



WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF THE BLIND

Opportunity, Equality, Independence
Founded 1935

WCB NEWSLINE

Summer 2021 Edition

“Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life” – Pablo
Picasso

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

Calling All Members

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

Please send all submissions by August 31. Digital cartridges must also be returned to Audiobook Ministries by this date for re-use in the following issue.

Publication Guidelines

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

President's Message by Julie Brannon	5
Letter From the Editors.....	7
It's Your Newline... Just Say It! Compiled by Reginald George	8
FEATURES	10
Cheshire Cat Interviews #13 A Tapestry of the Happy Warrior by Heather Meares.....	10
They Make it with Mud by Frank Cuta.....	15
Art is Magic by Yvonne Miller	16
Flow Like the Water, Move with the Wind, Dance in the Fire by Becky Bell, with Heather Meares.....	17
Finding My Creative Niche by Tristen Breitenfeldt	19
My Mother's Gift of Art by Chris Coulter.....	21
The Thrill of Throwing Things by Holly Turri.....	23
LIFESTYLE	25
Book Chat by Alan Bentson, Reader's Advisor	25
Rediscovering Art as a Blind Person by Gloria Riley	27
Ninety Nine and Counting! by Anne Ridenour, with Lisa George	29
You Can Teach an Old Guy New Tricks by Alan Biné	31
Benefits of Blueberries, Cherries, and Cantaloupe by Leonore H. Dvorkin.....	32
What's On Your Plate? Creativity From My Kitchen by Hayley Agers ...	34
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.....	39
Technically Speaking – Clubhouse and Bookshare by Frank Cuta	39
Bits and Pieces Compiled by Denise Colley	41
HISTORY	43
One Man and His Dream by Carl Jarvis.....	43
History Quiz by Carl Jarvis	46
ADVOCACY AND LEGISLATION.....	50
Chronicles of the Happy Warrior #8 "Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life" – Pablo Picasso by Mark Adreon.....	50
Valdemar Estates Winery: Part One That All May Eat, Drink, and Be Merry by Heather Meares	52
Accessibility in the Arts for Blind and Low-vision Patrons by Elizabeth Ralston, Accessibility Consultant.....	54
The Kids Are Alright	57
Youth Speaks by Luke Uniack	57

Tails & Tales at WTBBL by Erin Groth 60

BRAIN FOOD 61

Noteworthy Blogs Art in Blindness by Beth Greenberg..... 61

Podtastic Casts by Reginald George 64

WCB HAPPENINGS 68

The Aging and Blindness Committee Presents: Tips and Tricks
 Compiled by Alco Canfield 68

Spring WCB Board Report by Alco Canfield 70

GiveBIG Results by Lisa George 72

WCB Awards Calls for Nomination Letters by Jessamyn Landby..... 72

Hats Off Compiled by Chris Coulter 73

Around the State 75

2021 WCB Calendar of Deadlines and Events 85

***** President's Message**

by Julie Brannon

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For some reason, the last few months, for me, seem strangely vague and disconnected due to about six weeks of illness. So, I've felt like my handle on WCB happenings was diminished. But not to worry, WCB work moves forward with purpose and diligence, with its members continuing to function in their various roles. Chapter presidents held monthly meetings with their chapters, and committee chairs continued meeting and working toward their goals. Also, see below how officers stepped up to the plate to take on some presidential duties. All I can say is we have a strong, hard-working and supportive state affiliate. Thank you, WCB.

Officers carried responsibilities with skill

Thanks to Sheri Richardson, WCB second vice president, for stepping into both pre-board meeting duties and board meeting facilitation. She did it with flair and skill, both functions not an easy task when done for the first time. Thank you, Sheri.

Thanks to Andy Arvidson, WCB second vice president, for facilitating the April president's meeting, and for representing WCB on a pre-recorded video segment about our WCB affiliate, to be played during the ACB convention.

WCB membership

As noted in my previous Newsline article, Lisa George, WCB treasurer and membership database coordinator, worked very hard gathering membership data with the help of chapter membership reps. At the time data was submitted to ACB on March 31, we had 419 certified members, with 12 members joining after May 1. Included in that number are 61 members at large. When the Vancouver chapter's request for affiliation is accepted, nine of the members at large will become Vancouver members.

Conventions

This year's American Council of the Blind Convention will again be held virtually; registration is now open. Many events will again be streamed via ACB radio channels. Sheri Richardson organized an ACB voting explanation for WCB members on June 5.

Chapter presidents showed interest in having WCB board members who were familiar with the ACB convention as speakers at their June chapter meetings to explain the ACB convention and encourage members to take advantage of the virtual format. A speaker's bureau was formed from volunteers to present all aspects of the experience to the chapters. They are Denise Colley, Frank Cuta and Julie Brannon. We plan to utilize this same process to encourage WCB convention attendance when that time comes around.

Washington Council of the Blind convention

At our May 1 board meeting, a decision needed to be voted on in regard to what format our annual WCB convention would be held this coming fall. We discussed the options of a hybrid convention, (a combination of in-person and virtual), an in-person convention, or holding a virtual convention as was the platform last year. The vote was tied, with the tie-breaker vote given by board facilitator Sheri Richardson to hold this year's WCB convention via a virtual platform again. This was not an easy decision for the WCB board to make.

Fundraising

The fundraising committee again spearheaded the GiveBig fundraiser for WCB, with the option for board members to supply matching funds. Overall, \$7,000 was raised. Good work, WCB and fundraising committee. The details are covered quite well in our GiveBig Results article.

Communications

The Communications Committee, with help from some WCB members chosen to serve short term as a website design team, is diligently working to

re-organize and re-structure our WCB website. They also, probably in August, will be changing our email platform to an email group entitled Groups IO, under ACB.

WCB Newsline Unleashed

If you haven't yet had the chance to listen to any of the podcasts made available, you're truly missing out. Talk about creative and artistic – just what this issue is all about.

The history and government affairs committees are working on several podcast ideas, and our team recently released a very fun meal and conversation that was enjoyed with representatives from the Valdemar Estates winery in Walla Walla. It was all about their efforts to make their wines and winery 100% accessible to people with disabilities. See Heather's article in the advocacy and legislation section. And check out all the latest episodes including an interview with Mark Adreon, the Happy Warrior, at <https://www.acbmedia.org/category/wcb/>

It feels great to know that in spite of adversity, the activities, work and accomplishments of WCB are always running full speed ahead.

***** Letter from the Editors**

Greetings,

We are pleased to present our Gallery of Artistic Endeavors. As you explore this gallery, you will find no ropes or barriers blocking the art. Instead, you will experience limitless creativity, feel emotions of the artists, and imagine the dreams that may have inspired them. No one will be telling you how you should interpret these, as that is what art is all about. The journey is yours alone. We only have one rule...touch the art!

Warmest regards,

Heather Meares-Vermeer, Curator, and Reginald George-O'Keefe, Art Dealer

***** 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.

As you will see, the votes were extremely scattered. Many great articles were highlighted by our readers, so we must be doing something right.

Still, you did choose one article that will move forward to the finals later this year. Let's all cheer Holly Turri for her article, "The Wonderful World of Tech and Me."

Voting for your favorite article from summer closes Aug. 31. We appreciate and thank you, our readers and authors. You are the wind that keeps us soaring, and we couldn't do it without you.

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>

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.

From Linda Wilder:

Reggie's article made me laugh, so maybe we should have a few different categories, such as the funniest article. I have to put my vote in for the article "Aquaponics: A Waste Management Experiment" by Heather Meares. What an incredible project, and Heather stuck to it even though there were trials and errors until she got it right. Heather has a unique way of writing

that keeps you enthralled and a little in suspense, not knowing if she will really get that toilet, sink and two bathtubs working just the way she wants. The step-by-step instructions were so specific; I think I could even do it myself. However, I would much rather come to her home and enjoy the sounds of the water flowing, and the wonderful smells of the variety of the many flowers, herbs, etc. The video was a great follow-up to the article. I could imagine being right there with her.

From Chris Coulter:

I vote for Holly Turri and her article “The Wonderful World of Tech and Me.” Holly’s wordplay made me smile because she writes just like she talks. It felt as though we were in the same room with each other, sharing the joy she takes in every aspect of her life.

From Janice Squires:

Another great WCB Newsline publication. I wanted to cast my vote for the article written by my friend, Frank Cuta, “Breaking into Electronics.” I have known Frank for over 45 years, and I cannot believe how much I learned about him from this article. He is one impressive man.

From Frank Cuta:

I thoroughly enjoyed all of the tech-related material in the spring issue. I particularly liked Chris’s, Heather’s and Beth’s articles, but they are all getting honorable mentions, because the History Quiz by Carl Jarvis gets my vote for the best article in this issue. As was made clear by Carl, both Saddler and Irwin were huge contributors to our efforts.

FEATURES

***** Cheshire Cat Interviews #13
A Tapestry of the Happy Warrior
by Heather Meares
hdmeares@gmail.com**

Mark Adreon. Those are two very powerful words. It is impossible for me to describe him in simple terms, for indeed, he is not a simple man. Some words come to mind: honest and truthful, a fierce advocate, a legacy. These are all very strong words, and for good reason. Anyone who knows him would have to agree that he has earned each one of these descriptions. But there is a softer, gentler side to Mark that people may not be aware of, and I was honored to talk with him and hear more about the complex, beautiful tapestry that is Mark Adreon, the Happy Warrior.

This interview was so in-depth that I would never be able to cover in this article all of the fascinating topics we discussed, so we have created a podcast episode to share the interview in its entirety with you all. This release is quite timely, in that Mark just retired from his 20-year career with the Washington Department of Services for the Blind (DSB). But by no means does this mean he is done. We will all be interested to see what he decides to focus his energy and efforts on in his next chapter.

Here are a few small excerpts from our conversation.

Mark: "Art is interesting, in the sense that it is extremely personal. It's expression, and it doesn't matter who the artist is, because it's being done for the statement, not the adulation. For some artists, it's their only way of interfacing with a very confusing universe, a confusing society. Sometimes it's the only thing that makes sense. Often, it's the representation of where people are, where they've been, where they want to go. It pulls on the personal experiences, and can bring them into aspirations, or moments of sad reflection and contemplation. In my mind, it's the uncontrolled, unstructured embodiment of humanity, without humanity saying what the rules are. It allows a person to express themselves fully, in authentic ways

without being restricted by words like, ‘you don’t do that, or, we do it this way.’”

“As a person who is blind, I have noticed there are way too many people in the community who assume that art is not for them. Maybe music is a good art form. Stevie Wonder is always the first name to come up – the blind person and the piano sort of go together. That’s the art form for the blind folk, also singing or vocalizing. So, you have society telling you what the art form is for you, as a blind person. I’ve spent a lot of time pushing against that. Art is something about which society needs to understand universal access, that if you’re going to paint, make the painting somehow accessible to all people who view it, regardless of how they view it. So, if I’m looking at a piece of artwork, and someone is describing it to me, all I’m getting is their impression of the art, so I don’t have purity. I have no authentic experience. Being stubborn, I’m never satisfied with someone else’s impressions. So I would request that the artist give me their description, or an audio version of the artist, describing what they’ve done. It doesn’t mean they should tell me what I should feel, but as the artist, take me into your painting, tell me the colors and how they feel to you, the shapes, what kinds of images you used, without telling me what they are supposed to be. You describe it, artist person, because you’re the one who has intimately taken this medium and used it for your language, your message. I will hear your message, and then I’ll hear my message, guided by what you’ve presented.”

We talked a lot about his musical journey, creating what he calls soundscapes on the piano, as a way to express his emotions. At first, this was something he did for himself, but now he also shares it with a few select people, allowing them to experience their own feelings and emotions through his music.

He says, “I sort of meditate into my music, to let it come out, not be bottled up. When I started letting people listen, my fear was that they would say things like, those notes don’t go together, or that doesn’t work, you’re not keeping the right beat. I was afraid of the critique, of them dissecting the technique. I didn’t want to hear that. I come from the right-brain place, where it flows like a stream. It doesn’t come in little chunks and puzzle pieces, and then you put it together. That’s kind of a left-brain approach.”

He found himself explaining to people how to listen and create an area that would take them into the soft, gentle places, or angry places, and find the narratives in their own lives. It was like he was playing a musical score to their thoughts.

He said, “My approach is like a painting – there may be similarities in what I play, but I never play the same musical piece twice. It’s unique to itself and will never occur again. The creative process is creating one of something. The production process is creating multiples.”

The discussion continued as we talked about Chihuly, theatre, and improvisation, and the ways Mark creates an acting environment and space for himself on stage. You will have to listen to the podcast to hear this part of the conversation.

<https://www.acbmedia.org/category/wcb/>

Heather: “I want to hear about the project you did with the University of Washington.”

Mark: “Well, I get into advocacy positions really fast. Through a series of projects I was working on with Chihuly glass and other art experiences that were frustrating as hell, I decided there needs to be an art form, I named it Touching Art, and that it had to be both tactile and visual. I worked with the director of the master’s program, while I was working with DSB, to create an art competition for the graduate students. They had to create a wall-mount piece of art that is tactile first, and then visual. DSB would buy the top four pieces, selected by the judges.

I conducted a 2-hour workshop for all the people submitting art to the competition and exhibition. It forced me to talk with visual artists to try and get them to understand how to take their visual art and make it tactile, without being stereotypical.

“They discussed the ways visual people are engaged with art, and how to translate that into tactile art in the same way. They have to get hooked, pulled in, and then evaluate or get emotionally connected.

“There was a public showing, and visitors had to wear night shades first, to touch the art, and then they could view it on their second round. The final pieces were so thought provoking, including one that was made of beeswax and computer fans that buzzed like a beehive when touched. I wish I could experience them myself.”

Heather: “Let’s talk about the Happy Warrior. How did you come up with this name? Also, I would love to hear the things you think people should be doing for themselves, and what organizations, not just blindness, but any disability-related organization, should be doing.”

Mark: “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with the group. I like going fast, and I like going far. If an individual issue impacts me directly and needs to be resolved, I want to go fast. I have strategies that get action from people. Part of it is having the persona that carries the confidence of the request. I am not going to wait for more people to join me. First, solve the problem. In the process, I’m going to point out that I represent others. I’m not the only person having this issue, and that they probably should consider if they are in violation of any human-rights issues, and/or if they really want to delete a \$425-billion-dollar consumer market from their businesses. I help them understand that I will work with them while others may go straight to their lawyers. Fix it for me, and institutionally fix it for any consumer who might be blind or low vision. Getting into good trouble is the way to actually create the passion of advocacy. Some people think advocacy is getting pissed and making a scene. That’s not advocacy. Do something fun and creative. How fun would it be to go in with a bunch of people and shut a store down by jamming the register lines because of self-check-out issues, with someone videotaping the interaction? No one is being nasty. We are just trying to check out. This is where the Happy Warrior comes in, especially when the store’s mission statement says they want to be the store of choice for all customers. We want that, too!”

Heather: “If there was one message you would leave people with, what would it be?”

Mark: “Accept the authenticity of your own position, be true to yourself first. This means don’t pretend blindness isn’t a pain in the butt. It is. Don’t pretend that you are a victim of it, because you’re not. Don’t pretend that

others are obligated to help you out of your situation, because they're not. Don't pretend that it's okay to just be on your own, do it your way, live with whatever the consequences are, and be 100% independent, even if you are 50% inadequate. The honest reality of authenticity is that it's way easier for you to be interdependent, which should be the goal, because that's where everybody else is. I don't think blind people should think they are different. It's not a binary choice between dependent and independent. It's actually a choice of being interdependent, which means you're a part of a community of sighted, non-sighted, disabled, non-disabled, people of multiple colors, multiple cultures, multiple faiths, multiple political standpoints, that you're part of the tapestry. You aren't the star, nor the inconsequential thread. You're essential to the tapestry. Ask for what you need, don't ask for things you can do yourself. Include people in your life because they like you as a person. Don't assume that you're always going to be the victim of your circumstance. Understand that people are generally kindhearted, that people will never understand your situation if they don't have lived experience with it, so don't expect that they will, and don't make it the thing that defines you, the idea that the characteristic of blindness is not a definer of who you are as a person, just like the color of your hair, your height, or the color of your eyes are not. Blindness should not lead your life, it should just be a part of it, like everything else. It's part of the tapestry of it."

Heather: "I love that! And let's hope that the tapestry becomes more tactile as we go along."

We both laughed.

Mark: "That would be nice! Yes, they could use different threads with different textures. What's nice about a tapestry, for blind, sighted, or other, is that it's a blend, and it doesn't matter what is there, or what it shows. The tapestry is a blend of all kinds of threads that normally would not go together."

Heather: "Yes, and it is about the big picture. If you only look at little parts, it means nothing. You have to understand the whole thing. This is a beautiful concept."

***** They Make it with Mud**
by Frank Cuta
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Hand-built ceramics has got to be one of the most tactile and gratifying forms of artistic expression that you might choose to pursue. Whether you work free-form, build traditional vessels, or even work with molds, you can be inspired and release your spirit independent of how much God-given natural talent you possess. Unlike the years of training that it takes to be a decent painter or musician, you can be working in clay in just a few days.

Twenty years ago, Paul Wilburn started a basic hand-building ceramics class at the Edith Bishel Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Kennewick. Serious diabetic issues were robbing him of his vision. He had given up teaching art in the public schools, but he continued to run a small, private ceramics business out of his home.

Paul had invited a group of ladies from the United Blind group over to his studio to see his work. Diana Softich pointed to a coil-built vessel, remarked on the simple structure, and asked Paul if he might be able to teach others the basic technique.

The first classes at the Edith Bishel Center included Diana, Janice Squires and two others. Later, they moved to the Kennewick Community Center, and Carman Walker, Cheryl Stone, Dorothy Stone and Kevin Meehan also joined the class. This hardcore group met once a week for about six years. It was a craft group, a social group and a great support group.

After years of suffering serious health problems, Paul lost his battle with diabetes and passed away in 2007. This might have killed a weaker group, but they had enough momentum to forge ahead, with Cheryl and Kevin leading, until I joined in 2016. We kept it going until the COVID pandemic shut us down in March 2020. We hope to see things open up again soon.

I find a great deal of comfort in using only my hands to work a formless mass of clay into a functional object. However, it might just as easily turn into something impractical, yet be a piece that means something special to only you or to one that you love. I have found that rather than building a lot

of pieces that are quick and easy, it means more to me to take my time and fashion objects that take weeks or months to finish.

Over the years, our group has made dragons, cartoon characters, a castle and all manner of kitchen vessels and yard ornaments. Paul, on the other hand, was an artist who liked to make statements. He had a quirky sense of humor and loved to incorporate it into his work. One of his pieces was a baby bending over with its bare bottom high in the air that he called “Bad Moon Rising.”

Another piece was the “Double Crossing Rat,” which depicts a rat with a knife in one hand, and his other hand behind his back with the fingers crossed.

My favorite has always been his imaginary creature composed of the front half of a hippopotamus and the back half of a cricket. This, of course, was his “Hypocrite.”

***** Art is Magic**
by Yvonne Miller
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As a child, my dad showed me how to shade a box of strawberries in a coloring book. That began my love for art.

Colors may evoke emotions. For example, white, yellow, orange and red are bright colors and they are sunny and cheerful. Green, blue, purple and black are dark and earthy and are more subdued.

In my Native American heritage, red and black are spiritual colors and are incorporated in our art. I am a member of the Lummi tribe, located 10 miles northwest of Bellingham. Northwest design is representational expression, and Coast Salish exaggerates colors and forms of figures and objects. I liked expressing both styles of art in my works. I was an artist who painted nature and portraits on canvas. When losing my vision, I no longer drew and painted.

Later in my life, in my mid-thirties, I was forced to explore 3D work in clay and sculpture. No longer relying on my eyesight, I molded clay into figures. Clay is a sensual and soft medium to the touch. I shaped objects and figures. Relying on memory, I executed forms and details to create my clay sculptures.

Another medium, soapstone, is a rock so soft that one can mark or scratch into the stone with a fingernail. Tackling the stone, it sometimes speaks to me. I envision an object inside the stone that cries out to be let free. Using various sculpting files, I rough out the shape until it resembles the object in my mind. Sometimes it's a memory that emerges as I feel the raw stone. Satisfied with my rough form, I use finer tools to fill in details. For the final touch, I use a piece of denim cloth to smooth out the stone until it shines.

Later, the clay and soapstone art pieces serve as stepping stones into bronze sculptures. Bronze is a long process that takes about nine months to create, and has been compared metaphorically to giving birth. I have completed six bronzes.

I have gifted one to the Department of Services for the Blind. It is "Laughing Beaver." The beaver is laughing so hard on its back that it looks as though it will fall backwards. This is my expression of joy.

However one expresses their feelings, art is a good vehicle to do it. One can say art is therapy for the mind, soul and heart. Some people dance, and others act, sing, cook, write, etc. Stretching, expanding and exercising the imagination and self-expression... one can say art is magic.

***** Flow Like the Water, Move with the Wind, Dance in the Fire
by Becky Bell, with Heather Meares
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One of my favorite things is art. I have loved it my whole life. Even when I was a child, I would make clay things and draw. I think I was born an artist, like some people are. I loved drawing trees when I could still see pretty well, especially the little, tiny leaves and details. I drew beautiful trees and

fences, fields and mountains, mostly in black and white, which I like a lot. I also used colored pencils, especially when I lived in Paris, and enjoyed drawing abstract still-lives in beautiful colors. I would get up close and copy what I saw. I wish I could still see well enough to draw.

One summer at the University of Washington, I took an art class, and we were supposed to be drawing a person with no clothes on, and the teacher saw that I couldn't see well enough to do this, so he just let me draw what I wanted. I thought that was pretty neat. He was really good, and encouraged me to draw. This made me so happy.

Then I started to do pottery again. I really engaged myself and loved it, especially coil pots. This method does not involve using a wheel, which I struggled with. Creating vessels in a variety of shapes makes me think of the ocean. I picture the movement of the coral and plants, things you might find at the bottom of the sea. This is my inspiration, and gives my pottery a very flowing motion. They look like the wind is blowing them, or water is pushing them, like they are dancing. My art is always uneven and moving and very organic. I love making things you can put something in, like a special candy with pretty wrappers, that you have to dig way down deep to find. You might discover treasures like beautiful jewels, or maybe beautiful cookies. I dream of having a house with pottery all over it, and each piece would have something special to me inside. I would always be able to find them by knowing the specific pottery. I know this sounds strange, but I think I am strange. Artists can be eccentric, and have a quality about them. This is how they make art, and only they know why they make it.

Most of my pieces are huge and made of stoneware clay. The color of the glaze and shape are slightly altered when it is high-fired, using gas vs. a low-firing electric kiln. This makes the finished pottery even more interesting. You never really know how it is going to turn out. People love gas-fired pottery. It is much stronger, as well as unique. It takes three days to fire with gas – one day to heat up, one day to fire, and a day to cool down. The fire is so hot and it is all around the pottery. It's just so beautiful, as it burns the pots in the fire. It's an experience beyond anything you can imagine.

Another technique I use is applying glazes thickly, because it creates a finish that is extremely smooth to touch. I typically only use one or two colors. More complicated designs other people make are too difficult for me. Sometimes I use a dark color on the outside with a light color on the inside, which has a nice visual contrast, and a simple beauty. Glazes in shades of bronze, blue, black, and white are my favorites.

I could make pottery all day, all the time, and I would never get tired of working with the clay. I would love to have my own studio someday, or even share one with somebody. There's a certain point you reach when you don't need anyone to teach you how to do your craft. You just want to strike out on your own and make it.

I think it's important for people to know that you can do a lot of things with art, and how important it is to our culture. It seems like everybody has some form of art, which is so beautiful. If it's not pottery, it's something else. People who are visually impaired or blind can express things through art. You don't have to see at all to do it. You can make something from inside, create something out of nothing. Don't be afraid to touch, and realize how beautiful things are by touch.

***** Finding My Creative Niche**
by Tristen Breitenfeldt
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“Creativity is allowing oneself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep.”

— Scott Adams, The Dilbert Principle

I have always been the kind of person who has to have a hobby of some kind. My history of hobbies is vast and spans many disciplines. While I don't intend to catalog all of them in this article, I will attempt to describe some relating to art.

First, you should know that I was born with a progressive visual impairment that has gradually stolen more and more of my eyesight throughout the

years. So, as a child, I had almost “normal” eyesight, and now as an adult, I am functionally blind. I share this because I believe that the progression of my vision loss played a small role in the unfolding of my artistic journey. If I hadn’t lost a lot of my eyesight, I would probably still enjoy drawing and coloring with colored pencils. That was always my favorite activity, and I still miss it to this day.

As a child, one of my favorite pastimes was drawing and coloring. My preferred medium was colored pencils. I loved the smell of the lead, the feel of a long narrow pencil in my hand as it glided across the paper, and the satisfaction of seeing the vibrant colors and shapes that flowed from my mind onto the page, forming complex pictures. But, as my visual impairment progressed, my ability to see and appreciate my drawings diminished.

Then, when I was 12 or 13, I enjoyed creating digital art, drawing on the computer using a standard PC mouse with Windows Paint program. I would use the zoom feature to enlarge the screen as much as possible, then draw and draw for hours.

A year or two later, it became very difficult to see the intricacies of my digital art, so I turned to painting in the real world. I had an array of easels, paints, and brushes, which I used in creating my art. But, like most teenagers, I eventually became bored with painting, so all of my supplies were packed up and put into the garage, where they sat for years until eventually being sold in a garage sale.

I also dabbled in creating clay figurines, which was fun for a while, until I ran out of room to display my “masterpieces.” Then, I made bead jewelry for a couple years, until I grew bored making necklaces and bracelets in patterns and colors that I could not see.

Next, I experimented with tactile art such as raised-line drawings followed by using push-pin punchers to trace and punch out tactile renderings of the seven continents, which I used to create a large tactile world map. My hope at the time had been to design a purely tactile curriculum for teaching geography to blind and visually-impaired children. But, after completing my months-long tactile map project, I put away my paper and punchers, to search for something else to satisfy my creativity.

Last year, I started learning a completely different form of art. With the help of YouTube and sighted descriptions from friends and family, I started learning loom knitting, with the goal of making some knitted projects to donate to local shelters. Over the course of several months, I made some basic hats, a scarf, a blanket, and a woman's purse. However, while it became clear that I enjoyed the repetitive movements of knitting on a loom, I lacked the patience and dedication needed to make my projects durable and visually appealing. It also became clear that I could hardly afford the expense of constantly purchasing high-quality yarns. So, that hobby also went into a closet.

I suppose the argument could be made that I lacked the dedication and wherewithal to really develop my skill and interest in any of these art forms, but I prefer to see these past endeavors as part of a journey to develop and discover my own creativity. I think Steve Jobs said it best: "Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it. And, like any great relationship, it just gets better and better as the years roll on. So keep looking until you find it. Don't settle."

– Steve Jobs, Stanford commencement speech 2005

***** My Mother's Gift of Art**
by Chris Coulter
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When I was beginning to prepare for this writing about art, I realized that I had never taken the time to pursue the idea of making my own art. After all, I had been blind since birth. That meant there was no vision with which to view art or to make art. As I began delving into my own childhood and my early interactions with my family, I unearthed a lot of interesting things about art and the many ways in which it was communicated to me. Here are a few of the opportunities I discovered and resurrected after their many years lying dormant, somewhere in the bottom of the clutter of all the things that didn't

make sense to me while I learned my way around the world of independent blindness.

My mother loved art. She was very talented as a person who could draw, paint, and create everything from beautiful clothes to cakes with detailed decorations. She wanted to be a commercial artist, but she was never able to make that dream become a reality. Instead, she filled the lives of her four daughters with the awareness of art and its many uses in each of our lives.

One of the best pieces of art my mother ever made was a mock-up of an intersection that I could feel and learn how to cross the intersecting streets safely. She laid a large piece of cardboard on the dining room table. Off to one side of the cardboard were some toy blocks that she used to represent buildings. In the area where the street crossing started, she used tinfoil, twisted into the shape of curbs. She employed yarn in parallel strips for the crosswalks and gave the toy blocks the names of some buildings in Everett, where we lived. I was given the task of letting my fingers do the walking by crossing the homemade toy streets in one direction, then making a turn onto the next corner, crossing the street within the yarn crosswalk and stepping with a finger on the foil curb to safely reach the little toy-block building. I actually found that this homemade picture of an intersection helped me learn not to be confused about crossing intersections anymore.

I also remember that as a very little girl, someone gave me a box of differently-shaped, plastic pieces that were meant to be laid on paper and traced. As I recall, the templates were mostly animals. However, I didn't have much luck tracing the shapes. I suppose it was because of the dreaded spatial-awareness problems that I had. The idea of tracing things didn't go to waste. Later in life, it helped me learn to sign my name with a signature guide. My handwriting was atrocious, but most people who saw my signature must have been okay with it. The bank accepted my signature and I had no problems when it came to writing my name on a ballot.

At the present moment, most of my artistic endeavors center around music, but I have an appreciation for the colors I have never seen, and the photos that people describe to me with such vivid language that I absolutely can see the images in my own way. For me, sound design is very important. So is audio description on videos and long-form movies. Sometimes if I am

wearing headphones and listening to immersive sound, I don't even need audio description, because tactile sensitivity and listening to every detail of sound come together in my life to create my own kind of seeing. And, in case anyone is wondering, even with my immersive listening skills, I still love audio description. It's fun to realize that what I see in my mind is just about the same as what I hear from the audio description.

During my preparation for this article I have learned to appreciate my mother and the rest of my family for their contributions to my being included in the world of visual and tactile art.

***** The Thrill of Throwing Things**

by Holly Turri

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Here's a secret that very few of you know: I love pottery. Touching, purchasing, and most fun of all, making or throwing it really rocks my world. Working with clay is good for my hands, heart, and mind.

Painting, drawing, weaving, knitting, or crocheting are appreciated by me from a distance. If I get too close, disaster will strike.

When I was three or four, a wise woman told my mom to purchase playdough and have me play with it. This would strengthen and sensitize my fingers for reading and writing Braille. It was the best thing she ever got me.

At first, all I did was roll it out, ball it up, or make scary snakes. Then, I tried copying the world around me. I made models of little girls, dishes, ashtrays, pretend cakes, make-believe pies, and the list goes on and on. At one time, I made a set of playdough doll dishes. If I wanted to try something and I didn't know what it looked like, I'd go find it, or whine until someone else showed it to me.

One time in Sunday school, the kids made some pictures of whatever. My teacher showed me how in the Bible times they made water jars that the

women carried to the well. You can't imagine how totally thrilled I was. My mom kept that project for years to keep pencils in. How proud I felt.

One summer when I graduated from college, I found out that the adult education department in our county offered pottery classes. They were right near my parents' home. Until I got married, I'd stay at the homestead, and once a week, go throw pots. An additional plus was that mom would make my dinner and breakfast.

The class was filled with really unusual hippie types and me. The teacher was a hoot and a half. I learned how to make coil pots, e.g., Bible times water jars, pinch pots, and finally I got to get on the wheel. The latter was met with limited success, but I tried.

In this busy world, it seems a shame that many blind children aren't given the time to explore and have fun with playdough or clay. Learning the tactile arts broadens our worlds in myriad ways. Creativity can never be overestimated.

As we all know, unless we touch something, we really don't understand what it looks like. Creating an item with clay reinforces these concepts.

So many of the art projects done in school are very visual. Clay and/or playdough level the playing field. Plus, it's a great way to make something for friends/family that will always be pleased and treasured.

Clay also can build bridges. When our kids were preteens, I took them to a pottery and sculpture class sponsored by a community center near us. Since we had just gotten a rescue puppy, each wanted to make clay representations of our new dog, Jade. Both became frustrated because their outcomes weren't what they expected. In fact, between you and me, they were horrible.

The teacher gave each kid an assignment. Michael is sighted. She suggested to him that he carefully watch the way Jade's legs were attached to her body. What did they do to run and walk? Did they move differently? How did she sit, lie down, curl up and eat?

Since Tracey is blind, she suggested that she touch Jade and see how her legs worked. How did she hold her ears? She was to crawl around for a while and pretend to be a dog. That way she could experience first-hand how it might feel to be Jade. You can imagine the fun we all had with that assignment.

The next week, they returned and remade their sculptures. Both kids did much better. Each statue was different and creative. Both emphasized the things each child felt were most notable about their pet. Isn't that the way art should be? Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, or the hands of the happy.

LIFESTYLE

*** Book Chat

by Alan Bentson, Reader's Advisor

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Question: What do you call a guy with no arms or legs hanging on a wall?

Answer: Art

There you go, that's all I know about art. The expression goes, "I don't know anything about art, but I know what I like," but I cannot say that since I do not know what to like. As a totally blind person with little poetic imagination and even less mechanical aptitude, I long ago consigned the visual arts to the vast pile of things I am just never going to get. This pile includes colors, flowers, facial expressions, sunsets (and sunrises, too), travel for pleasure, women's fashions, athletics and how cars work, or how just about anything works for that matter. In fact, some days when I think of how many words in the vast English language refer to things I am just never going to understand, I wonder why I like to read at all. But the compulsion came upon me early, and I read on, because I must.

The visual arts are a great subject for fiction, and I usually find the novels enjoyable. For one thing, literature likes to pay its respects to a fellow art form. For another thing, artists make dandy outsider characters and that is

what just about every novel needs. You could define a novel as a longish story, concerning a person who feels outside the world he finds himself in, and whose reflections and observations make that world come alive for the reader and whose conflicts with the world often are the engine that drives the plot. Artists are generally perceived as outsiders, very individualistic souls, more concerned with values of creativity, beauty and integrity, unlike the ordinary, money-grubbing, every person who is more interested in just getting by.

Recently, I read a novel by Sue Miller called “The Good Mother,” (db#23041) about a woman recently divorced from a very stuffy husband. She starts an affair with an artist, and immediately the story became more intense and dramatic. Other examples of good novels about the visual arts follow.

“The Agony and the Ecstasy,” (db#19356) by Irving Stone, is a big book about a big personality, Michelangelo. I found this book so involving and got so interested in his work that I did something I thought I never would – read a whole nonfiction book about an artist, namely, “Three Worlds of Michelangelo,” (DB49989) by James Beck. It is a well-chosen book by NLS, as it stood up well even without the illustrations. Stone has several other novels about painters, and I imagine they are all good. There is a more recent and better marked-up version of “Agony and the Ecstasy,” but it is narrated by Fred Major, and not Guy Sorrel, who is much the preferred narrator for this book.

“Girl with a Pearl Earring,” (db050258 and BR13360) by Tracy Chevalier, is the absorbing story of a maid in the household of Vermeer, famous 17th century Dutch artist, and who became the subject of a famous portrait. This author has several historical novels, most of them named after paintings.

“Of Human Bondage” (DB024363 and br#16190) and “The Moon and Sixpence,” (BR16531 and db62289), both by W. Somerset Maugham. “Bondage” tells the story of Philip Carey, who goes to Paris to become an artist. Art is not the main concern of this book, but the parts about Paris are particularly good. “Sixpence” is based loosely on the life of Paul Gauguin, a French painter who spent the last part of his life in Tahiti. It is intensely moving, which is odd as it is told in a very detached sort of way.

“The Light That Failed,” (BR8642 and DB32530) by Rudyard Kipling, the great storyteller and contemporary of Maugham, tells the story of an artist who is losing his sight.

“Ordinary Daylight: Portrait of an Artist Going Blind,” (DB16674) by Andrew Potok, is a memoir and not fiction, but it is as absorbing as a novel as the author, a painter who sees himself as an outsider. He describes the effects of retinitis pigmentosa on his vision and his trek to London to find a lady who claims to be able to cure the disease with bee sting therapy (ouch!).

“Still Life,” (br20557 and db#66731) by Louise Penny, and “Death of an Artist,” (from Audible.com) by Kate Wilhelm, are two mysteries in which those wishing to solve the case must examine artists’ last works intensively to find the clues they need.

There you have it, gentle reader. Have a great summer, read lots of books and get plenty of sunshine. I will see you soon, whatever that means. Sight itself is another one of those things I just do not get.

***** Rediscovering Art as a Blind Person**

by Gloria Riley

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While researching our summer Newslines theme, I’ve made an amazing discovery. Not only the totally blind, but folks with low vision have found ways to apply their imagination and creativity through more than just music.

For example, many people in the blind community have found innovative techniques to express their talents by growing a personal fragrance garden, drawing, painting and sculpting. Various audio instructions are available to learn how to crochet, knit and make individually handcrafted Braille jewelry.

There is a wonderful fragrance garden in Whatcom County. Hovander Homestead Park is located at 5299 Nielsen Road in Ferndale. This award-winning garden is adjacent to the Tennant Lake Interpretive Center. Visitors are encouraged to touch, smell and enjoy the beauty of plants. The raised

beds are wheelchair accessible and have a Braille system to provide flower and plant identification for the visually impaired.

While experiencing low vision my entire life and losing most of my vision in mid-life, I never thought about how people with limited eyesight could still draw. I just assumed their artistic abilities were lost forever. “How the Blind Draw” is an excellent article written by John M. Kennedy. He stated: “Blind and sighted people use many of the same devices in sketching their current surroundings that suggest vision and touch are closely linked.” Reference: Artbeyondsight.org

Consider becoming an instructor for artistic training. Teaching strategies for students of all ages are accessible on various websites. You will find resources for materials, tools and techniques with multiple forms of instructions for the students you will serve.

Art develops cognitive skills, such as feeling the tactile difference of materials or using cotton to represent snow. Art is also a way to develop motor skills by finger painting with finger paints, shaving cream or pudding to promote finger sensitivity.

For more information, and to get a whole list of creative adaptations and free printouts, go to teachingvisuallyimpaired.com

Wonderbaby.org is a wonderful place to find sensory art projects for children.

Sculpting is a favorite because the clay is so malleable that no tools are needed, only the hands. It's a way to meditate or get lost in emotional feelings. Inspiration releases the flow of energy into creative shape and form.

Today is a perfect day to change your focus. Instead of being an observer for the rest of your life, become the artist. Start thinking about the ideas you have in your mind's eye. Reflect on anything that's been lost. Recover any pieces of your inner child that are calling out to be seen. Then, set out to reclaim it! What do you feel that you need to express?

Art is seen as beauty of the beholder, but what about the expressive beauty of the art within you?

***** Ninety Nine and Counting!**
by Anne Ridenour, with Lisa George
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A very remarkable WCB member lives in Yakima and will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of her birth in September. Anne Ridenour brings a smile to everyone she meets and doesn't know a stranger. If you've been to a WCB convention in the past several years, you may have met Anne selling raffle tickets or helping with other fundraisers. She's one of a kind.

Serendipity

Back in 2014, my daughter-in-law, Cookie, was a dental hygienist. One day, Bud Kohl came in for an appointment and they got to talking and decided I should join the bowling group at Nob Hill. Bud was president of Yakima Valley Council of the Blind at the time and a very persuasive speaker. Cookie and Bud both called me that evening to encourage me to come to Nob Hill Bowl on Friday at 11 o'clock. I did go and haven't missed many Fridays since (except for losing 53 weeks to COVID). Bud was a wonderful president who made our group No. 1 in the state. We lost him way too soon, but his legacy lives on in the motivated leaders of our Yakima Valley Council of the Blind chapter.

A couple of years ago, when I was doing nothing and had the TV on, I heard them talking about a 97-year-old female bowler with a 10-pound ball. I figured they must be talking about me – until they said she had a 200 average. Oops, that's not me.

Countdown to 100

My 99th birthday started when I got up and saw pink all over my yard – it was 99 flamingos. I was sure my youngest daughter, Barbie, was responsible, but NO, it was my good friends, Lisa and Reggie George – the couple who keeps our Yakima chapter keeping on.

We had a nice birthday dinner with my son, Ray, and his family, and then, a few days later, a BIG party with a bigger bunch of my family in Olympia. My great-granddaughter, Ella, and granddaughter, Christel, played “Happy Birthday” for me on their violin and guitar.

For Christmas, my darling family gave me a huge basket full of a paper chain. Each link has a cherished note from a family member or a friend. I open one link each morning – the minute I get up. My family made sure I’ll have one to open every day until my birthday. It’s such a great idea, I think everyone should make a chain for someone else.

Isolated no more

It’s such a happy year when you feel good and COVID is over (we hope). I finally went to the store for the first time in over a year. I told this to the gal in front of me in the checkout line and she paid for my groceries! I was glad I’d only gotten a couple of items.



The highlight of May was having my three daughters (Marilyn, Barbie, and Terri) with me at bowling one Friday with the blind group. And what do you know – I trounced all three of them with a tremendous score of 143. I was having a dizzy spell, too.

PHOTO TO LEFT:

Anne (seated) and her daughters Marilyn, Terri and Barbie holding their bowling balls after the game.

P.S.

Anne, we are so lucky to have you in our chapter. We know you are incredible!

***** You Can Teach an Old Guy New Tricks**

by Alan Biné

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What if dogs were in charge, and humans were their pets? The cost of health care would certainly be cheaper, I bet, because dogs would feed their humans only what was good for them, and people wouldn't pack on the pounds or get sick as often. Fast-food places like McDonald's and KFC would go under, but their former customers would be less likely to do the same.

Instead of sitting around watching Netflix or American Idol, we'd spend more time getting exercise down at the people park. We'd learn that big or small, black, brown, white, yellow or red, we're all really the same, including blind and visually-impaired folks. Through everyday socializing with other humans, we'd get to know everyone better and become much nicer. Before long, I think we'd all be getting along far better. Liberal or conservative, it wouldn't matter. The United Nations would be a lot more united. Peace would be given a far greater chance.

If dogs were in charge, we'd probably take fewer baths and showers, which could save our precious water, not to mention all that soap on a rope. But since we'd be eating better and getting groomed more, we'd likely be just as clean and sweet smelling as we are right now.

We'd certainly not need as much stuff, including smartphones and laptops. A Frisbee and ball perhaps would keep us eternally entertained, especially if we were among the lucky ones with owners who'd want to teach us tricks. I mean, what could be more fun than fetching or digging in the dirt? Or even better, playing dead?

Oh sure, many of us would need to get training, just like a guide dog. But wouldn't that be kind of useful? Once you mastered that irresistible begging look, you'd have your pup eating out of your bowl.

On cold rainy nights, you'd never again have to sleep on the couch, or in the doghouse, even if your girlfriend or husband happened to be mad at you. You'd have your own comfy fleece bed to curl up in. And all those pesky

bills, petty office politics, garden pests, and piles of dirty laundry? Hey, they'd no longer be your problem. Just bark at your retriever and he'd take care of it for you.

If only dogs did rule. Big sigh! I'm sure this world would be a much better place. I agree with whoever once said, "The average dog is quite a bit nicer than the average person."

***** Benefits of Blueberries, Cherries, and Cantaloupe by Leonore H. Dvorkin**

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(Note: The original version of this article was published in the August 2007 edition of a Denver print magazine called Community News. That publication no longer exists. The article has been very slightly changed for this appearance.)

Who doesn't like fruit, in all its sweet, juicy goodness? Some fruits, such as watermelon, peaches, and cantaloupe, are practically synonymous with summer. This article details some general benefits of fruit and gives specifics about blueberries, cherries, and cantaloupe.

Adequate hydration (fluid intake) is always important, but with the heat of summer upon us, it becomes especially important to avoid dehydration, which can impair the function of vital organs, such as the heart. Dehydration can cause headaches, muscle cramps, difficulty concentrating, dizziness, and other unpleasant symptoms.

We know we should drink plenty of fresh water at any time of year, but in hot weather, it's also important to replenish the electrolytes, such as potassium, that are lost in sweat. The good news is that both electrolytes and fluids are present in most fruits, along with hearty doses of vitamins and antioxidants. So you can eat your way to better health while you treat your taste buds and enjoy all those beautiful colors.

Blueberries are full of nutrition and flavor. They're at their best from May through October, but are available frozen throughout the year. I always keep a cup or so of those thawed in the refrigerator, stored in a plastic container, for heaping on cereal or spooning into yogurt.

Blueberries possess antioxidant phytonutrients called anthocyanins, which can help prevent glaucoma, varicose veins, hemorrhoids, peptic ulcers, heart disease, and cancer. Anthocyanins, which give blueberries their blue-red pigment, help the entire vascular system and enhance the effects of vitamin C. Blueberries have been shown to be more protective of the heart than either red or white wine. They can protect the brain from oxidative stress and may help reduce the effects of dementia. Blueberries are high in the soluble fiber pectin, which can help lower cholesterol. Extract of bilberry, a cousin of the blueberry, has been shown to improve night vision. Try bilberry preserves for a real taste treat.

Choose blueberries that are firm, with a uniform color and a whitish "bloom" (it protects the skin of the blueberries), and that move freely in the container if you shake it lightly. After removing any damaged berries to prevent the spread of mold, store unwashed blueberries in a container in the refrigerator. Do not wash them until just before eating, so as to avoid removing the protective bloom.

Have you ever noticed that blueberries in baked goods, such as muffins or scones, may look a bit greenish? This is a natural reaction of their pigments, and it does not make the baked goods unsafe to eat. However, blueberries do contain oxalates, which can concentrate in body fluids, where they can crystallize and cause health problems. Therefore, people with a history of kidney or gallbladder problems might wish to avoid blueberries. But for most people, blueberries are both perfectly safe and highly beneficial.

Next up are cherries. Sweet or tart, they are lovely and delicious, as well as high in antioxidants, beta carotene, and fiber. Tart cherries are even higher in antioxidants than blueberries. All forms of cherries -- fresh, dried, and frozen, as well as cherry juice -- are beneficial. Cherries have been shown to lower cholesterol, lower blood sugar and insulin, and help slow the aging process. They are also fat-free, low in calories and sodium, and high in potassium, vitamin C, and B-complex vitamins.

Tart cherries, especially the Montmorency variety, contain high levels of melatonin. You may have heard that melatonin can help slow the aging process, fight jetlag, and help regulate sleep. (My husband and I take melatonin in capsule form every night; it definitely helps us fall asleep.) I can't say I've noticed those effects from cherries, but perhaps that's because I eat mainly the sweet variety. And black cherry yogurt sends my taste buds to heaven!

Cantaloupe is the most popular melon in the United States, and fortunately for us, Colorado produces some of the best. This lovely melon is high in vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium, fiber, and niacin. Cantaloupes are best from June through August.

How do you find a ripe cantaloupe? The melon should sound hollow when you tap it and feel heavy for its size. There should be no bruises or soft spots. If the melon is unripe, the rind under the netting is greenish; if the melon is ripe, the rind has turned yellow or cream-colored. Also, you should be able to smell the fruit's sweetness.

If you buy an unripe melon, store it at room temperature for a few days. Before cutting into the rind, wash the melon. Store cut melon in the fridge in plastic wrap or a plastic container. Cut fruit, if chilled, retains almost all its nutrients for at least five to six days. That's good news for lovers of fruit salad. So, select a variety of your favorite fruits, load up a bowl, cover it with plastic wrap or put it in a plastic container with a lid, then enjoy the mixture for the next several days.

***** What's On Your Plate?
Creativity from My Kitchen
by Hayley Agers
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Welcome to my art studio, a.k.a. my kitchen.

For some, being creative comes in the form of a painting or drawing – perhaps plants selected for a garden and the spots where they are planted.

Others choose to express creativity through the clothes they wear, or the instrument they play. For me, it shows up in the form of a recipe. Truth is, when you are the wife and mum to two teenagers, who can be very picky, it requires being a little creative.

Meal prepping is a great way to allow for choices and creative meals. Meal prepping simply means setting some time aside each week to devote to cooking several ingredients. Those ingredients can then be used to make different, easy-to-put-together meals throughout the coming week. Some of the advantages are:

- **Saves you time**

When most, if not all, of your ingredients are ready to go, your time spent in the kitchen when you are hungry and ready for something amazing to eat, will be limited. Saving time can be accomplished in many ways, but two of them are washing and cutting up your fresh fruits and veggies when you bring them home from the store. The other way is preparing the individual components for each meal.

- **Saves you money**

When you meal prep, you will get better with practice, only buying the items you will be using. When you use what you have purchased, you don't have as much waste, but you also don't buy what you won't need or use. When you food prep, you love what you make and it's ready in a flash so you will spend less money on impulsive fast food or Uber Eats meals, which can be expensive, not to mention unhealthy.

- **You eat healthier**

We've all been at the point of "hangry" – angry because you are so hungry. It's usually at this point you reach for anything that will subside the craving and grumbling in the pit of your stomach. When you meal prep, your main ingredients are already in the fridge waiting for you. Therefore, you make healthier choices.

So then, what might a day of meal prep look like? This will be different for everyone, depending on your likes and dislikes, the time you are willing to commit to meal planning and prep, the availability of certain ingredients for

where you live and, let's be honest, your level of comfort with cooking. Let me encourage you by telling you that many things can be purchased already prepackaged these days. If you do not feel comfortable using a knife to shred a whole cabbage, then buy the prepacked coleslaw mix right in the produce section.

Do what works for you, and do not fall into the trap of comparing your journey to others.

Here are some of my favorites:

- **Grains such as brown rice, quinoa, farrow, wild rice**

These can be made from scratch or purchased in microwavable pouches that are done in 90 seconds, such as Uncle Ben's.

- **Beans and legumes such as black beans, pinto beans, refried beans, lentils**

These can be purchased in prepacked pouches and mostly in cans. Be sure to look for low-sodium varieties so you control the salt. If you can't find low sodium, be sure to drain and rinse before using.

- **Proteins such as meat, tofu, or chickpeas**

One of my favorite things to meal prep is several chicken breasts that I bake to use in a variety of recipes during the week. Sometimes this is steak or shrimp, too. You can buy an already cooked and cut up rotisserie chicken, cubed ham packets and even stir fry meat, cooked or uncooked. On a meat-free day for me, I love to top a big green salad with roasted chickpeas.

- **Starches, like potatoes**

I love to use sweet potatoes, or baby red potatoes in a variety of recipes for both breakfast and dinner recipes. These are great with an egg scramble, as a sweet breakfast treat, in a super foods bowl, or alongside a stir fry.

- **Fruits and veggies**

I love to have a fruit salad in my fridge at all times that I can either top with yogurt for breakfast, or serve as a healthy dessert at dinner – things like

strawberries, pineapple that you cut or buy pre-cut, watermelon, blueberries. These can be purchased already washed and cut up in a fruit tray, or even frozen, for healthy smoothies or overnight oat recipes. Veggies are much the same. Bring them home, wash, cut, and place in the fridge. You can buy them already cut up, and even find them at the salad bar, if that's what you prefer. I often make a huge sheet pan full of roasted veggies to use throughout the week.

- **Sauces and dressings**

Having several, ready-to-go sauces or dressings in your fridge will help to keep you from getting bored of the same old salad. Make the dressings right in a wide-mouth mason jar, give it a good shake and place in the fridge for when you need it. Make a tomato sauce in a blender and use it on pasta, over veggie noodles, tossed with roasted veggies, inside a calzone, or on a homemade pizza.

There is so much to discuss. Please reach out to me with any questions. If you are interested in doing a WCB Zoom meal prep call together, we can also explore that. So, finally, here are a couple of recipes.

Easy Chipotle Shrimp

- 1 lb. medium uncooked shrimp, peeled and de-veined
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- ½ tsp. cumin
- ½ tsp. chipotle powder
- Salt and pepper to taste

In a bowl with the thawed shrimp, add the olive oil, chipotle powder, cumin, salt and pepper. Toss to thoroughly coat. In a large pan, over medium high heat, cook the shrimp 2 minutes on each side.

These are great to use in super food bowls, on salads, or in shrimp tacos.

Basic Quinoa

- 1 cup of uncooked quinoa, rinsed
- 1½ cup water
- Pinch of salt

After quinoa has been rinsed in a fine mesh strainer, place it, along with the water and salt, in a medium saucepan. Bring the contents to a boil, place with a lid slightly ajar, and turn down to a simmer. Let it cook for about 8 minutes. Remove the pan from the burner, put the lid on tightly, and let stand until all of the liquid has been absorbed.

If you aren't using this as a cereal and would like it to be more savory, you could use a veggie or chicken broth in place of the water.

Easy Fruit Salad

- 2 cups of grapes, cut in half
- ½ pineapple, cut into bite-sized chunks
- 2 mangos or peaches, cut into chunks
- 2 cups of fresh strawberries, cut in half or quartered, depending on the size
- 3 kiwis, peeled and cut up
- 1 cup of fresh blueberries
- 3 mandarin oranges, peeled and segmented
- Zest of 1 lime
- Juice of that same lime
- 2 tbsp. of honey

Prepare all of the fruit and place in a large bowl. Meantime, in a small bowl, combine the lime zest, the lime juice, and the honey. Stir to combine. If you need to slightly warm the honey to make it easier to stir, you can. Drizzle the dressing over the entire salad, toss, and store in the fridge until you are ready to enjoy it. It will keep for 3 to 4 days in an airtight container.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

***** Technically Speaking – Clubhouse and Bookshare by Frank Cuta frank@cuta.net**

What do Clubhouse and Bookshare have in common? Well, they are both internet-based services. They are both tremendous treasure troves of information. They are also both very accessible. If you are an information junkie, you have probably already dipped your toes into them. But they are not just geek toys, and everyone should at least understand that they are a valuable potential resource.

Clubhouse is the newest social networking application for your smartphone. It joins the existing list that includes Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. Blind users find it particularly appealing because it is based around audio chatting. It is completely free of those pesky video annoyances.

What makes it so powerful and so attractive is that it takes you directly to information content that is personally interesting to you. It is structured around shared common interests and personalities. When you first open it, the setup process has you establish a list of your primary interests and people that you would like to associate with. This can be as restricted, detailed and focused as you want it to be. The categories range from technical to social and from business to recreational. For example, I checked the topics science fiction, disability issues and math and physics because these are the areas that I want to keep abreast of and chat about.

Now, each time I open the Clubhouse “hallway,” it is lined with rooms hosting presentations and drop-in chats on subjects that I am very likely to find interesting. I can proceed down the hallway discreetly listening to each discussion, then quietly leaving and going door to door until I find one that really grabs me. Then I can choose my level of participation. I can remain a listener or request to join the active speakers on the stage. Each room is a little mini-conference that draws you in. Clubhouse is free, powerful and engrossing, and for sure it can be addictive.

However, if you have any privacy concerns regarding social media services, Clubhouse is definitely going to raise some red flags. For example, where Facebook takes months or years to scan all of your posts to develop a detailed profile on your likes and dislikes, you just handed this same information to Clubhouse on a silver platter. Secondly, Clubhouse is, at this point, invitation-based. Before you can invite your friends to join, you must grant it access to your personal contacts list. In this way, it gains access to information about persons who have not yet joined. Clubhouse makes no bones about its intentions to make money by tracking users and selling this information. Our national organization, American Council of the Blind, is jumping in with both feet, and they have established an "ACB Club" on the service. If you want to give Clubhouse a try, let me know and I will send you an invitation.

Bookshare, on the other hand, is just a huge web-based library of accessible reading and reference material that has been developed for people with print disabilities. If you qualify for library services from NLS as your primary source of books, you also qualify for Bookshare. It's a tremendous secondary resource of over 900,000 books. Subscriptions are free for students and others normally need to purchase a subscription (more about that later). Note that most of the Bookshare materials are in some form of electronic text rather than recorded audio.

Of course, Bookshare contains a wealth of popular books in addition to the technical material, but for the purposes of this column, I am going to focus on the latter. Most of these technical books are very difficult to find anywhere else.

I performed a search on BARD/NLS for "electronics" and I received about 35 hits, but I found that only two of them actually were books that had anything to do with electronics theory. This same search on Bookshare resulted in 4,100 hits and I found that 650 of them directly applied to electronics theory. I only needed to look at the first 100 to find 30 titles that I immediately wanted to download and review. Similar searches on Bookshare yielded 146 for "guitar," 80 for "audio," 12 for "microphone," 250 on "gardening," 700 on "yoga," 220 on "automotive," 1,000 on "chemistry," 400 on "geology" and 200 on "music theory." Just like BARD, once you have

established an account, you do not need a computer or a smartphone; you can perform all of your searches and downloads from your Victor Stream.

If you want to do some serious reading on technical subjects like the above and are not a student, you may want to take advantage of a special Bookshare program currently available from Washington Talking Book and Braille Library. Danielle Miller has a limited number of free subscriptions that are available on a first-come, first-served basis. You can reach her at 800-542-0866.

***** Bits and Pieces**
Compiled by Denise Colley
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The announcement of products and services in this column does not represent an endorsement by the Washington Council of the Blind, its officers, or staff. The Newsline cannot be held responsible for the reliability of the products and services mentioned.

New from National Braille Press

National Braille Press has a wide variety of new books available for children and adults. Now available is “The Day You Begin,” by Jacqueline Woodson and Rafael López, available in contracted Braille (UEB), for ages 5 to 8. Also new is “Martin & Anne: The Kindred Spirits of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Anne Frank,” by Nancy Churnin and Yevgenia Nayberg. It’s available in contracted Braille (UEB), for ages 6-14.

Got a little baseball fan in the house?

Take a look at “Little Baseball,” by Brad Herzog and Doug Bowles. It’s available as a print-Braille board book so that even the smallest fans can enjoy a baseball book. And now that we’re well into spring, the hibernating animals are coming out of their lairs. “Old Bear,” by Kevin Henkes, also a print-Braille board book, tells how the old bear celebrates the best of all seasons, including spring’s blossoms.

New technology books

Over in the technology section are a number of brand-new books, including “Getting Started with Windows 10: Using Windows 10 with Screen Readers,” by Chris Grabowski and Kim Loftis. It is available in Braille (three slim volumes), as well as BRF, DAISY and Word. Those who are new to Windows 10 will find that this book helps demystify the operating system and shows how to use your PC in the ways that best suit your preferences. Also available is “What’s New in iOS 14: A Guide for Blind Users,” by Anna Dresner. It is available in Braille (one volume), as well as BRF, DAISY and Word. Dresner’s iOS 14 Reference Card is available to go with it.

For more information, call 800-548-7323 or visit www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/publications/index.html.

Humanware introduces new line of Brailiant BI X Braille displays

Humanware has refreshed its lineup of Braille displays, with two models that are much more feature-rich. Read, write, connect, and be more productive than ever with the new line of Brailiant BI X Braille displays. Powered by Humanware's trademark KeySoft Lite, the new BI X series of displays is the first to feature new Bluetooth 5 technology for faster and more reliable Bluetooth connectivity. This focus on productivity enhancements forms the core of the new Brailiant BI X series.

Access books and articles from Bard, Bookshare, NFB Newsline, and other sources with the included Victor Reader app. Take notes with the included KeySoft Lite Editor, then sync them to your connected iOS device with the Brailiant sync app. Customize the Brailiant BI X menu by reordering the options to be most productive for you. Read faster and more efficiently with Brailiant's exclusive thumb keys read in contracted or uncontracted Braille for an easier experience learning Braille. Connect to up to five Bluetooth devices, and one USB device simultaneously and switch between them. Listen to Daisy books, read file types including DOCX, DOC, TXT, BRF, BRL and more with 32GB internal storage. The Brailiant BI X 40 is available for \$3,195 and the Brailiant BI X 20 is available for \$1,895. For more information, contact Humanware at info@humanware.com or 800-722-3393.

From Aira: Check your app version

After June 1, Aira no longer supports versions of our app below 4.2 on iOS. This applies only to the iOS/iPhone app. Here's how to check your app's version:

- Open the Aira app.
- Tap on "More" at the bottom of the homescreen.
- Under the support heading you'll find "About," followed by the app's version number. The most recent version is 4.4.5.

How to update your app:

- Ask Siri to "Find Aira in the App Store."
- Swipe right until you find Aira, visual information on demand.
- Swipe right until you come to the "Update" button, then do a 1-finger double tap.
- You may be asked to agree to Apple's updated terms of service.
- The "Agree" button is usually at the bottom of the screen or you can swipe right to find it, then 1-finger double tap.
- You can also set up automatic updates for apps by going to Settings, App Store, App Updates and selecting the radio button to turn them on.

HISTORY

***** One Man and His Dream**

by Carl Jarvis

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The next time someone says to you, "What can I do, I'm only one person," slip them a copy of this article. Certainly, it's true that none of us live in a vacuum, but the right person at the right place in history makes all the difference in the world.

While 1961 marks the birth of our American Council of the Blind (ACB), it does not mark the beginning of our history as a national movement.

That distinction occurred in November 1940, as our nation continued to struggle under the weight of the Great Depression, and the bombing of Pearl Harbor was still over a year in the future. It was during those harsh times that local blind clubs and guilds sought relief, organizing blind associations at the state level.

One man, Dr. Jacobus tenBroek, dreamed of a national movement, a National Federation of the Blind, which could bring pressure on our federal government to support the reforms blind people so desperately needed.

And so, with a gathering of blind leaders from seven states, the National Federation of the Blind was born.

And who was this dreamer of a national movement? From Wikipedia comes the following: “Jacobus tenBroek was born on July 6, 1911, in Alberta, Canada. He was partially blind at the age of 7 due to an accident with a bow and arrow. His remaining eyesight deteriorated and he was completely blind by age 14. His mother decided to move the family to California so tenBroek could attend a state school for the blind. In 1934, tenBroek graduated from the University of California with a degree in history. He graduated with the highest honors. ... He went on to earn a master’s degree in political science and a Bachelor of Laws and Doctor of Juridical Science degree from University of California Berkeley School of Law. He continued to review honors after graduation. He was on the California Law Review, a member of the Order of the Coif, and earned a Brandeis Research Fellowship with Harvard University.”

TenBroek served on the faculty of the Chicago Law School. California Gov. Earl Warren appointed tenBroek to the California Social Welfare Board. During 1960-63 of his tenure on the board, he was chairman. During his career, he published over 50 articles. His book, “Prejudice, War and the Constitution,” received the Woodrow Wilson Award. He was with the University of California at Berkeley for 25 years, from 1942 until his death. During that time, he became full professor in 1953 and chairman of the department of speech in 1955.

During his career, he focused on subjects that were not yet being written about by scholars. He brought attention to the field of welfare and raised

awareness of the deprived citizens in society. He wrote scholarly material about the origins of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth amendments to the U.S. Constitution. His book, "The Antislavery Origins of the Fourteenth Amendment," was cited by Thurgood Marshall in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, and regularly cited by the U.S. Department of Justice. His writings affected much scholarship and attention around civil rights law and welfare rights law.

In 1934, he worked with a few others to organize the California Council of the Blind. In 1940, he began organizing the National Federation of the Blind. In 1964, he began organizing the International Federation of the Blind.

He stood for academic freedom and opposed the loyalty oath in the 1950s.

His 1958 book critiqued the Supreme Court's decision regarding the imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II. TenBroek was supportive of the free speech movement, which was a student protest taking place on the University of California Berkeley campus to support the freedom of students to protest or host other political activities.

TenBroek wrote in his 1966 article, "The Right to Live in the World: The Disabled in the Law of Torts," that the doctrines in the law of torts should be reviewed and revised to address the modern integration of disabled people into society.

In 1965, I was at a low ebb – newly blind with a wife and small daughter, and no idea of how to go about earning a living. I had just entered the Orientation and Training Center, and someone handed me a packet of records. It was a collection of speeches delivered by Jacobus tenBroek, mostly addresses he'd delivered at NFB conventions. Brilliant! I was so moved that I sought out the local chapter of the Washington State Association of the Blind, and joined.

I never met tenBroek in person, but I felt in him a ray of hope. It was tenBroek who inspired me to enter the field of work with the blind.

People who knew tenBroek and worked closely with him in the Federation told me that he was a bit of an elitist. How much he influenced the structure

of the NFB is unknown to me, but Kenneth Jernigan certainly was a controller and an elitist.

And yet, as much as I came to disagree with, and even dislike Jernigan, he was a strong voice for the blind. But the lie that I could not get past was that the organization was a grassroots organization, the blind leading the blind. Even before Jernigan and the board kicked Washington out of the national organization, we had been regularly involved in disagreements with the leadership, especially Jernigan. Every important item was controlled. And yet, even though I had the beginning of uneasiness, there was a sense of success in the air.

Back then, I was very intense and a bit rigid in my views of what an organization of the blind should look like. But I like to believe that I have learned a thing or two over the years, and I like to think that had tenBroek lived longer, he would have also grown more flexible, and even embraced some of us left-wing progressives.

***** History Quiz**
by Carl Jarvis
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For many of us, the Washington Council of the Blind (WCB) is like an old, comfy pair of slippers. But before you become too cozy and begin nodding off, here's a very basic question. What is the mission statement for the WCB?

Answer: The answer is found in the following December 2008 editorial by Gaylen Floy:

“It never hurts to re-articulate the council’s mission statement. ‘The Washington Council of the Blind is a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to promoting opportunity, equality and independence in the blind community through education, public awareness and advocacy.’

“This year, I heard a few people be very critical of the council. It was painfully evident that these people had not made an honest effort to attend a board meeting or find out what our volunteers accomplish on a regular basis. It chaps my hide!

“When board member Alan Bentson visited my chapter a couple years ago, he shared what prompted him to join and get involved. He observed that the council affords people a safe and nurturing place to participate in a democratic process. If you’ve never attended a WCB board meeting, I would encourage you to give it a try.

“As much as I dislike sitting through meetings, this is where a member sees the real work of our organization. It is accountability and transparency in action. We can be proud and grateful for how resources are managed and invested. Let your board members and committee members know how much you appreciate their time and hard work.

“I would challenge each of you to consider serving on one of the state committees this next year. It is an opportunity to learn, get acquainted and contribute new energy. Oh, and, thank you!”

Question: From out of the dim past, who was Perry Sundquist?

Answer: Here in the 21st century, we tend to take for granted our strong blind organization, the WCB. It’s easy to overlook the struggles of blind men and women during the early years of the 20th century. But those men and women, caught up by negative stereotypes of the day, understood the value of building a strong blind organization. Building a strong organization took strong men and women. And strong men and women, as it turned out, did not need keen eyesight in order to become leaders and visionaries.

The following is from the October 1968 Braille Monitor.

“Past president of the National Federation, pioneer leader of the organized blind movement in California, veteran administrator of a model state welfare division – Perry Sundquist has played a distinguished role in the social progress of the blind over the past generation.

“Born in 1904 in Minnesota, Sundquist received his early education in the schools of Canada and Washington, and later moved to California to enroll at the famous school for the blind in Berkeley, where he studied under the late Dr. Newel Perry and first developed his interest in the educational and organizational cause of the blind. ...

“His long years of association with the National Federation of the Blind were culminated with his election to the first vice presidency in July 1961, and his elevation to the presidency some months later, an office which he held until his resignation in July 1962 – followed by his election to a two-year term on the NFB’s Executive Committee, renewed in 1964 and 1966, and to fill an unexpired term in 1968.

“Sundquist’s career in public welfare work with the blind goes back to 1935, when he was appointed by the California Department of Education to conduct a statewide study of the blind. In 1941, he became chief of the Division for the Blind, California Department of Social Welfare – a post in which he served with skill and distinction. His contributions as an outstanding administrator were given recognition in 1959 when the National Federation of the Blind conferred upon him its Newel Perry Award, and again in 1964 when he received the Citation of the California Council of the Blind. ...

“In April 1968, Sundquist was appointed editor of the Braille Monitor. On June 30, 1968, he retired from the position of chief of the division for the blind after 27 years of service to the State of California.”

Sundquist lived until 1987, and helped to start one of the most progressive programs available to blind people in the country, California Aid to the Blind.

Question: In what year did ACB become a national organization, and who is credited as having founded that national movement?

Answer: The answer would seem to be 1961 but, in fact, our ACB organization came out of the National Federation of the Blind during a time of growing philosophical disagreements.

The first national organization of blind men and women dates back to November 1940. Many future ACB members were part of that new organization, the National Federation of the Blind, the dream of founder Dr. Jacobus tenBroek.

In 1941, the Washington State Association of the Blind, organized in 1935, joined the new NFB, and remained a member chapter until another philosophical difference brought about a parting of the ways. Renamed as the United Blind of Washington (1980-1990), the UBW remained independent until merging with the Washington Council of the Blind in 1990. WCB was organized in 1971, in part as a result of the ACB's growing national influence.

Eternal vigilance is the price for a democratic organization. In order to have a strong democracy, the people must insist on educating their youth in the value of such a form of self-rule. The work of ensuring a people's democracy is in the trenches, the day-to-day work each of us must put in if we are to advance our form of self-rule.

Because of our human nature and the sort of society we live in, democracy always hangs in the balance, pulled this way and that as each generation becomes worn out and sees their resolve weaken. To my way of thinking, democracy is holding its own in the Washington Council of the Blind. Look at the work being done at the committee level. Look at the direction provided by local efforts. We should be looking for ways to strengthen this action, to build it up, to hold it up as something the organization does for all of us.

We live in a world where strongmen lurk, waiting for a crack through which they can slink. Instead of being charmed by them, we need to educate our next generation regarding the pitfalls of "strongman" leadership. Shared labor is the real value of democracy over any other form of government.

ADVOCACY AND LEGISLATION

***** Chronicles of the Happy Warrior #8**

“Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life” –

Pablo Picasso

by Mark Adreon

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“Mom, why can’t I touch it?” asked the young girl. Her 7 years of life made her curious, and she needed to understand why you can’t touch the art.

Sarah’s mom tried to explain that art was to be enjoyed from a distance, and people are not supposed to touch it.

“It is a red bird made from a shiny metal,” her mother shared. Sarah and her mother moved on.

Years passed, and Sarah took a normal path of education, learning about the people around her. She was tuned in to the cultural norms, and society’s expectations and restrictions. In other words, she led a common upbringing.

What was interesting, and made Sarah feel like a rebel, was that if a situation presented itself, where a statue, sculpture, or a piece of wall art was of interest to her, she began to devise a covert enterprise to achieve her goal. She was going to touch this art. “Catch me if you can,” she said to herself, as she put her plan into action. As she touched the art, she could feel metal, curves, shapes and angles, yet the nature of the art piece was still a mystery to her. The 10-foot red bird, with its details and graceful flow, its powerful yet delicate and soft features, was clearly created to be understood from a distance.

Sarah, now a young woman of 19, blind and still curious, sits in the art studio with hammer and chisel in hand. She has spent weeks creating a bird in flight. Using red eagle limestone, she taps the chisel, and then feels the cut in the stone, and plans her next cut. She sees so clearly her bird in flight

that she is confident every hit of the hammer is in perfect alignment with her vision.

Art is a statement, emotion, wish, anger, thoughtful, a communication, a fear, an expression of love, and intended to speak to the soul of those that embrace it. Many artists cannot begin to tell you who their audience is for the works they create. Many artists are feeling or expressing their thoughts through the art they create. They are unconcerned if others understand or appreciate their work. They are gratified to find those that say the work speaks to them. There is the sense of accomplishment when people reach deep inside themselves to explain what they are feeling, experiencing, or understanding.

Each person will incorporate their impressions or learnings from their art experiences, and share it consciously or unconsciously, perhaps changing a stranger's path or enriching one's relationships.

There are times that art in any form rises to the status of changing the ethos. Society's embrace of art reflects through history how a culture, group or nation experienced their time, often sharing the feelings and emotions, aspirations and fears. An artifact can be a day-to-day item that is commonplace for daily chores, like carrying water, or storing grain. The finding of an ancient clay pot can show a tool for a utilitarian function in the lives of ancient people. This finding would be of interest to archaeologists or historians, to understand the nature of the society.

That same piece of pottery might have been the work of an artist, showing the society's feelings on issues of their day. It could be war, love, power, or the gods. The artwork glazed to the pots provides a glimpse into societal lived experience. This window into the soul of and from the ancient people's culture, is the human connection to history, not just intellectual understanding of it. The expressions on the pot make an artifact a piece of art.

If art is only for those who can see or appreciate from a distance, leaving parts of the society out of this important part of culture, the soul of the culture is denied. Art is more than something to "look at" and is an important voice in the feelings, emotions, ideas, thoughts, battles, and the color of life.

For this to be denied to people in real time is saying, “You don’t need to be bothered with the soul of the life we are living. I will tell you what you need to know, and hope it has meaning for you.”

People who are blind, use hearing aids, or are deaf, use mobility devices, and those that process in alternative ways, should also be allowed to be part of the soul of our lives together. To be part of those conversations that do not have agreed-upon answers or solutions. To experience the challenge of understanding the deeper emotional issues that impact individuals and our society at large. Yes, the privilege to dust off our souls.

As Sarah descends from the platform back to the floor of the studio, she pats her apron to get rid of the red limestone dust that she is covered in. She puts her tools away and calls for her guide, Picasso. She puts Picasso’s harness on and prepares to leave. For a short minute, she remembers her mother’s rule to not touch the art. She can’t help but chuckle at the irony of this lesson not adhered to.

Valdemar Estates Winery: Part One
***** That All May Eat, Drink, and Be Merry**
by Heather Meares
hdmeares@gmail.com

Almost 2 years ago, I received an email from Valdemar Estates Winery in Walla Walla, asking if I would be willing to consult with them and discuss ways they could become more inclusive and accessible for people with all types of disabilities. Yes, yes, and yes! This, of course, got my adrenaline pumping, and my mind was flooded with potential ideas. Full of excitement, I met with them for the first time to hear their story. Little did I know this would be the beginning of an incredible journey.

I met with David Brauhn, marketing director, and Kaleigh Brook, general manager, and we talked about so many things, like menus that could be read in Braille or digitally, and QR codes that could be scanned with smartphones to hear tasting notes about specific wines or special features

in the winery. Website accessibility, audio-described videos, and how people with visual impairments could best navigate the facility were all big topics. Soon after this meeting, we brought in Reg George to help with website testing and other technical aspects. But what I really wanted to know was why they reached out to me in the first place. In my experience, many businesses only do this as an after-thought, when someone has complained or legal action is being pursued. I was pleasantly surprised, and dare I say overjoyed, to find that this is a huge project they are choosing to take on... wait for it...because it is important to them. And it actually started in Spain, at Bodegas Valdemar five generations ago.

Here are some excerpts from their website to explain:

“Valdemar Estates is the first internationally owned winery to open in Washington State. It is one of the few wineries in the U.S. that has a full restaurant, as well as a tasting room. Valdemar Estates is owned by the Martínez Bujanda family, which operates the Bodegas Valdemar winery in Rioja, Spain. In 2018, Bodegas Valdemar became the first winery in Europe to offer a 100 percent inclusive wine tourism experience, an initiative that has earned numerous awards. Valdemar Estates is working to become the first winery in the United States to offer a 100 percent inclusive and accessible experience for all guests. Our Walla Walla, Wash., winery, tasting room, and restaurant have implemented extensive measures to ensure that guests – regardless of ability – are able to enjoy the facility.

These efforts include:

- Use of QR codes throughout the building, which link to web pages that relate information via American Sign Language, dictation, and text.
- Fully inclusive tours.
- Website and printed material set in a hyper-legible font designed for those with low vision.
- Wine-tasting notes that use icons and easy-to-understand descriptions of flavors and aromas.
- Braille wine and food menus
- Availability of Braille labelling for wine bottles.
- Shatterproof wine glasses and hands-free holders.
- Wheelchair availability.

- Staff member training for serving guests of all ability levels.”

As you can see, most of the original concepts we discussed at that very first meeting have been implemented. The project will be ongoing, as the work is never really done, according to David. There are more exciting plans for the future, including blending classes and tours, which we hope to capture in more podcast episodes. This episode of our podcast, “WCB Newsline Unleashed,” is a gathering to taste some delicious wine, Spanish tapas, indulge ourselves with Basque cheesecake, and have an open conversation to test new features and give feedback. We also explored their fantastic water feature on the veranda. At the table, you will hear Kaleigh Brook, David Brauhn, Heather Meares, Cindy Maywalt, and Reg George. As for myself, it has been an experience I never would have guessed I would have. I have enjoyed every moment thus far, and will continue working with them as long as needed. And maybe, someday, I will make it to Spain to check out Bodegas Valdemar – a girl can dream, right?

To access the episode, go here: <https://tinyurl.com/yz9jbcas>

To learn more about Valdemar Estates Winery, visit the website at <https://valdemarestates.com/>

***** Accessibility in the Arts for Blind and Low-vision Patrons**
by Elizabeth Ralston, Accessibility Consultant
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As an accessibility consultant, I have been helping clients and the arts community figure out how to intentionally integrate accessibility practices within their programs, spaces and events.

I usually begin by asking the question: Can everyone access the materials you are sharing? Can people with vision issues access a video that has images or action happening without any dialogue? Can people with hearing loss access a video with spoken dialogue? And for those with invisible disabilities and neuro-diverse conditions (e.g. autism, post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, anxiety, etc.) -- is it communicated well in

advance if there are any content warnings, such as loud noises or strobe lights?

Whatever strategies an organization adopts for accessibility will benefit EVERYONE, not only people with disabilities. This inclusive design perspective is essential when planning programs from the very beginning. That way no one is left out of being able to enjoy the arts. As someone with a public health background, I think a lot about how health and equity shows up in someone's life: being part of arts and culture enhances health and well-being; intersectionality within disability; and frequency of accessibility offerings. For example, I would love to be able to attend any performance on any day I want to, just like anyone else. But if captioning is only available for one show during the whole run of that show, that is not equitable.

I also share that there is diversity within disability. What works for one person who is blind may not work for someone else with a vision issue. In my case, as a person with hearing loss who uses cochlear implants to hear, speak, and read lips, I do not benefit from ASL interpretation. I do benefit from captions and assistive listening devices. Regardless, I tell people that you have to meet the person where they are, and be open and curious about their needs.

I coach clients on how to make their virtual meetings, presentations and shows welcoming and inclusive to all. One strategy is for speakers to introduce themselves with their pronouns (she/her, they/them), and state a visual description of themselves and surroundings to give people with vision issues a sense of space and place. This also helps people who are calling in to a meeting or event to get a better sense of who is talking.

Panelists are encouraged to state their name every time they start speaking, for the same reason, to help those with disabilities follow along. As a person with hearing loss, I appreciate being able to track the conversation better. This also helps those with cognitive or vision issues.

I also advocate for good color contrast, large font (20 pt. or larger), sans serif fonts, alt-text or image descriptions, reading the chat comment and all text on slides.

The biggest part of making sure that the arts are accessible to people of all abilities is to make sure communication strategies include this information. You can do all this great work to make a show accessible, but if you don't tell the disability community about it, then no one will come. And it is important to build up trust in the community, so don't be surprised if no one shows up at first. Unfortunately, we live in a society whose structures were created from ablest perspectives.

The deaf/blind population is often left out of accessibility conversations. This group, which relies on tactile interpreters, can experience art through transcripts, large print, adequate lighting, and even audio description in some cases.

I started the Seattle Cultural Accessibility Consortium in late 2018 with the intention of designing and implementing programs that educate the arts community about accessibility. The consortium presents three workshops and three Consortium Connection events each year. These networking events are an opportunity for the arts community to discuss and brainstorm accessibility solutions. We are working on outreach strategies to encourage the disability community to join these sessions so that patrons have the opportunity to give feedback to arts staff about their access experiences.

Here are some examples of organizations that are working to integrate accessibility into their spaces, programs and events:

Disability Rights Washington (DRW)

DRW is a nonprofit organization in Seattle, whose mission is to advance the dignity, equality, and self-determination of people with disabilities. The organization works to pursue justice on matters related to human and legal rights. During DRW's fundraiser last year, every piece of that event was diligently planned and thought through, from where it would be live-streamed (Kirkland Performing Arts Center), how videos would be accessible, to who could participate in this event. They had audio description for all of their pre-recorded videos. A staff member who worked on this event shared with me that the audio description actually enhanced her perception of the event. As someone who uses glasses, she realized there was a lot of detail that she would have missed had there been no audio description.

Sound Theatre Company (STC)

Sound Theatre Company is a performing arts organization in Seattle that is really pushing the envelope when it comes to accessibility. It has a radical inclusion ticket pricing system to make shows accessible to all. You can purchase a ticket at any price point that works for you and you can work with the accessibility coordinator to find seating that meets your needs. At one of its shows, STC had a touch tour activity on stage before the show began. This allowed people to explore the stage props, feel the costumes, talk to the actors, and get a general idea of what the production was like.

Virtual tours at art museums for blind or low-vision patrons have been extremely popular at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. The museum held access tours in-person before the museum closed due to the pandemic. The museum also does highly descriptive audio tours. The person who worked on this program said, "I believe that all people benefit from highly descriptive art lectures." A part of their success had to do with successful collaboration with community partners and leadership buy-in.

Advocating for accessibility in the arts is crucial for blind and low-vision patrons. By speaking up about your needs, the arts community will become more aware of the changes that must be made as art is created, from the very beginning of the planning process.

The Kids Are Alright

***** Youth Speaks**

by Luke Uniack

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Hello, my name is Luke Uniack. This is my Youth Speaks column. A little bit about me: I just finished my sophomore year of high school and what a year it has been. Ever since the pandemic quarantine started over a full year ago, I've felt I haven't been able to find my proper footing since we've been in isolation. It is because of this that I am looking forward to what the future has to bring, with everything beginning to go back to a new normal, and for

all of us to finally feel like we have some sort of consistency in our lives once again.

I'm very fortunate to go to a school that was prepared for COVID, and I was even able to be there in person for the last two months of my sophomore year. I was finally able to connect with my friends and teachers in person again. I finally started to look forward to going to school each day. It's because of this that I'm so excited for the future and everything that it will bring as we all journey forward together towards a better tomorrow.

But that's enough about me, I have some extremely exciting news to share with all of you – that I've been able to be a part of the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library (WTBBL).

If you don't know, WTBBL is the statewide library that serves blind and visually-impaired readers from all across Washington State. It serves anyone who can't read standard print books. WTBBL is a really important place to me, and the library has changed my life in an extremely profound way.

Since this edition of Newsline is focusing on art, it is only appropriate to tell you about an art installation that has just been officially finished at WTBBL. The installation consists of 37 handprints created by youth patrons from all across Washington State, ranging from small handprints from toddlers to larger handprints from teenagers like me. The handprints are made with glue, sand and glitter. They've been hung on the wall without glass so that they are all tactile and can be appreciated by everyone who enters the library.

I have had this project in my mind for years, and I am so happy to have spearheaded the effort to bring it to life. I have been in Boy Scouts since fifth grade and have aspired to become an Eagle Scout for a long time. It takes a lot of work to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout, and this art installation at WTBBL, in addition to being an awesome piece of art, is also my Eagle Scout project. I want to thank Danielle Miller, WTBBL director, who sponsored the project and has worked with me on it for literally years now, and the youth librarian Erin Groth, who worked closely with me on so many aspects of the project.

My original concept, before the pandemic, was to have an in-person workshop where we would have made hand molds from youth patrons. They would have been three dimensional, and we would have then mounted them on the wall and made them into an art installation.

When the pandemic hit, the team at WTBBL and I realized that we wouldn't be able to have an in-person workshop, and we would have to rethink the project with the quarantine in mind. We thought for a long time and eventually came up with the idea of handprints instead, made from kits that could be mailed out to all of the youth patrons. Then, the finished handprints would be mailed back to the library.

At first, I was bummed that we had to move from 3-D hand molds to handprints, but overall I think that it's still really great because we were able to get more participation from patrons than we would have gotten had it been an in-person event. Some people wouldn't have been able to travel to Seattle for the workshop, and so this way every youth patron from every corner of Washington was able to have a chance to participate.

But that's what art often is – something that evolves and changes along the way as the artist or artists change and grow, as well, and in the end is different than what was originally pictured. Many times, like in life, the artist doubts themselves during the making of the art. I want to take this time to

thank my parents for encouraging me and telling me the project was going to turn out great when I doubted myself. Sometimes, like in the case of my art installation project, the end result turns out even better than planned, and the art involves many people behind the scenes working their hardest and giving their all to the project to fully bring it to fruition.



Photo to left:

Mounted on a wall, five framed handprints surround a sign that reads: "Lend A Hand So That All May Read"

To me, this project will forever be a symbol of teamwork, resilience, and learning that artists and leaders sometimes need to pivot and shift their thinking. It will be a symbol of something really good that came out of this difficult pandemic time. And the title, which is “Lend A Hand So That All May Read,” truly describes what the library staff do every day for their patrons. They help us gain access to books that can take us to another world, help us learn about the world around us, be inspired by history, and so much more.

I hope once we are back doing more things in person, you can visit WTBBL and experience the art installation for yourself. Art is something that is meant to be experienced.

***** Tails & Tales at WTBBL**

by Erin Groth

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Erin Groth has served as the Youth Services Librarian at The Washington Talking Book & Braille Library since 2017. Originally from Florida, Erin moved to Seattle after working as a Children’s Librarian in Tallahassee. She earned her Master’s in Library & Information Studies from Florida State University, and her Bachelor’s in Fine Art and English Literature from Florida Southern College. Erin currently serves on several committees for the national Collaborative Summer Library Program, is Chair of the Teen Services Manual for CSLP, and is part of Seattle’s ADA Workgroup.

Get ready to learn about all kinds of animals – big and small, real and imaginary. The Washington Talking Book and Braille Library will host several online events this summer as part of “Tails & Tales,” the 2021 summer reading program. This program lasts from July-September and features eight weekly activity packets mailed directly to participants in Early Literacy, Children’s, and Teen’s categories. Though the registration window for the by-mail program is closed, we wanted to share the list of events happening over the next few months here, as well. Anyone is invited to our Zoom events, whether you are a registered participant or not. Please

contact Youth Services Librarian Erin Groth at erin.groth@sos.wa.gov or 206-615-1253 for more information.

All Zoom links and call-in numbers are found at wtbbl.org.

- Friday, July 16, 7-8 p.m., WTBBL Pet Parade. Show off your animal friends. All ages and pets welcome. Via Zoom.
- Thursday, July 22, 7-8 p.m., WTBBL Teen Hangout. Teens and tweens discuss their favorite books of 2021, best characters of all time, worst things they've ever read, and more. Via Zoom.
- Saturday, Aug. 7, 11 a.m.-noon. Pasado's Safe Haven Rescue animal meet and greet. Children and families welcome. Via Zoom.
- Saturday, Aug. 14, 11 a.m.-noon. Pasado's Safe Haven Rescue animal meet and greet. Teens and adults welcome. Via Zoom.
- Saturday, Aug. 21, 11 a.m.-noon. Meet a vet from Guide Dogs for the Blind. All ages. Via Zoom.
- Friday, Aug. 27, 7-8 p.m. Summer reading wrap-up party. All ages welcome. Via Zoom.
- In-Person: Kitsap Regional Library. Bainbridge Island Branch collaborated with WTBBL to bring multisensory story walks all June, July, and August long.

BRAIN FOOD

***** Noteworthy Blogs**

Art in Blindness

by Beth Greenberg

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When the theme for this issue came up of art washing away the dust of everyday life, I was excited to write about it. I am not sure if you all know that I am partially sighted – that is, legally blind. I enjoyed art class in middle and high school. In my late teens and early 20s, I would draw and sketch.

I began working and dropped this hobby. In the past five years or so, I have found some apps that allow you to color on your phone. Unfortunately, I haven't found any that are accessible with voiceover. I feel like the coloring helps calm me down so I can focus on what I am listening to. I often wind up listening to an audio book, or hopefully a described TV show, and coloring. I even used to latch-hook in my teens and early 20s, but need to pick that up again.

Did you know that American Council of the Blind has a Friends in Art affiliate, FIA for short? FIA is for artists who sing, play musical instruments, dance, paint, sculpt, carve, etch, knit, crochet, quilt, or who write literature of any kind. Each year, FIA hosts a performing-arts showcase at the ACB conference and convention, as well as an art parlor, where artists can display (and perhaps sell) their artwork. FIA artists are painters (watercolor, oil, pastel, and acrylic), sculptors, work in soft fibers (such as yarn), and much more. You can read more about this group at www.friendsinart.org. NFB also has a Performing Arts Division. You can find them at www.nfb-pad.org.

The art theme can be so broad. I have six of them here to read about. Sins Invalid is a disability-justice-based performance project that incubates and celebrates artists with disabilities, centralizing artists of color and LGBTQ/gender-variant artists. Sins Invalid's performance work explores the themes of sexuality, embodiment and the disabled body, developing provocative work where paradigms of "normal" and "sexy" are challenged, offering instead a vision of beauty and sexuality inclusive of all bodies and communities. From the group: "We define disability broadly to include people with physical impairments, people who belong to a sensory minority, people with emotional disabilities, people with cognitive challenges, and those with chronic/severe illness. We understand the experience of disability to occur within any and all walks of life, with deeply felt connections to all communities impacted by the medicalization of their bodies, including trans, gender variant and intersex people, and others whose bodies do not conform to our cultures' notions of 'normal,' or 'functional.'"

Sins Invalid is in the San Francisco Bay area and teaches, as well as performs different arts such as music and dance. On its website,

www.sinsinvalid.org, they do have clips of performances, as well as audio clips of music.

To continue on the topic of performing arts: Have you ever thought about being an actor? I read an article from Paramount saying they will start being more inclusive with hiring disabled actors for big and small screen roles. I like this quote that they had: "We understand that increasing auditions, no matter the size of the role, is a critical step toward achieving inclusion in the industry."

In the article, they also commented that Viacom/CBS has made this commitment. Okay, I am going to date myself here. But, when I was growing up and watching "Little House on the Prairie," I remember seeing a blind gentleman, Tom Sullivan. I felt like he was the only blind actor when I was growing up.

When I was a teen, I was a fan of the original MacGyver. I was excited to hear that Dana Elcar, who played Pete, was able to continue to act as Pete even after he had gone blind. Elcar lost his sight due to glaucoma. It is nice to see more disabled actors playing roles of disabled people.

I found a blog post about Ana Cristina, a deaf/blind lady who started her own company to make jewelry. It's really good. Her story is called "There Aren't Any Shortcuts to Make Beautiful Things," and may be found here: http://blindnewworld.org/blog/there_arent_any_shortcuts_to_make_beautiful_things/

I Googled "blind sculptor" and found a bunch of YouTube videos, as well as an article/new release about Michael Naranjo and his Please Touch exhibit being shown in Indianapolis. Michael has 30 sculptures that he encourages people to touch, where most exhibits say do not touch. The exhibit is now closed, but if you want to read more about the exhibit and Michael Naranjo, see here: <https://eiteljorg.org/news-release-beautiful-sculptures-by-blind-native-american-sculptor-are-a-multisensory-experience/>.

We also know some of the musical artists like Stevie Wonder, Ray Charles, Ronnie Millsap, and Jeff Heely singing and playing instruments like pianos and guitars.

There is a blind photographer, Pete Eckert, who uses sound vibrations to help him make his phantom/ghostly photos at his home studio. CNN has an article about him and his art called “Life through the lens of a blind photographer”:

<https://www.cnn.com/style/article/pete-eckert-blind-photographer/index.html>.

You can find more about him and his art at www.peteeckert.com. On the front of his website, there are some images of his photos. I like the ones he has of a yellow car with a ghostly image of the wind around it, or the one of the yellow car from above looking down. There are flames all around the car that go from the front tires to the back and around the tail bumper.

I don't know if life ever slows down enough to find the time to do the things that you love or have a passion for such as art, but you need to make the time.

Writing this article makes me feel like picking up a sketchbook and pencil and starting to draw. I am sure you can find an art that you are passionate about starting, even by taking a class at the local college or art studio.

***** Podtastic Casts**
by Reginald George
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Today I want to focus on the podcasts provided by Hadley Institute under the name “Hadley Presents.” Over the last 50 years, Hadley has served more than 150,000 blind and visually impaired people with free and low cost continuing education and skill-building resources for adjusting to and thriving as a visually impaired person.

A few years ago they realized they would have to reinvent themselves for the 21st century. These podcasts are one of the manifestations of that change, and they are fantastic. Ricky Enger is the host. She is a skilled dynamic interviewer who brings out the best in her subjects. They also have many free discussion lists and keep in touch with their graduates around the world.

From the Hadley podcast page:

“Listen in as we get the inside scoop from experts on a wide range of topics unique to vision loss. We will ask the questions that get to the heart of the matter for you... And have some fun along the way.”

The current episode introduces a company called Accessible Pharmacy that is licensed in Washington State, and provides accessible packaging, Braille, large print, or whatever is required, at no extra cost. One of the owners is blind and holds a PHD in marketing.

Do make some time to sample the various podcasts, or at least read the show notes and transcripts. If you hear something you like, most of the guests welcome contact from anyone and are happy to give encouragement and share their knowledge and advice. There is so much more content available here than I can convey in these few words.

Recent topics included audio description resources for national parks, impacts of vision loss on marriage, tips from a low vision doctor, working in the kitchen, easy home repairs, using hand tools, combating isolation, support groups, a retina specialist discussing macular degeneration, raising future guide dogs, becoming socially confident after vision loss, travel, hand writing, and much more. All of these are listed as headings, making the page very easy to navigate with a screen reader.

On an episode called “Painting Blind” we meet world renowned artist John Bramblitt. He takes us on his journey from completely losing his vision in college, to traveling around the world teaching visually impaired children and adults how to paint. He describes the techniques he uses to make colors something that you can feel, and what drove him to continue to express himself even though there might only be one successful effort for ten paintings. One aspect that impressed me is his level of discipline. He draws and paints 8 to 14 hours a day, just like a concert pianist.

John’s family and art were the things that kept him from feeling disabled. When he lost his ability to create art along with his sight, even though he was adjusting on the surface, inside he experienced much anger and frustration.

John had an epiphany that if he could find ways to adapt the tactile techniques he was learning to recognize to help him navigate with his cane in mobility and convert those to something he could feel and create with paint, he could paint pictures again. Once he understood how much his cane was an extension of his fingers, he found ways to take his art to an unprecedented level of detail and beauty that has won him awards and acclaim around the world.

John says, the more I paint, the easier it is for me to get around in the actual world. And the more that I get around in the actual world, the more it helps my painting.”

“This is something that we've started teaching children in schools for the blind all over the country, and actually the US is sending us outside of the country to go to other places. It's incredible because these children will learn how to paint. You know, this first time in history you have non-visual, visual artists. You have children who are visually impaired actually learning how to paint and it's affecting their life. It's making it where they can get up from their chair. They can walk around the room, they can do whatever they want, and they can do it independently. And it's all because of art. And I'm such a nerd. I'm such a fan of art that it just, every time I think about that, it just gives me a warm feeling.” ...

“I work with museums all over the country- work with the Metropolitan, Guggenheim, dozens and dozens of museums. And I do a workshop where I blindfold people. And I showed them how to paint the way that I paint. And I do it in about five minutes. And in about five to ten minutes, everybody's painting. ... And we're doing like cartoon sort of characters.

“Color is the most fun now. And I thought it was going to be the hardest thing because how in the world do you pick colors and control colors and mix colors if you can't see them? I thought that just sounds crazy, but it's actually really, really easy, and there's several ways to do it. But the most fun way is by changing the way the color feels. So, I'll take different mediums and mix it in with the paint. So, what a medium is, well, when you have paint like if you just, if you break paint down to the very basics, you have the color, and then you have the stuff that holds the color together which is like the medium, it's a sticky stuff. But you can actually change that

sticky stuff. You can change the medium and you can make it looser. You can make it runny. You can make it feel like water or like satin. You can make it really thick where it's like putty or even so, so hard and thick that it's almost like stone. You've got a carving. So, you've got this wonderful range of different textures that you can use. So, I can mix a medium into my white to make it really thick and gummy where it feels almost like toothpaste. So yeah, I've got this very, very thick white, that I can mix a different medium in with my black, and make it feel like oil. So, it's really runny and it's really oily feeling. And because I had these two colors on my palette that are so different. If I touch the thick paint, I know it's got to be white. There's no way it's black. So it makes it really easy to know which color is which. But if I want to mix the colors, it also helps with that. Because if I want it gray halfway between the black and the white, I just mix for the texture, the feel of it, that's halfway between the way the white feels and the black feels. ...

“Our hands are fantastic at being able to feel detail. We have over 200 touch receptors on the pad of each finger, and their whole job is just to feel the viscosity of things and how thick and how thin they are. ...

“We can touch things and move things around without having to look at them all the time. If you think about it you actually use this a lot in your day-to-day life.

“Perception actually takes place in your brain. It doesn't take place in your eyes. The same struggles that you have as a non-visual artist are the same ones you have as a visual artist. You're trying to take your thoughts, your ideas, your emotions, you know from inside of you and put them outside so that other people can understand them as well. And it takes a lot of practice, and it takes an intense amount of failure.

I think that's one of the most important things is that you need to be failing and you need to fail a lot, you know and then you need to be okay with it. And take those mistakes and just go with it. ... It's incredible how much your failure will push you forward. And the great thing about art is that people don't really see your failure. You just show them the successes. You've got the 10 paintings hanging in the gallery. They're all nice. You don't see the hundred back in the studio that are crazy.”

Bramblitt.com is his personal web site, and he is also Bramblitt on Facebook and Instagram. The podcast itself may be found at <https://hadley.edu/podcasts/hadley-presents-conversation-experts/painting-blind>

For more information on Accessible Pharmacy, call 215-799-9900

WCB HAPPENINGS

***** The Aging and Blindness Committee Presents: Tips and Tricks Compiled by Alco Canfield**

We had many little ideas. So, we have combined them in this article. We welcome any tips you may have. Send them to: alcocanfield@gmail.com
Thanks. Enjoy.

Holly Kaczmariski -- Cooking Waltham Squash

I have a brief list of cooking tips for cooking Waltham butternut squash, which is my favorite squash:

- Wash the outside to get off the dirt if there is any.
- Poke a large slit in the squash with a sharp knife to allow air to escape.
- Place the entire squash in a microwave-safe bowl in about 1 inch of water. Cook on high for approximately 3 to 5 minutes until it is soft.
- Remove the squash from the microwave carefully as it will be hot. Cut lengthwise into two halves with a sharp knife. Place back in the microwave cut side down in the water.
- Cook additional time on high until the skin appears to be soft and pliable. Continue cooking until it is the desired softness.
- Remove squash from the microwave carefully. Scoop out the seeds using a spoon or your fingers if it has been allowed to cool. Remove the skin which should come off easily.

Now you are ready to prepare the squash in any way you like. Cutting it up into cubes makes it cook more easily and then it can be served with butter or smashed like mashed potatoes or any way you desire. All done. Enjoy.

Alco Canfield -- Skinning Potatoes Without Peeling

“But most of the vitamins are in the skin,” you may protest. That’s true, but for those who like potatoes without the skin, this may help. I hate peeling potatoes. So, I came up with an alternative.

Boil the potatoes and when tender, strain with a colander and cover potatoes with just enough cold water to cool the outside. Peel with fingers. The inside of the potatoes will still be hot. After peeling, place in a bowl to mash. If the potatoes are too cool, you can nuke in the microwave for a minute. Mash, add butter and milk and mix well. Enjoy.

Carl Jarvis and Debby Clark -- Ode to the Power Strip

Carl here. Mostly, inside my 86-year-old head, I feel about the same as I did 50 years ago. Inside my brain that is, sitting in my recliner. So here I sit, remote in hand, ready to match wits with Jeopardy contestants.

I press, and nothing happens. “Drat,” I mutter. “Somehow the TV plug has been knocked out of the wall.” That’s me, not feeling as young, now that I’m lifting myself out of the recliner and shuffling across the living room. “Orff!” Me again, going down on my hands and knees. “Ah!” My hand finds the plug. Then I find the wall outlet. Clever of someone to put it two inches above the floor, back under the large cabinet.

Five minutes later, as I struggle up from the floor, I say to myself, “Self, there must be an easier way.” And so there is.

Enter Debby Clark. Debby has just the right solution at her fingertips.

Hands not so strong? Ability to bend over impaired? I have some tips for you. Use a power strip with an off and on switch for charging multiple

electronic devices. Make sure your strip has a long enough cord so the plug-ins can be on your table, desk or counter. Put a bump dot on the “on” part of the switch so you know when it is on. Leave your power strip plugged in and just flip your switch to “off” when not in use. No more plugging and unplugging.

Use a separate power strip to plug in your Alexa device, and turn the switch off at night, or when you do not want her listening. Turn the switch back on for your music, etc.

Many plugs now have a third, larger post. Line up the post and then gently rotate the plug to line up the remaining two prongs.

This last entry had Carl’s and Holly's endorsement.

Byron Kaczmariski’s Bag Trick

You take a plastic bag from the grocery store, hang on to the handles with one hand, and slide your other hand along until it's a skinny shape. Then you tie a loose knot and put it under the sink or wherever you wish to save it. Then you don't have a lot of loose bags. You have a small knot in the middle very loosely tied but compact.

***** Spring WCB Board Report by Alco Canfield**

The Washington Council of the Blind board meeting was called to order by Sheri Richardson at 1:03 p.m. May 1. She chaired the meeting at the request of President Julie Brannon.

State Convention

Three options were presented concerning the October WCB conference and convention: in-person, hybrid, and virtual. After a very lively discussion, a vote was taken and the virtual convention option was chosen.

Alco Canfield then summarized the results of the legislative activity by Disability Rights Washington's Mobility Initiative.

- \$10 million for bicycle and pedestrian programs
- \$5 million for regional transit grants; these are public transit agencies
- \$3.8 million for special-needs transportation; this is for paratransit and for other community shuttle providers
- \$10 million for green transportation investments to transit agencies – converting buses from diesel to electric

Voting at the ACB Convention

On August 7, a call will be held by ACB to discuss procedures for voting at the ACB conference and convention. Details to follow.

Communications

Deb Cook Lewis reported that the WCB website has been completely updated.

As a result of a board vote, WCB will be moving all of our email lists to groups.io, and they will be under ACB's domain and jurisdiction. A note will be sent to all WCB subscribers with further details, but the change should be fairly transparent. Everyone on any list will be getting a welcome message with the name of the new list. At the time of transition, a group session will be offered so people can ask questions. Any lists not used in the past 18 months will be eliminated. Deb commended Jeff Bishop for his help in this project.

Door Prizes and Auction Items

We have \$200 in the budget for this purpose. The board voted to split this evenly between one auction item and one door prize.

The locations of the next four ACB conferences and conventions:

- 2022 Omaha, NE
- 2023 Schaumburg, IL
- 2024 Jacksonville, FL
- 2025 Dallas, TX

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

***** GiveBIG Results by Lisa George**

The 2021 online fundraiser significantly exceeded last year's results. The annual GiveBIG Washington fundraiser proved to be a success for WCB and the 11 chapters that participated, with overall results of \$7,290 – more than double last year's total.

Several factors contributed to the increased donations, including \$1,000 in matching funds pledged by four WCB board directors, an ad in The Seattle Times, and many individuals from participating chapters who spread the word to encourage donors. Special thanks to the four individuals who created pages, offering personal stories and perspectives for this appeal; those pages accounted for 22% of the total funds raised. This year, as last year, WCB returned a 50/50 share to the chapters that generated the contributions.

Congratulations to South Kitsap Council of the Blind, whose page generated \$1,020, and Yakima Valley Council of the Blind, whose chapter page and individual pages combined to generate \$1,238. Ashley Trenkenschuh's page, titled "Join Me in My Vision for the Future," was the top individual page, bringing in \$525 and earning her an Echo Show.

Many thanks to those WCB members and supporters who made donations and/or shared the links with their family and friends. (See the back page for more details on donors.)

***** WCB Awards Calls for Nomination Letters by Jessamyn Landby**

Once again, the Awards Committee is looking for nominations for the seven different awards given out each year. The awards are:

- The Certificate of Outstanding Service to WCB
- The Chapter That Thinks Outside the Box
- 2021 Ammeter and Lieberg Outstanding Advocacy Award

- Employer of the Year
- Business of the Year
- The One World Award
- Teacher of the Year

The Awards Committee has been sending out emails about the different awards. Here is what needs to be in your nomination letter: Include your contact information and contact information for your nominee. Tell us why you are nominating the person for the award and why they deserve it. Please send all nomination letters to landjess@icloud.com by midnight Aug. 31. If anyone has any questions, please email or call me at 360-710-2678.

***** Hats Off
Compiled by Chris Coulter**

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

- Mark and Linda Wilder on the celebration of their 30th wedding anniversary.
- Linda will celebrate her 75th birthday on July 24.
- UBTC special members Jeff and Pat Johnson both celebrated their 80th birthdays.
- UBTC members Bob and Janice Squires will be celebrating 50 years of love and life together on Aug. 7.
- Tom and Donna Douglas of YVCB will celebrate their silver wedding anniversary in October.
- Best wishes to Anne Ridenour of YVCB on her 100th birthday in September. Her family is planning a party at a surprise location.
- Andy and Colette Arvidson celebrated 30 years of marriage May 11.
- A hearty congratulations to Mark Adreon on his retirement from Washington State Department of Services for the Blind after 20 years of distinguished service to all of us.

- Julie Harlow is currently in home training with her new dog guide from Guiding Eyes, Eros. He is an 88-pound yellow lab. She is amazed at how tall he is and says she can use him for a table.
- Holly Turri for her new “Reading Roundup” column in Our Special Magazine, edited for and by blind women.
- Gloria Riley on the publication of her book “Your Amazing Itty Bitty Guide for Adult 20/20 Vision Loss.”

And we offer a special congratulations to the graduating members of the Washington State School for the Blind, Class of 2021. May all your dreams come true.

- Kyle Bulger, Vancouver, WA
- Drey Chitwood, Anacortes, WA
- Dima Faraj, Covington, WA
- Sioryann Fitim, Vancouver, WA
- Chloe McDonald, Kent, WA
- Cheyann Purjue, Gig Harbor, WA
- Husai Sanchez, Tacoma, WA
- Isidoro “Izzy” Solario, Newberg, OR
- John Ziemann, Stevenson, WA

To view the program for WSSB’s 2021 commencement and/or read more information on this year’s graduates, click here:
<https://tinyurl.com/wssbgrads21>

To watch WSSB’s 2021 commencement ceremony (held on campus June 11), click on this link and be warned: the video will automatically start playing. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WzEq5OoM1X4>

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

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

Look forward to our membership focus call on Saturday, July 30, via Zoom.

Our convention in October will be held virtually in conjunction with the WCB 2021 convention.

Stay tuned for more information to come.

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

The pandemic has been rough on the Jefferson County Council of the Blind (JCCB). We began the year with 16 members, but only six or seven have made the transition from live meetings to our virtual meetings. President Nancy Villagran felt that we might try using our virtual meetings to invite guest presenters. This would not only bring information to our members, but also connect JCCB with other service organizations in our area.

Our May 28 virtual meeting featured Shauna Jatho, RN clinical nurse educator. Shauna discussed Non-24 Sleep Wake Circadian Rhythm

Disorder. This is a serious chronic condition. Shauna explained that without enough or any light cues, people living with Non-24 may experience the following symptoms:

- Trouble falling asleep and/or staying asleep during the night
- A strong urge to sleep during the day or a tendency to fall asleep unexpectedly
- Periods of good sleep followed by periods of poor sleep

Facts of Non-24: Up to 70% of totally blind individuals may develop Non-24, but you don't have to be totally blind to have this disorder. Symptoms of Non-24 may first be noticed around the time an individual starts to lose their vision.

We will look forward to returning to our regular face-to-face meetings in September.

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

With our new president and others, we continue to evolve, while raising our glass to six new chapter members this year. We challenged ourselves by having breakout rooms during our meeting, with great results. It allowed members to converse for 15 minutes, while having more one-on-one chats. It was well received and enjoyed by everyone.

Our latest guest speaker was Rafael Ramirez, Pierce County independent living instructor. Our Public Relations Committee continues to set up great speakers to keep us all informed on services and interesting topics.

We have decided not to have our annual picnic again this year and will regroup for next year, giving us all a newfound appreciation for our gatherings. We are all so grateful for the recovery of PCAB member and WCB President Julie Brannon. We continue to wish her a speedy recovery to her usual stamina.

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

The Skagit and Island Counties Council of the Blind has been meeting virtually since April 2020. We decided to start meeting in-person again in June. We wanted to have our meeting at the scenic Washington Park in Anacortes. This park is located on the water where there is a boat launch to the glorious San Juan Islands, just around the corner from the San Juan ferry dock.

From the dock, there is a trail through an estuary, which includes a boardwalk that prevents damage to the wetlands. This is a magnificent place with many different birds, making the walk artistically beautiful to the ear. There are several deer that walk across your path with elegance and grace. You can hear them step in front of you.

Our plans were interrupted by local high school graduation parties, so we had to move our meeting to another location.

Our chapter started out as a blind/low vision support group. We used to meet at the Burlington Senior Activity Center. Fortunately, there is a covered picnic area that is part of Maiben Park.

I have delightful memories of this park, as well. As a child, our family met there every year on Father's Day for a reunion. I paint pictures in my mind of those who are no longer with us, except in the way we envision them, as they were in years past. Hopefully, our chapter will appreciate and enjoy the moments of beauty that I share with them.

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

Wow, it is amazing to see on my calendar that it is time to write another Newsline article updating everyone on what South Kitsap Council of the Blind has been up to lately.

In April, we decided our meeting would be in person at a restaurant called "That One Place." We had a really good turnout. We even had visitors for that meeting. Welcome to Robyn and Chuck. It was awesome to see everybody.

Unfortunately, it was very hard to hear each other. The restaurant was way too noisy, even though we had been told it would be quiet back where we were. So we will continue to have virtual meetings while trying to have a few more social gatherings so that people can get together and socialize.

Our chapter participated in the Washington GiveBig campaign, raising \$510. This was way more money than this president expected. For next year, the plan is to get the word out to members and community much more than what was done this year. Thank you to family and friends who support the South Kitsap Council of the Blind.

We were sorry to hear of the passing of Carol Brame's father. Carol has been his caregiver for many years. His life journey has moved on and will continue as he lives in the house of our Lord. We ask during this time for prayers of comfort and understanding for Carol.

At our meeting today, Hayley Agers came to speak about the work her committee does in WCB. Hayley chairs the Families Committee, which provides a way to reach out to both youth and parents who are blind or visually impaired. They provide many activities throughout the year, including the Youth Track at convention and Forum calls for youth and for parents. It was really interesting hearing about the many ways this committee connects with these families.

***** Snohomish County Council of the Blind
by Marilee Richards**

Our group is growing. We have a new member this month, Alan Biné, who is new to the blind/sight-impaired community. He is retired and looking for answers regarding sight loss later in life. He has worked on a paper as an editor at the University of Washington. He writes poems, prose, and a blog,

too. We are happy to accept Alan with open arms and gratitude for the many skills he brings to our group.

We are meeting twice a month – once as a support group (open to anyone), and the other for our chapter business meeting.

We are looking forward to meeting in person soon. We are working towards utilizing Zoom for the business meeting, and using our conference call number for our support meeting. It is taking a little practice to connect on Zoom, but it will happen soon.

We sold our leftover See's Candy and did quite well. Nancy Lind was the top seller, so we rewarded her with a Dairy Queen gift card for her hard work. Congratulations, Nancy.

We hope to have a picnic this summer at Wiggum's Hollow Park. It will be so nice to be together soon.

***** South King Council of the Blind
by Meka White**

Over the past year, the world has had to learn how to come to grips with making things more virtual, and the South King Council of the Blind has been no different in that regard. Learning to adapt and recalibrate is something that I believe we as blind people understand and have often needed to do, so it has been a matter of figuring out how to best keep the momentum going.

We continue to meet every Saturday in order to get to know our members. This begins with me checking in with everyone on our call, asking how their week has gone, and often asking cringe-worthy but funny icebreaker questions, which they answer with enthusiasm. Thus far, we've learned about most embarrassing moments, favorite books, how someone would want to be cooked if they were a potato, and much more.

Throughout all of this, we discovered that there is an unbreakable cord of support, connecting each person to one another, through tears and laughter.

We are ever hopeful that as more places open, and we figure out the new normal, we will be able to meet in person soon. I am way overdue for hugs and laughter from this wonderful group.

In extremely sad news, our friend and treasurer, Terry Blankenship, passed away in April and we are grieving the loss of such an incredible individual. His warmth, dedication, dependability, and friendship will be greatly missed. Our hearts, thoughts, and prayers go out to his family and friends.

As spring turns in to summer, we will continue to find innovative ways to remain connected and provide outreach and friendship to those in South King County and beyond. We wish all of you the very best, and we'll see you toward autumn.

***** Spokane Council of the Blind
by Debby Clark**

Creativity is one of the most wonderful gifts from God. This has been the hallmark of 2020 and how we conduct our chapter meetings and more over the past year and a half. We were having our meetings on the phone prior to May, which has worked in a pinch. We have also been doing our weekly phone Coffee and Conversation calls. We have talked about many things that are of interest to us as a group. Staying connected and supportive is the goal of these calls, as well as getting to know each other better.

Our May 2021 meeting is described by Vivian as follows: We met in person for the first time since October 2020 at Denny's in Spokane, with 16 members in attendance. One highlight of our meeting was the first use of our microphone, this being the wireless one recommended by Frank Cuta. This allowed our members to better hear President Debby Phillips. Our chapter donated \$10 to each active member's lunch since we had no Christmas party in 2020.

We are looking forward to many in-person meetings in the future. We meet on the third Monday of the month. Stay tuned for where.

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

With over 90 percent of our members now vaccinated here in the Tri-Cities, we are cautiously resuming face-to-face activities. Two of our households were hit hard by COVID, and we are grateful that all survived. Also, several members who received the vaccine reported nasty side effects that lasted several days.

We are again having our business meetings on the second Saturday of each month at the Crow's Nest at Clover Island. They seem to love us and we love them, and the food is great. These are hybrid meetings with about 15 members attending in person, and another half dozen connecting by conference call. Most recently, we have enjoyed presentations by ACB board member Jeff Bishop and our local independent living instructor Sheila Turner.

We have resumed holding our monthly social activities face to face, but we do try to exercise reasonable precautions. Many of us are calendar impaired, and this year to keep things simple we have standardized on Tuesday afternoons for most of these meetings. First Tuesday is the lunch bunch, second is the card players, third is the book group, and fourth is the tech group. The lunch is at a different restaurant each month, selected by Karyn Vandecar, and the other meetings are held at the Edith Bishel Center.

For the book group and tech group, we are encouraging virtual participation by members via conference call. In addition, we have a weekly Thursday walking group that is coordinated by Pat Johnson. The walkers like to go to the park when the weather is nice, but when it's not they go to the Columbia Center mall.

Our paratransit service has to be one of the best in the state. It is door to door and has been completely free to us six days a week for over a year

now. In June, they are going to experiment with resuming limited Sunday service, which is great news.

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

The summer days have been intensely hot here in Walla Walla, sometimes reaching 115 degrees, but it has not stopped this dynamic chapter. Joleen Ferguson has been working diligently on our website to update the content, as well as archiving some old minutes she found from the beginning days of this chapter. This was a really neat discovery and we appreciate her efforts to save and share this history.

At our June meeting, Annee Hartzell spoke to us about some of the exciting methods she has been using as a virtual teacher for blind, visually impaired, and deaf-blind students around the world. Providence Medical Center's Susan Kelly and Nick Begick Diabetes educators also joined us to learn and share. Their focus is on serving people with vision impairments and blindness. Frank Cuta spoke to us about the ACB convention and voting procedures, which was a very informative presentation.

Our chapter continues to work with the city on sidewalk improvements and road construction plans, to ensure our voice is heard during the planning and implementation of these projects.

At this point, we are still meeting via conference call, but hope to plan some in-person activities soon. It will be great to see each other again!

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

Although we continue to meet virtually, United Blind of Whatcom County has been very busy and active. In July, we will have our first in-person activity, which will be a picnic.

In conjunction with the Bellingham Central Lions Club, we sold T-shirts that have our name and a bunch of other businesses listed on the back. On the front, they say "Eat Local Drink Local."

There have been many Zoom socials. On March 26, Hayley Agers was a guest at one of these. She gave an enthusiastic presentation about the WCB survey.

President Yvonne Miller has organized a myriad of fascinating speakers for our meetings. These were Donna Oilan, "Laughter as Medicine"; the Whatcom County ADA plan; and Lisa Craft, American Red Cross Northwest Regional Disability Integration Lead, who discussed emergency preparedness. This was so well received that in June it is hoped that we will share her expertise via Zoom with two other chapters. In April, our WCB President, Julie Brannon, was our guest speaker.

***** Washington Council of the Blind Diabetics
by Danette Dixon**

One thing Washington Council of the Blind Diabetics has changed within the past few months is we now meet via Zoom. In order to receive the link for our Zoom meetings, please email WCB.wcbd@gmail.com or email President Danette Dixon at danettedixon63@gmail.com.

We still have a speaker every other month. In April, we had Vanda Pharmaceutical Non-24, and in May we had Valerie from Dispatch Health. Both of these calls were remarkably interesting, with great information, and we all attended.

The GiveBIG campaign was great for WCBD. We had to set a larger goal since we maxed out the first goal.

WCBD is continuing to support and educate diabetics in Washington State and having lots of fun doing this. Looking forward to whatever WCBD has for the next quarter.

***** Yakima Valley Council of the Blind
by Tristen Breitenfeldt**

Happy summer from the beautiful Yakima valley. This April, our chapter participated in Washington GiveBIG, and after all matching funds and splitting with WCB, our net profit was \$959. That's an impressive 500% increase over our GiveBIG net from last year.

Since the new Naches audible pedestrian signals at Highway 12 and Naches Avenue should be completed soon, we hope to take a group field trip to try them out.

YVCB voted to donate an Orbit Reader 20-cell Braille display with case as an auction item to either WCB or ACB. We also decided to donate some low-tech blindness and low-vision materials to the financial-aid program at our local low-vision clinic.

We are excited about remaining in COVID phase 3, so we are planning to meet at a local park for a potluck and business meeting in June. Members will bring their favorite side dishes, while the chapter is purchasing some main-course items from Dickey's BBQ. We anticipate it will be a fun day.

Get vaccinated, stay safe, and have a beautiful Washington summer.

*** 2021 WCB Calendar of Deadlines and Events

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

List of Abbreviations:

ACB	American Council of the Blind
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

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

JULY

- 12** – WCB Diabetics call at 7 p.m.
- 15** – WASILC meeting from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Zoom)
- 16-23** – ACB conference and convention (Zoom and ACB Media)
- 18** – WCB Tech Chat with Reg and Frank at 7 p.m.
- 26** – President's call at 7 p.m.

AUGUST

- 2** – Treasurer's call at 7 p.m.
- 7** – WCB summer board meeting from 1 to 3 p.m. (Zoom)
- 9** – WCB Diabetics call at 7 p.m.
- 15** – WCB Tech Chat with Reg and Frank at 7 p.m.
- 23** – President's call at 7 p.m.
- 31** – Submission deadline for WCB Newsline Fall 2021 issue

SEPTEMBER

- 1** – WCB convention registration opens
- 10** – DSB State Rehab Council meeting from 9 a.m. to noon (Zoom)
- 13** – WCB Diabetics call at 7 p.m.
- 19** – WCB Tech Chat with Reg and Frank at 7 p.m.
- 21** – WCB committee leaders' call at 7 p.m.
- 27** – President's call at 7 p.m.
- 30** – Early Bird \$15 member registration ends at 11:59 p.m.
- 30** – Record date for WCB members' voting eligibility

OCTOBER

- 2** – Proposed 2022 WCB operations budget forum call at 3 p.m. (Zoom)
- 3** – Proposed constitutional amendments forum call at 3 p.m. (Zoom)
- 4** – Treasurer's call at 7 p.m.
- 7** – WASILC meeting (Zoom)
- 11** – WCB Diabetics call at 7 p.m.
- 15** – White Cane Safety Day
- 16** – WTBBL Patron Advisory Council meeting, Seattle
- 17** – WCB Tech Chat with Reg and Frank at 7 p.m.
- 17** – WCB convention registration ends at 11:59 p.m.
- 25** – President's call at 7 p.m.
- 28** – WCB pre-convention board meeting (Zoom)
- 29** – WCB Annual Convention (Zoom and ACB Media)
- 30** – WCB Annual Convention and business meeting (Zoom and ACB Media)

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** – Submission deadline for WCB Newsline Winter 2022 issue

DECEMBER

1 – Indicate your interest in 2022 WCB committees to the WCB president

6 – Treasurer's call at 7 p.m.

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

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.

Washington Council of the Blind

gratefully acknowledges donors making a difference,
including 30 first-time donors!

THANK YOU!

Donna Adamson, Anonymous (26), Colette & Andy Arvidson, Julie Brannon, Teresa Breitenfeldt, Timothy Breitenfeldt, Alco Canfield, Konnie Chitty, Vivian Conger, Frank Cuta, Danette Dixon, David & Hayley Edick, Edmonds Lions Club, Gaylen Floy, Lisa & Reg George, Ava Grajeda-Allard, Kenny Hillestad, Jeanne Jacobs, Michael MacKillop, Marilyn Milburn, Julie Miller, Yvonne Miller, Kim L Moberg, Bruce Radtke, Marilee Richards, Sheri Richardson, Nicole Sanderson, Beverly Saunders, Shoenfeld-Gardner Foundation, South Everett Lions Club, UBTC Tech Group, Kelsi Watson, and William L Freeman

In Memory of Terry Blankenship:
Guide Dogs for the Blind Seattle Puppy Raisers

	<u>In Honor Of:</u>
Phyllis Agers	Hayley Agers
Bruce Aitken	Ashley Trenkenschuh
Steve & Susan Braun	Reg George
Ann Jones	Yvonne Thomas Miller
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