

**WASHINGTON**

**COUNCIL**

**OF THE BLIND**

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Founded 1935

# WCB NEWSLINE

Fall 2022 Edition

“Bells, Whistles, and Chimes: The Sounds of Our World”

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## \*\*\* Calling All Members

**We will publish the Winter 2023 WCB Newsline in January**

**and are anxious to read your quality content.**

**Please send all submissions by November 30.**

**Digital cartridges should also be returned by this date.**

## \*\*\* **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 content or letters.
* Articles may be up to 1,000 words.
* Chapter updates may be up to 350 words.
* Please submit in Microsoft Word format when possible.
* **Send all submissions to:**

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## President’s Message by Julie Brannon

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As president of the Washington Council of the Blind, it’s always a bit disconcerting writing an article in one season to be read in the next season. This one is no exception, as it is being written at the end of summer to be read in the fall.

**Looking back over summer**

The American Council of the Blind convention gave us the flavor of a hybrid convention. Nineteen people from Washington went in person, truly a phenomenal number. The offerings, which included a diverse number and variety of breakouts along with the business segment of the convention, kept us all engaged and amazed. Unfortunately, COVID did rear its ugly head and several Washingtonians and other conventiongoers did get sick.

We had our summer WCB board meeting on Aug. 7. With so many issues to overview and consider, the board meeting lasted a whopping three hours. Kudos to the diehards who stayed through the entire meeting.

A major point of discussion was how best to ensure safety for WCB convention in-person attendees. The board will still be considering all possible details and adjusting as needed.

A new, long-awaited WCB venture is on the horizon. For as many years as I’ve been a member of WCB, about 28 years, we’ve talked about the concern that our organization members are aging and what that will mean for WCB’s continuation. Based on the idea of ACB’s Next Gen affiliate, a young WCB member, Tim Breitenfeldt, now a part of the Clark County chapter, has agreed to spearhead a young people’s WCB affiliate, probably with members between the ages of 18-40 years (stay tuned for a name) with some WCB leaders assisting him. These include Andy Arvidson, Julie Brannon, Danette Dixon and Sheri Richardson. This is truly exciting, so don’t be surprised when you are asked to be on the lookout for current or potential members in this age group.

This summer, longtime WCB member Hayley Agers realized how important and therapeutic cooking for her family was in her life. So, she very generously reached out to WCB members, offering a Zoom cooking class entitled, “Cooking with Confidence.” Several members responded, expressing they’d be interested in this new WCB offering. (See her announcement elsewhere in this issue). A very first get acquainted and overview possibilities for the class meeting already occurred in September, but you can still join the class. A huge thanks to Hayley, a phenomenal cook, for reaching out to WCB with such a valuable and generous offer.

**Looking forward to the fall**

The WCB convention registration form was posted on time this year, thanks to Lisa George and Jeff Bishop. Hopefully, you registered for the convention, either as an in-person or virtual attendee.

As with last year, Frank Cuta, Denise Colley, and I formed a WCB convention posse and spoke to chapters who requested our input about the convention and what they could expect.

**WCB, “Breaking Through the Storm”**

When you read this, you will probably be thinking about WCB convention attendance coming up in a short time. As you know, many, many hours are dedicated to this endeavor, by the convention committee with co-chairs Cathy Wilson and Merribeth Greenberg. Another group of technically skilled people form a behind-the-scenes committee to make sure the virtual components go off without a hitch. So many other people are involved in the development of our first-ever hybrid convention. If you didn’t pre-register, you can register at the door.

This year, we have our very own Cindy Hollis as our national representative. This year’s convention will include our usual presentations by successfully employed blind persons and we will hear from our Washington blindness agency leaders. We will also have a self-defense workshop put on by trainers Andy and Collette Arvidson. We will look at voting options, the independent older blind program for seniors, what it’s like to lose vision later in life, we’ll hear from some blind authors, and a panel covering the latest advances in navigation and way-finding technology.

This list doesn’t even include the many internal and external awards that will be given, including our college scholarships. We’ll also enjoy a variety of vendors in the exhibit hall and some fund-raising events. Thanks goes to our host chapters of the United Blind of Seattle (Darryl Roberts, president), and Clark County Council (Bob Cavanaugh, president).

As you know, WCB is a very active and thriving organization, utilizing the talents and skills of many dedicated people to keep things going. To that end, we have the following positions up for election at this year’s convention: 2nd vice president, secretary, and three board positions. Here’s to many dedicated WCB members stepping up to the plate to rally for these important roles within WCB.

By my next writing, we’ll be able to summarize the stories of our first-ever WCB hybrid convention. Until then, enjoy the transition from summer to fall.

## Letter From the Editors

Hello WCB and beyond…hello, hello? Can you hear us? Copy, can you hear us?

We hear you loud and clear! We hear your train whistles and space shuttles, your clinking and tinking mugs, and your chirping birds.

There’s a strange ringing in our ears from all those bells…church bells, cat bells, bell choirs, and one enormous dinner bell, ring-a-ding-dingin’ around in our heads, like a concerto waiting to be born.

We hear the sounds of your music, so much music!

And, we hear your silence, your meditation, and the absence of normalcy.

We listen to your voices, loudly saying “I matter.” You are heard.

Your Faithful Editors,

Heather Meares and Reginald George

It’s Your Newsline … Just Say It!  
Compiled by Reginald George

This is the place to express your thoughts, voice your valued opinions of our articles, inspire us with your grandest ideas, and share your honest concerns as we continue to evolve our publication into the Newsline you can’t wait to read.

It’s exciting times for Washington Council of the Blind (WCB) as we prepare for our first in-person hybrid convention since 2019. Thanks to everyone who takes the time to read our magazine and vote in our Readers' Choice contest. The top four articles at the end of the year will compete for our annual Readers’ Choice Award. Participation is down, so if you want us to keep Readers’ Choice alive, please read and vote.

Your favorite article from our summer animal issue is,

“Cheshire Cat Interviews #16, Who Gives a Hoot?” by Heather Meares

The deadline to cast your vote for the best article from this issue is October 31st. This is so we have time to put out a special email issue with the top four finalists. You will then have until November 30th to cast your vote for the best article of the year as chosen by you, our readers.

Send all votes and submissions to [TheWCBNewsline@Gmail.com](mailto:TheWCBNewsline@Gmail.com).

As we continue to celebrate our Newsline 50th anniversary year, we wish to recognize and thank our authors for your contributions. We do this work through the gift of your writing and ongoing support. Please share it with a friend.

There is always engaging content on our podcast, “WCB Newsline Unleashed.” You can find it at the following link, or ask your phone or smart speaker to play it:

<https://tinyurl.com/et6en8md>

**Reader Feedback**

Danette Dixon: “This summer the article I want to nominate is ‘Chronicles of a Happy Warrior #12, I have a Right to Wag Where I Want!’ by Mark Adreon. I chose this one because I can relate greatly to this article. An awesome piece by Mark.

Thank you WCB Newsline!”

Chris Coulter: “My reader’s choice award goes to Marilee Richards for the very creative and entertaining duck who ‘Never Ducks His Duty,’ as the title tells us.”

Linda Wilder: “I actually take the time to read every single article from top to bottom. It takes the best part of two days to do this, but I don’t want to miss a thing.

I am choosing, ‘Cheshire Cat Interviews #16, Who Gives a Hoot?’ by Heather Meares.

Who would think that a Horned owl named Oliver could have such a fascinating conversation with Heather? Once again Heather had me completely enthralled. I felt I was sitting right by Heather on her back porch taking in every word they were exchanging. I loved meeting Sparkles, Luna, and Star, her new ducks. And all the many chickens with their clever names and duties just blew me away.

Heather, have you ever thought of writing children’s books? You certainly have the imagination and writing skills.”

Heather Responds: “Thank you, Linda! Oliver and crew say hello to you, and no, I have not thought about writing children’s books. Maybe someday though, you never know.”

Frank Cuta: “Carl Jarvis's ‘Tips and Tricks’ piece on attitude was excellent. Either it or some version of it should be offered to viewers to open our WCBInfo web site.

On another subject, if you enjoyed my article on the different ways that you can enter data into your iPhone, you should check out the December 2021 and January 2022 issues of ‘Access World.’ Judy Dixon is an excellent tech writer, and she covers this same material in much greater depth.”

Janice Squires: “My nomination for the best Newsline article is, ‘I Choose Joy,’ by Hayley Agers. It brought joy to my heart and a tear to my eye. As a blind mother of two beautiful daughters, I could totally relate to Hayley’s thoughts, and how she reacted to her situation. So many times, I had those very same feelings and sentiments.”

Sarah Edick: “The article that I think is the best is ‘Mr. Tuxedo.’ by Dorene Cornwell. It brings back memories, as well as describing the antics that any cat lover knows well.

I must add that all the articles were well written! The authors make it difficult to pick. This is the sign of a wonderfully written Newsline!

Keep up the good work!”

Janelle Edwards: “My favorite article was ‘York: Guide First; Dog Always!’ by Ron Brooks. In the past I had guide dogs. Due to my current living situation, a home with no fence and none allowed, I do not have a guide

dog now. Also, there are a lot of days as a retired person that the dog would not get used enough to keep up its training. Back in the day each of my two dogs was very helpful to me! Your whole issue was great including the other guide dog stories. This one just touched my heart in a very special way.”

Zach Hurtz with a reminder:

“Did you know our Newsline is on Wikipedia? I didn't and was super

shocked to find it after Googling the Newsline. It has a fairly

detailed history of the publication and is current as of 2020.

Here's the link.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington\_Council\_of\_the\_Blind\_Newsline”

Gina Allen: “How cool that the WCB Newsline is on Wikipedia. That just goes to show ... the WCB Newsline can’t hold a candle to any other publication.”

The Editors Respond: Reg: Did you possibly mean that they can’t hold a candle to us? That’s some high praise Gina. It was a very original idea because it appears that no other affiliate of both major blindness consumer groups has a page for their flagship publications on Wikipedia.

**Long may we reign over the annals of the interwebb.**

Heather: “Yes, thanks for posting this link. My friend, Loretta Pederson, who is an academic editor and wrote an article for our summer issue called ‘Washington’s Most Haunting Bird,’ took it upon herself to add us to Wikipedia. We were quite surprised and pleased about this as well. S**he is back this time with another fine offering.** If there are ever any updates or changes that need to be made, please let us know.”

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

# FEATURES

## Cheshire Cat Interviews #17 Chasing the Chaos Monster by Heather Meares

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We all encounter those times in life when everything seems to be plummeting in a downward spiral, and we decide it’s time to push the reset button and try something new. I have done this myself many times. It never gets easier. Loss is inevitable. It takes a certain degree of self-awareness, and dare I say courage, to strip your life to the bare bones and give up everything familiar in order to move forward into unknown realms, especially with no guarantee it will be better than what was left behind.

Everett Elam moved to Washington to do this very thing. He recently started a position at the Lighthouse for the Blind as the assistive technology specialist in Spokane, WA. He enjoys food, trail running, and is a musician. He was previously in Arkansas, where he worked for World Services for the Blind (WSB) as a Braille instructor, curriculum developer, and assistive technology trainer.

I asked him what his favorite foods are to start the conversation and got some interesting responses.

Everett: “I like apples, I even eat the core.”

Heather: “Do you eat the seeds?”

Everett: “I do eat the seeds. I also like cilantro, rice, coconut curry, and charred hot dogs or bologna, even though that might sound disgusting.”

Heather: “It does. Tell me about Arkansas.”

Everett: “It’s very communal, it’s more progressive than it used to be. There are a lot of metropolitan happenings there. Little Rock used to have dirt roads and now it’s got an Amazon warehouse, the art district is thriving, and there’s a lot of good fiddle playing.”

Heather: “If you could play one fiddle song for the rest of your life, what would it be?”

Everett: “It’s a tune. A song has words, a tune has notes. It varies. It’s like smells, it’s connected to different times. Maybe Hollow Poplar, that’s a good tune. I used to play that out on the square in Mountain View, where I lived for a while. It was a bunch of people sitting around, everyone from little kids to older people, and we’d play Hollow Poplar for a very long time. It always felt like transcending the veil a little bit and brought everyone together. That’s a good sound.”

Heather: “Is there something that drew you to the fiddle sound?”

Everett: “Growing up with so much classical music played from the violin as it was taught to me, which was good, and then hearing the imperfections of the fiddle, and how it can get crunchy and greasy and nasty. It was really appealing. I grew up in a dorm with so much different music. You’d have this vortex where you’d hear Usher or Omarion or whatever was playing, and then hear my friend playing 9 Inch Nails, so there was this cross-over, which was always really attractive to me. Fiddle music has a lot of African influence, it’s not just a white man’s music.”

Heather: “I think music definitely brings out specific moments in people’s lives. You hear a certain song, or tune, and it takes you back to a time or place, or a person. I would like to hear more about your work with WSB and your journey here.”

Everett: “I started there in 2016, and taught Braille for two years. It was a very echoey building with cinder blocks in the walls. The CEO would come through in the mornings, and sing different songs, like Rollin’ On the River, and that was always a really cheerful song. She was a force of nature, and it was always good to hear her being cheerful, you couldn’t help but be cheerful too.”

“Sometimes with clients who played music, we would spend time doing that together. One played the banjo, and we were able to spend some mornings in the classroom playing music together with the door cracked open, which was a really good time. I moved on to Mountain View and taught remotely for WSB, leading the assistive technology program and making it into what it is today.”

“For the last two years, I was working on the CATIS program, calling Reg George, who is a CATIS, tons at night for advice.”

Heather: “Tell us what the CATIS program is.”

Everett: “So CATIS is a Certified Assistive Technology Instructional Specialist and is a license to teach assistive technology in schools, which is huge, because typically you would need a teacher, TVI, or a licensure like the PRAXIS, and the CATIS fills that requirement.”

Heather: “It’s a pretty prestigious certification, and I know not a lot of people here in Washington have it, so we are obviously very lucky to have another one here now. I bet that was intense.”

Everett: “I think there’s about 110 in the world. Yes, it was fun. I like chaos and challenges, and it provided both.”

Heather: “What do you like about chaos?”

Everett: “I love that it takes all these labels that we put on ourselves and people, and throws them to the four winds. It gives everyone a chance to have new beginnings. I love that people who seem to have it together don’t really know what to do during chaos. They have a few preset sub-routines they can do to make their image look better, but when chaos happens, we’re all on an even playing field. One of my favorite sounds is when you’re in a public place, like a restaurant, or at Christmas when the baby gets ahold of the tree, and there’s a horrible crash. I become sort of incapable for a few minutes. I like those two sides of myself, that I can be a CATIS, but also you have to keep that childlike side about you.”

Heather: “You know when you go to the symphony, and everyone is warming up? That’s my favorite part, that cacophony of everybody playing randomly in different keys. It’s the best! So, it’s almost like chaos brings sanity.”

Everett: “I think so. After Mountain View, in 2021, I moved to St. Louis, and there was a lot of chaos there. I lived in a third-floor apartment, near a highway. The city never went to sleep, there were sirens and buses, one that would stop by my window and beep and squat down. That was what I needed at the time. It was a defining moment when I could sleep to the sirens. I think I needed to hear that people were around me. In St. Louis, I would teach on Friday mornings to get my internship hours. Then in the afternoon, I would go and play fiddle with an old-time fiddle player, who was really defining for me. A lot of young musicians will look people up on YouTube and copy what they do. I found this guy, and he was so good to me, so humble. We would ride around in his jeep, go to his apartment, he’d tell me about tunes, and we’d play tunes, and then he’d kick me out because he had a girlfriend. There were a lot of fiddle sounds there, it’s kind of following me.”

Heather: “How old were you when you first played?”

Everett: “I was 10 and learned from the Suzuki method, which is a Japanese method that teaches you through repetition and popular melodies.”

Heather: “What are some sounds that elicit different emotions for you?”

Everett: “There was a Catholic church close to where I lived in Missouri, in an Italian neighborhood, and on some mornings, there was a bell clock that would go off. It was beautiful, very pretty, and you knew that all the little, old people were going to mass. That sound is also a growing up sound for me. A sound that makes me laugh is when there’s a horrible, robotic crowd. Crowds are not excited anymore, they just sound the same, and if someone drops something, or a suitcase rolls down the stairs, and everybody‘s just a little uncomfortable, and no one knows quite what to do. It makes me very happy. I don’t want anyone to get hurt, I just want someone’s apple cart to get a little upset, for them to realize they’re probably not the biggest thing in the universe. It’s also funny when it happens to me. I also like when dogs talk, when they roll on their backs and Ar,ar,ar, it’s pretty adorable. A baby laughing is pretty sweet. Fire is a really good one.”

Heather: “Ooh, fire is a good one. The crackle, or the roar?”

Everett: “No, like a match, like a lion cub flame, when you first light it. And if you can get some hairspray, you can make a little flame thrower. That’s exciting.”

Heather: “You probably like torches too, huh?”

I could tell Everett was grinning with amusement at this point, as he said “probably so.”

Everett: “Some songs can make me cry, and it’s never the lyrics. The tune of a song is usually what can make me cry, like right now, ‘Carolina’ by Taylor Swift, from the movie ‘Where the Crawdads Sing.’”

Heather: “I was actually listening to that song at 3 a.m. this morning when I couldn’t sleep, and it is hauntingly beautiful. I did see that movie, and the audio description was very well done. Are you into theater?”

Everett: “Yes, since I was little, I have always loved audio plays, and one of my best friends introduced me to the Star Wars radio dramas. I never will forget that music that comes on at the very beginning. His dad would whip the car around, to and fro whenever the space battles were happening. I didn’t really fall in love with theater until the first time I got my heart broken, which I highly recommend. It opens up some channels in you and you discover, oh, wow, that’s why this music is so dramatic. I went to see ‘The Music Man,’ so good. Last year, in St. Louis, I auditioned for the part of a blind guitar player in ‘The Last Stop on Market Street.’ I don’t have any acting background, and I didn’t get the part, but it was still a lot of fun.”

Heather: “So you play the guitar, too? What else do you play?”

Everett: “Yes, I play the piano, and the Irish tin whistle, also called the penny whistle.”

“There was a voiceover thing on NPR where people would talk about how different voices sounded like different smells. They said Morgan Freeman’s voice sounded like Old Spice and cigarette smoke, and that’s kind of how my dad sounds. I didn’t meet my dad until 2013, and I guess that would be one of my favorite sounds, his way of speaking. He’s a very mature guy, and has worked on oil rigs his whole life, and I feel like sometimes he can live vicariously through my slightly undeveloped maturity.”

Heather: “You seem to think about immaturity and maturity a lot. Do you feel like you are half and half?”

Everett: “I feel like I’m just trying to become something, and I don’t really quite know what it’s supposed to be, and so I step in and out of different parts of myself to figure out who it is.”

Heather: “I struggle with that a lot, for sure.”

Everett: “Yeah, it’s like you’re a different person.”

Heather: “I feel like I’ve been many different people. It’s all been me, but you change throughout your adulthood, and I think a lot of it has to do with being open to explore different things. It’s how we find out more about ourselves. It’s not an easy path because a lot of it is very painful. The good thing is that you meet so many people and can be picky about the ones you let in, knowing they are in your life for a reason, regardless of the length of time they are there. What do you think?”

Everett: “I think trust is definitely as valuable as money and time. Letting people in is hard because of past stuff, but I want to be a human that this planet doesn’t have enough of, so I’m not going to curl up in a corner, but at the same time, if you’re not going to do that, and you’re also not going to trust, you have to pick your battles. I guess I’m trying to figure out who my people are.”

Heather: “What would you like some of your battles to be, ideally?”

Everett: “I don’t know if I want to have any more of those right now. I’m pretty tired.”

Heather: “So when you hit those super bad places, how do you get out?”

Everett: “I think the first step is to scream, and that doesn’t really work, but it makes you feel a little better. Then you can start scratching against the walls of your universe to see what happens, because if you don’t do it consciously, you’ll do it subconsciously. In a space of two years, my place of employment, several relationships, and the place I’m living have changed. You can either call that immaturity, or you can call it lost. I had to get out. Once you realize everything is a choice, and you scare yourself into fixing things, then I think it gets easier. You realize all the little labels we put on everything ain’t so scary, and then you realize being scared is better than sleeping for days at a time.”

Heather: “Right, it’s better than being numb.”

Everett: “Yeah, and then you move here cuz Reg is here, and you’re here, and people who don’t know me are here, and I can pretty much go out in this neighborhood and do a battle cry.”

Heather: “I think you should.”

Everett: “There’s a group of people I follow on a podcast, and their motto is to leave the world better than they found it, and I think that’s where this whole thing in Washington is leading me, your spare time talks a lot about where you’re wanting to go. Everything has a time and place and I think if I could figure out the balance, living each day, not excessively, not over-indulging, being with friends, I think that’s what Washington is to me. The waterfalls and beautiful scenery are an incubator for balance for me.”

Heather: “That’s one of my favorite sounds. Water of any kind. It’s very balancing.”

Everett: “I like me some water, too.”

Heather: “What one thought would you leave the world with?”

Everett: “Don’t forget to love each other. A lot of stuff gets solved when we’re attentive.”

## Stress by Everett Elam

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*Dedication: To Zora and whatever else he’ll choose to be called. May the road rise up to meet you on your writing journey these next few weeks.*

Stress started getting to me when I was 23, ya see, in accordance with my recent divorce, of course.

When one moves to a new city, the mind starts to do funny things with itself. I was sitting around at a swill shop doing what I did after work during those days, drink and think … drink and think. You take a coffee and pour some of Ireland in there, you’ve got a good thing going.

Along comes the waitress. OR, is she a waiter nowadays? People get often offended when we ain’t PC. They get stressed.

“How about that bill?”

“You’re billing me for my swill?”

“Indeed, I am.”

Here’s the rub. I didn’t have any money. I commenced a dialogue with my waitress, a friend to be sure. I even got her number on one of those paper napkins like my buddy CG tells me he’s making up in Nebraska town with those machines he knows how to use. Me, I’m just a good dude. CG loves a good merry making time just the same as me. He’s a good dude.

This was a napkin in its prime, a napkin on which my new friend’s 10 digits would not soon dissolve or degrade.

“How about the bill? Are you ready for something else?”

I deflected again; he shoots, he scores! I showed her photos on my phone this time, stock shots of places I wanted to visit in the grand ol’ world. We took a trip around the world sitting in that greasy diner. We perused the photos, she scooched into the booth with me to get a closer peep. She smelled like cigarettes and hard work, laced with something that might have been coffee spilled earlier while she rushed around to serve the plebians. Her voice was high but not unpleasantly so, breaking when she got excited about something in the loveliest of ways. Her hair was put up in one of them caps like what ya see them wear in restaurants, though a few strands had come loose framing her face. She had lines around the eyes, those past thirty lines ya see when life’s dragons breathe fire on us, mortality reminders. She was lovely.

‘Bout that time, a fella started getting really stressed. In my head I named him Fella. Everything has to have a name, don’t it? Everything and everybody has to have a name.

Fella’s vittles had not arrived. He commenced a fair amount of rapping and tapping on his coffee cup, he did. The cup was unadorned, an innocent cuppa Jo among others in a diner that fed the truckers and passersby of Eastern Kentucky. It looked like it had had, until quite recently, a good life as lives of mugs go.

“Ting ting ting,” said the abused cup.

When fella’s ministrations to the mug failed, he gave a harrumph and tinged louder. The mug reached the end of its ting quota, if you will, or even if you won’t, and shattered. Mug got too stressed.

I promised my troop of dead soldiers that I never would have abused them in such a way while they were filled, and nor would I do so in their current state. I’m a respectful guy, not like Fella. Fella was not a good dude.

I noticed around that time there was something in the bushes outside in the diner parking lot. As I observed, a black and white blur detached itself from the greenery and bolted crossed the lot in a hurry. Squirrel most likely, and a stressed out one almost assuredly. Big old tabby cat came around the corner to see where its bushy-tailed meal had gone.

“Meow?” asked the cat.

“Vroom vroom vroom,” replied the Reefer in the parking lot of the diner. Tabby cat slunk off, obviously not agreeing with what the truck had to say. It appeared unfortunately that the hungry feline was, to be honest, a little stressed.

I was roused from the cinematics outside. “Be right with you!” said my new friend. She gave me an odd look, hopped up and went skipping to the kitchen. Hopefully, whatever she brought would alleviate some of fella’s stress. Those eyelashes were batting a thousand on my heartstrings. She was quite lovely.

Her absence gave me the opportunity to search my pockets. Like a rogue, I picked the pockets of my own blue jeans as though they might be holding out on me. Maybe like a bank, my pockets had checking and savings… Maybe even better if something was left in it’d multiply like a catholic family in quarantine. These things happen.

Alas and alack, all I located were 12 cents and a ball of lint, along with a few rips in the liner of my pocket. My greedy pocket, seems, was also a wee bit stressed. My jeans were purchased for $24.95 and not a pretty penny more at Old Navy! They were in their prime.

I figured I’d wait on my waitress friend, (since she so graciously waited and indeed was waiting on me). Seeing as how I still had a bill for my swill to kill. My phone’s battery was toasted from our journey around the world and back, but I reckoned for a second on the newspaper I saw on a neighboring tabletop. The headline I viewed from that distance clearly spoke of drama and carnage, earthquakes and such, and I figured there’d be time passing while I had my beak in the paper.

Isn’t it a chuckler, amigos, that even in times de beauty and amorousness like the one in which I found myself, we still love on the less lovely parts of the world? Misery loves company. Hurt people hurt people. Adages went flying by my mind’s eye as I stood and took the paper. The disturbed paper, I discover too late, had the salt and pepper containers resting atop it. Down they go to and fro, another stressful situation which might have been avoided. Drama hunting has its casualties, though. The paper contained within it a maelstrom of baleful faces and current events, crosswords for the grammar gurus and sports for the sporting. I perused one story about a fella, presently, who had taken a beer truck without the beer making it to its predetermined destination. That didn’t seem to be a smart move to me, but the good lord Jesus didn’t make us all with the same brain. If he had, we’d be like them artificial intelligences we hear about in the Matrix and shows like Altered Carbon Dioxide or whatever the name was. Some people are sayin’ there’s machines smart or smarter than Jesus ever made me or you. Fact of the matter is, I figure sometimes Jesus mighta been one of them as he wrote a book for the rest of us to follow.

Fella by this time had a mighty spread in front of him. From over the top of my paper, it looked as though the Baptist Heart Hospital down the street a way might want to open a bed and prepare for incoming. Fella had a whole tub of chocolate gravy with hash browns and ham steaks, a meal of biblical proportion. And he was tearing into them like unto crazy Christians with the U.S. Constitution. Waitress hadn’t brought him anything with which to bathe himself. I ought to offer this boy a napkin before my lovely friend has to spend her time cleaning up, right?

I ambled over and proffered a stack of napkins to fella. He gave a grunt as he took them. He had the attitude of someone who got what he wanted, forceful and boisterous without even a thank you for my troubles. Of course, the next few seconds showed that you should never judge a book by its cover. There’s another adage for you.

“Put this nice man on my tab!” said Fella.

“Just lost my son in,” he told me conspiratorially. Crazy kid was an Olympic swimmer trying to save a little girl in a running river in Missouri. Both of ‘em hung up on a rock by their lifejackets, both gone.

“I’m so sorry. That sounds like you’re under a lot of stress.”

“I’m a ramblin’ man,” said Fella, wiping his eyes. “I’m back on the road doin’ what I love, just like Duane was in the water doing what he loved.”

We chatted a bit more, a different dynamic from the one with the waitress, but one that needed to be had.

She must have walked out in the middle of our conversation, and only later with Hank Williams filling the cab of my furniture truck did I realize that the paper towel proffered was the one with my future bride’s ten digits scrawled on it. The moon sat high in the sky as Kentucky receded to the background, and me and Hank howled at it. We were just a little stressed.

## Sounds of Silence During the Pandemic by Judy Brown

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March 23, 2020 was the first official day of lockdown due to the pandemic. I had gotten a text message the night before from my employer telling me I was considered an essential employee and I was expected to report to work the next day. I had never received a message like this from any employer during my entire nursing career. Even when I lived in Maine and we were expecting some huge Nor’easter, no one had ever sent me that type of message.

I was disturbed in a strange way. Why send out that message? Of course, I was planning to go to work, I am a nurse – it’s what we do. Even though I was now legally blind and working a different type of job as a nurse, I had always known I needed to show up to work in any kind of disaster.

I took an Uber to work as usual. There was a weird uneasiness between me and the driver. We both had masks on. I ignored the tension and tried to focus on something else. And that’s when I noticed there were no other car sounds on the road around us. No one else was going anywhere. No one was out on the sidewalk. The carpool parking lot was empty. The only sound I could hear was the rhythmic humming of the tires on the road from the car I was riding in.

I got to work early. No traffic so the whole ride took less than 15 minutes. I opened the main door to the hospital, and that’s when it hit me – the silence.

There is always a background hum of noise in any hospital. People talking, people walking in the hallway, equipment being moved – all contribute to the background hum. If you work in a specialty area such as ICU, there is constant low-level noise from all the machines we use. Ventilators, monitors, IV pumps, the alarms from those pumps, all contribute to the noise. And people are constantly around talking and moving. It is a special type of sound that I am very familiar with.

The lack of sound was striking and a bit disturbing. Then, I heard a brief whoosh from the Starbucks area at the front of the hospital. The people who make the coffee were considered essential employees. Just like the nurses, respiratory therapists, lab techs, housekeeping staff, dietary, pharmacy and physicians – we were all considered essential employees and needed to be present and at work.

Most of the administrators were told to work remotely from home.

My office was located in the administrative wing – the entire place was empty and silent. The only people in D-wing were me and my nurse manager. The silence had become a harbinger of what was to come during the early weeks of the pandemic.

I was the only blind nurse in the hospital. I was an essential employee.

After losing my vision about five years ago, I relied on my memory of the hospital and certain sounds to direct me in the hospital. Most people who encountered me in the hallway had no idea that I had lost my vision. Fine with me, since I did not want to be treated any differently than when I was a recovery room nurse at that hospital.

During the early part of the pandemic, my job changed daily. I usually did discharge planning for joint-replacement patients. The surgeries had all been cancelled. I was now assisting where needed – making calls, arranging appointments, looking for resources such as transportation, basically anything and everything that could assist with discharging a patient.

Many people were told to not report to the hospital, including volunteers. There were gaps that needed to be filled without volunteers. I found myself delivering an oxygen tank to one of the inpatient units to help discharge a patient who needed home O2.

No problem, I thought. Then I got off the elevator with the oxygen tank and was hit by the silence again. Nothing to orient me to which hallway I needed to go down. I knew there were direction signs, but I could not read much of what was written except the word STOP.

Part of the unit had been blocked off to create a “hot zone” for COVID patients. The other hallway was the “safe zone.” Because of all of the plastic sheeting, sounds were muffled. I could not hear the hum of a ventilator, which would indicate the “hot zone.”

I stood outside the elevator for several minutes hoping someone else would also arrive and I could ask which way to go. No one else arrived. I used my phone to take a picture of all of the signage so I could figure out which way to go. I was lucky I still had a small amount of usable vision to allow me to read the signs with magnification.

After a few weeks, I got used to the weird silence in the hospital.

As restrictions lifted, the hum came back. I could locate areas of the hospital easily based on the sounds. And the return of that hum meant a return to a more regular operational status.

Who knew my favorite sound was the combination of sounds heard in the hospital – alarms, hospital equipment, multiple people talking all at once, and, of course, the sound of the Starbucks cappuccino machine?

## Sweat Lodge Sounds A Poem by Yvonne Miller

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Summer evening at home

Kicking back in my bedroom

Listening to the drums

The neighbors beating in rhythm

Gathering in the sweat lodge

Boom … Boom … Boom … Boom!

Echoing beats like the heartbeat

Drifting sounds in my room

It is soothing to my soul

Each weekend they sit to sweat

Prayers go up with each beat

Sunny or clouds that sometimes may be gloom

Does not matter at all

Good medicine prevails

Always in a good way to call

Follow the trail

Of the Red Road

Creator listens and reveals

We are told

The ancestors reside on the other side of the veil

Whispering truth and wisdom

Their voices echo like the drums

Boom… Boom… Boom… Boom!

## The Bell Choir by Loretta Pedersen

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Long ago, I had a best friend, and the only way her mother would agree to let me stay the night on Saturdays was if I attended the Lutheran church service with them the next day. I felt rather out of place at the Lutheran church. My father was a Baptist, my mother was a Jehovah’s Witness, and I was a nascent atheist, though I didn’t realize that quite yet at age 13. The Lutheran pastor’s robes and recited prayers seemed suspiciously Catholic to me, as did the catechism the adolescents who were dragged to the church were required to memorize. The 1953 film *Martin Luther* that they made us watch in catechism class did not do much to convince me that Lutherans were not Catholics.

We had been warned about Catholics in my family. Catholics cared more about ritual and formulaic prayers than about a personal relationship with Christ, my father said. Catholics prayed to Mary instead of to Jehovah, my mother said. It was truly a miracle they let me go to the Lutheran church at all.

My best friend and I were the black sheep of the youth catechism class. It wasn’t because we failed to memorize the catechism. We did a decent enough job of that. Rather, it was because we happened to go to junior high with the other girls in the catechism class, and they happened to be popular, blonde, and athletic, while we were not. On confirmation day, they all conspired to wear identical white dresses without including us in the plan. We showed up in navy blue and hunter green, and the other girls smirked and laughed at us.

When it came time to put on the annual Easter play for the congregation, the mothers of those girls made sure that my best friend and I got the worst parts. We were given the roles of the angels who had to wait in Jesus’ tomb until halfway through the third act, and our shining moment was to come out and say in unison, “He is not here, for he has risen.” Now, Jesus’ tomb was actually the pastor’s little robe-changing closet thing just off the side of the chancel or the sanctuary or whatever the heck that front part of the church is called where regular members of the congregation rarely get to go. It was a dark and claustrophobic place to wait for two and a half acts, but we passed the time well by discovering the pastor’s stash of communion wine, which ended up noticeably spattered all over our white sheet angel costumes when we came out to recite our line.

Since the popular girls and their mothers hated us already, we decided to just own it and make them hate us all the more. When they organized a youth group sleepover in the church basement, we waited, giggling in the dark, until everyone had been asleep for a good hour, and then we pushed “play” on the church boombox to make our brilliant plan come to life. Aerosmith’s “Eat the Rich” suddenly blared out through the quiet church basement, scaring and horrifying everyone but us, and though I can’t remember what our punishment was, I’m sure it entailed the mothers of the popular girls calling our mothers to air their grievances.

Most of my memories of our days at the Lutheran church are like these – memories of being the awkward, unpopular poor kid who fit in at church no better than she fit in at school. However, there is one memory I have from that church that is truly divine, and it was from the first Christmas season I spent there. I remember the night well. It was Christmas Eve, and my best friend’s father had been forced by his wife to put on a nice argyle sweater and go with us to church. (Usually, he got to stay home.) He looked about as happy as an alley cat forced to wear a tutu as he sulked in the pew. Evening services at this church were an unusual thing, and I remember the night feeling enchanted. Special lights and decorations were everywhere and the congregation was twice as large as usual because all the dads had been forced to put on sweaters and attend. But the magic *really* began when the gentle sound of angelic chiming began to build and grow somewhere up above us. I looked overhead and realized that there was some kind of choir space on a loft or balcony type thing up above us, and in that space, I could see the popular girls and their mothers holding and carefully ringing different sizes of golden handbells. The sound was like nothing I had ever heard, and though I despised those girls and their mothers, I felt a sense of awe and gratitude in that moment.

Ever since that day, I have loved chimes and bells of all kinds. When I traveled to Thailand, I brought home a little brass temple bell, and years later a man who once loved me brought me a large bell shaped like a fish when he came back from his international travels. The sound of wind chimes can move me to tears, and the highlight of my entire undergraduate degree program was when we learned about the ancient Chinese bell sets that were made of bronze and that featured carefully designed bells of different sizes with almond-shaped cross sections. Each bell was meant to be hung in its special position on a rack with the others of its set. These bells would have been played by striking their outsides with some kind of mallet-like object. If I could hear any bells on earth from any time period, I would go back to ancient China and listen to these.

When I hear a bell ring, I’m not so sure that an angel gets its wings. I imagine 13-year-old me in a communion-wine-spattered angel costume with cardboard wings covered in crude glitter swirls, and I can only laugh at the thought.

## The Sound of Pollution by Zackery Hurtz

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When we think of pollution, we think of trash, chemical spills, air quality, and more. One of the things I personally track is noise pollution and its impact, both locally and globally. As someone who uses my ears, sound is very important to my ability to understand the world around me. I know I’m not the only one, and those of you reading this can greatly understand the value of sounds.

So, what impact does noise pollution have on those of us who use our ears?

For me, one of the biggest challenges when traveling is listening to the environment around me, which can be hard to do with extremely heavy traffic. This can make it dangerous when navigating in areas that aren’t focused on accessibility for the blind traveler. When I visit large cities, like Seattle, there are so many sounds that it begins to be overwhelming – people yelling, vehicles, construction, music, animals, and more.

Even as I sit here and write this, I’m thinking about the sound environment in my bedroom. There are two fans and one air purifier running 24 hours a day, the cats upstairs practicing kitty battle tactics, and household noises like refrigeration systems and plumbing. The fans help keep the air circulating while also drowning out the noises from the rest of the house. The fans allow me to ignore the chaos that is cat war games, their jumping off of dressers, rolling toys across the floor, and whatever it is that cats do when night rolls in. The air purifier helps clean the air, which is needed since I have a parrot who likes to spread his feather dust. Parrots are great, but their rooms need to be ventilated and circulated constantly.

These things that I need are also serving as noise pollution, and it’s a constant balance of needs and wants. If I didn’t have the fans running, I’d be lying in bed questioning every little sound I heard. Is that someone jiggling the door handle? Did someone just walk across the driveway? What’s that sound I can’t identify but need to figure out before I can even think about drifting off into the Land of Nod?

When you live with other people, you start to realize we’re noisy beings, and it all starts to just be part of the human experience. For other animals, though, it can be problematic. For example, my parrot, Oreo, gets rather grumpy when the cats are bouncing off the walls at 2 in the morning above our bedroom.

A global impact of noise pollution and animals is anytime we light off fireworks. Every Fourth of July, the birds around my house become startled and typically stay up much later than they normally would. Those that rely on hearing to find food, like owls, become disorientated and might miss a meal.

Oreo can’t stand the fireworks, and it’s my job to stay up with him all night to help him stay calm and not be stressed. Birds can’t handle stress well. When it gets too bad, they can actually die. They have such fast-beating hearts, and when they’re stressed, they can literally have heart attacks. So, every Fourth of July, I do my best to reduce the noises from fireworks by turning music on, keeping the TV going, and, yes, putting the fans on high speed. I’m forced to use one form of noise pollution to reduce a much larger problem with another form.

We see racism and classism when it comes to where we place things that cause noise pollution, as well. Neighborhoods that are low-income are typically found near manufacturing plants that put out a lot of noise. Several studies determined that in black neighborhoods, noise pollution was much higher vs. in wealthy, white neighborhoods. The noise pollution wasn’t that of daily living. It was caused by manufacturing, power plants, trains, and a variety of other things. If you look at the placement of railroads, you’ll notice they tend to pass through the low-income parts of cities and towns. This is illustrated in books and TV, where the poor family lives near railroad tracks, and the trains can be heard in the background. It isn’t just a trick writers use. It’s real life, and lots of money is spent to make sure the noise pollution doesn’t bother the wealthy homeowners.

Small towns can typically be found around military bases that practice shooting, bombing, and have airplanes and helicopters flying around nonstop. These towns are cheap to live in for the most part, but residents will be awakened at midnight as soldiers practice night combat. This causes adults and children to struggle with daily activities like going to school, working, and finding peace and calm to relax. Children who are exposed to sound pollution have lower test scores in schools and can struggle with controlling their body chemicals and behaviors.

I was one of those kids who grew up right next to a military base. Every day, Fort Louis would fire off guns, blow stuff up, and practice mortar attacks. Planes would be flying overhead, and the helicopters would fly in large groups so low you’d think they were landing in the front yard. In fact, my grandma would get so annoyed by the vibrations of the low-flying aircraft because her decorative plates would fall out of the cabinets and pictures would come off the walls.

I would go to school tired and never felt fully rested. I was already someone who had trouble sleeping, but you add in the stress of military activities, and it was a total nightmare. These types of things over a long time can cause major problems with behavior, mental stability, and stress levels.

When you have some time, try to identify noise pollution around you. Determine if it’s needed, and if you can find ways to reduce it. I’m sure most of us have gotten used to certain sounds and tune them out without even realizing it. Other sounds might be comforting, and without them we feel lost or like something is missing. When I thought about sound for this article, I really wanted to write about the problems of sound pollution. I hope over time, we can work towards a quieter environment.

## Oh, That Enormous Dinner Bell by Danette Dixon

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I grew up on a farm in Stanwood, WA. My dad was a welder, and he made an enormous dinner bell. It was shaped like a bell and had a rope that hung down. You just had to pull that string to ring it very loudly.

My four sisters and I could be in the very back acres, and we could still hear it from anyplace on the farm. When it was dinner time, all my mom had to do was ring that bell and everyone would come running. If my mom only wanted my older sister, the bell would only ring once. Since I was No. 2 in line, Mom rang the bell twice and I knew it was for me.

When my parents moved to Montana, that dinner bell stayed at the house on County Line Road. I will always remember that enormous dinner bell that hung outside the back door.

## Train Music by Chris Coulter

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I must have been born with the sound of trains playing their distinctive rock and roll music in my ears, my heart, and my bones. Of course, as a tiny, premature baby, I didn’t think about that. However, as time went by and I was no longer in the hospital in an incubator, my parents, my older sister and I began living a normal life. I began hearing and paying attention to all kinds of sounds. Prominent among those sounds were trains. We lived in Tacoma from the time I was born until I was 12 years old. I found myself going to sleep hearing the trains coming and going, usually going somewhere far away. Their long whistles would echo for miles and miles.

As I grew older, I didn’t have as much of an inclination to pay attention to train music. I was so interested in music by the Beatles or some of my favorite folk musicians. Instead of listening to the sounds of trains, I listened to the musicians who wrote songs about them.

My grandparents lived in Everett, and whenever we spent time with them, I still heard trains because we were just a little way down a hill that ended in railroad tracks.

We spent some time in Seattle, but Seattle was the “big city,” and I didn’t like the noise of the up-close-and-personal honking and braying of cars, trucks, and buses.

Another long stretch of years and my own fading interest in trains went by while I was at the Washington State School for the Blind. I tried to knuckle down and grow up and do my schoolwork, but somehow, I found myself daydreaming a lot. As graduation from high school drew near, I realized that it was time to stop listening to sounds for the joy of it.

After my freshman and sophomore years at Everett Community College, I spent a year at the University of Washington. I became seriously interested in music therapy. Willamette University was the nearest school to offer a degree program in this field. After my junior year, I went to Oregon to finish my required five-year college program that Willamette had as its training for a degree in music therapy.

At the age of 23, I received my Bachelor of Music degree in music therapy. I needed to intern in the field, and I had to do the hard work of writing letters to various hospitals and institutions to find out if I would be accepted. Eventually, I was accepted as an intern at a mental hospital in the western part of Kansas. I loved working on the addiction unit that was part of that institution, and I met some people who became good friends.

Unfortunately, when I came back to Washington after the internship, I found out that the state of Washington was in a recession. Jobs for people working in the addiction and music therapy programs didn’t have a lot of money to spare.

After several years of working as a musician and singer, I found out that even the booming business of jazz singers and cocktail piano bars wasn’t really in tune with my style of entertaining an audience. My mom and I went on the road together, and the best thing that came out of that experience was that I got to know my mother as an adult. We were very close during the years just before her death.

In the last chapter of this narrative, both of my parents died; Mom died in 1998 and Dad died in 2007. My sisters and I lived fairly close to each other, and my youngest sister invited me to join a church that she had attended for a while. That church, and the communal house attached to it, was a place of rest for my weary soul. That is where I met the man who is now my husband.

Jon and I left Everett not long after we got married and eventually we moved to Centralia, where we now live. We found an apartment that was much less expensive than other places we had lived in. The first morning as we were taking a walk, I heard a familiar sound. At first it was faint. It was the rhythm of the rails, and it was the sound of their haunting, soothing music. I felt myself relax as I heard the nearby train. I didn’t know I had missed the music of trains. I don’t really know if I was born when the trains were running, but I go to sleep every night to the whistle and the rhythm of the rails.

## The Sound of Balance by Hayley Agers

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The rustle of wind through the trees that tower over me, birds having their morning conversations that welcome in a new day, squirrels quarreling over who will get the best-looking seed on the off-limits bird feeder, the quiet voices of neighbors beginning their morning with some fishing, the rush of water from the other side of the lake filtering in … these are the sounds I enjoy each year we visit The Hideaway Cabin in Maple Falls, WA. They bring a sense of calm, allow me to clear my mind of constant chatter, and encourage my time of meditation and prayer. They have amazing health benefits, too. I didn’t realize how often I have digestive upset or headaches, until I didn’t. Research has shown that people who spend just two hours a week in an outside setting, such as parks, woodlands, and beaches, reported greater well-being compared to those who spend most of their time inside. Being outside, in nature, can help with such things as depression, self-esteem, problem solving, anxiety, loneliness, and pain. This is why I can’t seem to get enough time taking in all of the beauty, through sound, surrounding me.

The start to my typical day at the cabin is pretty predictable. While the rest of my family take in a few more zzzzz’s, I quietly sneak out to the kitchen. The new day has already greeted me with so many wonderful things: a slight breeze through the window in the bedroom just as I pull back the covers, the smells of a log cabin surrounded by nature, and the peace that fills my heart being here with my husband and children, who are all safe and well.

It’s at this point that things get even better. I listen to the tea kettle begin to boil, right before that sound of the whistle saying, “Not long, my lovely. Your cup of tea will soon be in your hands.” As I creep outside with my cup in my hand, I take in a deep breath as I feel the warm sun on my face.

As I settle into my favorite chair on the expansive, wooden deck, my breathing loosens up any tightness that might be in my chest. My worries and constant head-chatter disappear, and gratitude, comfort, love, and balance become the focus.

It’s not long before all of my woodland friends join me on the deck, and we begin our unspoken interlude. What are the squirrels thinking as they playfully chatter, running up and down the big cedar tree just to my right? How is it that the hummingbird always seems to get so very close to my ear, when it’s obviously not necessary to get to the sweet nectar in the nearby feeder? Do the birds and the squirrels really get along, or is it just my wishful thinking? The blue jay squawks, the crows squawk back louder, the smaller birds sing me a beautiful song, and all this while the two eagles in the nest on the other side of the lake watch over everything as they soar above. It’s amazing how far sound can travel when everything is so open and quiet.

A couple sit in their row boat on the lake, probably coffee in hand, maybe a fishing pole nearby, and they enjoy some much-needed alone time and conversation. I hear their voices, but not their words, so I make up their story, and it brings a smile to my face. A few short hours from now, we will be joined by others on the water, on their paddleboards, four-legged friends alongside them. Children laugh as they jump off docks, splashing into the water and screaming as the chill of it floods their bodies. Music plays in the distance, as the man a few houses down does his daily rowing around the lake. Occasionally, I hear trucks or loggers cutting down trees in the distance, but for the most part, it’s all the things that allow my mind to shut down and be appreciative.

Before my family even shows their faces, I’ve already experienced too many blessings to count. My head is in the right place so I can be what they need upon their arrival. My mind and heart are flooded with memories of growing up in England, as I enjoy my cup of tea. I’ve set my intentions for the day, and it’s going to be spectacular. It will be even better than the day before, and not quite as good as what tomorrow holds.

## Sound Thinking by Holly Turri

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Here are my top ten most favorite sounds. As I was considering this topic, I couldn’t decide, so I figure if it’s good enough for Casey Kasem, then it’s just fine for me.

Birds – They are my most favorite sound ever. Whether it’s those tiny baby chicks calling for dinner, seagulls fighting with crows, eagles, or my all-time favorite flying friend, which is the chickadee, birds are the music that makes my mood merry.

Rockets lifting off – Anyone who knows me probably is surprised that this wasn’t No. 1. That loud roar is the sign of dreams and exploration. Aren’t those the two things which separate us from Labrador Retrievers or snakes?

Christmas carols – Pretty soon it will be that most wonderful time of the year. It doesn’t make a difference if I’m listening to secular or religious songs, because these are the best music ever. My husband says musicians love to play these the best. I believe it.

Baby coos – Oh, how I love babies. They are so small, cuddly, and sometimes loud. From about 3 months on, they make the most adorable noises. At our church, our sound technician has a young lady right in that group. Yesterday, the pastor was praying and that little darlin’ was squealing and giggling. Although I’m sure the prayer was lovely, I think that little girl made the most beautiful praise to our Lord.

A summer thunderstorm back East – Sorry, my loving and dear friends, but the only thing that saddens me about living here is no exciting thunderstorms. People get all stoked and then there are two little, teeny, weeny, so-called claps. Several years ago, we did have a pretty significant one, but the thunder was still really weird sounding. Excuse me? To be classified as a real thunderous experience, the roars have to be loud enough to shake the house. Talking over them can be difficult. Sometimes even the continuous peals make my day.

NASCAR– Ever since I was a little girl, I’ve loved all kinds of auto racing. Dad and I always watch it together. When I was young, the Indy circuit was my favorite. Now that I’ve matured, NASCAR really makes my day. TV coverage is great, but only the FOX version. NBC go home. They use minimal equipment and their sound mixologists got their certificate from a crackerjack box.

Trains – Boy howdy, do trains make me feel small. As I’m standing on the platform waiting, when I hear one coming towards me, it makes me feel so small and very excited. Whether it is the D.C. Metro or Amtrak, this transportation mode causes me to feel as if I’m going to really leave for somewhere exciting and amazing.

Puppies – What can I say? Not only are they extremely soft, but their barks and yips just melt my heart.

My husband’s voice – Thirty-seven years and counting. Every day, he sounds better and better. As he’s aged, his music has gained in depth and talent. That’s besides his speaking.

Happy family – When we are all together, the grandkids are getting along, my children are having fun with their spouses and us, that is heaven on Earth.

Well, there you have it. Please don’t lock me up in the Twinkie mobile.

## The Power of the Falls by Heather Meares

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I crave water. Maybe because I am an earth sign and need it to give me a sense of fluidity. My grandma Lucille used to always tell me, “Bloom where you’re planted.” She was great at it. That theory has never really worked for me, though. I always find myself looking for gurgling streams to walk barefoot in or rushing rivers to carry me away on innertubes, or perhaps a raft or kayak someday. And, of course, there’s my not-so-secret, uncontrollable urge to immerse myself in public fountains.

Water speaks to me. I hear it and respond when it calls. I dream of it. Without it, I would be a rough, jagged rock, lodged and permanently stuck deep in the cool earth, waiting to be found, to be smoothed and refined, to be polished and made round. But not too round.

I’ve never understood why people duck and cover themselves when it starts to rain. Umbrellas? Not for me. I turn my face toward the sky, spread my arms out, palms up, and let her rain down on me. Drench me to the core as I laugh loudly with her drops of splattering, frenetic kisses, while she washes away all that turns me to mud.

Waterfalls are my holy grail. I seek them out, hoping to hear that ferocious roar, falling from the highest edges, crashing, smashing into what lies below, and then becoming a massive mist of white noise.

I was once told I would not be able to climb to the top of a particular waterfall because it would be too difficult for me. I think what they really meant was that it would be difficult for them to see me do it. So years later, I did. I traversed the very narrow, zigzag path up the side of the mountain. I had two panic attacks on the way up because there were no rails, and I made the mistake of looking down the cliff. My partner reassured me that I did not have to do this, and that we could turn back if I wanted. I reiterated to him that yes, I actually did have to do this, and so we did. When I reached the top, it was a curved lookout deck, which did have rails, right up close to the top of the falls. It overwhelmed me to the point of waterfalls streaming down my face. This powerful being had called me to her to remind me of my own strength, and to bask in her rapture, as she dropped to realms so far below, in her own path towards finding peace.

# LIFESTYLE

## Book Chat by Alan Bentson, Readers’ Advisor, Washington Talking Book & Braille Library

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Narrators sound great!

“You must remain alive, alert, to every friendly sound.” -- Rod McKuen

As a person totally blind from birth, the soundscape of my surroundings has always been crucially important. I have always enjoyed the sounds of blind people communicating with the world and exploring their surroundings. I love the sound of white canes tapping, dog harnesses jingling, Braille writers and manual typewriters clacking, and the sound or echo or feeling of a building or person or some other tall object going by. Whether you call it echo location or facial vision or sound shadows, it’s a great phenomenon.

Most of all, I love the sound of a human voice reading a book aloud. When I was young, my whole family, except for my older brother, all used to read to me. Of course, they mostly read what they wanted to read, lots of newspaper and magazine articles, advertisements, things from the encyclopedia, chapters from the current novel, or whatever was at hand. I was too young to know what to ask for, and I am a garbage reader, happy to soak in anything. All their everyday voices became much more interesting when reading aloud; the prose or poetry gave my ordinary family extra dimension and character. Since then, I have enjoyed teachers reading aloud, and my readers in college, friends relatives and anyone else who would sit still and do it.

I have learned to enjoy electronically created books that use text-to-speech voices. The reading may not be very artistic or expressive, but at least Bookshare books and other such platforms give a consistent and fast-paced rendering of the material. Several years ago, I read a novel on Bookshare called “Where or When,” by Anita Shreve, and I found myself tearing up and getting very upset at the ending. I figure that’s when I became used to text-to-speech. (This book is available from BARD in Braille).

One of the controversies about talking books right now, among blind people, is single vs. multiple narrators. It has become a hotter controversy as the commercial market, from which NLS draws most of their new titles, is more and more employing several narrators per book. I’m a conservative barnacle in this controversy, greatly preferring a single voice per book. Recently, Audible.com brought me three multiple-narrator books that did not change my opinion but did make me think more deeply about the question.

The first was “The Lost Children Archive,” (db93811) by Valeria Luiselli, a well-known Mexican author who currently lives and writes in New York City. The novel had four main characters in a blended family: a father and his 10-year-old son and a mother and her 5-year-old daughter, both children of previous marriages.

The adults are academic types who met while doing a project in New York City. The project has ended now, and the academics are studying other things. One has the feeling that the family is unblending at a great rate. As usual, the commercial publisher does not bother to tell us on the recording or on the website which of the four narrators plays which part, but the principal character is the wife, and I assume Valeria reads this section herself. The husband has a minimal role, and only a few scraps of narration in a male voice, which contribute little to the story. The boy-sounding narrator reads the middle section of the book, and his part is gloriously riveting. There is a tiny section toward the end of the novel read by the little girl in a little girl voice. Our researchers are radio documentarians traveling across the country. He is collecting sounds associated with Apache Indians.

She is trying to do audio reportage about refugee children of illegal immigrants who have become separated from their parents. The little girl’s section of the story is her attempt to reproduce through mouth noises the sounds she has heard captured on the couple’s various recordings and it is pretty cute, and certainly no one but a little girl could have read it. One wonders if this could be called a novel at all or just elaborate radio drama. The work is intricate, employing poetic prose, stories within stories, recordings of sound effects and many other literary and dramatic devices. It’s too clever by half, but manages to be moving in spots. The multiple narrators were not strictly necessary.

The other two were short story collections. “Memory Wall and other Stories,” by Anthony Doerr, features six stories set all over the world. The first and title story is read by Lisette Lecat who is a brilliant narrator. She has a South African background and was able to read the song in the Xhose language that appears at the end of the story. I could have happily listened to Lisette read all of the stories. Assigning each story to a different person seemed superfluous. This book is no longer available from Audible.com, but he’s such a famous author we can only hope that they will bring it back.

In “Unfettered,” edited by Shawn Gleason, 23 narrators read 23 fantasy stories by 22 different authors. It was nice to hear a lot of famous commercial audio narrators all in one place, but there was a similarity in tone and subject matter, and all those different voices just became distracting.

For the past century, we have been drowned in theater, radio, TV, and movies, and the dialogue in this media seems only to illustrate the visual parts of the story. I enjoy the friendly sound of a single voice bringing a particular book to life. It’s an intimate art form and narrative rather than theatrical, and I hope the talking book goes on a long time in some media or other. Meanwhile, happy reading.

## Sporting Spotlight Take Me Out to the Ball Game by Beth Greenberg

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Since it is almost time for the World Series, I thought I would talk about baseball in this newsletter.

I joke around about how being a Red Sox fan is part of my DNA. I followed in my dad’s love of baseball and the Boston Red Sox. I was born in Massachusetts and lived 45 minutes from Boston. I grew up taking the train with my dad and uncle Phil to Fenway Park at least once a season and listening to the game while we were there with a transistor radio to get the play by play.

The comradery of the crowd all rooting for our team is so encompassing and empowering. The smells of hot dogs and popcorn fill the air. The sounds of the crack of the bat when a ball is hit. The excitement, the chatter, and roar of the crowd, the green grass cut with a pattern.

My dad and the people around us would explain what abbreviations meant or talk about the last play and how they felt about it. I was totally in awe of it all as a kid.

Baseball is played on a diamond. The four bases form the diamond. The field is not shaped quite that way; it is more of a fan shape (a paper hand- handled fan). The part you hold at the bottom is where home plate is, and the outfield is the wide part of the fan – the four bases, including home plate. When a team is on the field, there are nine players (one at each base, the pitcher, three outfielders, and a shortstop). There are 25 players on the active roster, and 15 that are on the reserve list in case a player has an injury. When a player is up to bat, they can get four balls to be walked to first base, and three strikes to be out. They can hit a ball and go past the foul line and be considered a foul ball; two foul balls can be each considered a strike. There is an invisible zone called the strike zone, and the home plate umpire decides if the ball that was thrown falls within that box zone or not to determine if it is a strike or a ball.

There are nine innings in baseball. The away team plays first. In the ninth inning if the home team is winning, then the game is over after the top of the ninth (when the visiting team plays). If the score is tied after nine innings, then the game goes into extra innings. I have seen games that the Red Sox and Yankees have played that have lasted 18 innings and 5½ hours long. They have changed some rules so games don’t last as long.

I moved to Pocatello, ID, in 1986. Our local NFB chapter had started a Beep Ball team, but we only usually had one game and it was against the local channel 6 news station that had a softball team. We all had fun, and it was great exposure to show off the sport and what blind people can do.

When I moved to Kansas City, MO, we would try to see the Red Sox play the Royals. Even here in Washington, I travel up to see the Mariners play the Red Sox once a season. It is still best to find the local sports station to listen to the play by play. The MLB app has a 10-second delay, so when you listen to the game, you wonder what happened because of the crowd’s reaction, and you hear why 10 seconds later.

In 2004, I had moved to Vancouver in the beginning of October, and towards the end the Red Sox played the Saint Louis Cardinals in the World Series. The Red Sox have made it to the World Series several times but had not won one in 86 years. The night of game four of the series, I was on my knees praying for them to win, when my sister came home from a parent/teacher conference for my niece. The Red Sox did win that game and the World Series – as they say, the BoSox swept the Cards in four games (the series is best of seven games). (BoSox is for Boston Red Sox and the Cards is short for the Cardinals.) I was so excited I was jumping up and down and screaming excitedly. It was one of those things you will remember forever.

Back in 2015 or so, a member of WCB who has since passed away, Kevin Daniels, had come down to Vancouver with a couple of the Beep Ball teams and played an exposition game at a local park. The spectators got to hit the ball. I think a lot of people were interested in playing but did not feel like they had the time to start a team. I wish the Northwest Association of Blind Athletes would start a Beep Ball team here in the Portland metro area.

Beep Ball is a six-inning game, and there is no second base. There are four strikes and one pass ball in Beep Ball. There are six defensive players in the outfield. The catcher and pitcher are sighted members of the same team as the batter. The first and third bases have audible beacons at them; the batter doesn’t know which base will be turned on to run to once they have hit the ball.

Beep Ball is a good alternative for those of us baseball fans who want to play. Although some may say it is a slow game compared to some other sports such as football, I will still always enjoy the game.

## Patience and Kindness Coming Into Focus by Alan Biné

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Bad vision teaches you to have patience. Things I never thought twice about before my vision went south a few years ago now take at least twice as long to do – like simple cooking, or even buttoning a shirt.

You know those shirts with little buttons to hold down your collar? The ones with those very teeny buttonholes? They require considerable patience just to get them buttoned when you can't see too well. They can be so frustrating.

Sometimes now, I even make the mistake of putting my shoes on the wrong feet. Honestly, I wish I were kidding. I'm needing to be a lot more patient to gain more patience.

Here's another example. How about not being able to find something in the fridge that I absolutely know, 100 percent, I put in there. That can be a real test, especially when I happen to be searching for a highly craveable piece of leftover tiramisu. I'd very much like to know what happened to it. Who moved this piece of deliciousness? Fess up, I want to know? More importantly, where the heck did it go? It's not very nice to make life harder for a person who's having trouble seeing. Finding what you're after when you can't see is no piece of cake.

Geeze, even cleaning the lint screen of the clothes dryer can be a chore now. My color coordination skills have also taken a hit. And texting for a person who had trouble using his so-called smart phone even when he could see? Well, that can be nearly a mission impossible. Who do you think I am anyway, a male Helen Keller? Please people, could you quit asking me to reply by text? Just call me, OK?

I used to like going grocery shopping but, sadly, not so much anymore. Trying my best to find whatever I'm shopping for while avoiding a game of bumper grocery carts creates a sort of stress that spoils what formerly was a pleasurable experience. But enough of this complaining.

There's also some good to report since going low vision, (I still don't want to say going blind, which sounds awfully permanent. There's always hope for improvement, or maybe some ophthalmological miracle.)

On the positive side, I've been overwhelmed by all the kindness I'm being shown daily by many folks, some who have been total strangers. A big shout out to all the Community Transit bus drivers who always help me locate the Orca card scanner to pay my fare when getting on the bus.

And to the young woman at Round Table Pizza. Whenever I call from the bus enroute to Round Table to order my favorite pizza, it's Megan who usually answers. "We'll have it ready when you get here, Alan, and do you still want it a little crispy like last time?" she cheerfully asks.

It may be a small thing, but that kind of friendly customer service never fails to lift my spirit. People like Megan make me smile. And she's hardly alone.

There's Bella and Hee Kyung, who work the front end of Teriyaki Wok Express near Alderwood Mall in Lynnwood, who never fail to greet me warmly, and always get my order perfect. Full disclosure: Bella and Hee Kyung happen to be former ESL students of mine at Edmonds College, where I've volunteered for many years.

And then there's Bao, the amiable owner of Fat Pig BBQ in the Perrinville neighborhood of Edmonds. Whenever I'm near the Fat Pig, I like to stop in for the good barbecue, and to chat with Bao. We usually talk politics, and often agree to disagree.

Incidentally, for the tastiest and most affordable pulled pork sandwich in town, you should stop by there, too. I'd also be remiss if I didn't mention Chad, who graciously and patiently helps me use the self-checkout registers at Winco Foods in Edmonds. Good-natured Chad never ever complains when I ask him for help when I have trouble reading instructions on the credit card payment machine.

You're probably getting the idea that all I do these days is be-bop around town on the bus, stopping at my favorite joints to eat and chat up the various workers. If that's what you're thinking, I have to confess that you kind of have an accurate, clear picture of my travels. You can just call me Alan the eater and Edmonds Beacon writer, who's typically a slightly blurry man in motion.

## The Sounds of Music by Marilee Richards

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Where does your mind travel when you think of this image – a famous musical, the many kinds of music in our lives, a particular sound of music, or something entirely different? For me, it takes on a little bit of all these images. The first sound to trigger this article was a man whistling at a thrift store as he moved along the shelves. I had not heard anyone whistling since my younger years. What other sounds might I connect with music?

As I thought about this, I wrote a list of all the musical sounds I hear every day. There are bells from a church, a bell choir, bell in a band, bells we ring to call people to a certain location, such as a dinner bell or meeting, jingle bells at Christmas, the bell for the Salvation Army, and many more. My dad’s favorite bell was on his fishing pole to alert him to a fish on the line. As you can tell, I could go on and on.

Birds are always around for those of us who walk outside and don’t travel by auto. I sometimes think they are telling me their story, as I listen to their lovely melody. One seems to answer the others.

What about a band or orchestra? You hear them at concerts, at parades, and while attending a special program or event. They have bells, string sections, brass sounds, flutes, chimes, a percussion section, and many other sounds. What is your favorite? I think mine is the string section, because I played the violin as a teen. My brother played in the school band throughout his school years and was in the marching band, too.

After eighth grade, my music focus turned to a vocal interest. I was in every choir and special music group I could get involved with for the rest of my life. I was in an a cappella choir in high school, a small girls group, Girls of Note, church choir, and anything else I could participate in. This has been a part of my life until recently, when I can no longer read the music. This was heartbreaking until I took up piano lessons, after being offered free lessons by Brent Boon, who is still looking for some more blind/visually impaired students. I love this challenge.

There are several special events that stir my memories of music in my life. The first one happened during my senior year when we performed a joint concert with Everett High School and Cascade High. This was the first concert like this. Both a cappella choirs and bands did a concert at the close of the year. We each did our selections as individual groups, and then combined groups to do several pieces together. The last piece was “The Battle Hymn of The Republic.” This ended with the phrase “As He died to make men holy, Let us live to make men free,” instead of let us die to make men free. This brought chills up and down my back. Each time we sing this, that memory floods my mind, and I am a young girl once again.

As an adult, I was traveling with a special friend when she decided to visit the Capitol in Olympia. She decided to visit the rotunda while there. She often needs breaks while driving, so I didn’t think anything about stopping. When we got inside the building, an acapella choir was singing there, and the sound was breathtaking.

My favorite music group was the group “Great Joy.” It was a group of about a dozen adults who loved music and was developed by the music director at my church. We were all very involved in music our entire lives. One of the women did sign language, as her parents were both deaf. It was beautiful when she sang and included sign language, too. We all managed to wear the same colors when we sang at church, without telling each other what that would be. We sang at church camp, and all shared the limelight with small solos.

Going back to my childhood, I remember the Sunday evenings singing with my mother’s family and friends in their music room for hours, singing the old sheet music they had collected over many years. Also, singing Christmas songs for hours. My mother played the piano while my aunt played the organ, and we all sang along. I did not know then how much music I would commit to memory while singing along. I was not aware how limited my vision was then. What a gift now, though.

You can see the impact that music has had on my life, almost since birth. I have tried to make music a part of my family life, too, as I raised my children. They, too, are very musical. I do not know of a more impressionable gift to pass on to others. Please step out of your comfort zone, and take some time to listen to the music all around you.

## Hatching Robin’s Egg by Sarah Edick

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*Dedication: To all who have lost family, friends, and companions during this terrible pandemic.*

Robin’s Egg was her name. She’s not a robin, nor is she an egg. I held my iPhone, while listening to someone describe a Tuxedo kitten. She’s all black, with a white spot on her chest. She sat there, looking at the camera, with that regal look that kittens get. On the site for Sunny Skies Shelter, she has that look, the one that said, “Yep. I’m your baby. You’ll love me and spoil the daylights out of me.” She was also scared. Three of them were abandoned. One was her brother, a twin, but twice her size.

March 2021 really hurt my heart. My miracle kitty, whose eyes matched the ones made by Custom Ocular Prosthetics, crossed that rainbow bridge to kitty heaven. I couldn’t even be there. That was less than 10 days before my neighbor, Carol, left for that heavenly place. It was really tough. Two special friends were not with me. And in a building that had been exposed to the pandemic at least once before, you just didn’t visit neighbors. Of course,

I was missing a ball of fur, cuddling up to me. This happened after losing family and friends, after a sad year. I wasn’t going to remain sad. I’m just

not made that way.

I had been approved for another companion animal. When that fluffy, little baby kitten was described to me, I just knew that was the kitten that I needed to be a friend.

“I’d love to adopt Robin’s Egg,” I said to Jane (name changed).

Since transportation wasn’t going to work in my favor and, of course, nobody would let me drive, Jane agreed to bring that beauty out to me. That’s real compassion and understanding! When I first held this lovely kitten, I knew that it was the right choice.

“She’s a listener,” said Jane. “When you say anything, her ears just lift

right up.”

We were a match. Naturally, I listen, too. That’s why she wears a pink collar with a bell on it. Sad to say, she’s learned to silence her bell. How

do they do that?

I couldn’t keep calling her Robin’s Egg. I just didn’t think it fit her. So not knowing the future, I changed her name. She seems joyful, I’m thinking. She makes me feel that joy. Not just one Joy. It had to be Joy-Joy. She is twice the bundle that I needed.

That’s how I began to hatch a Robin’s Egg. When Jane left, she totally freaked out. She spent almost two weeks hiding. I spent that time talking her out into the open. Sad things happened to me. Terrible things happened to her. However, that’s before we met.

I was absolutely right not to keep that name, though it stays in her records. It’s our story. See by the time that Joy-Joy left her shell, I realized

something. She wasn’t the only rescue in this story. While she was saved from an empty house, I was rescued from overwhelming grief. She trusts me so much.

We all lost a lot of people that we truly love during this terrible pandemic. Losing my furry roommate and my neighbor was the tipping point. However, I’m not as lonely. I’m learning, even after the end of lockdown, how to handle so much loss. I know who’s missing. I know that they aren’t suffering.

Sometimes, I still cry. We all do. However, I have a special friend who does silly kitten things. The kind of kitten things that are sassy, silly,

sneaky… and, how does she silence that bell? Silence, then I call, “Joy-Joy! Joy-Joy?”

Suddenly, a bell rings loudly, and a kitten who will turn two on Sept. 20 runs to my side. Meowing, nosing, and a whack with that Tux tail is all

it takes. Noises in the night comfort me, in this new normal. She sneaks up on me, at early hours. That bell is silent but, yes, it’s still there. I feel a collar, the bell, too. The silenced bell will confound me.

I guess the moral is that even a human can be rescued when times are toughest. And it’s true, you really can hatch a kitten, a kitten who was once Robin’s Egg. Also, I learned, “Yes…These hard times made me better, not just older,” -- a quote from the song “When This Is Over.”

## It’s a Dog’s Life Chapter 2: ACB 2022 National Convention by Marilee Richards

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I attended the American Council of the Blind Convention and Conference (ACB) in July as a first-timer from Washington Council of the Blind. What an amazing experience this was. Right from the start, things went so smoothly for us. We were a large group to board, and Alaska Airlines deserves an award for getting us on and off the plane, and to the baggage claim area. They had volunteers at the gate to get all our luggage, get us out to the shuttle, and then to the hotel.

Settling into the hotel was another story. I got lost three times, and I have vision in one eye. Each time, I hoped it would be the last, but it was not. After four days, I was finally doing better.

At the convention, I continued to learn more about getting my guide dog. I spent a lot of time watching the many dog owners around the hotel. I am getting introduced to these dogs a little at a time. My roommate had a beautiful female dog. It was a full day before I was introduced to her at the close of our first full day at the convention. She was as excited to meet me as I was to meet her. What a wonderful way to end my first day that was so full of confusion and intrigue.

It was a very pleasant week rooming with them. The first night that her dog was off her harness, she covered me with kisses and knocked me to the floor with great excitement. I found that she was aware of everything around her. The expression on her face stole all our hearts. I can surely see why the connection is so strong between a dog and their owner.

Danette Dixon and Jeanne Jacob showed me the area to relieve the dogs. Many dog owners did not use this area but used the grass area alongside the street. That made it a little difficult when boarding our tour bus during the day. There were the age-old doodoo scoopers on duty all day. They were kept busy, and seemed to be jolly on the spot, with a smile on their face. That sure is a thankless job to do.

The most interesting thing I noticed was that each guide school used different harnesses.

After five days sleeping in a hotel room with my roommate, you could tell her dog was very tired, as she snored all night. It was a quiet sound. I thought it was refreshing. Many dog owners were as lost as the folks trying to navigate using a cane. Because there were so few volunteers to help direct the lost, I decided to give a hand when I could.

Andy Arvidson was one of the dog owners who gave his dog the lead and followed him knowing he would get him to the place he wanted to arrive.

Jeanne was one of the only dog owners who went on tours with me. She was a joy to have along with us, and was noticed by all onlookers where we traveled, too.

I am so excited to get a dog now. It will be so nice to have company and someone to care for, other than just myself. Stay tuned for the next chapter. It will be worth it!

## What’s On Your Plate My Daughter’s 14th Birthday Celebration by Hayley Agers

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In your wildest dreams or maybe your worst nightmare, were you ever surrounded and forced to spend five entire days in a wooded cabin with five teenagers? Well, this is exactly how we chose to celebrate Sydney’s 14th birthday this year. If I’m truthful, there was more noise than I anticipated, but I enjoyed it all the same and appreciated even more those far and few between moments of quiet.

This special birthday celebration trip was filled with the sounds of girls laughing and cheering on their friend as she perfected her flip off the floating dock into the lake, them debating who actually won Uno or Farkle, planning out strategies on where to take the next best selfie, and yup, the occasional quarrel or two as hormones raged and stubbornness settled in. No matter the reason or the volume, it all was topped off with a birthday song and dinner party on the deck. Gifts were given, food was enjoyed, many laughs were experienced, stories shared, and everyone came home friends. Below are a few of the recipes we enjoyed, and I hope you will take some time to enjoy them at your next noisy or not-so-noisy gathering.

**Sheet Pan Pancakes**

* 2 1/2 cups whole milk
* 2 large eggs
* 1 tbsp. vanilla extract
* 2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
* 2 tbsp. baking powder
* 1/4 cup sugar
* 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
* 8 tbsp. (1 stick) salted butter, melted
* 1 cup thick-sliced strawberries
* 1 cup chocolate chips
* 1 heaping cup blueberries
* Butter and warm pancake syrup, for serving

Preheat the oven to 425F. In a blender, combine the milk, eggs and vanilla and pulse to mix it well. Add the flour, baking powder, sugar and salt and blend until smooth, 25 to 30 seconds. Pour in half of the melted butter and pulse a few times to combine. Spread 2 tbsp. of the melted butter on a sheet pan, then pour in the pancake batter. Sprinkle the strawberries, chocolate chips, and blueberries over the batter in three sections. Bake until golden on top, about 20 minutes. Brush the remaining 2 tbsp. melted butter over the surface of the pancake. Cut into squares and serve with butter and warm syrup.

**Candied Bacon Wrapped Little Smokies**

* One package Little Smokies
* One package bacon with slices cut in half (do not use thick-cut bacon)
* Southern Roots Sisters Peach Pepper Jam
* Brown sugar

Preheat the oven to 350F. Begin to wrap 1/2 piece of bacon around one Little Smokie and place in a 9x13 in a baking dish all facing a uniform direction. Once your dish is full, scoop a little Southern Roots Sisters Peach Pepper Jam into a bowl and pop it in the microwave for about 10-15 seconds to thin it out (makes spreading it easier). Then, spread a thin layer of jam over the top of all the bacon in the baking dish. Sprinkle the tops of the bacon with a thin layer of brown sugar. Bake dish in the oven for approximately 1 hour at 350 until the bacon is done. Serve straight from the pan with toothpicks and enjoy.

# BRAIN FOOD

## Independent Visually Impaired Entrepreneurs ONLINE Business Expo by Ardis Bazyn

The Independent Visually Impaired Entrepreneurs (IVIE) is offering the following opportunity to blind or visually impaired business owners/entrepreneurs. If you join in our Online Business Expo, you can describe your products and services, pass on contact information, and allow participants to ask questions. IVIE members would pay $10 for a half-hour session or $20 for an hour. If you are not an IVIE member, you would pay $25 for a half-hour session or $35 for an hour. Non-members would have the option of having $15 of the payment used to pay IVIE dues.

The Zoom line would be the same for all those participating. The date and timeline will be Nov. 12 from 11:45 a.m. to 6 p.m. or later. At 11:45 a.m., an introduction of all the vendors participating with their specific time slots will be given, along with instructions for those attending. A wrap-up at the end of the presentations will be available for anyone to ask any final questions of those exhibiting online.

For those wishing to purchase a time slot or ask questions, send an email to [info@ivie-acb.org](mailto:info@ivie-acb.org) with your request to present/exhibit. Please send your business name, product line, telephone number, and email address. You will be sent a link for payment and additional information. If you wish to attend the IVIE Online Business Expo to join this unique shopping experience, there is no cost. However, please send an email to register so we can send you the Zoom call details. Send the email request to [info@ivie-acb.org](mailto:info@ivie-acb.org) or call 818-238-9321.

ENTREPRENEUR CORNER  
15 Tips to Consider When Marketing Your Business  
by Ardis Bazyn, business coach with Bazyn Communications abazyn@bazyncommunications.com

1. Do you currently have a marketing plan? What are your current marketing strategies? What differentiates you from others? What specific benefits do you offer? Who are your customers? Do you serve a specific niche? Do you offer a more personalized service?

2. Which benefits of your business should you emphasize? What issues are most important to your prospects?

3. What do your business cards say about you?

4. Do you write tip sheets that include your contact info?

5. Do you create online newsletters to send to your contact list? You could provide a few tips.

6. Are you listed and/or advertise in local online directories? Check online directories and local events calendars/websites to place events and articles. Create an article of interest to put on these sites.

7. Do you have a website to highlight your business? If so, trade links with local businesses.

8. Do you distribute promotional merchandise?

9. Do you visit or belong to networking organizations or service organizations? It takes time to build relationships.

10. Do you ask for testimonials and referrals from current customers?

11. Do you currently write letters or emails to customers thanking them for their business or referrals? Remember, business correspondence, whether written or calling past customers regularly, reminds them you are still around. Tell customers about other services you have.

12. Do you regularly meet with other business owners?

13. Do you make cold calls?

14. Do you occasionally offer seminars?

15. Do you have a blog, Facebook page, LinkedIn page, or other social media where you post articles, videos, or testimonials?

## From College to Career: Increasing Employment Outcomes within Academic Majors for College Graduates by Tristen Breitenfeldt

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The primary goals of my project revolved around reviewing existing literature to identify what percentage of college graduates with and without disabilities find work related to their major field of study, and other factors contributing to their career outcomes.

These days, most people attend college so they can attain higher levels of employment and earn higher wages than those without a college degree, spending thousands of dollars and an average of six years in pursuit of a credential. According to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, when compared to non-college graduates, degree holders have higher job satisfaction and professional success.

However, some data shows that employment outcomes for college graduates may be falling short of expectations because many of them are not working in careers related to their major field of study.

In a 1999 study of postsecondary undergraduate students in the United States, it was discovered that 6 percent of the student population had a disability. (DO-IT, n.d.-b). Furthermore, the 2020 Kessler Foundation National Employment and Disability Survey of recent college graduates revealed that graduates with disabilities were less likely than graduates without disabilities to be employed in a job linked to their college degree or to hold regular, permanent positions.

Burgstahler (2005) explains that when compared to their peers without disabilities, students with disabilities are less likely to persist or graduate with a degree or credential.

Despite having the highest rates of post-secondary education (78 percent) compared with those with other disabilities, the longitudinal study conducted by Antonelli et al. (2018), revealed that 17.5 percent of visually impaired, graduation-age adults were unemployed in 2015. This suggests that college graduates with visual impairments may have other factors affecting their ability to secure employment.

The majority of students graduating today earn degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, along with degrees in healthcare and business (Hanson, 2021). Degrees in these three major fields of study, comprised 50.8 percent of college degrees in 2021. This shift in the popularity of some degrees is somewhat reflective of the forecasted U.S. labor projections. Between 2020 and 2030, the disciplines of business, management, sales, computer and engineering, education, social services, legal, healthcare, media, arts, and sports are predicted to have the most job vacancies each year (Torpey, 2021).

College and career preparation for all students should start in middle and high school, with the youngest students learning about various career and educational pathways, paying careful attention toward not discouraging or unduly influencing any students based on perceived challenges and bias toward particular occupations of interest. Therefore, when talking with students, stakeholders should limit their discussion to only the facts and perceived benefits of higher education, realizing that youth may attempt to interpret non-verbal cues and body language being unconsciously conveyed during the discussion.

For example, a parent or teacher who has strong feelings against science may unintentionally discourage youth exploring that subject simply by exhibiting disinterest or displaying unfavorable facial expressions during the conversation.

Conversely, college-educated mentors may over-emphasize the merits of their degree in an effort to influence students toward a particular career path. Such coaxing and over-influencing can be detrimental to students’ self-efficacy and confidence in their own abilities. Instead, students should be encouraged by family, teachers, and counselors to begin thinking about who they are, and where they want to be in the future. Discussions might involve identifying the intersection between interests, aspirations, and work, along with conversations about the education and training requirements for particular jobs.

Academic advisors and career counselors should use a combination of tools and resources to help students research and explore various careers and college majors before they spend valuable time and money taking college classes that may or may not relate to their career preferences. Tools such as the Myers and Briggs Type Indicator should be utilized along with occupational projections data, college-readiness programs, career mentoring, and research on the labor market in the field and geographic location where the student wants to live and work.

Meanwhile, disability advocates and stakeholders in the community should organize to develop targeted resource guides and presentations highlighting the benefits of employing workers with disabilities in the labor force. These resource guides and presentations should then be widely disseminated to a variety of employers, utilizing both in-person interactions and social media.

However, the knowledge campaign should not end there. Since this is an ongoing issue, it needs a sustained, ongoing solution. Online discussion forums between employers and stakeholders should be developed and moderated, employers should be encouraged to examine their biases and attitudes toward hiring people with disabilities, and mutually beneficial partnerships between employers and postsecondary staff in disability services offices at both the community college and university level should be created and maintained.

While the post-graduation outcomes of young career seekers are varied, some prevailing themes emerged from the literature, such as the correlation between personality type and satisfaction in a chosen career, the influence of economic conditions on a graduate’s success in finding employment, and extra challenges experienced by students and job seekers with disabilities.

While this review provided a broad examination of the issues involved in the transition from college to career, further research on some of the discussed topics is warranted. Deeper research into the college-major decision process for young students, in-depth studies of the linkages between personality type and success in particular career fields, and further scrutiny of the perceptions of employers toward hiring people with disabilities should all be explored.

# HISTORY

## Lilac, More than Just a Pretty Color by Cheryl L. Martin, Executive Director, Lilac Services for the Blind

Edited by Carl Jarvis

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November 2021 marked 50 years since Lilac Services for the Blind began helping blind and visually impaired individuals across North Central and Eastern Washington to restore or maintain their levels of independence and quality of life. Since 1971, we have been the sole social service agency in the area providing the training and adaptive devices needed to scrupulously support this often-overlooked demographic. So, what started it all? How did Lilac Blind come to be the respected and highly beneficial service organization it is now?

It began with a blinded vet named Lewis Hendrix. Hendrix became concerned when he learned that the Office of Services for the Blind was scheduled for closure, and its services and programs would be folded into other programs within the newly established Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). Hendrix sought support from the Washington State Association of the Blind (WSAB) now the Washington Council of the Blind, (WCB). Over the next several years, studies were gathered from across the nation demonstrating serious under-service in states that had fragmented services to their blind residents.

For seven years, the Washington State Association of the Blind fought to have the Services for the Blind office preserved within DSHS. Efforts to have the Legislature establish a division for the blind within DSHS failed. The Washington Council of the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind of Washington (NFBW) set aside their differences for the time being to support the establishment of a separate agency, a commission for the blind.

As the struggle to save Services for the Blind dragged on, Lewis Hendrix refused to let those with vision impairments be ignored. He began putting together a board of like-minded people to organize something that would create a positive ripple effect throughout the blind community. At first, Hendrix and his board believed the best way to accomplish this was to connect with Seattle Lighthouse for the Blind and open a manufacturing location in Spokane, where those dealing with vision loss could get a job.

In the ‘60s and ‘70s it was unheard of to see blind people work in such areas as business administration. This was due to scarcity of assistive technology resources and a lack of accessibility in navigating office environments. Back then, organizations like Lighthouse for the Blind that were willing to hire and train visually impaired people were the best sources of employment. However, while Lighthouse for the Blind as we know it today offers opportunities for growth, that was not always the case. In the ‘70s, many visually impaired employees working in manufacturing shops found wages were low and opportunities to grow were scarce.

Enter Carl Jarvis, president of the WSAB, and a strong advocate for the blind community. Once Jarvis heard about "that troublemaker” Hendrix from the president of the Spokane Association of the Blind, he wasted no time in getting together with him. Once the two met, they decided to organize an Action Affiliate to help in the fight to improve services to blind Washingtonians.

Jarvis also agreed to help Hendrix and his board in their mission, but he believed that establishing another sheltered workshop wasn’t going to accomplish what they had in mind.

"What we need is a program that teaches blind people how to survive in the real world," Jarvis said. "A service center that offers broad instruction in work skills, how to do a job search, and how to hold onto a job once you have one, stuff like that."

Jarvis felt that a service center would offer more promise for integration. By going this route, the organization they were building could offer skills training and other activities that could help people become more independent. They could teach blind people valuable skills that they could use in everyday life and expand opportunities to work in other environments besides sheltered workshops.

Jarvis convinced Hendrix and the rest of the board that what was really needed was a service organization actually run by blind people.

On Feb. 9, 1971, the first preliminary meeting of Lilac Industries for the Visually Handicapped was held in Spokane at the Coeur d’Alene Hotel.

Now it was time to find some startup money. Jarvis and his father, Clyde, who acted as Lilac’s treasurer, attended a community meeting on behalf of the flowering organization to provide a presentation in the hopes of being granted federal money for community programs. They requested money to fund a center for the blind that would contain an aids and appliances store along with space for meetings and skills training.

Unfortunately, they did not meet the requirements for the federal money. Luckily, Jarvis managed to catch the interest of the attorney running the meeting, Horton Herman, who also happened to be a trustee for the Comstock Foundation. The Comstock Foundation was well known for financially supporting social and cultural growth throughout the city. It just made sense that Herman would appreciate what Lilac Industries for the Visually Handicapped was trying to do for the blind community in Spokane.

Herman suggested Jarvis meet with him later the following week. It was at that meeting where the Comstock Foundation committed $25,000 to go forward with the project. In today’s dollars, that amount would now equal about $170,000. They were also given space in a downtown building that belonged to the city for their new service center.

"Lew and I came to that meeting with a request for a few thousand dollars to purchase aids and appliances for the blind," Jarvis recalled. "That turned out to be the easiest $25,000 I ever raised.”

On March 29, 1971, Lilac Industries for the Visually Handicapped was legally established as a 501(c)(3) organization. With the groundwork in place and funded, and a deep network established throughout the blindness community, Lilac Industries for the Visually Handicapped was successfully launched. The aids and appliances store opened with strong volunteers lined up to help provide services such as fitting people with proper readers and magnifiers and reading materials. Hendrix’s dream finally became a reality.

On June 6, 1975, the name Lilac Industries for the Visually Handicapped was changed to Lilac Blind Foundation. Finally, in 2007, the organization’s name changed one last time to the name we all know and love: Lilac Services for the Blind.

There is a sad footnote to this uplifting story. In 1976, Lewis Hendrix and his fiancé, Nancy, were tragically killed in a head-on collision on their way home from a week-long camping retreat for blind people. It was a hard blow to the organization and community. Thanks to Hendrix, Lilac Blind has impacted thousands of lives across North Central and Eastern Washington in the past five decades. We are all very grateful for his passion and dedication in creating the empowering service center Lilac Services for the Blind is today.

## Voices: Our Untold Story When I Met Shirley by Chris Coulter

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Let’s go back to October of 1999. It was a landmark month and year for me because many “firsts” were coming into my life at the same time. It was my first Washington Council of the Blind convention. I knew it was time for me to expand my horizons during the time that my mother was near death. She died a month previous to my convention adventure.

I was nervous on the day of my first convention. I was afraid I might have forgotten how to effectively use my white cane and I was concerned I might feel too crowded by others on the bus. Sure enough, I heard shrill voices throughout our conveyance. It got louder and louder until another voice was raised. It was my first encounter with Shirley Taylor, the woman who could calm the ears and the nervous hearts of everyone in the room.

The roll call went off without a hitch. Everyone relaxed as Shirley called off the names. Somehow, even though I hadn’t met Shirley before, I felt as though I had known her for a long time. After roll call, she made some announcements and then sat at the front of the bus while we all started doing a sing-along that took up a wonderful amount of time on our ride.

I remember learning a good lesson as I realized that it could be possible for me to calm down, even in the middle of a loud crowd. At least I could put up with the crowd in small increments.

I never learned much about Shirley’s long and storied life, but she became one of my mentors during the convention of 1999. During the next day’s first general session, I was completely refreshed. I became much more tranquil as I found out where breakfast would be served, and I was able to find my necessary requirement of coffee and plenty of good food.

After breakfast, and during the first morning’s general session, I got brave enough to raise my hand so the mic runner could find me. I asked my question; my question was answered, and I got just a little bit braver by the time I passed the mic back to the runner.

I didn’t know much about the well-organized work that was being done regarding advocacy. I had never had any conversations with anyone in Congress, but I gained a lot of understanding from Shirley, Carl Jarvis and Sue Ammeter, to name a few. Several years later, Marlaina took me under her wing when I ran for a board position when Sue Ammeter was elected for another office. I filled that vacancy from 2008 until the fall of that same year.

Shirley, although she may not have realized it, was the wind beneath my wings. As time went by, I learned from others. My hope is that I will be able to be of help to others in WCB. I work quietly, as Shirley did, but I am a willing worker, except during the extraordinary experience of having an aortic valve replacement right smack in the middle of COVID. No, I didn’t get COVID; it was just another unknown in my world. So far, my heart is fine and I’m healthy, but I didn’t rest enough during those months. I am in reflecting mode.

Shirley had a big, beautiful heart and she inspired me, as I am sure she inspired everyone else.

## A Call to Include Disability History in Textbooks by Vaughn Brown

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The histories of women’s rights, slavery, wars, and voting rights are all common knowledge. What is not common knowledge is disability history. Dating back centuries, we can find examples of inhumane practices against people with disabilities – that is, if we dig deep enough down into the past of various countries and states.

As a former student and classroom teacher, I do not recall lower education history focusing on disability history. This is a great shame as we, along with Native Americans, people of color, and other communities, have the right to share our history. The public has grown more aware of the tragedies and successes we faced and still face. This is thanks to media such as news reporters and film producers making our community more visible to the public.

I recall friends and family calling me to share their amazement about our troubled history after watching “Crip Camp.” While I appreciated their expressions of horror, it did not please me in the way that perhaps it should have. Why? Because I studied the history of our community’s living with disabilities and the mistreatment at the hands of elected officials, medical practitioners, and education systems, among other industries. What I continue to learn is deeply saddening.

Sterilization of people with disabilities officially began in 1893 as a common practice. This was to supplement the 1867 passage of city laws throughout the United States barring people with disabilities from appearing in public, not to mention the establishment of education systems designed to isolate our population from other students. Or the barring of playing with friends or siblings in the public view.

San Francisco was one of the first cities to ban people with disabilities from being seen in public. This local law was approved in 1867. Other cities throughout the nation took similar steps in reducing the ability of our community to enjoy the right to public access. As a result, our ancestors were confined to homes or institutions.

Punishment ranging from fines to confinement was legal if a person with a disability, or their families, failed to adhere to such laws. It was not until the 1970s that activists started to make headway in demanding equal public access. This resulted in what we now know as the Americans with Disabilities Act, signed into law in 1991 by President George Bush Sr.

Institutionalization became common starting with Ontario, Canada. In 1839, one of the first institutions for people with developmental disabilities was erected. Not long after that, the United States started establishing similar institutions. During this era of the mid-1800s onwards, doctors, scientists, and philosophers were publishing articles and books on why people with disabilities should be eliminated from society. Such publications eased thinking towards the era of eugenics movements.

As part of the effort to eliminate our community from society, states such as Michigan started legalizing involuntary sterilizations in 1897. Shockingly, it is still legal to sterilize a person with disabilities. This is, in part, because of a 1927 Supreme Court decision that has yet to be overturned. This has been limited to certain circumstances, but remains legal, which is a cause for concern.

The fact is, there is much to learn from subjects regarding disability history. And, entire units can be devoted to this aspect of American history, but to this day, there does not seem to be room for such education. It is time that lower and higher education institutions take responsibility to make this portion of our history visible alongside histories regarding movements by women, people of color, Native Americans, and other communities who have dealt with tragedies. It is time to examine the lack of education surrounding our own history as a form of discrimination.

Notes:

[Crip Camp, A Disability Revolution](C:\\Users\\anneb\\Downloads\\Crip Camp, A Disability Revolutionhttps:\\cripcamp.com)

[https://cripcamp.com](C:\\Users\\anneb\\Downloads\\Crip Camp, A Disability Revolutionhttps:\\cripcamp.com)

[Eugenics" coined by Galton - Timeline](https://eugenicsarchive.ca/discover/timeline)

[https://eugenicsarchive.ca›discover › timeline](https://eugenicsarchive.ca/discover/timeline)

[Forced Sterilization Is Still Legal in the U.S. Giving Compass](C:\\Users\\anneb\\Downloads\\Forced Sterilization Is Still Legal in the U.S. Giving Compasshttps:\\givingcompass.org › article › forced-sterilization-is)

[https://givingcompass.org › article › forced-sterilization-is...](C:\\Users\\anneb\\Downloads\\Forced Sterilization Is Still Legal in the U.S. Giving Compasshttps:\\givingcompass.org › article › forced-sterilization-is)

## When Did the White Cane Become White? by Peggy Chong, The Blind History Lady

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*Reprinted by permission of the author. Her latest book, “Don Mahoney: Television Star,” is available from Amazon.*

*https://tinyurl.com/5xrz4vw4*

Oct. 15 is White Cane Safety Day. Looking back, I wondered when the white cane became white and the symbol for the blind? We all heard the story that white canes are white because of George A. Bonham. In 1930, Bonham, president of the Peoria Lions Club (Illinois), watched a man who was blind attempting to cross a street. The man's cane was black, and motorists couldn't see it, so Bonham proposed painting the cane white with a red stripe to make it more noticeable. But was he the first to think of this?

Robert C. Haven, manager of the National Safety Council, lived at 2641 Hennepin Ave., blocks from the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. He moved to the Minneapolis area for the safety manager position in late 1920. He is credited for starting the first driver’s education classes for women in the country while living in Minneapolis.

His family claims he is the first to think of painting the canes of the blind white for identification and safety in 1921. That year, he had occasion to speak with the director of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. She wanted to know what the safety council could do to protect the blind from the new, fast cars on the Minneapolis city streets. Robert called her back with the suggestion that a meeting be scheduled with his team, staff of the society, and blind people to discuss the matter. At that meeting, a suggestion by Haven was proposed – that the canes of the blind be painted white. Along with the painting of the canes, that drivers be educated to stop when they encounter a blind pedestrian with a white cane.

Most of the blind at that meeting were not in favor of painting the canes white for identification purposes. Some felt being obviously identified would make them targets on the streets for robbers, especially door-to-door salesmen and piano tuners.

Many already used the walking cane as a travel tool, reaching ahead to locate a curb, steps, open coal chutes, and other obstacles encountered daily on the streets. Good blind travelers taught each other their individual techniques that worked on the city streets and country lanes. Already, those using canes tapped the ground to listen for echoes or to determine, through sound, textures of the surface under their feet, benches, or the exterior of a building. Some canes were white, most were not.

One blind man at the meeting, David Rau, a weaver at the society, said he would give the white cane idea a try and carry a white cane on the streets for publicity. Haven went to work to get the press to come to their demonstration at the busy intersection of Lake and Hennepin near his home.

Rau (1878-1956) a blind, Russian immigrant, had a “special” graduation certificate from the school for the blind in Faribault in 1905. After leaving the school, he was placed in the Home for the Feeble Minded in Faribault, working as a rug weaver. In 1917, Rau moved to Minneapolis and got a job in the rug weaving department of the society, where he stayed for the next 35 years.

Haven had a cane painted white for Rau. He called the newspapers and asked them to bring a photographer. Several from the safety council and the Society for the Blind, and David Rau, went to the corner of Hennepin and Lake streets. Rau, having confidence in Haven, held the white cane as he was told, vertically, high in front of him and started across the street. The cars stopped. Everyone applauded.

The group moved to several other intersections, replaying the same drama. The cars stopped. Newspaper articles carried the story of how a white cane, carried by a blind person would make the blind safe. The articles encouraged motorists to stop when they saw a white cane aloft at an intersection.

Blind persons were told to change their travel technique and hold the cane up and out straight in front of them where a driver could see it from a distance. The blind pedestrian was told to step off the curb and walk across the intersection without the cane on the ground. The society began painting the canes of the blind white as a courtesy. Several years later, the society began classes in how to travel with the white cane. For decades, staff at the Minnesota agencies for the blind saw the cane as an identification symbol, not a travel tool.

Days after the demonstration with Rau, a blind workshop worker from the society told the staff that he was at a corner and held up his cane at the intersection. A truck stopped, the driver got out of the truck and helped him across the street. The director of the society called Haven and relayed the story. Haven was excited and continued a white cane awareness program until Haven left the job and the state in 1923.

The Minneapolis City Council passed its white cane ordinance in 1933 (11 years later), calling on drivers to give the right of way to blind pedestrians. Agency and blind alike worked to secure and promote the ordinance.

I wish to remark here that the technique taught the blind back then to cross the streets safely was to benefit the sighted. When the blind traveler came to the other side of the street, he had to locate the curb with his foot, or fall. Having the cane aloft made it harder to hear or feel curbs or obstacles such as another car stopped too far into the intersection. So, now the blind traveler hit the car. Well, that usually has a better outcome than the other way around.

And what about David Rau? He died of natural causes in 1956. In 1951, he was severely injured when hit by a car while carrying his white cane.

To schedule a presentation with the Blind History Lady, please write her at

TheBlindHistoryLady@gmail.com or call 303-745-0473.

# ADVOCACY AND LEGISLATION

## Voters Make Their Choices by Darya Farivar, Disability Rights Washington Director of Public Policy

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[Home | Darya Farivar for State House (daryaforhouse.com)](https://www.daryaforhouse.com/#:~:text=As%20the%20daughter%20of%20Iranian%20immigrants%2C%20Darya%20Farivar,career%20working%20with%20children%20who%20have%20communication%20disorders.)

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*Biographical Information from her website: “Darya has spent her adult career working with vulnerable populations. … After graduation, Darya worked as the advocacy program coordinator for Open Doors for Multicultural Families. Here, she showed immigrants and refugees with developmental disabilities and their families how to navigate the legislative process and use their voice to make change. Darya now serves as director of public policy for Disability Rights Washington. There, she has developed a reputation as a champion for access and equity.” She is currently running to become the state representative for the 46th district.*

Last month, on Aug. 2, Washington voters narrowed the field to two candidates for each of the open offices in this year’s general election. As the general election nears, there will be increasing attention to the candidates and the election – more candidate forums, news articles on candidate positions, and, of course, lots of campaign commercials. Voters will have access to plenty of information about each candidate and their stands on the issues.

“Top two” is not always a Republican vs. a Democrat. In our state, the “top two” vote-getters move on, which may be candidates of opposite parties, or the same party. In liberal urban districts, often there will be two Democrats who attract the most votes, with no Republican making it to the general election.

Meanwhile, in the “red” rural areas of our state, the contest may be between two Republicans. That said, most legislative seats have a Republican and a Democrat running against each other, so their positions on the issues may be very different.

Is the general election important? Yes, it is very important, and coming soon on Nov. 8. The outcome of the short and intensive campaign will shape the future of Washington state and the nation at large.

What is at stake in Congress? Washington voters will decide the fate of all 10 of our federal House members, and one of our two senators. Any change in the delegation will have a national impact. Already, in last month’s primary, one of our veteran House members, Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler, failed to make the “top two," so she won’t be a candidate in November’s election. Right now, the Democrats very narrowly control both the House and the Senate in Congress. If control switches after the November election, it will affect what bills pass, what programs get funded, and which federal judges are confirmed, including the Supreme Court.

What is at stake in Washington state? In our state Legislature, the change of a handful of seats would move control from the Democrats to the Republicans. Washington is perceived to be a mostly “blue” (Democratic) state, but just a few years ago the Republicans were in the majority in the Senate. Currently, the Republicans could control the House with just a couple more seats.

Here’s a list of the races this year that Washington voters will decide:

* U.S. senator (incumbent: Patty Murray)
* All U.S. representatives (Congress)
* All state House of Representatives members, and half of the state senators in the state Legislature
* Washington state Secretary of State
* Three Washington state Supreme Court justices (seats currently held by justices Yu, Madsen, and Whitener)
* Several Court of Appeals and numerous Superior Court judge seats

Who will be the candidates in November’s general election? As a result of the Aug. 2 primary, there are two candidates for each office. You can find these with their vote totals at the website of the Washington state Secretary of State.

* U.S. Senate: Two candidates emerged from last month’s primary, the incumbent Democratic Sen. Patty Murray, and her opponent in the general election, Republican Tiffany Smiley.

Washington state Secretary of State: Shortly after being re-elected as Secretary of State in the 2020 election, Kim Wyman accepted a position in the Biden Administration. Steve Hobbs, a Washington state senator, was appointed to fill the position until the next statewide election, which is this upcoming election in November. He received 39 percent of the vote in the primary last month. As for his opponent, it was a close race. There was less than a percentage point separating the next three candidates. Pierce County Auditor Julie Anderson, running as an independent, will be the other candidate.

Note: This past July, prior to the primary, there was a candidate forum for the several candidates for Secretary of State. Here’s a link to the recording that forum from TVW: <https://tinyurl.com/2jhnxpv6>

Why is the Secretary of State important? The Office of the Secretary of State oversees election administration. Given that there is division in the nation regarding how elections should be run, more attention than ever is being paid to the Secretary of State. In addition, the Secretary of State is a very important office for people with disabilities. In past years, this office oversaw the implementation of accessible voting units and the creation of disability advisory committees statewide and in local counties. While progress has been made in accessible elections, there is an ongoing need to ensure that elections are accessible to all voters with disabilities and that outreach ensures all voters experience barrier-free elections. Voting in jail continues to be the exception in most counties in Washington. County election websites vary greatly in how accessible they are to voters who are blind or cannot read text. There continues to be challenges to blind voters and voters who cannot read or mark a ballot independently and privately, and advocates have asked the Secretary of State and county election officials to support changing the law to facilitate access to online voting options for voters who cannot otherwise vote privately from home through mail-in voting.

Survey on barriers to voting: The Secretary of State has produced a survey asking voters about their priorities and experience with voting. It is mostly multiple choice, including questions regarding demographics, language access, and disability access, but there are also places in the survey where you can respond in your own words. This is an opportunity for voters with disabilities to indicate where barriers to voting continue, and to identify ways to enhance access (e.g., allowing electronic signatures to ensure blind voters can vote privately. Here’s a link: <https://tinyurl.com/4v23nvas>

What about accessible voting? Any voter can still vote in person by traveling to one of the local voting centers and making use of the accessible voting units available during established hours right up to the day of the election. Each county has accessible voting units available to those who wish to use them to vote independently.

# THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

## Youth Speak #6 My First Voting Experience by Lucash Uniack

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Hi everyone. It’s good to be writing another column for Newsline. I’m just starting my senior year of high school and am coming off of a difficult last six months or so. My visual disability, nystagmus, in combination with stress and other factors, started causing serious headaches that were debilitating. This really hampered my ability to participate in my normal life and do all the things I enjoy. I had to miss a lot of school toward the end of the last school year and dropped out of many of my activities.

Luckily, summer came and I got connected with staff at the Department of Services for the Blind, who helped me with things like cane training. They provided excellent advice on managing my lower vision levels and also helped me accept that I need help sometimes, and realize it is OK to ask for and receive that help. This is difficult for me sometimes, but I am learning to do this a lot more as I get older.

But this column is not about all of those experiences. I wanted to specifically write about my first experience voting. I will be 18 in October and will be eligible to vote in a general election for the first time this year. Because of this, I was eligible to vote in this summer’s primary election. My parents did a doubletake when three, not two, ballots arrived at our house. We were all surprised to see that the third ballot had my name on it.

My parents and I sat down together at the kitchen table to vote. We pulled out the voter’s pamphlet and also any candidate literature that had been mailed to us.

The first thing I noticed when I opened my primary ballot was how small the print was. It was effectively impossible for me to read the ballot. I had to ask for my parents’ help reading the ballot and also reading the voters pamphlet. I actually had them read every candidate statement in full in the pamphlets and found it really interesting to see what some of the candidates chose to write about. It was super rewarding to be able to become educated on the different candidates who were running for the various offices. It really made me feel like I was a valued part of our democratic system.

I emailed the King County elections office, since I live in King County, to ask about receiving a large-print ballot for the upcoming general election and future elections, too. I was really disappointed to hear that they don’t provide large-print ballots but, rather, a visually-impaired person who needs help voting needs to go in person to one of a handful of city halls and other locations around King County. At these voting centers, you can get access to a special voting machine that will allow you to hear the ballot read to you and you can vote that way.

The thing about this that bothers me the most is that this makes it really hard for people like me to vote. I don’t live close by any of the voting centers and so it would mean a special trip, taking a lot of my day, just to have the same voting experience that most Washington state voters get from the comfort of their own homes. This does not seem like a level playing field to me, and I think the system needs to change.

When I first Googled large-print ballots, Washington County, OR came up. They provide large-print ballots and send them directly to voters’ homes who need them. That is the sort of response I was expecting but did not receive from King County.

I think voting is a really important responsibility, and that it should be made easier for all people to vote, including those of us with vision disabilities. I plan to vote in every election and want to be sure my voice is heard on important issues in my community and state. I would love to hear from you, our readers, about your reaction to my first voting experience and to share your experiences, too. Let’s see if there is something we can do as a larger community to change this system that doesn’t seem to be serving visually-impaired voters in a very equitable way right now.

Thanks for reading. I look forward to hearing from you on this important issue. Email us at [theWCBNewsline@gmail.com](mailto:theWCBNewsline@gmail.com) with your thoughts on voting and this column.

# AGENCY UPDATES

## Washington State Services for the Blind Update by Michael MacKillop and LaDell Lockwood

Michael.MacKillop@dsb.wa.gov

Hello, WCBers. Thank you, as always, for giving space in your WCB Newsline for updates on things happening at the Department of Services for the Blind. We are always grateful for your interest, your input, and your guidance that helps us provide better services across the state.

We are still impacted by the pandemic but have learned to live with it. We maintain the safety protocols of masking when we work with agency participants and respond rapidly when an outbreak occurs. We have been conducting in-person services for some time now. While there are some great benefits of conducting parts of our business through phone or video connections, there are specific activities and stages of relationship building that rely on in-person contact. Some people are still nervous about the threat of COVID-19 and are cautious about meeting DSB staff in person. We understand that. We also know that building relationships in person is a key factor in successfully achieving vocational rehabilitation goals.

The number of applications is increasing this year. Our Orientation and Training Center is operating at full capacity once again, under the keen passion of OTC Program Manager Ron Jasmer and his team. With the guidance of Deja Powell and her team, Youth Services resumed in-person activities this summer. YES1, YES2, Bridge, and other workshops were all held in the community, with youth shadowing or working on site at local businesses.

One challenge emerged within our Youth Services program. We were informed that we can no longer use federal grant money to support activities for youth under the age of 14. The federal grantees determined that providing career exploration and self-advocacy services to youth “as early as necessary” was only as early as age 14.

DSB disagrees. We know we need to work with blind youth and their families as early as possible to create self-belief in their capability and future, to provide age-appropriate activities that connect youth to their peers, and to explore types of work and career pathways. This needs to start well before the youth reaches age 14. We are seeking state funds in the upcoming legislative session to allow us to work with youth under 14. We think we have a strong argument for the funding.

Other things we are seeking funding for in the upcoming legislative session:

* Continued support for the Business Enterprise Program re-build. We secured funding last session but have realized additional cost challenges – inflation, supply-chain issues, project management, sales tax, etc. We are seeking funds for rent abatement and for food trucks to lessen the disruption to businesses when a facility is slated for upgrade and remodel.
* Additional funds to serve more independent living individuals under the age of 55.
* Funding to manage recruitment and retention of service providers across the state. We would like to raise rates and provide funding for driver services for blind service providers.

Finally, we are happy to announce that we will be holding another community forum to answer your questions and hear your comments. We will meet virtually from 7-8:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 19. We really appreciate hearing your input. The community forums are your chance to hear directly from us and tell us what’s important to you. We’ll be expanding on the items mentioned here – particularly regarding the changes to the Youth Services programming and DSB’s request for funding for serving youth under age 14. And we will look forward to what 2023 has in store.

Everyone is welcome to log into our virtual town hall and we hope to see you there. This event is free, but you need to register in advance at <https://dsb.wa.gov/events/community-forum>**.**

## A New Year Begins At Washington State School for the Blind by Scott McCallum

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It is that wonderful time of the year again when students and staff fill our schools with optimism and hope for the year ahead.

Like most education providers, WSSB human resources staff and hiring managers had an extremely busy summer of recruiting and hiring staff to fill a wide range of openings that touched nearly every department at WSSB. Thankfully, WSSB was able to fill nearly every open position before the school year began. Filling all open positions was especially critical this year as WSSB welcomed 17 new students to our campus programs this fall.

WSSB campus and staff had a busy summer, too, offering several program options for students and professionals. WSSB offered two summer programs, one organized around the Expanded Core Curriculum and another focused on astronomy. Participants in the astronomy summer program learned how to build and use 3D printers and received instruction from several college professors partnered with trained teachers of blind and low-vision students.

WSSB partnered with our friends from the Department of Services for the Blind to offer the Youth Employment Solutions (YES1) program.

Once again, WSSB hosted the Summer Institute training for general education teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and other education service providers. Summer Institute provides participants with nearly a full week of training to help prepare them to work with and support a blind or low-vision student in their school. About 50 individuals participated in this year’s training.

Aug. 25 marked the official welcome back day for all staff. Throughout the day, and earlier in the week, staff participated in a range of trainings such as CPR, Cultural Competency Diversity Equity and Inclusion (CCDEI), Mandatory Reporter, Resilience to Trauma, and more. This year marked the first time we have offered these trainings entirely in person since the beginning of the 2019-20 school year. WSSB staff also received an update on current campus renovation plans, as well as potential future updates for the campus and our programs and services that we offer.

A new building project is underway. WSSB is constructing a new facility for our Learning Independence for Today and Tomorrow (LIFTT) transition program. This new, transition-focused facility will also be home to the Southwest Washington office of DSB. The LIFTT program will occupy the main floor while DSB will occupy the second floor. As of this writing, the foundation has been poured and the walls are being built. We are now picking out furniture, fabrics, and artwork. Substantial completion of this building is currently set for mid-March 2023. Several minor issues having to do with city permits, supply chain, and other material challenges have led to minor delays. We remain hopeful that this year’s LIFTT participants will finish out their program this school year in the new building.

WSSB is in the process of creating a new program designed to provide training and support, primarily for teachers of blind and low-vision children, centered around assistive technology for their students. This new program is federally funded and will be provided in partnership with the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) and the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind (AIDB). This new program will be a regional program, serving the northwest region of the country including Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, Northern Marianna Islands, and American Samoa. This program has been named the NW Regional Center for Assistive Technology Training (CATT). The training, supports, and services provided through the NW CATT will focus primarily on products created and provided by the APH. AIDB has created the original CATT program for the southeast region, and the Foundation for Blind Children in Arizona has been tapped to set up the SW CATT. It is a wonderful honor for WSSB to be entrusted with and provided the resources to set up the NW CATT. We are excited to get to the work of providing the training and support needed by education professionals so that all blind and low-vision students have access to the programs, services, and supports they need to succeed.

# WCB HAPPENINGS

## The ACB 2022 Hybrid Conference and Convention by Andy Arvidson

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Approximately 1,100 individuals attended the American Council of the Blind (ACB) Hybrid Conference and Convention, with minimal glitches in programming and streaming. It was a history-making event.

The event included reports, discussion panels, venders displaying new items and programs for the blind and visually impaired, and the election of new officers and board members.

At the beginning of the conference, it seemed a little confusing going back and forth from building to building, but it was easier than the venue we used in St. Louis in 2019.

There was lots of exercise walking from break-out to break-out and the general session. Our marvelous president of the ACB, Dan Spoones, did such a magnanimous job of facilitating this event with tact and poise. A man who is able to speak so eloquently from memory, and not use a written script, is an amazing feat.

The elections of five ACB Board of Directors and three Board of Publications positions went so smoothly it seemed effortless.

There is a song/poem in the martial art that I do that says, “When done correctly, all appears effortless.” That really fits into what was apparently a task that we selected the correct people to do.

The big difference between in person and virtual or hybrid is, to me, the lack of contact by being face to face with others. It was great to be in an elevator with Cindy Hollis and take a moment to share a hug. We cannot do that on Zoom. But thank God for Zoom, because we can do things that would not have been possible without it.

The general session, held in a large ballroom, was sectioned off so that those who wanted could sit in an area where all would be masked. Others, if they wished, could sit with their affiliate. The event had a shortage of volunteers, but people jumped in at the last minute and all went well. Even unknowing people who came across some of us on the local sidewalks came in to volunteer. With tact and grace, we can interest others into wanting to find out how all these blind people can pull off what sighted people are able to do. With the amazing technology that keeps being created and updated, there isn’t much we cannot do that the sighted can.

## Double Tree, Double Treat, Double Tweet by Frank Cuta

frank@cuta.net

If you are available on October 27, 28 and 29, you should seriously consider joining us for the State Convention of the Washington Council of the Blind. If you read the Newsline regularly you are getting to know vicariously a lot of very friendly and interesting people. This is your chance to meet many of them in person. I have gained some very special friends from all over the state in this way, and I am really looking forward to seeing them again after three years.

Our annual convention is the pinnacle, the crown, the culmination of a year's worth of effort by over 400 of us working together to improve our lives. The WCB offers many great services and programs, but this convention is where we all come together once a year to get re-informed and re-acquainted. There are some awesome individuals in this organization, and some of them are dying to meet you.

But remember that if you cannot come in person, you can still fully participate by registering as a virtual member. And if all you want to do is listen to the proceedings without interacting, you can do that as well, since most of the sessions will be streamed on the internet.

The theme of this year's convention is "breaking through the storm" and it is our first face to face convention since 2019. We are going back to the “DoubleTree by Hilton Seattle Airport” hotel. I have already called them and confirmed that they will have a couple of warm cookies waiting for me when I check in.

Some of the highlights of this year's convention are:

• report from Cindy Hollis, past president of WCB and now working at the national level

• reports from the directors of our three state service providers: the School for the Blind, the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library, (WTBBL) and the Department of Services for the Blind

• a panel of successfully employed blind persons

• a panel of published authors who are blind

• a self-defense training seminar

• advocacy presentations on topics including accessible voting and prescription labeling

• a panel on GPS and way-finding technology

• hands-on computer training

• a panel devoted to senior living and adjustment

• exhibits specific to blindness and low vision

• the annual talent showcase

• the annual live auction (fund-raiser)

By the time you read this article, on-line registration will be closed. But registration at the door will be available during the convention. Rooms at the convention hotel are $112/night (same price for singles and doubles). Call the DoubleTree Hilton at 800-222-8733. Use group code WCB to get our convention rate.

Tweet Tweet!

## Eight Constitutional Changes for Your Consideration by Frank Cuta

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Each fall as the seasons change, Washington Council of the Blind (WCB) looks at possible changes to its constitution. This year is no exception. The complete wording of this year's proposed amendments has already been distributed via the wcb-l listserv, and by the time you read this, an audio version should also be available.

These proposed changes will remain in draft form until the committee meets at the convention late in the evening of Thursday, Oct. 27. Already there has been one change in wording accepted as a result of a suggestion that was made at our open forum held early in October. Other improvements are also possible. You are all welcome to attend our deliberations as we decide what kind of a recommendation to give each before it goes out to the convention floor. At the morning session on Oct. 28, these amendments will receive their first formal reading at the convention. Then on Saturday afternoon, Oct. 29, they will come to the floor for debate. Each one will either be voted up or down by the membership.

Here is a summary of what is being considered:

1. The crisis committee operates under some strict guidelines as to how often a person can receive assistance. We want you to consider a new policy which is still strong but is a bit more compassionate.

2. The current constitutional wording has no provision for the board to meet in closed session. We want you to consider new language that allows for such meetings when making such information public might compromise the efforts of our organization.

3. We currently need a quorum of 20 percent to conduct business. We have come dangerously close to not meeting this in the past and want you to consider lowering it to 15 percent.

4&5. Officers currently may only serve a maximum of 4 years in any one position. We want you to consider extending this to 6 years. Same goes for the board of directors.

6. For many reasons, holding an elected office and participating on WCB state committees requires that a member be at least 18. This new proposed language makes it clear that this is not true for chapters. Younger members are encouraged to serve on the board and committees at the local level.

7. For many years, the WCB has extended interest-free loans to members wishing to attend the state convention. We would like you to consider a change that formalizes this practice.

8. The constitution still contains outdated language that provides for financial payments by check but makes no mention of current electronic payment options. We would like you to consider this provision, which brings the language up to date.

There are currently seven of us on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. It is a good hard-working committee. We all have some ideas that are good and a few that are not so good, but in the fall, we have struggled enough with these issues and our work is done. Now, these eight proposed amendments are about to be put in your hands. Please give them serious consideration and come to the business meeting ready to do your part.

## My First National Convention by Jeanne Jacobs

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Hello. I, Jeanne Jacob, and my dog, are pleased to report on our American Council of the Blind convention experience. It was our first time in Omaha, too. We arrived ready to learn, and as a first-timer, there was so much to figure out.

One of the things I enjoyed the most was making new friends. Marilee Richards was our roommate, and we got along very well. We spent a lot of free time just shopping and seeing many different sights.

There were many activities to enjoy in our down time. I really enjoyed going to the exhibit hall. I went the first day and was able to purchase a nice leather backpack before everything was sold out. My roommate was not as lucky, as every item she was wanting was gone. If you snooze, you lose.

When I returned to my home, I filled my backpack with the candy I purchased at the sweet tour at Baker’s Candies. That was one of the tours I went on. They had every candy you ever had in your life. I bought a lot of candy, but I still have a bunch left. When I was there, I took a video that turned out quite well. While at the convention, my dog and I helped my friend, Kenny, find his way around the hotel and convention center.

The baseball game and fireworks were amazing. During the game, the MC had our group sing “Take Me Out to the Ball Game.” We did well and listened to the songs the MC asked other groups to sing, too. My dog was not afraid of the fireworks. Most spectators had glowsticks that glowed when the lights went out, with a light blue glow all around the field. The finale was spectacular, with hundreds of fireworks exploding at the same time, like kaleidoscopes with multiple colors.

We learned a lot at the general sessions. I was interested in the speakers, and the scholarship winners were amazing, meeting all their challenges to finish school. There were group meetings to attend for breakfast, or in the afternoon, such as diabetics, guide dogs, and so many other choices that there was not enough time to attend them all. And then, of course, we had elections and many rules to change in amendments and such.

I would recommend that everyone take advantage of using the scholarship to attend their first convention. There is so much going on, it is hard to pick and choose events and find time to share with others. Hats off to everyone who worked so hard to make this event successful. Thank you for this privilege.

## Cooking with Confidence by Hayley Agers

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Beginning October 7th, please join me as we explore together what it means to be a confident cook in the kitchen. Each month, a few weeks prior to the class, I will send out the recipes we’ll be making, the ingredients you will need to gather, and any tools you will need. Some of the topics we will be covering, per requests on our August call, include: meal prepping with recipes to mix and match to carry you through your busy week, freezer batch cooking with recipes you can pull out and have on hand, healthy smoothies, cooking for the season, and so much more.

Stay tuned to your WCB email list as more information comes out. Oh, and one more thing: We will be having special guests from time to time, and even some drawings. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions, [haydav8@comcast.net](mailto:haydav8@comcast.net)

or 425-870-3865.

Much love and abundant blessings.

## Membership at Large by Linda Wilder

Membership at Large (MAL) invites you to our meetings held every other month at 6 p.m. on the fourth Monday. The next meeting is Oct. 24. We are excited to report we have increased the attendance, and the MAL are setting their own agenda.

At the June meeting, we had an informative discussion answering the question, “What blind task is difficult for you?” Each person had one or more tasks that we were able to answer with several ideas. Our August meeting was another lively discussion on the American Council of the Blind convention and what people liked and would like to see improved. Overall, most liked the tours and breakout sessions. In October, we will have a special speaker from a.t. guys, talking about the many different products they offer.

All MAL are welcome. The Zoom connections will be sent out a day or two before the meeting. If you have questions, suggestions, or just want more information, contact me at lindasuewilder@msn.com.

## Hats Off Compiled by Linda Wilder

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

* Colette and Andy Arvidson for being promoted to 6th Degree Black Belt in the martial art of Soo Bahk Do.
* Judy Brown on her appointment to the American Council of the Blind (ACB) Advocacy Committee.
* Abby Griffith as the 2022 Holman Prize winner from the Lighthouse for the Blind in San Francisco.
* Lynn Koral for being chosen as a mentor for the ACB Mentor, Access, and Peer Support Program. Lynn was also appointed to the Accessible Community Advisory Committee for Thurston County.
* Jim Turri celebrated his 70th birthday on Sept. 26.
* Terri Stiles of Yakima celebrated her 80th birthday on Aug. 3.
* Alice Klein of Yakima celebrated her 80th birthday on Sept. 5.
* Anne Ridenour of Yakima celebrated her 101st birthday on Sept. 8.
* And Marilee Richards for coming home to us from Guide Dogs for the Blind in Boring Oregon with her first dog ever, a female, petite, yellow lab named Taryn.

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 older in 5-year increments (yearly after age 90)
* Marriage or wedding anniversary 25 years and more in 5-year increments
* Graduation from high school, college or vocational program
* New job, career promotion, or retirement
* Partnering with a dog guide
* Appointment to a city, county, statewide, or national board or commission
* Exceptional recognition or award

# AROUND THE STATE

## Guide Dog Users of Washington State by Vivian Conger

In June, we had a great focus call. Lucas Franck from The Seeing Eye (TSE) was our presenter. He gave a brief update of the happenings of TSE and then opened the call up for a Q&A session. This format was well received by those in attendance. We are looking to have another focus call in September. The announcement will be posted on several listservs. Details to come soon.

We will be having our annual GDUWS convention membership meeting, which will include elections for open board positions. This meeting has previously been held at the WCB convention. The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Monday, Oct. 24, via Zoom. Folks don’t have to get up for that early breakfast meeting like in the past. We hope you can all be there to help us in conducting the business of GDUWS.

We have several board positions available this year. The vice president position is open. Sheri Richardson is finishing Andy’s term this year and is up for re-election. Deb Lewis is secretary, and she is not running for another term. We also have Hayley Edict’s director position open as she has termed out. If interested in running for any of these positions, please contact Vivian Conger or Deb Lewis, who are filling the role of nominating committee for GDUWS. Their email addresses are Blazie.girl@gmail.com and deb@lewissound.net.

Serving on the board is a wonderful experience. Come and join us to keep GDUWS moving forward and making good decisions for the betterment of guide dog users.

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

We did our normal summer break and took off July and August, but we snuck in an adventure on Aug. 11. We took a tour of the Heritage Flight Museum in Burlington. This museum is owned by the Anders family. Bill Anders, director of the museum, was on the moon landing exhibition and took the picture of the “Blue Planet” as the Earth was rising over the crest of the moon. They have many planes there, and they used to have some outside but have built another hangar to be able to have all planes inside. Most of the planes are from an earlier era, but all are fly ready and get off the ground on special occasions.

We finished the tour with lunch at the Skagit Landing Restaurant, which used to be the Flyers. It was a pleasure to have all the members who showed up enjoy the day. There were nine of us, including one almost 6-year-old totally blind young man from Shoreline.

We will be back to full meetings in September with our new schedule and venue, the fourth Thursday morning of the month at the Anacortes Senior Activity Center.

## Snohomish County Council of the Blind by Marilee Richards

We finally have found our way to summer. It has finally arrived. It has been pleasant, and easy to enjoy. Our group has not met yet this season, but we are all looking forward to meeting for our picnic. We will enjoy both sack lunches and potluck goodies, as COVID is still a major issue to consider. Masks will be encouraged, but not required. One of our new members who has immune issues will come and social distance while talking to individuals masked to keep her well. Others like myself will mask except while eating to stay well this time.

A member of the group went to order some sub sandwiches, and they offered to provide a plate of food for the picnic. I just want to give a huge shout-out to Jersey Mike’s Sub for donating a large platter of food, and thank you from SCCB.

It sounds like we will be having visitors from other affiliates, new people interested in joining SCCB, and hopefully members of our families.

Before we get started on our fall events, we will be having a board meeting to get our calendar fixed for the 2022-2023 season. Some of the things I hope to find interest for are the white cane walk, convention, and special Christmas party. Come ready to enjoy meeting more new people, new ideas, and an open environment of acceptance to all.

I don’t want to forget our support group that meets every first Saturday on Zoom. We would like to welcome any visually impaired or recently blind persons who would like a place to come ask questions and express frustration in resolving problems. All are welcome. Contact me or Danette about an email address to connect with the group. Praying that all groups get off to a great start this fall. Sometimes it is hard to get back to the group size you had at the start of summer.

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

Greetings to all. We here at South Kitsap Council of the Blind hope that all have had a fabulous summer.

This summer, we had a couple events in our chapter that were fun and created a place where we could have a nice time to get to know one another. The first was game day rather than having a meeting. We all brought finger food to share with each other. By the way, we have some awesome cooks in our chapter.

First, we filled our bellies with food, then we filled the room with laughter. Some people played Left Center Right, while others enjoyed teaching the author of this article how to play Uno. The cool thing about these games is they are both accessible. When playing this game with Jess Landby (president) and Gayle Passi (kind of new member), one can tend to get very confused as to what we are supposed to be doing in order to win. Anyway, it was a lot of fun.

This month for our meeting time, we combined a very short meeting with our summer picnic. If you left hungry, it was your fault. Our members who do not come to meetings all that often were at the picnic. We were so happy to have Denise and Craig come to the meeting. Denise brought a very delicious zucchini bread that also had in it strawberries and blueberries. If you missed out on trying this, you missed something very spectacular. There were lots of other goodies, as well. Carol Brame brought the makings for root beer floats for everyone to have. They tasted so good. I hadn't had a root beer float in a very long time, so this was an extra special treat.

We voted to give stipends to individuals who would be attending the conference and convention in person this year. I know that we are all looking forward to seeing our friends in person this year. It should be a great conference.

Here at SKCB, our hearts are a bit heavy even though we have enjoyed some good times this summer. Our dear member, Shirley Sharmer, passed away earlier this month. Shirley had been a member for close to 10 years, if not longer. She was such a beautiful lady. We will all miss her.

## United Blind of Tri-Cities by Frank Cuta

The United Blind of Tri-Cities has survived another long hot summer and is moving on to our fall elections and the WCB state convention. With the temperature dropping back into the 80s, we hope to get more active outdoors. Despite the heat, we did get about 20 members and friends to our fall picnic.

Our guest speakers at our summer meetings have concentrated on services for the blind. Sheila Turner has created a new local business, Legacy IL Services, which will restore independent-living services to this part of the state. We also had a presentation from Juan Ortiz, who is our new vocational rehabilitation counselor with the Department of Services for the Blind.

We very nearly lost our local resource, the Edith Bishel Center, but were extremely relieved to hear that they were granted surprise funding just weeks before they were scheduled to close their doors.

We have been following with concern the progress of Janice Squires as she recovers from triple bypass surgery. Janice is our current secretary and a past president of UBTC.

## United Blind of Walla Walla by Heather Meares

United Blind of Walla Walla is feeling a growth spurt happening as we have made some new connections in our community and have two new members, Laurie Nesheim and Susan Bailey. Laurie is about to get a new guide dog, so we will hear more about that in our next issue. Susan has been a volunteer for our chapter in many capacities, and now has decided to make it official and join us. She is looking forward to attending the Washington Council of the Blind convention in person, and learning more about our organization and the ways she can assist us all.

We have reconnected with the Delta Gammas at Whitman College, and look forward to working with them again this year. Joleen provided a great video of her and her guide dog, Mensa, for them to use at their recruitment event. They loved it.

Andrew Colleran joined our September meeting to talk about his work with accessible traffic signals, which also involves an app and Bluetooth capability. He will be joining us in person early next year for a demonstration and gathering.

As always, Walla Walla is vibrant and alive, and we look forward to the end of another great year.

## United Blind of Whatcom County by Yvonne Thomas-Miller

Bird walk: On June 3, members of our group participated in a bird walk with the Skagit and Island County Council of the Blind. It was held at a park in Whidbey Island.

Bird talk: On July 22, we had two members of the Audubon Society give a presentation in a Zoom meeting. We were so impressed with them that it is hoped we will work together to plan bird walks for next spring.

Picnic: On July 29, 2022, we had our annual picnic at the Cornwall Park. The food was excellent, and the company was even better.

## Yakima Valley Council of the Blind by Sally Mayo

We have had a quiet summer, still meeting by phone conference line, and looking for a place to meet. Bowling continues. Carl Jensen achieved the first turkey of the year. A turkey is bowling three strikes in a row. Great job, Carl. Bowling is open to anyone. Some of us eat breakfast or lunch while we are there. They have great food and serve us out by the lanes while we bowl.

We continue to have a social meeting that is open to the community at Harmon Senior Center. We have been playing Uno and will be playing other games, as well.

Frank Cuta gave a presentation last month on the WCB convention, which is coming at the end of October. Members are attending both in person and virtually this year.

The Central Washington State Fair starts Sept. 23.  Our club members have an opportunity to attend at no cost. It should be great fun.

Several of our members also attend the Richland Players and play with United Blind of Tri-Cities.

# 2022 WCB Calendar of Deadlines and Events

For more details on events listed,

please subscribe to the wcb-l list on groups.io or call 800-255-1147.

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

List of Abbreviations:

DSB Department of Services for the Blind

WASILC Washington State Independent Living Council

WCB Washington Council of the Blind

WSSB Washington State School for the Blind

WTBBL Washington Talking Book & Braille Library

**SEPTEMBER**

**27** –Record Date for WCB members’ voting eligibility

**OCTOBER**

**2** – Proposed Constitutional Amendments Forum call at 2 p.m. (Zoom)

**3** – Treasurer’s call at 7 p.m.

**6** – WASILC meeting from 10 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. (Zoom)

**8** – WTBBL Patron Advisory Council call from 9 a.m. to noon

**9** – Proposed 2023 WCB Operations Budget Forum call at 3 p.m. (Zoom)

**10** – WCB Diabetics call at 7 p.m.

**10** – WCB convention online pre-registration ends, (closed till 10/28)

**15** – White Cane Safety Day

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

**22** – WCB Fundraising Auction on Zoom at 5 p.m.

**24** – President’s call at 7 p.m.

**27** – WCB pre-convention board meeting at DoubleTree by Hilton Seattle Airport (pre-registered attendees can pick up packets Thursday afternoon)

**28** – Onsite registration begins, WCB general sessions, breakout sessions, vendor exhibits, and hospitality

**29** – WCB general sessions, annual business meeting, banquet, Showcase of Talent, and hospitality

**NOVEMBER**

**14** – WCB Diabetics call at 7 p.m.

**15** – WCB Committee Leaders’ call at 7 p.m.

**18** – WSSB Board of Trustees meeting

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

**30** – Submission deadline for WCB Newsline Winter 2023 issue

**DECEMBER**

**1** – Indicate your interest in and willingness to serve on 2023 WCB Committees to WCB President Julie Brannon. Assignments will be finalized in January.

**5** – Treasurer’s call/Membership Database call at 7 p.m.

**9** – DSB State Rehab Council meeting at 9 a.m.

**12** – WCB Diabetics call at 7 p.m.

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

**26** – President’s call at 7 p.m.

**Washington Council of the Blind**

is pleased to acknowledge donors who have generously

supported our programs in the third quarter of 2022.

**Thank You!**

Democracy Live

Michael Alvarez, Anonymous (6), Andy & Colette Arvidson, Terry Atwater, William Belina, Viola Bentson, Julie Brannon, Tim Breitenfeldt, Tonia Burkett, Deb Cook Lewis,

Michelle Denzer, Rita Dilek, Danette Dixon, Maritza Dowe,

Cindy Fleck-Tedrow, Cynthia & Keith Heun, Kenny Hillestad, Jeanne Jacobs, The Lighthouse for the Blind Inc.,

Manolo LoGerfo, Beth Marsau, Glenn & Ursula McCully, Rhonda Nelson, Port Ludlow Associates LLC, Bruce Radtke, Marilee Richards, Sheri Richardson, Stuart Russell,

Robert Serian, Randy Tedrow, Yvonne Thomas-Miller,

Cathy Wilson, and other anonymous contributions through:

ACB Monthly Monetary Support Program,

AmazonSmiles, Benevity Fund, & PayPal Giving Fund.

– **DESIGNATED TO** **SCHOLARSHIP** –

South Kitsap Council of the Blind

Spokane Council of the Blind

United Blind of Walla Walla

WCB would also like to welcome

**John Ross**

**Kathy Watkinson**

**Larry Watkinson**

as new **Life Members**