler, and also helped with fundraising. They did performances for nursing homes, congregate-care and retirement facilities, with all different kinds of performing groups. During that time, around 1975, I got involved with the National Federation of the Blind in Washington and quickly became the chapter president of the Spokane group. That was my first introduction to consumer organizations of the blind. It was also my first introduction into advocacy and what advocacy was all about, and how we as blind consumers could really be involved in shaping our own destiny. My first convention was in Los Angeles in 1976. I met a whole lot of people, and it was really cool to look at where we had been and where we were going. I realized the importance of a national organization. Chapters tend to see

themselves as autonomous, and in some ways we are, just as we are an autonomous organization on the state level. But if it hadn't been for the national or state organization, we wouldn't have some of the rights and services that we have right now. We here in Washington, as a result of our state organization, are able to serve on juries, get automobile insurance, homeowner's insurance, and other things we didn't have the right to before. A big one is the work we did on taking our state agency for the blind, our rehab agency, from being under the Department of Social and Health Services, where we were buried, to moving to the Commission for the Blind, which became our own state agency for the blind. That was a real monumental step for us. It took us seven years to get it through the legislature. When you start working on legislation and you don't get something passed the first couple of years, you think, well, this obviously isn't going to go anywhere, and I don't want to bother anymore. We need to remember that sometimes legislation takes a while to get enough people onboard and interested to make something happen. It was really important that we were able to do that. So I think, even from the beginning, I knew the importance of advocacy, and of going out there and being a part of figuring out what we really wanted for ourselves.

A group of us became members of WCB in 1990. We left the NFB and became our own separate organization, United Blind of Washington State, which later became WCB, and we continued to work on education, vocational rehabilitation, and passed the Braille bill during that time. I remember being in the governor's office and getting that bill signed, and how exciting it was. Finally we were going to ensure that kids going through the public school system had the right to be introduced to Braille and learn Braille, even if they had some vision. All of those things shaped me and who I became as a person, and as a leader. Once we became part of the council, it strengthened our organization, and we've continued to work on areas that are really important to us, as blind people. I think we still have a ways to go; there are still things we can be doing.

The two most important issues for me are first, that the Department of Services for the Blind stays its own individual, separate department. Every once in a while, the ugly head rears itself and they talk about moving us back under vocational rehabilitation, which would be absolutely detrimental to us as an agency. We would get lost under that umbrella. I don't think we

would have the staff that are as dedicated to ensuring that vocational rehabilitation and teaching, and assistive technology, and those things that we fought so hard for, would get lost and buried.

And the other really important issue, and for me, probably the most important thing I've done since I became a member of the organization, is ensuring our secret, private right to vote. I had the opportunity to testify at a couple of the legislative hearings on accessible voting here in Washington state, and was able to say we have the same rights to vote privately and independently as anybody else does. I don't want to have to tell anyone else who I want to vote for. It's nobody else's business but mine. Being able to vote is a fundamental, American right, and I want that same right. The first time I was able to go to the county auditor's office and cast my vote, I felt like, wow, like I had arrived, like we had won a major battle. That will be one of the things I miss most about leaving Washington, continuing to work on that issue, both on a state and local level. It makes me really sad that we have not been able to get fully represented by all disability groups, because this isn't just about us. It's about senior citizens, and people with other disabilities, the deaf and deaf/blind, and all who need access. Whenever we are helping develop their plans, we try to be inclusive and think about the needs of all groups and disabilities. While that's difficult because you can't fully understand what another disability group needs, we try to be as inclusive as possible. I got to do a couple of commercials on our local TV station and demonstrate the AutoMark (an accessible voting machine), and talk about why it was so important. I never, when I was in college, would've ever thought that I would be going to the legislature. It's been very special to have those opportunities.

One of the key messages I'd want to leave is that we wouldn't be where we are today if people hadn't been willing to go out and stretch themselves and talk about why we need what we need. The organization isn't just about local chapters getting together and having lunch or social activities. It's a lot more than that. We're in a different place right now than when I first got involved, and a lot of us who were involved back then are gone now. We're coming forward with a whole new generation of blind people."

Heather: "And a whole new generation of issues."

Denise: “Yes, but the intent is still the same. If we don’t step out and be a part of making change, change isn’t going to happen. I know a lot of people think they don’t need to worry about what’s happening on the national or state level. They just want to be there and see friends. If we don’t continue in the mode of advocacy, whatever that looks like, we still have to step up and take an active role to ensure things happen that are going to move us forward. People aren’t going to know what is important to us, and what we need, if we don’t tell them. We have such a vital, strong state organization, with a lot of members who have great abilities that we need to plug into the organization.”

Heather: “The importance of working within your state and national organization, I know, is huge. How do you feel about the importance of working with other cross-disability networks as a whole?”

Denise: “I am absolutely for it. That took me a while to grab onto this whole issue, but I am totally supportive. I think we have to do that, because if we don’t start working in cross-disability platforms, first of all, we’re probably not going to have the strength we need, and secondly, we probably aren’t going to accomplish what we need. We’re just a small minority in the grand scheme of things. This has been a hard concept to get people to understand. We have to be willing to help other disability organizations, so that they will, in turn, be there to help us.”

Heather: “And like you said earlier, with voting, it’s not just for us. The voting issues affect us and a lot of other disability and minority groups. We need to understand that the pieces of those issues that affect us and the others are different, and it all has to be incorporated into the solution.”

Denise: “The more we get involved and get to know other disability groups, and maybe are able to help them understand our issues, yes, it’s vital. We have not done a very good job of that. It’s a weak area for us.”

Heather: “Well, it will make you happy to hear that in the time I’ve been serving on councils with Disability Rights Washington, and this is my third year, at the very first meeting I attended, in a brand new, not a clue what I was stepping into moment, they asked me what issues are important to me. I said website accessibility and voting accessibility. I have been saying that

since day one, and now voting accessibility is one of their top priorities for the next couple of years in their plan. We're getting there."

Denise: "That's awesome. We're getting there, we are getting there! That's exciting."

Heather: "It is, it's very exciting, because they have some very powerful tools to help make things happen."

Denise: "I've seen people with their own biases, saying, oh, we don't want to work with other groups, because, because, because..."

Heather: "Because we're a blindness organization. Yes, we are blind. We get that. But we're also people."

Denise: "Yes, we are people, who have issues, and voting access is a really good example, because it impacts a lot of people, not just us. It's about helping people look at, this is our issue, this is your issue, how do we work together, because ultimately we want the same result. I hope we can begin doing this again and being more involved. Legislation is difficult, trying to figure out every year what issues we are going to focus on and which ones we are not, and what's most important."

Heather: "And I also think it's a really intimidating concept for a lot of people. It's very tedious, and can be a lot of information to take in."

Denise: "One of the most intimidating things is going to talk with a legislator, or their aide. It's terrifying when we think, I don't know enough about this issue, when it's really just about telling your story, and why this is important to you, and how it is this going to impact you personally. We've elected these people, they are just people. One thing we can do on the local level is get connected with our local legislators, go to the caucuses, and take time to meet them when they are home."

Heather: "If you could add a particular area for Washington Council of the Blind to focus on, what would it be?"

Denise: “I have wanted, for I don’t even know how long, to put together our own statewide legislative seminar. I want to be able to teach people how to deal with and talk to their legislators, and how to introduce issues that are important to us. We can’t expect them to know unless we tell them. People forget this, and think other people will do it so they don’t have to. No, that’s not necessarily true, and if it is, the more people they hear from, the more in tune they will be, and the next time a really important issue comes up, you will feel more comfortable talking with them.”

Heather: “And then they’re going to expect to hear from you...Okay, where’s Denise?”

Denise: “Exactly. So those are my areas of interest and real passion and concern since I’ve been part of the organization. It’s not enough to say, well, we got this far, it’s better than nothing. We can never go forward saying it’s better than nothing. We have a goal, and we need to get to that goal.”

Heather: “And we shouldn’t have to settle for less. No one else does, why should we?”

Denise: “Yes, exactly.”

Heather: “What is one thing you will always love, that makes you happy, even on a bad day?”

Denise: “On a bad day, the thing that makes me happy is sitting down and reading a good book. I’m an avid reader and love to read. I’m finding myself doing a lot more of this, being at home. Being with my family and doing things with them makes me happy. One of the things I’ve always enjoyed is to be able to help people really understand what their civil rights are. Being able to go around and teach people about the ADA, and what the law is, what it says, and what it means for you as an individual who has rights under the law. And what it means for businesses and employers, and state and local government, and what their rights and responsibilities are under the law. I love doing that kind of training.”

Heather: “Well, I definitely feel that you have been the closest thing to a mentor that I’ve had since I’ve been in Washington, and in WCB. I always

learn things from you, and can learn so much more from you. I'm still planning on doing that, by the way."

Denise: "I hope so. I'm excited to go and see Texas, and how a different state affiliate operates. I'm going to participate in their convention and see what that's like. I've enjoyed getting to see how my leadership skills have grown and developed, from being a leader in my local chapter to stepping out and taking responsibilities on the state and national level. I've done things that stretched me, things I didn't know I could do, that were a little scary. You have to believe in yourself. The things each of us do impact and benefit all of us. Figure out what is important to you, and then be willing to step out and be involved. Change is what it's all about, and making our lives better, that's what we all want."

Heather: "It's so important for us to hear your voice on all these topics. We will drastically miss you. I know you will not be gone from us in spirit and heart, but your presence with us will be missed."

Oreo

by Zack Hurtz

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The joy of meeting a lifelong friend is something very few people ever realize at the start of the relationship. I, at age 10, didn't quite understand what was happening, but I felt that my life would change forever the moment I was introduced to a small, baby, red-lored amazon.

On a cool, crisp morning, in a small town in Washington state, a small egg was slowly rotating within an incubator. The house was quiet, and the little parrot inside the egg was ready to meet the rest of the world. He slowly used his beak to break apart the egg, and crawled out from his former home.

Unfortunately, the next few days would prove troublesome for the little fellow. As he extracted himself from the egg, he felt a brutal crushing pain on his right leg, and then his foot was gone. You see, within the incubator are long rods that turn the eggs so they stay warm on all sides. Normally,

when a chick is born, they're removed from the egg incubator, and placed in a safer one. Unfortunately for him, the breeder hadn't yet awakened to notice his hatching.

He sat for an hour in this awful state, as he lost blood and dealt with the pain of his missing foot. It's unknown exactly how he dealt with the pain, but when he was found, he was making a loud screaming call and wouldn't let anyone touch him. His missing foot would become a lifelong disability, which would alter his life, and guide him towards a 10-year-old boy named Zack.

The sounds of parrots rang out through the large house as I sat with a freshly-hatched parrot, cupped in my hands. I held him close to my chest, letting him snuggle into my shirt, and providing some heat for the fellow. His feathers weren't in yet, and all he had was a small amount of fluff to help keep him warm. His little peeps melted my heart, and his calls for food made me want to feed him the world's best food. Instead, I popped a syringe in his mouth, and slowly gave the little guy baby formula that smelled down right awful.

My fingers slowly traced over his tiny head, over his beak, and down his front. Every time I rubbed his beak, he'd begin to fall asleep and would make even cuter baby noises. His soft, downy feathers felt like silk, and his little face would be a mess, covered in formula.

My thumb gently scratched the drying formula off of his beak, and as I helped keep his feathers clean, he'd lovingly hold my finger in his mouth. He was giving off all signs that he accepted me as his parent, which for me as a 10-year-old, was incredible. I had developed a bond with another being who was living in a world not built for them, and at times felt like we weren't wanted.

You see, this little parrot and I had a lot in common, even though he was only hours old. He had a disability, and it was clear that no one would accept him as he was – so much so that the breeder said we either take him or she was going to put him down. She didn't keep birds that weren't going to provide profit. While we played nice, we saw this for what it was – disgusting.

For the next two months, I spent a couple hours a day at the breeder's house, taking care of Oreo and helping out with the other parrots. Oreo could only be handled so much before he needed to be put back in the heat, so while he was resting, I'd help feed other babies. I spent time working with macaws, cockatoos, amazons, and more. My appreciation of responsibility grew, and my love for parrots exploded. I could pick out Oreo simply by his noises, even though there were other red-loreds in the same cage. Of course, the fact he only had one foot helped me determine him from the rest.

The little bro took up all my thoughts. At school, I would spend the day thinking about him. Any creative writing assignments featured Oreo. I planned all these awesome events for us to do together. I kept thinking of awesome toys, neat tricks, and things I could teach Oreo to say. Most importantly, though, I kept thinking about what I'd need to learn and do to provide Oreo a great home.

Being blind helped me understand the type of care Oreo needed as an amputee. I worked with my dad to build Oreo an awesome living space at our house.

The day came when Oreo could finally make the 20-mile trip to our home, and the whole way home, I had him snuggled against my chest. He'd grown quite a bit from the small hatchling that could fit in one hand. Now, he had grown some feathers and was looking more like a rainbow chicken.

I placed him in his new cage and could tell right away he was scared. It was a lot bigger than what he was used to and had a lot of toys that seemed giant. I kept my hands in the cage, slowly petting him and soothing him with beak rubs and face skritches.

He quickly grew accustomed to our home. He'd fall asleep on my chest and we'd both take naps.

At a time in my life where I felt I didn't belong, Oreo gave me the friendship and courage to be myself. I was living in a small town, away from all my school friends, and the only interactions I had with kids my age were my cousins. My family was a private group, and we didn't let people into our

house. Looking back, I think it's because we were all a bit anti-social. Oreo was quickly adopted by everyone, and I spent all my time with him. I read out loud to him from the Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings series.

Oreo learned to bark and call the dogs, and my dad and I taught him how to whistle. Even now, Oreo is helping me cope with loss. I lost my dad on March 16, 2020, due to pancreatic cancer. Anytime I miss my dad, I get Oreo to whistle, and I hear my dad's exact whistle. Oreo copied us so well that we couldn't tell who was whistling.

Oreo gets to go with me when I go to the beach, or out for hikes around the forests. He helps serve as an advocacy tool. Before I got him back from my dad's, no one would approach me in public. They'd see the white cane and avoid me. The rainbow chicken overrides the fear of my blindness and they always come up to say hi. This allows me to talk about disabilities, and the cruelty in parrot breeding.

Oreo and I have built a brand as the Disability Buddies, and we speak to 60,000 people every time we live-stream on social media. I truly love him and wouldn't ever trade him to get my sight back. He, on the other hand, would trade me in for a chunk of apple. Ha ha!

I hope you enjoyed our story. We're always available to answer questions and share more stories.

Sonnet on Red Hair
A Poem by Frank Cuta
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It's here written that bliss is long red hair,
To run ten fingers through the flowing strands,
Folding the flaming locks between your hands,
To bury your fond face and thus all cares.

Here lies crimson sand bathed in soft moonlight,
Ardent ancient spirits, native and wise,
Bright buttercup blue, mischief in her eyes,

Smoldering forge fires that warm up the night.

Beyond hope, a bloom beckons from the void,
The sweet scent of a rust rose, drunk with joy.
Spectacular gold and red rosebud blend,
With sunrise, sunset and the summer's end.

And languid dreams and pixy schemes are there,
Resplendent in each flaming strand of hair.

Promoting it Forward as a Writer

by Robert Kingett

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It was 3 p.m. Central Time, amidst the first iteration of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States in 2020. I was on the phone with my first literary agent. It's very common to let literary agents go in the publishing industry if they don't fit your current project. I had my first contract, and I needed an industry professional to look at it to be sure I couldn't get a better deal for my first anthology, "Artificial Divide," an anthology featuring blind and visually impaired people telling multi-genre fiction stories.

Nothing about my career was traditional so, of course, I didn't bat an eye over the fact I was negotiating a contract and not a finished fiction novel. To be fair, the agent wasn't fazed at all either. As it turns out, he remembered me when I queried him before, when I was a teenager, and I spelled his name wrong before telling him I had a 600-page book ready to look at.

After we negotiated the contract and how I'd work with him moving forward, he wanted to know if I had figured out my biggest strength as a writer.

"So, Robert, we got to think long term. What's your biggest marketing strength? Is it your back story?"

"It could be," I said, "but I actually think my biggest marketing strength is giving others a boost. It's actually promoting other writers."

That conversation will never leave me. Even to this day, I still replay the conversation in my head, especially when I see other writers online declaring fellow writers as competition.

Writers insist that other writers are a source of competition. There are many writers out there who will actively try to sabotage others in the rush to prove that just because they can write better dialog, they are a better writer.

I don't necessarily blame writers for getting stuck in this mindset. After all, capitalism affects the publishing industry just as it affects other industries. Writers are trained to think competitively, not cooperatively. Writers, especially emerging writers, are conditioned to think that if you don't work hard, at all costs, then other writers will make it and will leave you in the dust. While this might be true sometimes, it breeds a sense of lonely competition. Networking events are not mutuals getting together, they are a covert way to see how one can cut a writer off from their support network, for example.

Recently, I've been really examining the value of marketing other writers you admire. Even though you may want others to read your new book, there are other writers begging for the same thing. Other writers, I feel, could actually be your biggest support network if you give them a genuine boost.

I've started marketing others' work a bit more than my own and, as a result, I'm slowly building a firm and loyal support network of my own. Whenever I champion a book I really enjoyed or fund a writer's Kickstarter, I always leave my name so that they will recognize me and so they can connect if they want to return the favor.

Writers might have connections you don't have. It's important to pass the mic when someone can speak to a particular subject better than you can because, someday, they could return the favor and it will give you a boost.

I've stopped thinking about writers as competition and I've started genuinely promoting others work I enjoy more than my own. It might not have immediate benefits, but I'm not in this race for getting ahead at all costs. I'd rather have a community passionately carrying us all to victory rather than stand, alone, at the finish line.

Artificial Divide Introduction

by Robert Kingett

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“Artificial Divide” is an anthology featuring fiction by blind and visually impaired authors. Below is the introduction to the anthology, with links to buy the book. All versions of the print book are large print by default.

I remember the first out-and-proud fiction book I read that included an openly gay character. Actually, this book had gone above and beyond. It was a gay utopia for me because some of the characters are also openly trans and proud of who they are. What made this book so special to me was the fact it was a safe space before I knew what a safe space was. The book is “Boy Meets Boy,” by David Levithan.

Growing up in Florida, I don't remember anyone encouraging me to read books with openly gay or bi or trans people in it. People loved the fact I loved to read, but I was never actively shown any books with LGBT+ characters and themes. I had to find those books on my own. Even after I'd found them, I had to keep them in the closet with me because I knew society didn't see them as "normal."

I just can't shake those early years of thinking I wasn't wired the way the rest of society seemed to be, just because I am not at all sexually attracted to women. I didn't understand how a book such as “The Princess Diaries,” by Meg Cabot, was only for girls, and why I shouldn't be reading it.

I didn't understand publishing's desire to keep telling stories about non-disabled, straight white men. I thought, if everybody has a story, then where are the stories about people who are black or trans or gay or disabled?

If I take a minute to try to think of fictional characters with disabilities in books, my brain comes up with few options. I've read many great memoirs by disabled people, ones where I felt seen and heard because they shared my struggles, but I can't say the same thing about fiction.

“Boy Meets Boy” was special to me because it was a story involving LGBT+ characters. Nobody was overcoming their gender identity the way disabled memoirists seemed to “beat” their disabilities on every page. I was hungry for some fun stories that just happened to have blind or visually impaired characters telling us their fictional tale of adventure or mystery.

Even in the non-fiction I've read by blind people, they all seemed to be about overcoming the world, not just living in it while experiencing drama and/or romance. The protagonist always had to overcome blindness or learn how to be blind. The characters always saw the blind protagonist as either strange, scary, helpless, super gifted, flawless, ignorant, clumsy or unable to function. The memoirist would have no choice but to prove them wrong about their blindness. It made me exhausted trying to find books by disabled authors where the visually impaired protagonist just had to deal with the plot of the story, not their blindness and the plot at the same time.

As an openly gay man, I'm witnessing in real time the progress publishing is making towards telling LGBT+ stories. LGBT+ is moving away from a genre label and characters are just LGBT+, which is great. I feel honored watching that growth. As a blind man, though, I'm afraid I'm not seeing the same progress with disabled stories.

More times than I'd like to admit, I've Googled fiction books with blind characters. The results are not promising, every time. I go to page four or five of the Google search results, hoping I'd find a golden egg somewhere, but the results are disappointing.

For one thing, a lot of books featuring visually impaired characters are written by sighted authors. While I don't necessarily have a problem with this, I keep running into stories that are inauthentically told because a sighted writer always shows a visually impaired character dictating to their phone without using a screen reader, for example.

One exception I can remember is a book called “WWW: Wake,” by Robert J. Sawyer. In this book, the protagonist uses a cane properly, uses a screen reader with the keyboard for a long time on the page, and is just a smart blind girl who is dealing with the plot.

Even though I still go back and read “WWW: Wake” occasionally, I'm hungry for more modern fiction featuring visually impaired characters. I know there are others out there just like me who are eagerly seeking books that have people like them on the page. That's where this anthology comes into play.

This anthology features blind and visually impaired authors telling their own stories. Some are emerging authors. Some are more established, but they all have something to show you about being low vision.

There's a wide range of writing styles, genres and even character archetypes in this anthology. Not every story will have a happy ending. Not every protagonist will be nice. That's the point, though. This anthology compiles snapshots of blindness to show that blind people can be witty. Blind people can be crude. Blind people can be whimsical. Blind people can be clever or brash.

Visually impaired people have to educate the sighted daily on what it's like to be visually impaired. This even happens, sometimes, because sighted people expect us to be teachers. This book might not be an instruction manual on how blind and visually impaired people use a computer, but it will open your eyes to characters who have flaws, outsmart bullies, learn to trust their skills, and are mischievous to get what they want.

The authors in this collection are just a snippet of the talent that's cast aside for established sighted people, who really should step aside and let disabled voices take the publishing contracts.

I hope that you, dear reader or listener, go through this anthology with the understanding that “Artificial Divide” isn't meant to take away from sighted authors trying to be allies. We desperately need allies, but we also need people willing to listen when blind people want to tell the stories they want to tell – with grit and grace.

It might be difficult to empathize with some of these characters. You may love every story in this collection. That's okay. It's your journey through this book. I'd like you to ponder how you feel after reading this collection. I think you'll find that even though you may be sighted or visually impaired, and

even though this character would never be your friend in real life, you do have things in common, and that maybe we're not so divided after all.

Where to buy "Artificial Divide":

Paperback from publisher: Large Print by default.

<https://renaissance-107765.square.site/product/artificial-divide/203?cs=true&cst=custom>

eBook and audio book from publisher.

https://renaissance-107765.square.site/product/artificial-divide/204?cp=true&sa=false&sbp=false&q=false&category_id=3

Pick your eBook store. <https://books2read.com/u/b5v0pk>

A Dozen Haiku

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Introduction

Haiku, or haiku poems, are Japanese in origin. In their traditional form, they consist of three unrhyming lines, with five syllables in the first line, seven in the second, and five in the third. They most often focus on nature, and they emphasize simplicity and intensity. Many haiku in English, including mine, do not adhere to this strict structure, but they all have 17 syllables.

These are just a few of the many haiku I have written over several years. Some of them refer to events, good and bad, in my life or the lives of people I know. Others play with words and the varied meanings of those words in English.

Someday I might put these haiku and others, along with some essays, into a printed collection. In the meantime, I hope you will enjoy these few poems, as I loved creating them.

Leonore Dvorkin
Denver, Colorado

*** The New Kittens
Goodbye knickknacks,
unobstructed reading,
late snoozing.
Hello, sweet love!

*** The Girl's Gone
Love faker, heart breaker, stuff taker.
Face it, guy;
she ain't comin' back.

*** Urban Bus Stop, April
Wee birds in the bush,
heedless of the beer bottles beneath,
sing of spring.

*** After the Hurricane and Flood
(from a story on National Public Radio, 10/24/05)
Mayan Indian
flies yellow plastic kite for son,
hearts unsubmerged.

*** If Only
Seen chalked on a college sidewalk:
"Learning zone. Stop all stupid stuff." Ha!

*** The Match As You Might See It
fire starter
tennis war
chess game
pairing similars
made in heaven

*** Come the Food Revolution
Teed-off tea
Potatoes with chips on their shoulders
Bread that screams, "You're toast!"

*** Tiny Toy Teddy
There in the gutter:
dropped, wet, muddy, and forgotten
... but still smiling!

*** "Hold That Bus!"
(A young man helps an old one.)
He assures him they will wait,
helps him up,
and restores his faith
in youth.

*** A Black and Gray World View
Her T-shirt reads:
"Everybody lies."
My hope:
that cynicism dies.

*** Seen with Regret in the Park Today
(Spring, 2010)
Her dog lies resting,
uncomprehending,
for she's texting,
not walking.

*** Change Speaks
Trample your fears, dear one!
Propelled by me, your tired heart
Will leap anew.

Building Bridges with Books
by Chris Coulter
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Over the course of my life, I have read many books with themes of going through trials, tragedies, and terror. I have read books about September 11,

2001, as well as books about people struggling with failing marriages, sickness in the family, and the aftermath of storms and earthquakes. I thought I understood the anatomy of a book or magazine article that gave people a picture of hard times, that finally made those people use their grit, determination, and a whole lot of prayer to make something of what might seem like a barren life.

In the past couple of years, it seems to me that every day was met with a sense of jaw-dropping astonishment, as my family, friends, and neighbors listened to everything from the coronavirus to people trying to play fast and loose with our elections, and the weirdest happening of all: the insurrection at the capitol building in Washington, D.C.

Thankfully, this is not an article about politics. This is an article about my surprise when I began thinking about my own writing, from my own journal to our very own Newslines. Words are not adequate to convey the sorrow of health-care workers doing their best to save lives in hundreds of hospitals. I can't describe the way this heat wave, and the one before it, have made me feel as though the life-giving rays of the sun have turned into an instrument of hatred instead of the warm, nourishing light that brings us flowers, food, and the joy of blue skies.

It is my hope that every one of us who is blind or low vision can find a way to reach beyond our own concerns, huge as they are. The American Council of the Blind community calls have been a great step forward in helping us to get in touch with the wider world. There are even some writing workshops in those calls. I should say that I've never been on those particular writing calls, but they seem to be quite popular.

As I come out of the shock of all the disasters, sickness, and wild weather, I believe there is something happening in our lives that we have never known before. There are words that may be hard to find, and to put into a document, but we certainly can do that. We have often helped sighted people to understand something about our world, which many people find very strange. What if we could write books and articles, or just tell stories about the ways that blind and sighted people can join each other, without any awkwardness? What if, in writing our own books and getting them published, sighted and blind people alike could learn how these two groups

could build smooth, strong communication between people who have been afraid of each other for centuries?

I will simply leave my questioning at that. Someone will write a book. It could be any of us. It could be me.

Tail of a Musical Marmalade
A Poem by Heather Meares
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I did not know at first, the curiosity,
When Sherlock came to live with me.
That he, indeed, was an orange-striped prodigy.
My first clue was a plink on my mando,
Promptly followed by a tour of the piano.
He snoozed inside the baby grand,
Then on the keyboard he did land.
Frolicking along the black and whites,
Wooden hammers in his sights,
Demanding a partner for his delights.
As I played, there was no sound,
For Sherlock held the hammers down.
He plucked and played the long, loud low strings,
And lightly strummed the tiny, high things.

While in my kitchen, I did hear,
One harp string sing, so bright and clear.
He sat so innocently on the stool,
Watching the goldfish staring back at him,
From its gurgling pool.
I hope he leaves that fish alone,
As he sits there, on his throne.
The music stand has been knocked down,
Crashed upon the floor.
But Sherlock must investigate,
And explore forever more.

Balanced on the bathtub ledge,
Between the curtains he has wedged.
He will perch here for an hour,
Just to hear the music,
Coming from my shower.
Jazz and blues, rock and folk,
He loves them all, this is no joke.
A tail swings and dangles, in the water gleefully,
Conducting dancing droplets, into a magical symphony.

But alas! He finds the Holy Grail.
A majestic tambourine! To him, it's a musical dream,
So he flicks it with his tail.
He pats with his paws, and jingles with his toes.
What he will do next, I never really know.

He grieved the loss of his last owner,
And turned it into joy.
And now he makes me laugh and ponder,
The thoughts of my marmalade boy.

Swinging Bridge
by Marilee Richards
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It hangs empty now, almost a feeling of foreboding there.
The cold barrenness of winter has taken all its life away.
The steel cables set deep within the banks hold the bridge securely in place.
It hangs suspended over the Stillaguamish River, just up-river from my
home. The span is wide enough for three people to walk abreast across its
long expanse.

On the north bank from which it hangs is a high solid rock cliff.
Evergreen trees grace the top, standing full, with dark pine-green boughs.
In the light of the day the mirrored water reflects a purple and midnight blue
silhouette of the bridge hanging gracefully from its forbidding rock face.

The crossing itself is made from planks supported underneath by large cables. The sides are protected by a three-foot-high wire fencing which offer a wood rail to grasp as you walk across. There is a gentle slope to the left, with a generous bowing in the middle.

The riverbank to the south takes on a different appearance from its north bank. It lies close to the river's edge consisting mostly of sand and river rock, that seem to change shape with each high or low water.

There is a look of winter here. The shadows of the day leave the wood planks covered with patches of thin ice. Splashes of water are not yet completely dry from sun rays playing softly along the wood planks.

This is the quiet beauty in the loneliness of winter. The only sign of life around its banks might be an occasional eagle landing, taking a moment to catch a glimpse of a salmon going upstream.

Quiet Beauty

A place I love to come,
When clear thinking is my measure.
I spend my time while sitting there,
Just taking in some pleasure.

For the ripple of the water,
As it runs along the way.
The birds... as if to answer,
"How are you on this fine day?"

The fish as they go stealing by,
Along their short life's journey.
Oh! What a wonderful place to come,
To take in all God's beauty.

LIFESTYLE

Book Chat

What's Up, Homes?

by Alan Bentson, Readers' Advisor

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All those series! Seems like every book you start reading these days is in a series. If you read the Talking Book Topics or look at the recently added books on BARD or Audible.com, it's astonishing how every book is in a series. No matter the genre or grade level, every book seems to have a number attached. I always thought this was a contemporary phenomenon, a century of radio and TV, not to mention Hollywood's sequel mania, that has got us to expect stories to come in episodes. Or, I thought, maybe it's all Harry Potter's fault, and everybody wants to have a successful serial.

Recently, I came across an article in the latest issue of "The Journal of Specious Literary Archeology" that made me feel differently. It seems the vogue for series books goes back a long way. Turns out that a fragment of papyrus has been discovered that contains notes on a conversation between Homer, famous blind epic poet, and his literary agent. Unfortunately, only the agent's side of the conversation survived. Nevertheless, it's pretty interesting, and here it is:

-- "Hey, Homes, old buddy, haven't seen you since the last Olympiad. I forget, what's your dog's name? Oh yeah, Sirius, that's it. Have him bring you over to this olive tree. I hear the constellation design folks are looking for a dog, you should apply, then you both could be stars! Anyway, have a seat. I've just popped a new amphora of wine and they'll be out with the honey cakes in a minute.

-- "I hear you're knocking 'em dead on your tour promoting The Iliad. They tell me you've pulled in enough drachmas to hire some dancing girls, a backup band and some roadies to help set up the equipment. That's great, couldn't have happened to a nicer guy. Now, I asked for this meeting because there's something I want to discuss with you. Tell me, what's the question people ask you the most in the Q&A after the poem?

-- “Okay, but after they ask you where you get your ideas, what’s the second thing they want to know?”

-- “That’s right – ‘What are you working on now?’ We got to come up with a follow-up product while The Iliad is still fresh in people’s minds. I want to pitch an idea; I think you’ll like it. You should put out another epic in the form of an inspirational celebrity memoir. It can’t miss! I even thought of a title for you. You could call it, ‘Epic: or How I Stopped Feeling Sorry for Myself, Got Off my Butt, Learned to Find the Bathroom, Use a Guide Dog, Count Steps, Feel Faces, Dream in Color, and Made it Big in the Blind Bard Business.’ What do you think?”

-- “Well, I guess it is a little personal. Do you have any ideas?”

-- “A sequel to The Iliad? Not a bad idea. People always want to know what happens next in the story. The Hebrew guys are doing pretty well with 2 Kings and 2 Samuel and 2 Chronicles, you could call it Iliad Two!”

-- “Well, I suppose you’re right, people who hadn’t read the first poem wouldn’t buy it, and people who want stand-alone stories wouldn’t buy it either. So, what would you call it?”

-- “The Odyssey? That’s kind of weird, isn’t it?”

-- “Well, Odysseus was one of the main characters in your first poem, and probably the smartest guy in the story. People who liked The Iliad would want to know what happened to him, and people who hadn’t read the first poem wouldn’t realize it was a sequel. You might have something there. Oh, here comes the honey cakes, let’s dig in! By the way, you got that grant from Athens DSB to set up that merch table, but they say you got to employ blind vendors. It will be a good way to push those spin-off Iliad products you’ve been talking about. You know, the Ajax laundry detergent, and the Achilles tendon pain relief cream, and of course the Trojans – a fellow should always have some of those in his robes. Well, I know you’re busy, but try and find some spare time to knock out an outline for your sequel. I’ll run it up the flagpole and see if any promoters salute. I still think that title’s a little weird though! Okay, let’s eat.”

Of course, The Odyssey went on to become the greatest sequel of all time. The word “odyssey” means any long trip or major endeavor. It all goes to show how you should not trust your agent for ideas about the creative end of the business. Hope you have a great autumn and start some new series.

The Benefits of Tea, Part Two

© 2021 by Leonore H. Dvorkin

<https://www.leonoredvorkin.com/>

Note: The original version of this article was published in the April 2007 issue of the Denver publication Community News, which no longer exists. The article has been updated and slightly expanded for this appearance.

Oolong Tea

You may have seen intriguing ads for "wu-long" tea. It's touted as an effective weight-loss aid, often called “Chinese slimming tea.” Please don't be fooled into paying some absurdly high price for what is actually common oolong tea with the name spelled differently. One online seller has the audacity to charge \$147 for 120 teabags, or \$1.23 per teabag. Another seller charges \$30 for six boxes of 20 teabags, thus 25 cents per teabag – not a bad price. But a brand that we enjoy is cheaper still. That is Foojoy Wuyi Oolong Tea, currently \$15 for 100 teabags, or just 15 cents per teabag.

Oolong tea has a lovely amber color and distinctive flavor. Its caffeine level is lower than that of black tea, so if you are seeking a way to cut back on caffeine while not eliminating it entirely, try oolong tea. I can even drink a cup of it in the evening without it later disturbing my sleep.

A 2003 Japanese study found that while oolong tea has about half the cancer-killing compound EGCG that is found in green tea, oolong tea contains more polymerized polyphenols, which increase energy expenditure and help burn fat. Therefore, a cup of oolong tea after a meal may indeed help you lose weight.

A July 23, 2021, article that I read on a site called Healthline.com lists many other benefits of oolong tea, among them a decrease in the risk of heart disease, improved brain function, a lowering of the risk of cognitive decline, and some protection against cancer. The title of the article is “What Is Oolong Tea and What Benefits Does It Have?”

Several years ago, in an Asian grocery store not far from us, we purchased a huge, 5-lb. bag of loose oolong tea for only \$10. I don't know what the current price is, but it's probably not a whole lot more. However, the teabags are just fine and are easy to use.

If you are fortunate enough to have any near you, you will find that Asian markets tend to offer a large variety of teas at the best prices, both in teabags or loose in bags or cans. Stored in a cool, dry place, tea keeps for a very long time, so don't be afraid of overbuying.

If you have a drip coffeepot (such as Mr. Coffee) that you can reserve for the brewing of tea, so that the flavor does not clash with the flavor of coffee, you will find that any loose tea can be brewed quickly and easily. You will need to experiment a little to find the ratio of tea to water that you prefer. In the summer, brew up a big pot at breakfast time and store the leftover tea in the refrigerator for a healthful drink of cold tea at any time of day.

Alternatively, you can brew a cup or a pot of loose tea by using a metal tea ball.

Please note: Bottled and powdered teas have virtually no antioxidants left, so avoid those. If you want a sweetener but wish to avoid sugar, try a few drops of liquid stevia, available at health-food stores, in many grocery stores, and online. We favor the Stevita brand, which we order from Amazon, three bottles to a package. Just two to four drops will sweeten any liquid.

Green Tea

Green tea is widely available. Its many varieties have subtle but quite distinct flavors. One that we particularly like is Chinese green tea with jasmine. At an Asian market or on Amazon, look for the pale orange box marked Jasmine Tea, imported by Fujian Tea Import and Export Co. The current price from Amazon is \$7.94, or just 8 cents per teabag. I also found

Taylors of Harrogate Green Tea with Jasmine on Amazon. This is \$4.64 for 20 teabags, or 23 cents per teabag. Another favorite of ours is TAZO'S "Zen" blend, which blends green tea with lemon verbena, spearmint, and lemongrass. TAZO teas are widely available in health-food stores and many supermarkets, as well as online.

Our aging population should take special note of the health benefits of green tea. Numerous studies suggest that it helps protect against some cancers, cognitive impairment, dental plaque, rheumatoid arthritis, and heart disease, and that it can help lower bad LDL cholesterol and increase bone density. Green tea is high in catechin polyphenols, particularly EGCG, mentioned above, which is an antioxidant. Black and oolong teas are made from fermented leaves, but green tea leaves are first air-dried and then gently steamed, which prevents the EGCG compounds from being oxidized.

A 1997 University of Kansas study showed EGCG to be twice as powerful as resveratrol, a polyphenol found in red wine, which limits the negative effects of smoking and a fatty diet. The Japanese drink a great deal of green tea. Even though about 75% of Japanese men smoke, their rate of heart disease is relatively low.

White Tea

White tea is the least processed of all teas. It's quite pale, and it has a very delicate flavor – so delicate that some say it's virtually flavorless. It's also more expensive than green tea. But do try at least a couple of brands to see if you like it, perhaps sampling it first at a tea shop or a friend's home before you buy, because it's even higher in polyphenols (antioxidants) than green tea. Some brands have other flavors added, such as those of various fruits.

All tea leaves come from the *Camellia sinensis* plant, or tea shrub. But whether those leaves wind up producing black, oolong, green, or white tea depends on how the leaves are processed. White tea is made from immature tea leaves that are picked shortly before the buds have fully opened. The unwithered leaves are not air-dried, pan-fried, or fermented, but are merely steamed. This leaves them closer to their natural state.

In Conclusion I very much enjoyed researching tea. I hope that I have convinced you of the health benefits of the various sorts of real tea, and that you'll try a few of the brands I've recommended. Your body will thank you.

Melody from the Heart
A Poem by Marilee Richards
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Love is not mere feeling,
It's a force so very revealing.
It's the song of a dove, sent down from above,
It's the joy in life so appealing.

Love is a song that comes from the heart,
It's the melody sung for all seasons.
Like the song in your heart, with a tune to impart,
Let you sing the song it is bringing.

Set your heart free, like the dove far above,
To express the song it is singing.
Not until then, will your heart be set free,
To sing the song it is bringing.

How I Stopped Cussing
by Holly Turri
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Since words and their usage is the Newslite theme, I figured I'd describe how I have stopped a lifelong habit. In fact, at least for most of the time, I've eliminated certain words from my vocabulary. Those deletions often contain four letters, and shouldn't be used in polite society. You guessed it – I've pretty much quit cussing.

Although I've never done something like ceasing smoking, eliminating my inappropriate expressions of frustration and fury is probably just as difficult.

When we depend on something, even if it is harmful, removing it from our lives is very challenging. Like anything else, cussing is habit forming.

A little background might help your understanding. For 44 years, my dad worked for the Army. On weekends, to make extra money, he crewed on sailboats. Both milieus are noted for colorful usages. Oh yes, he served in World War II. In fact, dad could cuss in English, German, and a couple additional languages. He said that as a GI, it was his patriotic right to say bad words. There is no logic to that statement, but there you go.

My brother followed in dad's footsteps. In fact, he added new expressions to my vocabulary. From my earliest childhood, I was told that girls and young ladies should never talk that way. If I ever tried, I got hot sauce on the tongue.

Then I went to college. Being away from home, and trying to be a liberated woman, I adopted the men's favorite expressions. Of course, I shut them down at home, which was challenging.

Then I got a job at National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. This organization has lots of men. Most of my gal pals thought if we cussed, they would accept us.

Then I met Jim. As a ham radio operator, we should never use bad language on the air. He rarely uses it. In fact, if he does, the entire world gets silent and does whatever he wants. In 1984, when I got my license, I had to stop being creative with my words.

What has finally cured me is the American Council of the Blind (ACB) community calls. On Friday, they have trivia games. "It's Play Time" is broadcast on ACBMedia Network. If I made a mistake, I'd say "oh sh**!" Then I'd get told to stop it. Finally, people started calling me "potty mouth."

As my mom said, "We say in jest things we would never say in anger."

That description really bugged me. So, much to my husband's relief, I've really tried, and I think I've done a mostly successful job.

Another favorite of mom's was, "Cursing shows a lack of vocabulary." So, when I get the urge to come out with blue words, I think of other ones that showcase my burgeoning substitutes. "Oh, you useless poor excuse." Or, "I am totally mortified and made miserable by your disreputable disgusting behavior." And the ever popular, "Go pound sand," are appearing with many others in my conversation.

Thank you, ACB, for cleaning up my act. It's much appreciated by everyone I know.

**Home in the Rain
(to the tune of Home on the Range)**

Lyrics by Alan Biné
whimsicle@comcast.net

Oh give us a home, that is warmer than Nome,
Where the sky is so cloudy and gray.
Where seldom are heard, any negative words,
And the slugs and the geoducks play.

Home, home in the rain,
Where the Seahawks and Mariners play.
Where it's always so green, and cool to be seen,
In an REI parka and jeans.

Oh give us a home, where there's no Styrofoam,
And the trash is recycled each day.
Where we hug every tree, compost all the leaves,
And the air is so clean we can breathe.

Home, home by I-5,
Where all of us live, work and thrive.
Where espresso is near, along with Rainier,
And everything else we hold dear.

Little things!
A Poem by Andy Arvidson
arvidsonandy@gmail.com

Appreciate all gains no matter how small.
It doesn't matter if we are short or tall.

When our lives are looking for betterment,
Do we amass friends with enjoyment?
If I die today have I left a mess behind?
Or have I learned the process of being kind?
Have I given freely to others without asking for reward?
Is the life I am leading on a path of moving forward?
Do I feel that I need to be applauded and cheered?
Or am I the tyrant that becomes feared?
Shall I be flaunted with rings?
Or will I be satisfied with little things!

What's On Your Plate?
My Words: The Window to My Heart and Soul
by Hayley Agers
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When my mind is full of chatter and my heart confused by previous wounds, I rely on my journaling to bring things into focus. For some people, sitting in contemplation, with only the sound of the quiet wind or the chatter of nearby birds, brings them answers. For others, it is reading a good book, maybe even an inspirational, self-help book that provides them with a new way of looking at things. For me, it's always going to be one of two things. The first one is a conversation with a good friend, a person who knows me and has my best interest at heart, someone I can share my thoughts with, know they are listening and not just waiting for their turn to talk, and will say what is necessary in love, to grow that deepest part of me. The other option for me is to write. My special place on my deck, a comfy chair and table, the sound of my outdoor water feature soothing my mind and allowing my thoughts to flow, a cup of tea, which always brings back wonderful memories with my

grandad, and wraps me up in one of his childhood hugs, the sounds of nature reminding me that my Heavenly Father already knows all I am about to write, and yes, my slate and stylus. I love the way I can pour out my deepest pains, my greatest joys, and my dreams. Nobody will invade that space or read what I have written and hold close to my heart.

It is only on paper that the answers seem to come, like the flow of crystal-clear water, as it melts from atop the most beautiful mountain and flows down the mountainside until it reaches a stillness. As I write the words, somehow the hurt seems to fade, the self-love and self-compassion are evident, and I am able to move forward to a place of kindness. It's kind of like how I feel when I am asked to keep a food journal; it makes me more aware of my behavior, knowing I have to confess that on paper, and thus it helps me be more mindful of the bite I am about to take or the unkind word I am about to speak. Should I struggle, I know I will have to write down that I over-indulged on that piece of tiramisu, or that I did not control my tongue when speaking to a neighbor that I feel wronged me. It allows me to stay present once it is off my chest and on paper. It's true, that well-known saying, "Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift, that's why it's called the present."

Once I have written it down, worked through it, maybe prayed on it, and then have written down some goals or lessons, it's time to move on. I can't change how I disrespected myself today, devaluing my place or allowing my past to affect my day. I can't change that something I said to somebody, or that little fib I may have told to get out of doing that chore I hate, but I can work through the reasons why those things may have happened in the first place and I can learn from them. Isn't that the purpose mistakes are supposed to serve, teaching us how to be better in the coming days?

So now that my soul is in a better place, and my heart is focused on what I need to do moving forward, I wanted to share a couple of my favorite comfort recipes, as we move into the fall, and cooler weather. Maybe you'll even enjoy these while taking the time to write down your thoughts on paper, or while listening to your favorite book.

Fruit Dip I

- 8-oz. package of cream cheese softened (I use 1/3-less-fat version)
- ¾ cup firmly packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 1 Tbsp. vanilla extract
- ½ cup chopped nuts, optional
- Stir together until creamy and smooth. Stir in the nuts and serve with apple wedges.

Here is a delicious alternative fruit dip for those who can benefit from no added sugar.

Fruit Dip II

- 1 cup nonfat plain Greek yogurt
- 2 Tbsp. peanut butter powder (I use PB Fit)
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 packet of sweetener of your choice (I use Monk fruit extract)
- Good pinch of cinnamon

Mix all ingredients together. Enjoy this with sliced apples, drizzled over a sliced banana, or topped with granola and fresh fruit, more as a breakfast or dessert. If you are doing Weight Watchers, this is only 2 points, minus the fruit and toppings

Pumpkin Pie Smoothie

- 1/2 cup milk, any kind (but not canned coconut milk because the taste is too strong)
- 1/2 cup yogurt, any kind (or more milk if you prefer it thinner)
- 3 medium bananas (360 grams without peel), frozen or cold
- 6 Tbsp. (90 grams) pumpkin puree
- 2 Tbsp. maple syrup
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1-2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice

Place all the ingredients, starting off with 1 tsp. pumpkin pie spice, in a blender and blend until smooth. Start the blender out on low speed and gradually increase to high to blend the ingredients, then back down to low to get it silky smooth. Taste and add more pumpkin pie spice, if desired. Enjoy immediately.

*This makes two good-sized smoothies. You can make this and store it in the fridge for the next day, but no more than two days ahead.

Three Bean Sweet Potato Chili

- 1 ¼ lbs. sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into ½-inch chunks
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 chipotle chilies in adobo, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 Tbsp. ground cumin
- 2 tsp. chili powder
- 2 cans (14 oz. each) diced tomatoes
- 1 can (15 oz.) pureed tomatoes
- 2 cups frozen, thawed, edamame
- 1 can (14 oz.) pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (14 oz.) black beans, rinsed and drained
- Shredded cheddar cheese and sour cream for garnish

In a microwave-safe baking dish, combine sweet potatoes and 2 Tbsp. water. Cover with vented plastic wrap and microwave for 12 minutes. Meanwhile in a 5-quart saucepan, heat oil on medium. Add onion, chipotles, garlic, cumin, chili powder, and ¼ tsp. salt. Cook five minutes, stirring occasionally. Add tomatoes and two cups of water. Heat to simmer for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add sweet potatoes to pot, along with edamame, pinto beans, black beans, ¼ tsp. salt and cook 2 to 5 minutes or until beans are hot. Garnish with cheddar and sour cream.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, and ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Technically Speaking Do You See the Light?

by Frank Cuta
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As a totally blind person, it is not possible for me to see visible light. But in a sense, the sighted population is very nearly blind, for the visible band that they can see is only a tiny part of the immense electromagnetic spectrum of light.

I have always been fascinated by the science surrounding the spectrum. As a kid, I collected bits of data like earthquake vibrations, ultrasonic dog whistles, and the broadcast frequencies of radio stations. My dream was to someday be able to assemble all of this data on a grand single continuous chart. Before I was old enough to be in science classes, I was also curious about other spectrum-related mysteries like why the sky is blue, or how a glass prism turns light from the sun into a rainbow.

This article is primarily about the spectrum of light. But first let me point out that my dream of recording all of my sensory input on one continuous spectral chart could never happen. I did not realize that there are actually two separate spectrums: one for acoustic waves, and one for electromagnetic waves. In the acoustic spectrum, waves propagate via alternately compressing and expanding the medium in which they are traveling. Waves in the electromagnetic spectrum are totally different. They do not require a medium such as air or water; in fact, they do very nicely in a pure vacuum. They propagate by passing energy back and forth between electric and magnetic fields.

If you have ever studied ham radio theory, you know that you can characterize radiation either in terms of wavelength or frequency. In this article, I am going to try to stick primarily to wavelength. One wavelength is defined as the physical distance between two wave crests. As you move through the entire electromagnetic spectrum, from low frequencies up to high frequencies, the associated wavelengths get smaller and smaller. That

is, at the bottom of the spectrum they are hundreds of kilometers long, and they decrease in length until at the top of the spectrum they approach the size of an atom. As all hams know, to convert any wavelength to radio frequency you just divide it into the speed of light (300 million meters per second).

Example: a frequency of 30 megahertz has a wavelength of 10 meters.

There is a lot of light in the electromagnetic spectrum, including radio waves, microwaves, infrared, visible light, ultra violet light, X-rays, and gamma rays. At the very bottom of the spectrum are very low frequency radio waves, with wavelengths measured in kilometers or miles. This band is mostly used by the military, to communicate with submarines operating just below the surface of the ocean. Next we come to wavelengths around 100 or 200 meters. This is the range for local AM radio broadcasts. These waves propagate very effectively over long distances, particularly late at night.

Next in the spectrum are the shortwave radio bands, with wavelengths extending from 160 meters to 10 meters. At the top of the radio frequency range is VHF and UHF, with wavelengths as small as 10 centimeters. It includes walkie-talkies, FM broadcast radio, TV, and police radio communications. This band is characterized by short-range line-of-sight transmission.

Just above the radio frequencies, from 10 centimeters to 1 millimeter wavelengths, is the microwave band. It includes microwave towers, home Wi-Fi, radar systems, and microwave ovens. Have you ever worried about the danger of being exposed to radiation leakage from your microwave oven, or stray radiation from the communications tower on a nearby hill? Although it is important to be concerned and follow all normal safety precautions regarding microwave oven usage, you should relax. Microwaves are not dangerous like X-rays. (More about X-rays later.)

Above the microwave band, wavelengths shrink to millimeters. I actually worked in this area in the eighties and nineties. Understandably our government was very interested in the unique ability of millimeter waves to probe through solid walls without doing any damage and take a look at what

is on the other side. This technology is no longer classified, and is now in common use at your airport to scan you and your luggage.

The next three bands -- infrared, visible, and ultraviolet -- tend to run into one another. The wavelengths for infrared extend from 0.1 millimeter to 750 nanometers. Infrared is the band of heat wave propagation. It is also where all night-vision equipment and motion sensors operate.

Finally, we have reached the visible range. The wavelengths that can be perceived by the human eye are restricted to this extremely narrow band, from 750 nanometers to 380 nanometers. Some other species see slightly different parts of the spectrum. Many birds and bees cannot see red, but can see partway into the ultraviolet band. Some snakes have extended sensitivity into the infrared band, and are able to use heat detection to catch their prey.

The light that sighted people perceive as “white” actually includes all colors. The color red has the longest wavelength, then comes orange, yellow, green, blue and finally violet, which is the shortest wavelength people can see. A glass prism, which bends light passing through it, is able to disassemble a beam of sunlight into all of its component colors because light is not able to travel at 300 million miles per second (mps) in glass. The longer wavelength red light goes faster and, therefore, is bent the least. The shortest wavelength violet light goes slowest and is bent the most. On a nice clear day, the sky is blue because the white sunlight passing through the atmosphere is scattered more at the short blue wavelengths than at the longer red wavelengths.

At about 400 nanometers, light again becomes invisible to human eyes, as we enter the ultraviolet band. This is the band where health effects of light start to be a concern. You should never look directly into a UV light source (such as a black light). When you smear on the SP30 or SP40 sun blocker, these are the rays that you are protecting your skin against. This band is hugely useful in forensics and many other diagnostic applications.

At this point light gets extremely dangerous. At 10 nanometers, the top of the ultraviolet band merges with the X-ray band. At these very short wavelengths, the associated photons have enough energy to ionize atoms –

separating electrons from them and thus damaging whatever they pass through. Even at low power levels, we need to be careful to minimize human exposure. Most of the X-ray band lies between 1 nanometer and 100 picometers. X-rays are extremely dangerous. But under controlled conditions are very useful for medical diagnostic imaging.

At the very top of the spectrum, starting at 1 picometer, is the gamma radiation band. This is basically radiation from outer space. Not much of it gets through the atmosphere, but without special shielding, astronauts would not be able to live and work in space.

A final note: astronomical observations used to be restricted to the visible spectrum, but now astronomers have “assistive technology” to extend their senses. Most of their observations are performed using electronic instruments that can peer into all of these other bands of the electromagnetic spectrum. In some sense, they may be the only people on earth with “perfect vision!”

When Our Son Was Six

by Holly Turri

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When our son was six, he loved space. In fact, he still does. Anything that flies fascinates our entire family. I just saw a quote about kids embarrassing their folks. So, I had to relate this story.

In 1995, on the Independence Day weekend, the movie “Apollo 13” was released. Michael was thrilled to attend with me. Our daughter, Tracey, couldn’t go with us because she was too young.

Little did we know that the Goddard Space Flight Center’s employee and retirees organizations had purchased the majority of the tickets. When we sat down, Michael said, “Gosh, mom, there are a lot of men here.” I told him that most women don’t have the weird interests that I do, and that this wasn’t surprising.

So, the movie began. When they went to mission control, Michael whispered in that voice that kids have, which can be heard in the next county, "Mom, those men watching over the rocket are bad." Well, the whole row of guys right behind us kind of gasped. I asked him why he thought this was so. He said, "Can you believe it? They are smoking at their desks."

Oh Lord, I thought, how do I quickly and quietly handle this one? "Well," I said, "it was a different world back then. Those men did a great job and an important one. As the movie progresses, you will find that they are also brave and excellent problem-solvers. For many folks, smoking helps them when they are tense and working hard. It's not a smart idea, but lots of them did and still do it."

I heard a bunch of chuckling. Food solves any of life's uncomfortable moments. So, I reached into my purse and handed out homemade chocolate chip cookies to the son and heir to enjoy. "Well," I thought, "those ought to keep your mouth shut for a while." No such luck!

Once again, I began to relax and get into the plot. Then, I felt the nudging of a bony elbow in my side. "Hey mom," came the piercing whisper, "I was thinking."

"What son?"

"Dad would hate to work at that mission control place."

"Well, other than the facts that your dad doesn't have the skills or training to work there, why do you think that son?"

"Well, they wear shirts and ties and stuff. Dad hates that."

"Well, remember the smoking thing? Back in those olden times, men dressed differently for work. Some still do. Dad is lucky that his job environment matches his casual personality." Again I hear laughing.

So, I turned around and said, "Don't worry. There is no extra charge for the entertainment."

Then, I looked at Michael and said, “Let’s watch the movie. You are disturbing others’ enjoyment.” Fortunately, he had sense enough to save his 1,001 additional questions for after the show.

The Cat
A Poem by Alco Canfield
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The cat creeps carefully on the
Cold, clammy clay.
Waiting, watching warily
For a stupid starling,
A raven or a wren.

Pouncing, proud and pitiless,
He breaks the baffled bones,
Gulping, gorging greedily on
The mutilated meat.

Alone, aloof,
He ambles away.

HISTORY

My Memories, Right or Wrong, My Memories!

by Carl Jarvis

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Remember those snappy old chants by the Good Old 200% Red Blooded Americans?

- America, love it or leave it!
- My country, right or wrong, my country!
- I'd rather fight than switch!

Hmm, sorry, that last one was a cigarette commercial.

Anyway, those snappy slogans still cluttering up the backroads of my mind are what inspired me in picking a title for this history ramble. And yes, as usual, I'm trying to make a point. Good luck in figuring it out.

My folks retired back in 1975. Of course, that's not how mother puts it: "Your father gets to retire. I, however, get to keep on doing what I've been doing for the past 43 years. Everything else!"

Is that a touch of bitterness I detect? But anyway, mother packed up the houseful of 26 years of accumulated stuff, and they sold our Ballard house and headed for Spokane, where they bought a place in the Northeast corner of town near Hillyard.

Mother was born and raised in the valley just outside Park Water. And if I think I grew up in different times, my folks grew up on a different planet. Grandpa walked to work, and when it came time to lay in supplies and food, he hitched up the horse to the old buckboard and headed for town. Dad spent most of his youth in Spokane, but he was born in Webb City, MO. He was about five years old when his dad died of miner's consumption. Grandma Jarvis and dad headed out West, looking for grandma's brother-in-law, Jim Jarvis. She had matrimony on her mind, but that's another story for another time.

One reason the folks moved to Spokane was because their favorite son lived there. In fact, their only son. Me. I had been working about four years in the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) and about the time my folks were settling in, I was offered the job of trainer in the BEP, in the Seattle training cafeteria.

Fortunately, my folks were outgoing people. After putting up chain-link fencing around their double lot, and planting a huge truck garden, and adding a room and a deck on the back, they ran out of projects. Dad replaced me on the board of directors for Lilac Service Center for the Blind, and he became active in local politics. He also formed a harmonica band, playing for senior centers and nursing homes. Mother, a master gardener, joined the local garden club and also spent time making crafts to sell, to raise money for several non-profit, social-service organizations.

Around 1977, my folks met Virginia White. Virginia was a retired teacher who just couldn't accept retirement, so she began a class in creative writing. Her goal was to inspire older, retired folks to set down their early memories to share with family members.

My folks took to this like those proverbial ducks took to water. Mother had her IBM Selectric typewriter, which dad also used. But because they were both using it, dad began looking around for some sort of a word processor.

Now, there are a very few folks who would have you believe that I am cheap. That's because they didn't know my dad. For some years, dad had been buying typewriter ribbon in bulk. He would wind his own spools for the Selectric. But everything he looked at took their own ribbon cartridge, and he was sure they were overcharging. Oh yes, dad was truly frugal. I remember when Cathy and I took dad looking for a headboard. But that's a tale that will need to wait for another telling.

For mother, writing came naturally. She had always been able to lay out the facts in a clear, succinct manner. Dad, on the other hand, got so wrapped up in making certain that he had all the facts detailed, with supporting photographs and references, that reading his early work was like getting lost in a giant maze.

Virginia White told dad, “Remember, these are your memories. It's what you remember, and if anyone questions it, the fact that it's how you remember it, that is your proof.”

As time passed, dad became a skilled storyteller. And as always happens when time is passing, life has some bumps in the road. Arthritis became so severe that mother had little time for anything but the basics. It seemed that she barely finished cleaning up after breakfast when it was time for dinner.

After 21 years in Spokane, my folks sold their home and moved back to the west side, taking an apartment in Marysville. Shortly after moving, mother died from liver cancer. Hard days, but again, that's another story.

Finally, dad began organizing the piles of stories that both of the folks had written over nearly a quarter of a century. Mother died in 1996, and dad died in 2001, also of cancer. He had a pretty good start on the job of putting their memory book together, but Cathy and my kid sister Delores did the final editing and assembly. I think we had 30 copies printed. Yup, my memory says it was 30 copies, so 30 it was.

We gave 10 copies each to my two sisters and me to share among our family members. Virginia White taught her students that there was no such thing as a dull life, or ordinary people. She believed that each life had meaning and needed to be shared. My folks were proof of that. Each person reading this article has a story to share – especially a story to share with loved ones. Besides, how do we know whether or not today's events will become an adventure worth retelling? Remember my dad and his mother, moving from Webb City to look for her brother-in-law, with matrimony in mind? How could Grandma Jarvis know that she was heading out to become her own mother-in-law? All of us are full of stories, just waiting to be unlocked and shared.

Perhaps WCB could create a page where members could post short stories or personal events. What are other ways to become better acquainted, especially during these times of isolation?

Make A Memory
A Poem by Alco Canfield
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Each day make a memory,
Maybe more than one.
You can't go back and make some more,
When that day is done.

To gather precious moments,
Like flowers in the sun.
Bouquets to scent the present,
As if the past had just begun.

Home
by Debby Phillips
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From the time I was a little girl, I heard the word home. It was in many contexts – people coming home from the Army, coming home from work, Daddy will be home or, "Wait until your dad gets home!" That was not a pleasant prospect, so I won't comment on that one much, except to say that I hope parents don't use that one anymore.

When I went away to the Oregon State School for the Blind, the word home was synonymous with finding out if you were on the bus list – the list of students who would be going to the bus depot in Salem. It also meant getting on the bus for a long, boring ride. We were not to eat our sack lunches until we got to Eugene, and then we could eat them. Home for the weekend was a hodge-podge of different experiences: trips to my grandmother's or other relatives, being at our house in Medford where I grew up, and having my mom do my laundry, roll my hair in curlers, or maybe going to get a haircut. My brother would act silly, and my mom would tell him to stop showing off. Then it was back on the bus again, (no eating the sack lunch my mom fixed until Eugene), and greeting my schoolmates

as if I had not seen them for years. It often felt like they were more family than my biological family.

Now I am older, and the School for the Blind no longer exists. The people I knew then are scattered, and some have passed away. It's only in my dreams and imagination that I walk the halls of the dorm or the school building. When I'm really sick, I long for the infirmary where I could just get well. The nurses were there to take care of me. I can still feel the clean sheets and blanket wrapping around my achy body when I had the flu. School became home to me as much as my family home, if not more. At school I had freedom to do things for myself, walk to the other dorm to see friends or to the dining room when I stayed late to do homework.

Tonight, we are getting ready for a trip to Mount Angel Abbey and Seminary. I took graduate courses there and lived at the foot of The Hill, as everybody calls it, and would walk up every day. There is something wonderful to me about monastic life, and I guess there will always be a part of me that wishes I could be a nun, somewhere in a place like Mount Angel.

Perhaps, though, there is no place like it, so my yearly or every-other-year visits will have to do. After all, I'm a married woman now. My husband and I live in a nice house – not fancy, but comfortable for us, in a fairly nice neighborhood. I can walk around it and feel comfortable.

But my heart is always flying toward the Abbey. There, I find silence, a peacefulness that doesn't exist anywhere else, the sound of morning prayer as I rush into the Abbey Church because I'm usually late. I feel a little like Maria, from “The Sound of Music.”

It is also a place where I know I am loved. There are many new monks now who have arrived since I was in school, and several of my old friends have passed away. But there are still enough of the monks I knew before. Their greeting is always warm, and they are always welcoming. Perhaps that's what home really is, a place where you know you are loved.

As I sit here in the living room of my house writing this, my guide and partner, Nova, is lying by my feet. My husband is sitting in his chair next to me, one cat is lying in the hallway, and the other is perhaps on the back

deck, lying in one of our chairs. It is cool today and has been raining. The cool hand of God touches my cheek in the breeze that wafts in through the open window.

My prayer for all of you tonight is that you have home, a place where you are loved.

For My Mother – Clare Cuta

A Poem by Frank Cuta

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I think of you, your trials all through, still a fire within your head,
Your love of life, and eyes so bright, a dreamer born and bred.
Time out of space, I see your face, your eyes turned out to sea,
Chained to the shore, you've quested for the ship to set you free.

She Saw the World Through Plastic Eyes, But No Longer Does She Need Them

A Tribute to Judith Lynn Sorter

by Joleen Ferguson

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"Words are a lens to focus one's mind." — Ayn Rand

What better phrase could describe Judith Lynn Sorter, former officer and member of Riverside Association of the Blind and Washington Council of the Blind. She loved the written word and was happiest with Braille dots under her fingertips. Her obituary gives some of the details for this article: <https://cascadiacremation.com/tribute/details/2863/Judith-Sorter/obituary.html>

Born Aug. 4, 1947, in Aberdeen, WA, she moved with her family from Hoquiam to Vancouver to attend the Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB) in 1952. This was when we met.

Judith read everything in the school library from a very young age. She even read the dictionary for fun. She developed a Braille reading speed of more than 450 words per minute when proofreading Braille. She read even faster when reading for pleasure. Having skipped third grade, she graduated from WSSB and Hudson's Bay High School in 1964.

Judith attended the University of Washington following high school. She was a proofreader at the Ogden Resource Center on the campus of WSSB for many years until her retirement in 2012. Not only was she an avid reader, but she was also a wordsmith and loved word games and card games. Knitting for others was another enjoyment. She wrote poetry and is a published author. Although her life with us ended on June 11, 2021, her poetry and creative writing lives on through a website developed by her family. Here is where she is reading many of her poems:
<http://www.judisorter.com>

Judith's love of fantasy and stories of interest to children is evident in her poetry, but there is also a depth and range of feeling in her creativity. She also has a Kindle book on Amazon, "Dreaming in Dots: A Memoir in Verse."

Her obituary noted: "Judi, with assistance of Tina Corey fostered and sponsored children from every corner of the world with faith and love. One of the best jobs Judi had was helping to raise children of the heart, Michaela Corey, Sylvia Corey and Charles Corey."

When visiting WSSB, stop and rest a while on either of two benches – one for Tina Corey and one for Judi Sorter. Besides Braille reading, Judi loved to collect elephant figurines. These and her love of knitting are depicted on Judi's memorial bench.

Here are two of Judi's poems from her Kindle book, "Dreaming in Dots: A Memoir in Verse."

Plastic Eyes

I see the world through plastic eyes.
Which makes me neither good nor wise.
It only tells the way I see,
Who I am is what makes me.

I see the world through plastic eyes.
Which means the sun shines warm, not bright;
Which means the clouds are cool, not gray;
But doesn't tell you if I pray.

Through plastic eyes it's plain to see
They shape the way you look at me.
You think you know who I must be
But eyes don't make a destiny.

You see the world through plastic eyes,
And some things you don't realize.
Look beyond the things that seem,
Look, and find my world of dreams.

Perspective

There are many things I've never seen, or have forgotten if I did.
A rainbow's grace, my mother's face,
And purple mountain majesty.
And yet I heard a trumpet soar, the ocean's roar, and church bells ring.
There are many things I've missed, it's true,
the color blue—but still—
I've had the joy of laughter,
sweet memories that linger,
the handclasp of a friend;
so in the end
my world is warm and bright,
without the gift of sight.

Rest in peace, classmate and friend.

History Quiz
by Carl Jarvis
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History questions once again remind us that our strength as an organization depends upon the countless contributions of individual members.

Quiz Question:

Who was Henry Ivar Bartleson?

Answer:

From The Blind American, December 1963 issue, ink-print edition, published by The American Brotherhood for the Blind (a charitable and education foundation):

"Henry Ivar Bartleson, 61, whose death came on Nov. 14, 1963, was a member of the executive board of the Washington State Association of the Blind (WSAB) and chairman of the committee for White Cane Magazine, published by WSAB. He was an active member of the local King County White Cane Association...

"Henry Bartleson had the long view, and his general plan extended for years into the near future. He wanted this magazine to be of 'quality.' He wanted it to give a self-respecting image of the blind to themselves and to the public.

"In his personal relations, if only a brief phrase must be used, he was a 'Christian gentleman' in all that this conveys.

"He was dedicated to the cause of the blind. Becoming blind in maturity, he is said to have spent a year soul-searching and adjusting to his new role. Then he took advantage of enforced leisure to study the great philosophers and to do creative things, after which, knowing himself, he did his best to help his fellow (blind) men. He had a vision of blind men and women, forgetting their differences and personal frustrations, uniting to make a better world for the children."

Quiz Question:

What does USABA stand for, when did it begin, and why is it important to blind people?

Answer:

(From the USABA Abstract by Sarah K. Bradley)

“United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA) emerged in 1976 when a group of individuals met at the Olympics for the Disabled in Toronto, Ontario, to discuss their vision of the future of sport for athletes with visual impairments.

“In the beginning, founder Arthur Copeland ran the organization from his kitchen table on a shoestring budget in Beach Haven, N.J. Since then, USABA has evolved into a national organization that provides sports opportunities in 11 sports, which impact the lives of more than 2,000 athletes of all ages and abilities each year and has reached more than 100,000 individuals in its 30 years of operation. The organization has emerged as more than just a world-class trainer of blind athletes; it has become a champion of the abilities of Americans who are legally blind. In fact, USABA athletes have served as U.S. Olympic Team members and won medals against sighted competitors.

“This past summer, USABA had 34 of its athletes compete in the 2006 Rocky Mountain State Games, the first state games in the nation to fully integrate athletes who are blind and visually impaired into competition. More than 25 medals were earned by USABA athletes from the ages of 7 through adult who were able to showcase their talents and abilities in a competition with more than 5,000 competitors.”

Quiz Question:

Who is John Olson?

Answer:

Note: Brevity was not a term associated with John Olson. The following response back in 2017 is typical of the details tucked away in John's head.

“Hello, this is John Olson. Before talking about me, I thought you might be interested in some early history of the orientation and mobility (O&M) training programs. There is, of course, a long story about their origin, but here is a brief version.

“During World War II, the Veterans Administration sought to provide rehabilitation services for blinded veterans. As part of this, a corpsman, Richard Hoover (who later became an optometrist), devised a series of long-cane techniques and got the ball rolling. The services started in Avon, CT, and later moved to the Center for Blinded Veterans at the VA Hospital in Hines, IL, where it really got cooking.

“When news got out of the successes in independent travel achieved by these blinded veterans, agencies and schools for the blind around the country began sending staffers to Hines to learn the techniques. The VA did its best to train these folks, but their success as trainers was limited by the varying times people could commit to being away from their jobs, and these visitors were chewing into the time that the VA staff could spend with their own students.

“It was tough for many of these visiting trainees at the VA in a few other respects. They had limited time to learn the techniques themselves, and even less time to try a little practice instruction while at the Hines VA Hospital. They had very limited time to learn about the medical, psychological, social and economic aspects and implications of blindness. Many lacked the leadership back at their agencies and schools to effectively incorporate O&M instruction into their service structure. Many agencies and schools lacked the money to send trainees to the Hines VA center in the first place, and some did not have sufficient funding to employ those they did send for training.

“In dispersing throughout the country, many of these new trainees lacked any means of continued learning via the help of the VA, or with others who may have had the VA training.

“It had become apparent that the VA could not sustain a prolonged free O&M instructor trainee service. Eventually, a group of agency leaders and the VA met to discuss the need for professional training that would further

develop O&M as service, take the training burden off the VA, create a body of knowledge that could be imparted to each trainee in an organized fashion, and create an overall supply of trained professionals that could meet the needs of agencies and schools for the blind across America.

“A big issue in the 1950s and 1960s was the influx of children who were born blind, or acquired significant vision impairment in their early childhood due to the Rubella epidemic and what was then called retrolental fibroplasia, or RLF. RLF is now called retinopathy of prematurity and is due to fibrous growth on the retina from too much administration during incubation of premature babies. These "congenitally" blind kids had no visual experience and lacked a visual-memory connection to the travel environment. The VA program and agencies for adults had no experience with how to teach independent travel to children, much less congenitally blind kids who were entering upper grades in school and headed for adult rehabilitation services to prepare for personal and economic independence. So, it became clear that a much more advanced curriculum of training at an institution of higher education was needed to adequately and consistently train O&M instructors in the future.

“When Mark Mahnke left DSB, he was replaced by Arlene Itou (1974). She and I taught O&M together for many years until I became a vocational rehabilitation administrator, working as DSB facility specialist and as grant proposal writer in 1984.

“Some of the highlights from my O&M teaching years at DSB were:

- Meeting Buzz Aldrin, a distant relative and second man on the moon, when inviting him at the Pacific Science Center while touring with Russian cosmonauts to an AAWB meeting to talk about his experience with teaching SCUBA diving to blind kids in Sweden.
- Organizing and becoming the first president of the Washington Association of Orientation and Mobility Specialists.
- Consulting with Sensory Engineer Laboratories and a few other independent scientists in developing acoustical beacons and fluxgate magnetometer compasses as mobility tools.
- Developing a unique system of teaching basic touch technique with a long cane utilizing body mechanics identified by Dr. Gideon Ariel, a

biomechanics scientist who was a consultant with the U.S. Olympic track team.

- Establishing a snow-skiing program for blind and low-vision students at Seattle Jaycee Ski School. At the ski school, I trained other instructors in sighted-guide techniques, verbal direction-giving, and the methods I devised to teach skiing to people who were blind and visually impaired. Knowing the vision situation of each of our students, I made up simulators for each of my assistants to wear so they could get an idea of the vision functioning of the students they would be teaching. We paved the way. Our ski program was followed by Ski for All – a skiing program for people with all disabilities. This, in turn, developed into the Outdoors for All Foundation with much broader recreational opportunities available all year and is a tremendous resource for people with disabilities in Washington.

“Well, I guess that covers the early years of O&M in Washington state. It was great to be a pioneer and do so many interesting and innovative things during that period of my career. Most of all, I’ll always feel good that I did stuff that was worthwhile, and that I got to meet and work with a broad spectrum of students and colleagues from throughout the Pacific Northwest. It was great preparation for what followed during the rest of my career at DSB and into retired life.”

ADVOCACY AND LEGISLATION

Chronicles of a Happy Warrior #9 Words Help Focus the Mind

by Mark Adreon
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How do words focus your mind? By opening your mind to the messages or ideas words will bring to you. A closed mind is unable to focus, as it is too consumed with reinforcing the walls to keep new ideas out and old ideas in.

People use words to communicate ideas, thoughts, convictions, inspirations, concerns, directions, feelings or information. Add to the mix several different delivery methods, including written, spoken, signed, TV and radio programs, social media, and artistic presentations.

The word “focus,” put simply, means to verge on a single point, or have a central point of activity or thought.

When an author writes a book, a playwright a play, a lyricist words to a song, a poet a poem, an instructor a lesson, or an enterprise writes a commercial, they all generally know who their audience is or who they want them to be. They choose words and word combinations to capture the attention, focus and, yes, engage feelings, actions, or thoughts for their intended purpose. The purpose can be all over the board, including both positive and negative intentions.

Depending on the method or medium, the impact of words on the mind varies. A 30-second commercial might eventually cause you to purchase the product being advertised. Your unconscious mind may have been the target for focus, and the power of the words measurable with consumer purchase data. The mind was focused enough to act on the delivered message. There is also data that shows this unconscious saturation with 30-second commercials can also shape the nature of a vote.

Speaking of a vote, if you find that you have an affinity for a political system, your mind will focus on information that supports your position. This can be

both conscious and subconscious. The information bubble where you get the words that support and focus your mind, assists you in closing your mind to information that contradicts your mind's commitment.

When your right-wing uncle begins to give you some MAGA ideas about all the socialist agendas and reasons why the country is going the wrong direction, does it focus your mind? Do you accept and agree? Do you reject and defend your position? Is this an expected and repeated conversation?

When a progressive neighbor tells you about raising taxes to help the homeless and concerns with global warming, and people are going to need to stop driving cars to reduce the carbon footprint, does this focus your mind? Are you open to the idea of getting rid of your car and paying more taxes? Do you accept and agree? Do you reject and defend your position? Is this an expected and repeated conversation?

Now, consider those areas where your mind has not committed to a point of view and you are receiving new or unfamiliar ideas.

A friend recommended a book for you that talks about history in 1492 that discusses the development of slavery and economic drivers for world exploration and exploitation. This book introduces you to many new ideas that you have never considered. The book and the words within captured your focus and engaged your mind. Why did this happen? Was it the power of the words or subject? Was it the skill of the author? All these elements can be a yes. However, your open mind to these new thoughts is what created the opportunity for a focused mind.

In addition to delivery methods, people's minds all process differently. The differences are based on culture, knowledge, life experiences, spiritual commitments and a lifetime of human variances. Even if people are reading or hearing the same combination of words, they could still have completely different impressions, ideas or feelings. The process of focusing would look completely different between people. So, does focusing the mind incorporate the concept that it is different from person to person, culture to culture, country to country, race to race, conscious to subconscious?

Communicators, life facilitators, teachers, thought leaders and influencers need to fully consider the means or media they use to deliver their messaging to their intended audience. The medium requirements become much higher if there are some requested actions to be taken to actuate the ideas shared.

Lastly, there are the daily conversations between people. Varied types of relationships might determine the number of encounters that would raise to the level of requiring a focused mind. Often, these conversations are abundant with “trigger” words that have predictable responses. “How are you today?”

Response: “Fine.” Weather, meal planning, gossip or issues with other people, chores, and on and on. You get the idea; these are conversations or transactions that don’t require or demand a focused mind to participate. This only requires passive listening, not thoughtful consideration or evaluations. Remember Pavlov?

Important personal conversations do require the focused mind to participate and bring value to the interaction. An example closer to home and less intentional may be your friend giving you advice after you have shared feelings about being hurt or not understood.

They may try to comfort you with words of empathy or compassion. These words of comfort are intended to focus your mind on better times, solutions to assist, or to just say they care. This is present experience, and how your friend is trying to focus your mind.

I don’t want to minimize the daily exchanges that can, indeed, be important and bring topics or ideas that require a focused mind. If someone says, “Did you know that hate can cause people to be misjudged and, therefore, excluded from participating with our group,” these ideas have expanded beyond the normal automatic response. The ideas might now capture your focus and engage your mind as you explore the ideas or consider the observation. Positively, the focused mind can now engage in discussions of discrimination, stereotyping, conscious/subconscious bias or cultural-change opportunities.

In closing, words, phrases, text, books, memos, letters, menus, highway signs, advertising, wills, instructions, user manuals, white papers, fortune cookies, intimate conversations, arguments, packaging, explanations, descriptions, and virtually anything or nothing can focus your mind.

So, how do words focus your mind? By opening your mind to the messages or ideas words will bring to you. A closed mind is unable to focus as it is too consumed with reinforcing the walls to keep new ideas out and old ideas in.

Look for the gifts that words bring, open them with a curious mind, and enjoy them as you discover their magic.

Limitless
A Poem by Christmas Frahm
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Carrot me a cog,
To bog my dreams with,
And drag them by the noose.
I'm letting loose, I'm letting loose!

Anesthetize me with the punishments of pain,
And toil that coil around the everyday.
Get out of my way, get out of my way!

We were all told, when five,
Dream your dreams, make them big and strong and new.
Build a new reality, make it come true,
For the inner you.

But then came the deconstructionists,
They came with word and deed, to bleed it all dry,
With government and ordinances and concepts made by men,
To put us in our places,
Concealing even from ourselves our own true faces,
Showing a sense of illusion for the dreams of delusion.

Run deep in sleep,
Don't soporifically snore.
instead exuberantly explore.

Dare to dream, and build a reality,
Where possibility is really anything you can imagine,
And being limitless,
Boundless,
Endless,
And full of ALL.

Where, is There?
A Poem by Mark Adreon
arosindigo@me.com

Are you leaving from here?
Okay, go to there.
Is this, by there?
Bliss, lives here.

I can meet you, there,
Assuming you care.

It, has been a long road,
This journey, is old.
I'm, tired if it be told,
Why does pushing back seem bold?

Are you standing, over there?
Do you wish you were standing, here?
Are you still looking, for there?
I want to move, from here.

The headline, above the fold,
Tells a story of old.
People will often, scold
But, still do what they are told.

Do you know, where I am?
Do you, give a damn?

I'll look for, you here,
I do hold you dear.
Life meant this to be,
My canine friend and me.

THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

Youth Speak #4 How Literature Helps Define Us by Lucash Uniack

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Literature. It can take us to another world, and spark our imaginations. It's one of the most versatile mediums of expression available. It is something I am very passionate about. However, when I was younger, I had a very hard time accessing this amazing method of storytelling.

As a kindergartener, I struggled greatly with reading. Because I was born with a vision disability called nystagmus, trying to see and understand the words on the pages of books was incredibly difficult and frustrating for me. I didn't understand why my friends were able to read so much better than me. This resulted in me being distracted and not trying during reading time. I didn't like reading time at all and definitely did not look forward to it each day at school.

That all changed when in first grade, the vision specialist at my school district noticed I was having a lot more difficulty reading the words on the pages than my parents and teachers had realized. She referred me to one of the most impactful institutions that I have ever been associated with in my life, the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library (WTBBL). That connection was like flipping a switch, as I suddenly had access to far more interesting and complex books presented in accessible formats. With large-print and audio books, I was able to comprehend and immerse myself within literature in a way I had never been able to before, and that experience has carried me through my many years of education and has, in part, contributed to who I am today.

A major aspect of literature, and WTBBL's influence in my life, is that as soon as I found the library, I quickly became a voracious reader. I read many, many books from first grade on, most all of them in audio format. What is really interesting for me is that all of those audio-book experiences

exposed me to many fascinating people and subjects, and helped me to develop a vocabulary that was well beyond my years.

It became clear to adults around me that I was smart and knew a lot more words than most kids my age. With that came mentorship and opportunities. My large vocabulary gave me confidence to try new things, such as serve as a den chief in my Boy Scout troop, lead a global reading challenge team that made it to the Seattle semifinals, audition for plays, and eventually serve as the founding president of the Teen Advisory Board at WTBBL.

A book series that was very profound for me, and are some of my favorite books I've ever read, are the Harry Potter books. Because I was able to read these books in audio format, I gained a deep sense of immersion and wonder I had never experienced in any other books. That sense of wonder has never left me. I would try and get my homework done as fast as possible so I could return to that world that I love so much. The Harry Potter books, and many others, sparked my passion for reading. Those books, the sense of joy, and incredible worlds they took me to, drove me to read the incredible amount of books I've read over the years, and brought many positives to my life overall. It was life changing when you think about it. This, in large part, has formed me into the person I am today.

I am thankful for the opportunity that WTBBL has given me, not only granting me access to books, but the ability to define myself not by my weaknesses but by my strengths. Every person has strengths and weaknesses. It's an integral part of the human experience to work to define ourselves not by our weaknesses, but by our strengths. Because I was able to move past my weaknesses, I was able to capitalize on my strengths and become a stronger, more confident, more well-rounded person. I want everyone who is reading this to know that we all have incredible strengths and gifts for the world to see. Try hard to surround yourself with people who are willing to support you. If you work to define yourself by your strengths, you will be more successful because your identity will be built on what you are good at. Contact me about how someone around you helped you to use your strengths to define yourself, and how that helped in your story. I look forward to hearing from you.

Families Committee Announcement by Hayley Agers

WCB Families is happy to announce that we will once again be partnering with Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) to hold our youth track at the October convention. This year's theme is "The Science of Sound" and will focus on learning more about how those who are blind and interested in this field can follow their dreams.

The majority of the program will be open only to youth and their families. However, on Saturday night we will be sponsoring a session that all are welcome to enjoy. Here is what to expect.

On Friday evening, a youth-driven social will take place for everyone to connect and have some fun.

On Saturday, WCB Families will be holding a parent lunch to walk side by side with parents of blind children, as they talk about ways to get children more involved in activities of daily living around the house.

Then, Saturday afternoon, the youth and DSB will be working on creating a soundbox and talking about ways it can be used. To top it all off, on Saturday after the business meeting and before the banquet, WCB Families will be hosting a session to go into this topic in depth. We will be talking to a panel of people who already work in the field of sound in such areas as radio broadcasting, music production, voice-over announcing, what it takes to be a successful YouTuber and more. Please join us, and look for more information and details to come.

The Garlic Candle – A Ghost Story by Tristen Breitenfeldt tristenbreitenfeldt@gmail.com

Once upon a time, in a town called Hershey, PA, there was a large chocolate factory where lots of spooky things happened. Workers at the factory complained about strange noises in and around the machinery,

missing equipment, and strange-flavored candy bars. One day, the owner of the factory called the professional ghostbusters to come remove the troublesome spirits who were haunting the old factory. Since the paranormal business was slow, and they liked chocolate, the ghostbusters agreed to go to the chocolate factory to come and remove the ghosts.

When they arrived at the factory in their ghostbuster truck, they started sorting and assembling their tools for the job. Ted selected a wide variety of things to put in his pack and went into the factory for a look around.

Inside the lobby of the factory, Ted pulled a paranometer from his tool bag and began waving it around the room, receiving only a few minor ticks from the gadget. He slowly walked through each room of the building, noticing that each room he scanned with the paranometer registered more and more activity on the machine. Knowing that he must be getting closer to the source of the signal, he went into the Dark Chocolate room, waving the instrument into each corner and across every piece of machinery. But, he did not find the source of the ghostly echoes.

Then, in the White Chocolate room, the paranometer began beeping and clicking loud and fast. Putting the instrument back in his bag, he took a good look around the large room but did not see any ghosts. So, Ted sat down on the floor to watch and listen. Surely the ghosts would make themselves known somehow. He waited and waited for several minutes, but soon Ted fell asleep. Suddenly, there was a loud crash, which jolted Ted awake. In fact, he was so startled that he scooped up his bag of equipment and ran out of the building.

After getting the details from Ted, the other ghostbuster, Frank, gathered his bag of tools and went to the White Chocolate room. When he got into the room, he pulled a garlic-scented candle from his bag and searched for a match to light it. But, he had forgotten to pack matches. So, Frank set the fragrant candle on the floor near the middle of the room and searched through his bag, coming out with a hair dryer. He pointed the hair dryer at the garlic candle and turned it on, but nothing happened because, fortunately, you can't light a candle with a hair dryer.

Putting the hair dryer back in the bag, Frank then pulled out a bullhorn, which he pointed toward the candle and then shouted, “Hey, ghosts! Come out, come out, from wherever you are!” But, nothing happened. Then, Frank started to feel hungry, because the garlic candle smelled so good, making him think about spaghetti and garlic bread. So, he pulled a sandwich out of his tool bag and sat on the floor to eat his lunch.

After a long lunch break, followed by a short nap on the hard, concrete floor, Frank decided that he should get back to the job of removing the ghost from the factory. He stood up and brushed the sandwich crumbs off his clothes, then looked in his bag again, pulling out a flashlight. He turned it on and shined it on the garlic-scented candle, but nothing happened – because you can’t light a candle with a flashlight. Feeling frustrated that he could not light the candle, Frank was just about to pack up and leave, when he had an idea.

He reached into his bag again and pulled out a mirror, which he set against the wall facing the candle. He then stood back where the candle was, between him and the mirror, and he could see the mirror without being reflected in it. He shined the flashlight at the mirror. Nothing happened. So, turning off the flashlight to preserve the batteries, he pulled a white bedsheet out of his bag and hung it on the wall opposite the mirror.

This time, when Frank stood back and shined the light at the mirror, he watched as two shadows became clear against the hanging sheet. He could see the candle, but he could also see the shadow of a ghost hovering around it. It was obvious that the ghost was drawn to the strong smell of the garlic candle and was studiously examining the yummy-smelling object.

Feeling a sense of triumph at finally finding the ghost, Frank pulled one last thing from his bag: a miner’s headlamp, which he fastened to his head and shined directly at the ghost hovering above the candle. The ghost suddenly disappeared and never came back because ghosts can only be scary when we can’t see them. Simply shine a light on a spooky ghost and it will be gone forever. So, triumphant in his task, Frank packed up his tools and left the building to tell everybody that the factory was no longer haunted.

The End

BRAIN FOOD

Noteworthy Blogs Blindness and Literature

by Beth Greenberg
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In school I never did well with English class, and only read what I had to. My sister on the other hand, reads all the time and has even written poems. However, I did have an English teacher who told me my description of my favorite place was so well done he could picture it. I feel growing up with blind parents helped me be able to describe things.

So of course you have people who are bloggers. I feel that their blogs are literature, or often their own biographies. They are writing about events in their lives or their interests. You can find bloggers from all over the world these days.

While considering what I wanted to do for this issue, I decided to look up Blind literature on Google.

www.wsblind.org has a list of eight books, both fiction and nonfiction. The first book they listed is “The Light We Cannot See” By Anthony Doerr. It is a novel about a blind French girl and a German boy who met in France during World War II. You can read it on Kindle, Audible, BARD, or print.

The second book is an autobiography about Hellen Keller “The Story of My Life.” Most of us know about Helen Keller, being blind and deaf and learning to navigate her world with Braille and Sign Language. Her book is also available from the same sources.

The third book is also an autobiography for Molly Burke, “It’s Not What it Looks Like.” Molly is blind and a YouTube star and a global influencer covering fashion and makeup. She also does public speaking. I found her book on Audible.

The fourth book on the list is “The Lion’s Share: A History of Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind” by Roy Kumpe. The book is a history of World Services for the Blind that Roy had started in 1947. I see you can get a hard print copy at Amazon.

Number five is a memoir by Nancy Kear, “Now I See You.” It is about her journey through losing her sight at the age of 19 from retinitis pigmentosa, then having children with the same condition. It is available through BARD and the other usual sources.

Book 6 is “Thunder Dog: The True Story of a Blind Man, His Guide Dog, and the Triumph of Trust” by Michael Hingson. This is sort of a Biography of Michael and his blindness journey, but with a twist of having to escape the Twin Towers on 9/11/2001 with his guide dog. It is available on Kindle, BARD, Audible, or print with Amazon.

The seventh book is “The Unseen Trail: a Story of a Blind Hiker’s Journey on the Appalachian Trail” By Michael Hanson. Mike Hanson used GPS to help him navigate on the trail by himself. This book is available through BARD, and in a print Paperback edition.

The last book, “Touch the Top of the World” by Erik Weißenmayer is a look at his journey to climb Mount Everest. It is available on Kindle, Audible, BARD, or print with Amazon.

There is a website “Vision Australia” that had an article in October of 2018 “Five famous writers you might not know were blind or had low vision.” (I admit I never heard of these people, but heard some of their works.)

Number 5 is Sue Townsend, who wrote the Adrian Mole series from 1982 through 2009. Sue lost her sight due to diabetes, and even incorporated that experience toward the end of the series with one of Adrian’s friends losing sight due to diabetes. At the end she was using a voice recorder and voice to text to write.

Number 4 is Oliver Sacks. He is a British author well known for “The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat,” “Mind’s Eye,” and the Academy Award nominated “Awakenings.” Oliver Sacks lost his vision due to a tumor.

Number 3 is James Thurber, who lost his sight when he and his brother were reenacting William Tell and his brother shot him with an arrow. Thurber wrote short stories like “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty” and “The Admiral at the Wheel.”

Number 2 is Alice Walker who wrote “The Color Purple.” Alice Walker lost her sight in one eye due to a shot from a BB gun.

Number 1 is Jorge Luis Borges. Jorge was a poet and short story writer. He lost his sight due to hereditary myopia on his dad’s side. Here is an excerpt of a poem he wrote about his blindness:

“At the far end of my years I am surrounded
by a persistent, luminous, fine mist
which reduces all things to a single thing
with neither form nor color.”

The link below has a list of 49 books by blind authors:

<https://www.listchallenges.com/how-many-of-these-books-by-blind-authors-have>

Some of them are authors that I have previously mentioned. There are pictures of the books on 2 pages. At the top of the picture of the book there is a number in the upper left corner, then a lower case i icon, then a pin icon, then a heart, then an empty box. When you click on the i icon, it lets you choose the option to read/buy from Amazon or search for it on Google. I definitely found out some things I did not know. It is well worth the time.

Note from the editors:

This may be a great site, but it is virtually inaccessible to screen reader users. We kept it in the article as an example of the disappointment one can feel when encountering a well-meaning but non-functional page. I sent the following note to the web master through their contact form:

“I find it quite ironic, that a page on your site that lists books written by blind authors would be virtually inaccessible to blind screen reader users.

Tabbing to book titles or expanding descriptions and information by pressing enter appears to be impossible from the keyboard. I was informed that visually there are lots of small control icons and graphics such as a lower case i that are simply skipped over by the adaptive software.”

At this writing there has been no response from the List Challenge web site.

Podtastic Casts
by Reginald George
reggeorge@gmail.com

I have so much to share today. I threw all my favorite podcasts that have to do with words and language and writing and technology into a 10-gallon sorting hat, stirred them up well, added a dash of insanity and a pinch of magic, placed it on my head, and came up with four great ones that I can't wait to tell you about. So what do they have in common, you might ask? Not a lot, except that they all fall under the realm of communication.

Let's start with one called "Echo Tips." The host's name is David Ward, and although he doesn't come out and say it, he is definitely visually impaired. He is an assistive technology specialist, and runs the New Vision program at Goodwill Industries of the Valleys in Virginia.

There are more than 160 of these short, 5- to 15-minute gems. He starts from the basics like, "What is Alexa?" but soon graduates to topics like how to create routines and modify your flash briefing of news stories, cooking with your Echo, looking up shows on television by genre, playing games, smart-home devices you can talk to, using Zoom video conferencing with your Echo Show, making announcements, turbo-charging reminders, accessing email, and so much more.

In Episode 154, for example, I learned very quickly how I could verbally change to a male voice, and change the wake word to Ziggy, just by asking. If you ever asked yourself, "How can I get the most from my Amazon smart devices?" this is the man who will show you.

Next, a podcast that has become near and dear to many writers and lovers of literature. It's called "The Allusionist: Adventures in Language with Hellen Zaltzman." The show posts bi-weekly and can be found at: <https://www.theallusionist.org>

This one is a little difficult to describe. It's quite varied and playful. As they say, "It's about how our world shapes language, and how language shapes our world." There are transcripts available, which is always nice. Hellen is from England, and she is a dynamic, articulate interviewer and host with a quirky sense of humor who only enhances the material presented. Wherever possible, graphic audio and drama is used to make her points.

Episode 141 is an interactive food quiz, and there is a score sheet. Here are some extended excerpts from the website about recent episodes.

"Quiz Time!" Samin Nosrat and Hrishikesh Hirway, of "Home Cooking" podcast, join to deliver questions about food etymology as well as "what are the two words that make a dance track?" and whether 'za' is an acceptable abbreviation for 'pizza'.

Other recent episodes concerned all the names for ladybugs, a reading of a 1952 salad cookbook, with recipes from celebrities to put you to sleep, and Hellen calling herself the Tranquillusionist. This one actually kept me wide awake and smiling.

Here is her description of another recent episode. "The Scots language didn't have much of an LGBTQ+ lexicon. So writer and performer Dr. Harry Josephine Giles decided to create one."

And one about S.O.S. "SOS is a really versatile distress call. You can shout it; you can tap it out in Morse code; you can honk it on a horn; you can signal it with flashes of light; you can spell it out on the beach with debris from your wrecked ship."

The more I read, the more intrigued I become and the more I want to listen.

Moving on to my last discoveries for this issue, the "Coffee Break" language podcasts from the Radio Lingua Network are a quick and fun way to

practice your conversational skills. These have been around for many years. They present vignettes of travel and exploration with music, and dining in the covered country, that give them a particularly authentic feel. As of now, I believe there are at least five languages available, including French, German, English, Swedish and Spanish. Today at random, I tried the second episode of the German travel diaries series, called “Romantische Gassen mit Pflasterstein.” The story follows an older couple taking a river cruise. Some of the other stories have shorter episodes and actually use actors to read the dialog. I enjoyed that more. The one I chose today was pretty dry because it is from a diary with one person doing the readings, but this, in no way, lessens its value. The website is <https://coffeebreaklanguages.com/>

Honorable mention today goes out to the outstanding “Grammar Girl, Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing.” Her real name is Mignon Fogarty. You can find her fantastic web site here: <https://www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl>

She’s pithy, she’s smart, and she sprinkles her essays on the history of words liberally with phoned-in listener stories. Investing 20 minutes a day will keep you inspired and improving as a writer.

The easiest way to find all of these shows is simply by searching, or asking your phone or smart speaker. Happy listening.

The Phoenix Convention, the One that Melted Away

by Frank Cuta

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Remember American Council of the Blind (ACB) national conventions where our end of the hall erupted with loud approval every time WCB was mentioned on the floor? Remember scrambling to find your way through the convoluted hotel halls in time to make it to the active session of an important vote? Remember having difficulty finding your way back to your room after that night at the bourbon bar? Well, none of these happened at the Phoenix convention, because no one came! Instead, we all got together online.

Now I originally thought, “Ho hum, a virtual convention. I can just continue my regular daily schedule and listen to the proceedings out of one ear.”

How soon we forget. After the first day of attempting to take in between 30 and 40 hours of original content on seven or eight simultaneous internet channels, I was totally sucked in. I finally just cancelled all other appointments and activities for the week and just let go. Here is some of what I took away from the 2021 ACB Convention.

I was happy to see two presentations on smart-home technology and no less than three on winemaking and tasting. From the wine expert, I picked up some good tips on proper techniques for decanting and tasting.

Now added to the growing list of smart-home devices are smart air purifiers, smart speed-adjustable ceiling fans, smart window blinds, a smart lawnmower, smart lawn-watering systems, a mail-delivery-alert sensor and a window washer. Some power companies are offering pilot programs to assist people with disabilities to cover the cost of their smart-home conversion.

There was a great, realistic audio presentation on 3D binaural live recording, which included a recording of a ride experience in an autonomous car.

It seemed to me that this year, rather than using the conventional shotgun approach, the program concentrated on giving more time to in-depth coverage of a limited range of important issues.

There were multiple strong technical presentations on issues such as pedestrian street crossing, audio description, and diabetic and other health and fitness accessibility concerns.

One presenter on pedestrian crossing described a process of cane flagging and taking an initial reversible step that she claims significantly improves statistics on drivers yielding right of way.

The young guys demonstrating accessible Xbox video games like mortal combat put on a good show, but they only convinced me that I have not

been missing all that much. Looks to me mostly like a bunch of frantic button hammering and finger crossing.

The presenters discussing family-history resources compared some of the major genealogical apps and online services. They have found the apps from Ancestry DNA and Heritage to be most accessible.

I enjoyed the presentation on making more effective use of your library. They had a lot of good suggestions for finding reference materials and tactile maps. I had not previously heard of one called "touch the news," and it sounds quite interesting. It is a way of receiving tactile materials relevant to currently happening news.

Speaking of news, I learned that there are still 18 radio reading services on the air. Almost all of them are now available on services like ooTunes. I now have them set up as favorites on my Victor Stream.

I was disappointed to miss a lot of the presentation on Clubhouse and TikTok but, like many others, I will catch it later as a podcast on the ACB convention channel. From what I gathered, it seems that TikTok is not completely inaccessible. Although it is primarily a visual tool, it learns what you like and do not like. If you just like and follow the postings that feature audio and singing, it can be quite accessible.

In a presentation on fundraising, one person speculated that based on a year of virtual auctions, they are in general more successful than the ones that we held face to face. I guess it's possible.

I listened to a presentation on leadership development that featured Julie Brannon as a panelist. Her list of concrete, insightful and practical pointers really brought this panel down to earth.

Each week, the convention podcast list grows longer. By the time you receive this, I expect that most of the 2021 convention will be available online.

AGENCY UPDATES

Washington Talking Book & Braille Library Update **by Danielle Miller, WTBBL Director and Regional Librarian** danielle.miller@sos.wa.gov

A friend recently gave me a copy of a hardback book to read, but over the past several years, I've been reading almost exclusively eBooks on my eBook reader as I find it much easier with a bright screen and larger font. So I checked out a copy from the public library. The problem is, that copy will expire after three weeks so I have limited time to read the book. Luckily, it is also available on BARD. Having options is what we want for you with your Washington Talking Book & Braille Library service. The ability to read how you want, when you want is of the utmost importance. With our duplication-on-demand service, we customize digital cartridges with books based on your preferences, your favorite authors, series, or your specific requests you provide to us. You can choose to receive those books in the mail, you can choose to download books yourself and use BARD or BARD mobile, or you can do both. We want to make WTBBL work for you.

We are so excited here at WTBBL because we will soon be loaning our Braille readers refreshable Braille displays so they will also have the option of downloading Braille books or having us send out customized cartridges of Braille books to load on the eReaders. This brings a level of equity to the service by loaning devices to both our audio and Braille readers and, hopefully, making Braille more accessible to more patrons. The Braille eReaders are part of a pilot program with NLS. If you are a Braille user and did not receive a letter from us, please contact WTBBL at 800-542-0866 and reference the Braille eReader pilot to request to participate.

Throughout the pandemic, our Braille Department has been able to keep up production of new books for the collection with the help of our volunteer transcribers and proofreaders and their ability to work remotely. Our Braille transcribers continued to produce books by editing files emailed to them or manual transcription, and our remote proofreading teams did proofreading via Zoom and refreshable Braille displays. We were recently able to start bringing back narrators in our Audiobook Production Department and finish

books that had been near completion prior to March 2020 and begin work on new titles. Both local production departments are back in full swing and we are very pleased to be able to be adding books to BARD on a regular basis and getting new great material into the collection for you to enjoy.

As we move into fall, I hope either through duplication on demand, through BARD, or on a new refreshable Braille display, you are getting wonderful things to read from WTBBL. If you missed our 90th anniversary celebration presentations, you can still access them on our website at www.wtbbl.org. There is a fantastic history of WTBBL and NLS, a reading and discussion with Rena Priest, the Washington State Poet Laureate, and a history of audio from local broadcaster Ross Reynolds. I'm sure you'll enjoy the presentations and, as always, if there is more we can do to improve your library service, please reach out and let me know. I love to hear from you.

Washington State School for the Blind
by Scott McCallum

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WSSB concluded the 2020-2021 school year with a wonderful, outdoor, socially-distant graduation ceremony to celebrate our nine graduating seniors. Our park-like campus provided the perfect backdrop for this celebratory event. Everything about last school year was atypical and an out-of-the-box-style graduation ceremony seemed to be a fitting tribute. Graduation was a charming ceremony that included proud students, family members and staff. Students sang, gave speeches, completed the traditional bell-ringing for the number of years they attended WSSB (albeit in a slightly modified way), and listened to a heart-warming and inspiring commencement speech from our retiring science teacher, Mr. Paul Baldwin.

The 2021-2022 school year is upon us, and nothing brings excitement and anxious anticipation of what is to come to the WSSB campus like our students. Overall enrollment is similar to years past, holding to about 70 students.

We welcomed new students and their families to campus a little earlier than returning students and families. New students and their families had the

opportunity to take their time moving in, connect with WSSB staff, and engage with veteran WSSB parents and other new parents alike.

One of the parents followed up the opportunity with an appreciative email to the school principal, Sean McCormick.

In their email they noted, “Meeting staff members today, wandering around the campus ... my heart is full! What an honor to be a part of this WSSB family. Thank you all for embracing, encouraging, teaching, supporting and correcting [our child]. He is so thrilled to be back in your midst.”

Hopefully, every parent had a similar experience.

Monday, Aug. 30, was the first official day of school for students. Students checked out their technology, established and agreed on classroom rules and norms, and started to engage with their coursework. Students taking science this year hit the ground running with lab work on day one. We know that the pandemic will force us to do some things differently. However, we are leaning into the challenge before us and have every reason to be confident in our ability to adapt and change. After all, the most consistent aspect of last year was the fact that everything was in a constant state of change.

A number of campus projects continue to evolve. The most significant changes on the WSSB campus are centered around designing and constructing a new facility to house our transition program, known as the Learning Independence for Today and Tomorrow (LIFTT) Program. LIFTT is a collaborative effort between WSSB and the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB), two natural and strong partners for this type of work. Since its inception, the LIFTT program has been housed on the third floor of our old main building in rooms repurposed as dorm rooms, as well as an instructional kitchen, and space to hang out with friends and study. A new building has been designed as the new home for the LIFTT program, and as a new space for the local office of DSB. The new building is being designed with maximum accessibility, instructional opportunity and support in mind from the very beginning, utilizing principles of universal design. We hope that the building will serve as a model for what is possible in accessible

design and provide the optimal learning and support space for LIFTT participants and DSB clients.

The new building will be built in place of the old Ahlsten building on the southwest corner of the WSSB campus. The Ahlsten building will be razed this fall. We expect that next year's crop of LIFTT students will experience a forced lesson on moving to the new space sometime next year, likely late fall of 2022.

It is going to be an exceptional year at WSSB. We are excited by the many opportunities and are up for the challenges that exist between us and our newly revised mission and vision. Our mission is to empower blind and low-vision individuals to reach their full potential. Our vision is that every blind and low-vision student in Washington has the supports and services they need to succeed. We look forward to working with the Washington Council of the Blind and other stakeholders to make our vision the reality for all.

WCB HAPPENINGS

The Journey
A Poem by Yvonne Miller
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Finding my way as I journey through life,
A new sense of well-being.
Somewhat in the dark, I strive.
Knowing others are doing the same.
Working to build a strong community,
Independence is its aim.
Once again, I find myself in the light.
An opportunity to shine,
With the Washington Council of the Blind.
Achieving equality is in my sight.
In a sighted world I will find
My place and time.
With skills and talents to lend,
A connection that is yours and mine.
We find ourselves as friends,
On a road that may wind,
Working to achieve and triumph in the end.
May we all find
Independence, equality, and opportunity.

Washington Council of the Blind Hosts Second Virtual Convention **by Beth Greenberg with Lisa George**

The mechanics of this year's virtual convention will be old hat for those who attended the 2020 gathering, but the theme resonates with us all:
"WCB, Near or Far Together We Are."

Make your plans now to join us for informative sessions, virtual fun, camaraderie, and connections Oct. 28 through 30. There will be many

familiar things consistent with years past, and some that are new for 2021. We took your feedback from our first virtual convention to heart, and are excited to share our improvements with you.

On the schedule is our pre-convention WCB board meeting Thursday evening, general sessions on Friday, and Saturday's culmination of agency updates in the morning, the WCB business meeting in the afternoon, and the banquet in the evening.

Registration for the full virtual convention is only \$25. For your convenience, you can pay next year's dues (including your local chapter dues) and/or sponsor the convention if you are so inclined. Convention registration is available through Oct. 17, either online at <https://wcbinfo.org/register2021/>, or by calling 800-255-1147 to register by phone. Alternatively, you may choose to register for the business meeting only, the live auction only, or both of those events for no cost. Every WCB member in good standing as of the Sept. 30 record date is eligible to vote in the elections in 2021.

Those who register for the full virtual convention 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. 28, through Saturday, Oct. 30
- Be eligible for door prizes

All sessions will take place using the Zoom platform, which is accessible through computer, smartphone, and landline phone. With the exception of hospitality each night and a good portion of the Youth Track, all events of our convention will be streamed on ACB Media. Ask your Alexa device to "open ACB Media" or stream it at <https://www.acbmedia.org/home/streams/>. Vendors will be featured at various times throughout Friday and Saturday sessions, and their information will also be in the convention program and available on our website.

The WCB Youth Track will take place concurrently with the WCB convention, as a joint effort between the WCB Families Committee and Department of Services for the Blind's Youth Services. Youth Track attendees are blind and visually impaired students and parents, who will

have targeted sessions, as well as sharing their presentation, “The Science of Sound,” with all convention attendees on Saturday.

2021 Convention Schedule Highlights

Thursday, Oct. 28

Evening only:

- First-timers reception
- Welcome lounge
- Pre-convention WCB board meeting
- Hospitality

Friday, Oct. 29

Full day of sessions including:

- Careers and education after COVID
- Meal-prep services
- Fundraising in Washington
- Fitness
- Clubhouse, and so much more

Evening:

- Youth Track, “The Science of Sound”
- Live auction fundraiser
- Hospitality

Saturday, Oct. 30

● Morning session:

ACB national report, state agency reports, the always popular employment panel, presentations from American Printing House and WCB Aging and Blindness Committee.

● Afternoon session:

Annual WCB business meeting, including electing the president, first vice president, treasurer, and three board director positions; approving the 2022 budget; adopting resolutions and amendments to our constitution and bylaws; and any other business that comes before our membership.

● Evening:

Youth Track Presentation, “The Science of Sound”; our annual banquet, where awards will be presented and scholarships awarded; the banquet address will be given by our own Deb Cook Lewis, ACB first vice

president, plus many other surprises; post-banquet: end the evening with a hospitality celebration with karaoke.

This year, the annual business meeting will take place in a separate room from the general session. This allows us to restrict the participants to certified WCB voting members to ensure that our quorum has been met and that all votes taken are valid.

We heard your feedback from last year, and will increase the number of voting rooms, as necessary, to help the process move quickly.

As a review, each verified voting member will receive a unique link that must be used to cast a vote and should not be shared with anyone else. Those handling the voting will not be involved in any way with WCB.

Our voting stations will be regular Zoom rooms. You can access them by using your computer, smartphone, one tap mobile, or a good, old-fashioned telephone. If you are unable to utilize any of these methods to vote, please contact Lisa George as soon as possible, via email at lmwgeorge10@gmail.com, or by phone at 509-540-3073.

**Constitution and Bylaws Committee Report
and Summary of Proposed Amendments
by Frank Cuta
frank@cuta.net**

Each year, my committee puts in about 300 person hours assisting affiliates with their constitutional changes and updating and improving the language in our WCB Constitution and Bylaws.

Each September, we publish our proposed amendments to the WCB constitution and bylaws on the wcb-l email list. A few weeks later, after the pre-convention board meeting, we meet and send them out of committee with either a do pass, a do not pass, or with no recommendation. Then first thing in the morning on convention Friday, they are read aloud to the

assembly. At our annual business meeting on Saturday afternoon, they are brought to the floor and either voted up or down.

It has long been the feeling of our committee that the busy convention floor does not provide adequate time for us to hear from all the members who wish to seriously comment on and discuss these proposed changes with us. This year, with the help of Zoom conferencing, we are taking some extra time to make sure that such a discussion takes place. So, in late September, our final draft language will be published on the wcb-I email list. On Oct. 3 at 3 p.m., we are asking you to join us on Zoom for a conversation on this year's constitutional amendments. The meeting will be recorded and made available to those who are unable to attend the live event.

Here is a quick summary of the constitutional amendments that we are proposing for 2021.

2021-1

We recognize that our out-of-state membership is growing and feel the need to specify in this change that all officers be Washington residents at the time of their election or live in a contiguous county.

2021-2

Currently, new affiliates are accepted at the annual business meeting. However, this does not allow adequate time to discuss the strength of the application and efficacy of the new group. We believe that the board is better suited to make a carefully deliberated decision, and this change gives them this authority.

2021-3

At their request, this amendment changes the name of the Aging and Blindness Committee to the Senior Vision Loss Committee.

2021-4

WCB committees are currently appointed by the president in the December-January time frame. However, the Government Affairs Committee needs to already be active and functional by January. This

change directs the administration to appoint this specific committee immediately following adjournment of the convention.

2021-5

National: When every year our national convention was face to face, it made sense to restrict first-timer applicants to those who had never previously attended a convention. This amendment makes it clear that this restriction only applies to previous in-person events, not virtual attendance.

2021-6

State: When every year our state convention was face to face it made sense to restrict first timer applicants to those who had never previously attended a convention. This amendment makes it clear that this restriction only applies to previous in person events, not virtual attendance.

2019-2

In 2019 and 2020, an amendment regarding disciplining affiliates who fail to meet important administrative requirements was referred back to committee for refinement. This year, the time frame and other associated details of this discipline have been clarified, including what happens to the members of a chapter that is out of compliance. We are bringing this refined amendment to the floor again.

Many thanks to a hardworking committee, including Lisa George, Sheri Richardson, Rhonda Nelson, Stuart Russell, Jessamyn Landby and Nell Jack.

WCB August 2021 Board Report by Alco Canfield

The WCB board meeting was called to order by President Julie Brannon on Aug. 7.

Julie commended Deb Cook Lewis, Denise Colley and Jeff Bishop, who assisted at the ACB virtual convention. She also acknowledged Cindy Hollis for her service in this regard.

Julie, Denise and Frank formed a speakers' bureau to make presentations to interested state affiliates concerning all aspects of the ACB virtual convention. The voting process for the ACB virtual convention went very well. Julie thanked Andy Arvidson, Sheri Richardson and Denise Colley for their efforts.

Upcoming Events

The WCB conference and convention will be held virtually Oct. 28-30. Open officer positions are president, first vice president and treasurer. There are also three open board positions. Julie encouraged anyone interested in any of these positions to contact the nominating committee. Members of the nominating committee are Chairwoman Sheri Richardson, Denise Colley and Alco Canfield.

First Timers

We voted to pay first-time attendees' registrations for this year's virtual convention with the understanding that those chosen can apply to be selected as First Timers for the 2022 in-person convention.

Membership

Membership is working hard to develop the Members At Large (MAL) group. At this writing, MAL has met three times, and there are 12 individuals who are extremely motivated. Next steps will be taken to make Members At Large a new WCB affiliate.

The Clark County Council of the Blind requested and was granted affiliation with WCB after a motion was made by Alco Canfield and seconded by Nathan Brannon. The motion was approved unanimously, and Clark County was officially added as our newest affiliate.

Julie will appoint someone to visit the chapter via Zoom and in person when that can happen, utilizing funds designated for that purpose.

Bylaws

Frank Cuta urged everyone to attend the Proposed Amendments call on Oct. 3 at 3 p.m. The committee will be sending out seven bylaw changes and would like to answer questions and receive input from members at that

time. Frank will be sending out a link to access a recording of the call. Please see his article summarizing the proposed amendments.

It was decided that we will be using the same voting process created in 2020.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

All Ears Book Club
by Kim L. Moberg
mobergproductions@me.com

I want to introduce you to a Zoom-based conference call for WCB members that has been available statewide all year. It is a book club that existed at the local chapter level for many years and was founded by Meka White. She later turned it over to Gary Beck. I have also been involved for a long time, but when we went virtual, I became even more involved. I really want to see this become an event in which WCB members take an active part.

One thing I know about blind people in general is we all love to read books from our Washington Talking Book & Braille Library, or the national Braille and Audio Reading Download service, known as (BARD).

The other thing I know is that Gary loves to talk about good books. He loves finding books that he thinks individuals would like to read. When I cannot find anything good to read, I just ask Gary for a suggestion.

Here is how things work. At the beginning of each year, Gary creates a book list for the year, with us reading a specific book each month. Then, we meet and have a group discussion about the book. Then, Gary asks if anyone has other books or authors that they would like to share. I love hearing what others are reading. I have added new authors to my list of favorites over the years.

Each month, I post to the WCB list information on the book we are reading and discussing at the next meeting. I also include at the end of the email how you can join the call.

Now that you know about the All Ears Book Club, I hope you will join us on the third Monday of each month at 1:30 p.m. Mark your calendar and reach out to your chapter president or watch for my email on the WCB list.

In addition to the December book, we are also going to read a special book. You see, Dec. 7, 2021, will be the 80th anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. So, we will be reading and discussing a novel called "To Wake the Giant," by Jeff Shaara.

The more people we have, the more fun it is. So come join us. You do not have to have read the books in order to join in on the calls. We love to have you join us no matter what. Happy reading.

Aging and Blindness Committee
Old Dogs Can Learn New Tricks
by Carl Jarvis

Here's a question for you: Why does the Washington Council of the Blind (WCB) have so many committees? The answer is an easy one. WCB is overflowing with members full of knowledge and skills in the field of blind independence. And, they are ready and willing to share from their wealth of firsthand experience.

Looking back over our formal schooling, I doubt any of us received lessons in what to do if we lost significant vision, or became totally blind.

Because blindness is rare among children, the subject is passed over with little or no discussion. I know that in all my school years, I never met another student with glasses as thick as mine. In fact, until I was 17, I never saw a blind person.

Most of us are either fully sighted or have enough sight to function as a sighted person, and vision loss does not occur until late in life.

So now, here we are, late in life. And we're losing our vision. Finally, after we've tried everything – stronger glasses, brighter lights, and handheld magnifiers – we become isolated and resigned to the idea that we have reached the end of the line. And soon, all of the misinformation that we never knew we had accumulated comes tumbling into our heads.

If we're fortunate, we have an eye doctor or family members who give us names of several organizations serving blind and low-vision people.

And if we are very, very lucky and our fairy godmother is watching over us, we learn about the Washington Council of the Blind.

Of course, just hearing the name is not a solution, it is only a bare beginning. Many of us, as older folks, are set in our ways (stubborn), and need to be encouraged and dragged kicking and screaming if we are to become involved in a new organization.

But when we do, what a new and wonderful world it is. The Aging and Blindness Committee is sort of a treasure house for seniors. Open the door and step inside and you will discover many solutions to those annoying problems that interfere with your daily routine – little irritating stuff, like how to get the toothpaste to stay on the toothbrush, or how to find the keyhole in the front door. Also, we are a referral source, assisting you in connecting with just the right resources and technical help to make your life more enjoyable. So, next time you're on your knees trying to push the electrical plug into the wall outlet that is behind the china cabinet, and you swear that there must be an easier way to get the job done, there is. Once you pull yourself up off the floor, reach out to your Aging and Blindness Committee and ask for a solution. No topic is too inconsequential. If it's a problem for you, it is very likely a problem for others. Your Aging and Blindness Committee is waiting for your call. You can reach the committee by emailing Alco Canfield at alcocanfield@gmail.com.

Hats Off

Compiled by Reginald George

We are pleased to extend our congratulations as we recognize and celebrate the following WCB members on their achievements and milestones.

- Hayley Edick and Melissa Hudson on their new jobs
- Jeff Bishop, re-elected board director, American Council of the Blind
- Denise Colley, re-elected secretary, American Council of the Blind, and Deb Cook Lewis, newly elected first vice president, American Council of the Blind
- Carl Jarvis on his appearance in the July 2021 Braille Forum for his outstanding article, "Twenty-Five Years of Learning," which first appeared in the Fall 2020 WCB Newsline.

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 anniversaries 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

Clark County Council of the Blind by Bob Cavanaugh

I wasn't very happy about moving to Vancouver a year ago, but the reasons for that are more personal and have nothing to do with WCB or the Vancouver area. I knew I wanted to continue to be involved with WCB, and that there was no chapter here. So, I decided to start one.

Thanks to Beth Greenberg, who sent me the previous chapter's membership list, I started calling around to see if they were still interested. Many were, and thanks to WCB President Julie Brannon, I was able to reach out to even more people.

In March, we held our first elections. I was elected president, Jim Eccles vice president, Beth Greenberg second vice president, Dan Ezell treasurer, and Abby Griffith secretary. Due to the timing of the WCB board meetings and the amount of work it took to get our documentation together, we were just recognized as a chapter at the August board meeting.

There will certainly be other things we address, but I hope the main focus of our advocacy will be on transportation in Clark County. We were quite well represented at a City of Vancouver roundtable discussion regarding an update to the city's transportation plan, with myself, Beth, and Vaughn Brown all in attendance. Although we would eventually like to obtain 501(c)(3) status, this goal is likely years away. Although progress so far has been slow, everyone across both Clark County and Washington State is excited about what's ahead.

Guide Dog Users of Washington State by Vivian Conger

Recently, Guide Dog Users of Washington State had its long-promised membership focus call, which took the place of our Spring Fling. Even

though the attendance was a bit lower than hoped, all thought it was informative and timely.

We had two recordings from the GDUI national convention – the school updates and Global Guide Dogs. The presenters shared how schools tried to work through the pandemic, what’s happening now, and information on schools in Australia, Asia, Canada and the U.S.

I want to thank Rick Lewis for editing the files down to the allotted time, and Deb Cook Lewis for hosting the call and obtaining the files for Rick.

Future focus calls may include issues on dog attacks. Please give us any suggestions you would like to have these calls focus on. Please remember that this is your organization and that it takes us all to make it the best it can be now and in the future.

Jefferson County Council of the Blind by Carl Jarvis

Many of the low vision and blind residents in Jefferson County are also affected by a myriad of age-related conditions: hearing loss, balance issues, severe arthritis, fatigue – just to name a few. For older disabled people, any travel can be challenging, even a short trip to the corner grocery store. The most congested intersection in Port Townsend is Kearney and Sims, made even more congested due to its being the only access to the Whidbey Island ferry.

JCCB learned that the Washington State Department of Transportation (DOT) had determined that the congestion at Kearney and Sims would be solved through the installation of a roundabout. This might well be the case when solving the vehicular congestion, but how do roundabouts provide safe passage to pedestrians, especially elderly and disabled pedestrians?

JCCB teamed up with DASH (Disability Awareness Starts Here) and, with the support of the Port Townsend engineering department, we set a date for an onsite demonstration. We planned to use an existing roundabout to identify ways of crossing them safely. Sept. 7 was set for the demonstration.

Laura Parson and Steve King, with the Port Townsend engineering department, would be joined by a representative from DOT and several members of JCCB

Our plans unraveled when the DOT representative said he was not comfortable disclosing whether he had been vaccinated for COVID. DOT said they had no other employee able to meet with us on that date.

Given the age and health of our members, and the rise in the numbers of new cases of COVID, we agreed to postpone our on-site date until DOT could provide a vaccinated representative.

JCCB held a planning meeting via Zoom Aug. 27. It was decided to continue holding virtual meetings through the end of the year. Looking ahead, we need to find ways of teaching our members how to access the Zoom link.

From the Jefferson County Council of the Blind, we wish for you all the very best of health.

Skagit and Island Counties Council of the Blind
by Andy Arvidson

We are in the process of looking for a new meeting location that will best suit all members. It is time to start thinking about the regathering of members in person and having hybrid meetings for those who are not able to or have worries about in-person meetings. We looked at meeting back at the original meeting location, which was the Burlington Senior Activity Center, which we would have to rent from the parks department. There is another building on the property that we found would be a better fit, which we are checking out. It would give us a quieter spot and more room with less rental cost.

Another item on our agenda is writing a new mission statement, as well as writing up some committee guidelines for our chapter. So far, we have a Tech Committee, Constitution and Bylaws Committee, and an Activities Committee.

Our chapter is actively trying to figure out how to reach out to the community and let society know that people who are blind and/or visually impaired still can have a totally functional life. Therefore, we are looking for things to do that our members will enjoy and be excited about. Most of our members are between 70 and 80.

We are looking forward to the WCB Virtual Convention and will pay the convention fee for our members, as we do not want any of them to miss it.

South Kitsap Council of the Blind by Kim Moberg

Our little chapter is growing by leaps and bounds. We have several new members. If there is anything that we can help you with, please give a call.

In July, we had our summer picnic indoors. We had trouble finding a park where we could meet, and we did not want to have a Zoom picnic again this year. So, we met at a restaurant. Everybody got to order what he or she wanted to eat, and we did not have any kind of meeting. We all got to just visit with each other.

On Saturday, Aug. 28, we had our first actual face-to-face meeting back at where we were meeting prior to the pandemic. We put a few precautions in place and all were good with that. It was really good to see everybody. Face-to-face is always better than Zoom. If you were unable to attend, we sure missed you. We got a lot of business taken care of, including talking about convention. We went over registration and decided what we want to provide for door prizes.

Our chapter is ordering T-shirts, jackets and sweatshirts that have our chapter name on them. We are almost ready to place our order and I hope we have done so by the time you are reading this. I love doing this because everyone who wears the shirts is advertising our chapter. The shirts and jackets come in a variety of colors.

Our chapter meeting in December falls on Christmas Day. If we are still able to meet in person, those who would like to are going to get together for a

couple hours that day. Since we have some members who have nowhere else to go or no family to be with, this will be a great way to share and spread the Christmas spirit.

Snohomish County Council of the Blind by Marilee Richards

Welcome to all affiliates of Washington state. The Snohomish County Council of the Blind is moving along nicely. We are working on our constitution and bylaws at this time. We will be conquering our policies and procedures next, and hope to complete them by the close of 2021.

Our group is strong and full of new ideas for 2022. I hope our group will do something special on White Cane Day on Oct. 15.

My “spotlight” is on Danette Dixon this issue. She is active in multiple affiliates – with WCB, on many WCB committees and secretary of this group. She spent a lot of time this year helping us sign up for conventions, both national and local. She helped Nancy connect with the ACB convention (even if she was just involved in listening).

We were unable to meet in person at our picnic due to COVID-19. Please stay safe by wearing masks when you are around people inside and outside. I am looking forward to the fall and meeting in person when it is safe to do so. I am excited to see what this group will accomplish in 2022.

Spokane Council of the Blind by Debby Phillips

Summer is here, hot and the air hazy with smoke. It seems like just a year ago we were in basic stay-home mode because of COVID.

This past May, we began meeting in person. We had both our May and June meetings at Denny's. It was nice to see people in person again. We voted not to have a meeting in July so that people could attend the ACB

Convention virtually, and I'll be asking if anyone did this and how they liked the convention when next we meet.

We will be meeting this evening in a recreation room at a retirement home for seniors in Spokane Valley. It is hoped that we can find a consistent meeting place again and that everyone will be willing to mask up for those times when we are not eating or drinking, and when people are walking about the room where we are meeting. I believe this is our only hope for still being able to meet in person, without having to go back to our conference calls or to Zoom. Looking forward to better days this fall and winter when we can begin to plan activities again.

United Blind of the Tri-Cities by Janice Squires

The United Blind of the Tri-Cities has happily opened back up to many face-to-face meetings and activities. Between our two sources, in person and conference calls, our chapter meetings average around 20 members in attendance.

In June, we had Denise Colley speak to us about the ACB national convention and in July we had Jim Turri inform us about the WCB Crisis Committee.

Our weekly support-group activities are moving right along. Our lunch group has met in person at several local restaurants, including Mexican, Chinese and American cuisines. Our next luncheon in September will be the annual UBTC picnic.

If a chapter would like to have a lot of fun, you should try having something like our card party. It is one of the most popular events we share, always lots of laughs and good fellowship.

The book group is another good support-group function. We have some real diehard readers in this group and discuss a wide variety of books.

Frank leads us in a monthly tech group, and like I always say, there is always something new to learn.

We are so blessed to have the Edith Bishel Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired right in our own back yard. We had the annual Cluck Luck chicken potluck, and then there is always the crazy bingo party. Thanks to Shanna Larter for always putting in so much time and effort to make us happy.



In August, four of our members participated in Heather's awesome tour of Valdemar Estates Winery in Walla Walla. We walked through the facility and got to feel a pump and grape press that are over 100 years old. They gave us several wines to taste during the tour, then they sat us down. We were treated to an incredible repast from their excellent menu of tapas and many more wines. We were so full at the end that we had to just share a portion of cheesecake and ice cream and roll away like ticks.

Photo to left:
Frank Cuta and Carla Brinkley listen to

Valdemar Estates Winery General Manager Kaleigh Brook explain the workings of the barrel room.

United Blind of Walla Walla by Heather Meares

Although we are not meeting in person yet for our chapter meetings, we did host a wonderful tour of Valdemar Estates winery here in Walla Walla. We were joined by some members of United Blind of the Tri-Cities and Yakima Valley Council of the Blind and were able to try out first-hand some of the features they have implemented to create a fully accessible and inclusive environment for all.

Photo to right: Valdemar Estates General Manager Kaleigh Brook answers tour participants' questions about the cement tank while they explore the levers, dials and doors on the outside.

Pictured left to right: Heather Meares (behind Kaleigh); Joleen Ferguson and her guide dog, Mensa; Sarah Roy; Carla Brinkley; Matt Whitfield; and Annee Hartzell and her guide dog, Willis.



During the tour, we learned about the family and history, the sustainable concepts incorporated into the facility, and the entire process of making wine. We tasted three different wine and tapas pairings, felt the difference between stainless steel tanks and cement tanks, and some of us even stuck our heads in them and experienced the echoes of our voices. Then we went to the barrel room and learned all about the different types of barrels, the families who have made them for over 100 years, and their uses. A loud humidifier went off while we were in this room and it sounded like a steam engine or a sauna. This keeps the temperature and humidity consistent.

After the tour, we sat down for a lovely meal, delicious desserts and, of course, more wine. Some members visited the gift shop and were able to get Braille labels for their purchases if they desired. Braille menus were also available, which were made at Edith Bishel Center in Kennewick. It was so great to enjoy each other's company again.

We will still be having virtual meetings for a while, but this truly was a great event.

If you would like to hear more about the tour, please listen to our podcast episode, Valdemar Estates Part 2.

Washington Council of the Blind Diabetics by Danette Dixon

We are a strong special interest affiliate. Having diabetes is tough, but being blind or visually impaired with diabetes is even harder. Together, we can make a difference in our community within Washington state. WCBD meets every second Monday at 7 p.m.

If your chapter has any diabetic members, please send them this way for support. Even better, just ask one of us to join your meeting.

Some sad news about one of our members: Gloria Riley passed away. WCBD, along with WCB, will miss her smile and her contributions. I remember when I was president of the Greater Everett Area Council of the Blind, now called Snohomish County Council of the Blind, Gloria had lots of fundraising ideas. Rest in peace, Gloria.

You can contact WCBD by sending an email to wcb.wcbd@gmail.com. Thank you. Let us work together to make a difference.

Yakima Valley Council of the Blind by Lisa George

YAKITY YAK FROM YAKIMA



YVCB is staying flexible since our meeting place remains unavailable, but at least there's bowling!

Photo to left:

Anne Ridenour (in the center of the photo) and her children Terri, Barbie, Marilyn and Ray, hold a Washington's Lottery banner that reads "That's a Lotto Years! Happy 100th Birthday Granny"

Stay healthy, get your booster when you can, and enjoy the fall.

WCB Calendar of Deadlines and Events

For more details on events listed,
please subscribe to the wcb-l list or call 800-255-1147.

Saturdays at 10 a.m.
join the WCB Coffee and Conversation Zoom call.

List of Abbreviations:

DSB	Department of Services for the Blind
WASILC	Washington State Independent Living Council
WCB	Washington Council of the Blind
WSSB	Washington State School for the Blind
WTBBL	Washington Talking Book & Braille Library

OCTOBER

- 3** – Proposed amendments Zoom call at 3 p.m.
- 4** – Treasurers call at 7 p.m.
- 10** – Proposed 2022 budget Zoom call at 3 p.m.
- 11** – WCB Diabetics call at 7 p.m.
- 15** – White Cane Safety Day
- 17** – WCB Tech Chat with Reg and Frank at 7 p.m.
- 17** – **Deadline to register for 2021 WCB Convention**
- 25** – President's call at 7 p.m.
- 28** – WCB pre-convention board meeting on Zoom at 7 p.m.
- 29** – WCB Annual Convention general sessions (Zoom)
- 29** – WCB live fundraising auction at 6 p.m.
- 30** – WCB Annual Convention general sessions/business meeting (Zoom)
- 30** – WCB banquet at 7 p.m.

NOVEMBER

- 8** – WCB Diabetics call at 7 p.m.
- 16** – WCB committee leaders' call at 7 p.m.
- 21** – WCB Tech Chat with Reg and Frank at 7 p.m.
- 22** – President's call at 7 p.m.
- 30** – Deadline to submit articles for the WCB Newline Winter 2022 issue (to be published in mid-January)

DECEMBER

4 – Annual Membership Database Certification call at 2 p.m.

6 – Treasurer’s call at 7 p.m.

10 – DSB State Rehab Council meeting from 9 a.m. to noon

13 – WCB Diabetics call at 7 p.m.

19 – WCB Tech Chat with Reg and Frank at 7 p.m.

27 – President’s call at 7 p.m.

JANUARY 2022

1 – 2022 annual WCB and ACB dues are payable

31 – Deadline to notify WCB president of committee interest

Washington Council of the Blind

is honored to recognize donors who have made a difference

THANK YOU!

Michael Alvarez

Anonymous (4)

Colette & Andy Arvidson

Terry Atwater

Viola Bentson

Maria Buczynska

Deb Cook Lewis

Dorene Cornwell

Rita Dilek

Danette Dixon

Michael Edwards

Cindy Hollis

Kayla King

The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.

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Northwest Access Fund

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United Blind of Seattle

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