

NEWSLINE
MARCH 2014 Edition

Opportunity, Equality, Independence
Founded 1935
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From the President's Desk

by Cindy Van Winkle

Over the years I've accumulated quite a personal savings. So much so that



I feel compelled to share my wealth with others. Benefactors certainly have been family members, but they've also been and will continue to be, friends and acquaintances, those who I know well and those who I may not know yet, or may never know. Yet because I have been so blessed, I want to bless others, no strings attached. I mean, I didn't gain my wealth because of any strings. In fact, most of it was freely given to me by others, family, friends, acquaintances and strangers alike. And as they say, you can't take it with you...

To be completely honest with you, my fortune cannot be counted in dollars and cents, or gold and silver, or stocks and bonds. Rather, it is all in deeds, but not the property kind. These are deeds manifested through kindness, encouragement, wisdom, patience, love, time, and so much more.

When I think of all those who nurtured me; I can't help but want to nurture others. When I reflect on the many hours spent, often by strangers, to prepare a clearer path for me, it energizes me to do what I can to help make things better for others. I can lend an ear to a friend, offer words of encouragement, lead someone newly blind to resources, educate people in

my community (especially businesses) about blindness, and the list goes on.

We can all give back! Whether it's caring for a loved one, greeting visitors at your chapter meeting and making them feel welcomed, picking up the phone and checking on a chapter member, visiting an assisted living or convalescent facility, speaking to young people in a school or youth group setting, preparing a meal for a family in need, writing a letter or making a phone call to a legislator, the needs are out there. And each of us can do our part to "pay it forward."

I believe WCB is made up of a very wealthy membership. When we look at the rich history of the blindness movement in our state, we have all been benefactors of the work of others. We can think about events in our lives that have added to our personal wealth, situations or individuals who have made us stronger - better. Now it's time to share the wealth. Are you in?

Let's get you "in the know!"

The WCB board is on the move. We'll be visiting your chapter very soon in an effort to connect the dots between local chapter and state affiliate. We hope you'll enjoy this more personal interaction with one of the members of your elected WCB board, as we each look forward to the opportunity to get to know you a little better.

Our forum calls are going strong with more being added including a bi-monthly Book club and a quarterly forum focusing on the needs of the aging. These are in addition to our already existing monthly forums on technology, employment, and diabetes. These Forums eliminate transportation barriers and are a great way to reach members and non-members alike.

WCB's spring board meeting will be held at the Best Western Evergreen Inn and Suites in Federal Way on Sunday, May 4, 2014 in conjunction with our annual Leadership Seminar, May 2-4, 2014. Those wishing to participate in the seminar should send a letter of application to jbrannon0612@gmail.com no later than March 31, 2014, and those wishing to reserve a lunch for the board meeting should send a request to cindy.vw@gmail.com by April 27, 2014.

The 2014 Conference and Convention of the American Council of the Blind is being held in Las Vegas, July 11-19, 2014. WCB is making available a \$200 stipend and up-to-a \$700 loan to assist our members in attending, and will send one lucky and deserving member to attend as a first timer. These financial benefits do require membership in WCB since July 13, 2013 or earlier, with no outstanding WCB loans in default. Requests for the stipend and loan should be made by May 15 and sent to cindy.vw@gmail.com and letters of application for the first timer scholarship should be sent to sweetmalissa@comcast.net by May 1, 2014 to be considered.

Stay connected to WCB by: friending us on Facebook and joining our WCB email list (both with links on our website) and calling into The Buzz (800-255-1147) or visiting www.wcbinfo.org.

WCB February, 2014 Board Meeting Report

by Alco Canfield

The WCB Board Meeting was convened by President Cindy Van Winkle on Saturday, February 1, 2014 at 9:11 AM. All officers and board members were in attendance except Eric Hunter whose absence was excused.

All chapters except King County were represented.

All guests present introduced themselves. Among them was Jack Brummel, new Director of the Washington Access Fund who gave a brief presentation later in the morning.

Corrected minutes were approved and redistributed via e-mail.

Treasurer's Report

Due to Eric's absence, Berl summarized the financial report.

President's Report

Cindy briefly discussed the upcoming mid-year meeting of affiliate presidents in Washington,

D.C. and the legislative seminar to follow. Julie Brannon will represent WCB there.

Cindy said that the members of the board are anxious to make visits to WCB chapters. At the end of February, she will contact chapter presidents who have not contacted her to arrange dates for those visits.

Telephone forum calls are being expanded. This is a good outreach tool for those in rural areas and those nonmembers who may be interested in the forum. Julie will be coordinating the Jobs Forum. Every month the focus will vary. One month it may deal with job retention, and the next month, the topic may be about seeking employment. The Employment Forum will be held on the first Tuesday, and the second Tuesday will be devoted to the Technology Forum, chaired by Meka White. Shannon Curry will be hosting a Book Club Forum on the third Tuesday every other month. She is asking for people to bring titles of interesting books they have read to this forum. The group will then decide which books they want to read and discuss.

Sharon Schauer will host the Diabetes Forum on the 4th Monday of the month.

Once a quarter there will be a forum dealing with vision loss and aging. These will be held on the 4th Tuesday in March, June, September, and December.

Forum calls will take place at 7:00 PM with the exception of the employment call, which begins at 8 PM. The call-in number for all forums is: (800) 977-8002: Code: 5419226.

Committee Changes

Cindy listed committees and their chairs (refer to "Introducing the 2014 WCB Committee" in this issue).

Fundraising

We will be receiving a check from VDPC for car sales in December. These sales were a direct result of the internet.

Denise Colley is doing the database, assisted by Frank Cuta. Any changes in membership lists which occur during the year should be sent to Denise.

Rhonda Nelson will continue to do recordings for our phone system.

Cindy commended the Phone Committee for its outstanding service. She also commended David Edick for managing the sound during the meeting.

Committee Reports

Advocacy: This committee served 35 people this year. Sue discussed a few highlights:

1. An individual underwent a procedure at Swedish, but they didn't get prior approval so she was billed \$19,000. Ultimately, this amount was reduced to \$3,000. Our attorney, Mike Watkins wrote a letter to Swedish saying that the bill was erroneous and asked the hospital for a response, stipulating a date. No response was given, and the individual did not want to pursue the matter, so the case was closed.
2. An individual signed on a lease, but his girlfriend moved out. Six years later, he was notified that his check would be garnished. Mike Watkins is going to make a motion that the garnishment be overturned because the individual in question was not properly served. The hearing will be on February 21st.
3. The committee is working with a blind father regarding a custody battle. He fired his attorney because this person felt that blindness made him incapable of being a good parent. A new attorney is being sought.

Convention Committee

This year's state convention will be held at the Murano Hotel on October 30-November 1, 2014. Room rates are \$92 per night. Cindy encouraged members to send ideas to her about convention possibilities. Buses have not been budgeted for this convention because of the good transit services in the Puget Sound area. Stipends have been budgeted. UBS will be investigating the cost of a bus and will report back. ACB President Kim Charlson may be attending this convention.

Crisis Committee

Thirteen individuals were assisted last year. \$3,291.17 was spent. The spending cap has been removed this year. Members were urged to make referrals to the Crisis Committee.

Leadership Committee

Five new presidents attended the leadership training this weekend and there were 20 people present for the training. Chapter development, outreach, and succession planning were some of the topics discussed.

A leadership Seminar will take place May 2-4, 2014 in Federal Way at the Best Western Hotel. Those who have been members for three months and have not previously attended a Leadership Seminar are encouraged to apply. The application deadline is March 31, 2014. More information will be found in the March Newsline.

Legislative Committee

Denise gave the Legislative report, highlighting some of the legislation currently being considered.

HB 1024 aligns Washington State law against discrimination with the Federal Fair Housing Act as it relates to service animals and reasonable accommodation. This legislation would allow the Human Rights Commission to contract with Housing and Urban Development to investigate complaints. At this writing, the bill is in the Rules Committee.

HB 1814 reauthorizes the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation with the same membership, duties, and requirements. This council comprised of state agencies, providers, and legislators was created in 1998 to improve transportation accessibility for special needs populations.

February 7 is the deadline for bills to come out of their committees of origin.

At the federal level, the 2014 Omnibus Appropriations Bill will provide additional funding for the Independent Living Older Blind Program by 3.35%. Washington State will receive \$21,000. Letters recommending support will be sent to Patty Murray and Jim McDermott. Denise encouraged people in those districts to send letters requesting their endorsement of this legislation.

Newsline

Cindy reported that Audio Book Ministries has estimated that it will take about four hours to record the Newsline, duplicate, and prepare the mailings. They will charge us \$20 an hour. We are still in the process of

determining the cost of thumb drives. The March issue of Newsline will be a trial run. Cindy asked all presidents to get updated membership lists for this purpose. An individual unable to download the Newsline will receive a thumb drive which must be returned in time for the next issue. The Newsline will not be both digitized and recorded. One option will be chosen. Any suggestions about its reading are welcome. Cindy encouraged members to obtain digital players so that they will be able to use the Newsline thumb drives.

She also encouraged all those who read large print to receive Newsline via e-mail or on the web.

Alco extended the due date for Newsline article submissions to February 28, 2014 because of the short month.

Website Oversight

Gaylen Floy reported that Web Oversight and PR are doing well. They will do an annual review of the website, checking links, content, and spelling. Forum call information will be posted on the website. Tim McCorcle will be working with Kean to get the scholarship page up as a permanent feature. Bios and photos of officers will be featured in the "About us" page.

By the end of the year, Gaylen hopes to have a prototype for a website which will be responsive to cell phones and tablets. We have 134 "likes" on Facebook. At 200, another drawing will take place for an Amazon gift card. She would like to have a presence on Google Plus to optimize the search capability. On the Legislative Action Page, she hopes to put resources that allow people to register to vote or find their congressmen and legislators.

Families with Blind Children

Meka discussed the Blindness Awareness Resource Night sponsored by the Seattle School District. A flyer detailing the activities of Families with Blind Children, WCB brochures, Newsline issues, the Louis Braille Story, and Braille alphabet cards were distributed in a packet. The book, Touching the Stars in Braille and print was on display for a hands-on experience. Drawings were held for a number of Twin Vision books. Information was provided about the Braille Challenge to be held at the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library on March 1. Names of prospective participants were gathered at this event, and WTBBL will be sending out invitations to them.

Agency Reports

DSB

Sue reported that there are four new SRC members: Gloria Walling, representing Business and Labor, Steve Fixdal, representing business and labor, Dale Kosier, representing the State Independent Living Council (SILC), and Sheila Turner, representing individuals who cannot represent themselves. Meetings have been changed to Fridays in the hopes of recruiting more candidates representing business and labor.

The Work Force Investment Board has been most unresponsive, and has refused to send a representative to serve on the SRC. Since their participation is mandated, this issue will be taken to the governor.

The SRC is in the process of completing the Annual Report which is submitted to the governor. Since the SRC now has a part-time staff, the report will be revamped with pictures, employment closures, and will also detail the individuals served by IL and the OTC.

As of October 12, 2013, there were 119 competitive closures working at an average wage of \$19 per hour. 1,467 blind individuals over 55 have been served. The OTC served 51 students, 40 residential, and 11 commuting.

Another apartment has been added, so there are eight now. 439 individuals applied for service this past year. The number of Asians and Hispanics has increased because of more outreach activities.

The next SRC meeting will be held at WSSB in Vancouver on March 6-7, 2014. There will be a tour of WSSB, and the meeting will start on March 6 at 3:00 PM. The public is invited to the afternoon meeting and its continuance on March 7 from 9-noon.

Three people will be retiring from DSB this year: Bronson Goo, Mike Santi, and Keiko Namekata.

WTBBL

Denise reported on the activities of the PAC. The role of the PAC is being explored. The PAC will do research to find out what other PACs in the country do for their respective libraries. A position was posted on the WTBBL website for an individual to do community outreach.

WSSB

Berl Colley reported that the WSSB Board has two vacancies: one in District 9 and the other in District 3. The school is conducting two nationwide searches: a school psychologist, and a digital outreach coordinator. In March, there will be a discussion concerning 5-year strategic planning.

There are currently 10 students in the Lift Program. Money is being sought to build a cottage for this program so that more can be served.

WSSB, SPI, and DSB have been meeting and are attempting to reestablish the birth - 3 program. WSSB will take the lead for this project.

ACB Report

Berl, Denise, and Marlaina will be attending the mid-year board meeting in Washington, D.C., February 21.

Denise will be attending the Board of Publications Meeting, the Presidents' Meeting, and the Legislative Seminar.

The 2014 National Convention will be held in Las Vegas, NV July 11-19 at the Riviera Hotel. Rooms will be \$87 per night. The deadline to apply for a First Timer scholarship is 05/01/2014. To be eligible, one must have been a member of WCB since 07/13/2013, and must have attended one state convention. Letters of interest should be sent to Malissa Hudson. (See WCB home page.)

Go to the ACB website for information on the leadership seminar, the Let's Make a Deal Auction, and the walkathon, now called the Brenda Dillon Memorial Walk. WCB is contributing \$150 worth of auction items, and will take donations from chapters or individuals.

Berl Colley will be coordinating the leadership training at the ACB Convention, and will be assisted by Marlaina Lieberg. More details will be forthcoming.

ACB is a viable presence on Facebook with over 340 "likes". On Twitter, ACB has 500 followers. ACB Radio can now be heard over the phone. The call-in number is: (231) 460-1047. This number is averaging 200 callers per

day.

Stipends and Loans for National Convention

The deadline to receive a stipend of \$200 or a loan for up to \$700 is May 15, 2014. A motion was made by Alco Canfield and seconded by Denise Colley stipulating these amounts. Contact Cindy if interested.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 PM.

Fourteen Years and Counting 2014 WCB Leadership Seminar

by Julie Brannon

It's hard to believe, but the 2014 WCB leadership seminar will be the 14th of its kind! Our participants have gained much, both personally and professionally, and we are excited to bring this opportunity to you again.

This year, the seminar will be held on May 2nd and 3rd at the Best Western Inn in Federal Way, and participants are expected to join us for the May 4th, 2014 Spring board meeting.

This seminar is for anyone who has been a member of WCB since February 3rd, 2014, who have no WCB loans in default, and who have a desire to get more involved with both your local chapter and the state organization.

This is an excellent chance to learn more about WCB's history, mission and values, as well as an opportunity to make long-lasting friendships. Many people have stated that the leadership seminar was what prompted them to take on more active leadership roles in the council.

If you are interested in attending, please contact Julie Brannon at: Jbrannon0612@gmail.com by March 31st.

In your email of interest, please note how you are currently involved in WCB, and how you see yourself participating in the future. We'd also love to hear about current and prospective leadership roles you are involved in around your community.

This year's leadership committee hopes to hear from many of you, 16 applicants will be selected, so get those emails of interest sent in as soon as possible!

If you have any questions regarding the seminar, please feel free to contact Julie at her home phone number: (206) 547-7444.

GDUWS at the Table per Forced Emergency Sheltering

by Kevin Frankeberger, Ph.D.

The thought of a major earthquake, our beloved Mount Rainier blowing her top or fires across Eastern Washington, or even a terrorist attack by whatever means, anywhere in our state is not something we usually discuss over coffee. But, any of those scenarios are possible.

As blind/low vision citizens traveling with a guide dog or white cane, we have heard about having a "get kit", a bag with our medications, water bottles, change of clothing, meds, and kibble for a dog guide, if relevant and so on. But, what will happen when we get to a shelter?

FEMA, the Red Cross, Seattle Parks and Rec. and other partner leaders decided it was time to plan for that very bad event.

The group had the "vision" to decide the best way to understand the needs of those with disabilities was to have us on the planning team; that is, they wanted us to be part of the team to "plan with" as opposed to, "plan for."

Last summer, as a member of WCB and GDUWS I was asked to be the Subject Matter Expert (SME) per blindness/low vision and guide dogs/service dogs.

Over the following months, meetings were held and emails exchanged between staff and SMEs to include, deaf-blind, mobility, developmentally disabled and culturally diverse persons.

In knowing that I am not the holder of all knowledge, I reached out to garner insight and opinions from the GDUWS list, the WCB list as well as

conference calling with Guide Dogs for the Blind where my guide dog was trained. I also did an extensive review of the literature.

The "Tool Kit" being built takes all of the "best practices" and help tips from all of the SMEs and puts them on paper, in a bullet point format with tabs per "disability" for quick reference.

The reality is that when the "very bad thing" happens, most likely shelters will be staffed initially by volunteers who probably have had little to no training. The Tool Kit is designed then to support them.

For instance, a tab to "blind" will be there. Bullet points will alert how to do sighted guide, how to interact with a guide dog and so on. The need to instantly do minor, "O and M" - where is north for instance, is in that tab. And so much more - more than can be put into this article.

The result is that through me, we as GDUWS and WCB were at the table to again, be part of the process as opposed to the Tool Kit being put together "for" us.

As of this writing, the Tool Kit is scheduled to be rolled out in May, to King and seven other Western Washington counties. From there, it is hoped it will be embraced and rolled out to the other 31 Washington counties and then nationally.

As I receive the, who, what, when and where of the roll out, I will announce such to our lists. Perhaps some of us will be able to attend to not only thank the representatives of FEMA, Red Cross, Seattle Parks and Rec. and other stake investors but also to extend our thanks for having us as part of the process as opposed to the process being done, "for" us.

Along with members of GDUWS and WCB, I share credit to my spouse Becky for her support in the project. We are a team in all ways. Becky too is blind and travels with her guide dog. Our FEMA and Red Cross friends and others had some of their stereotypes challenged in a huge way. That was fun but in all seriousness, it drove home the point that all of us wear or manage our disabilities in differing ways. That means then that an emergency shelter staff will need to be able to embrace all needs and thus, the importance of the "Tool Kit" to lend them assistance in what probably will be a very panicked and confusing environment.

It has been a fun project to be involved with. Those I've interacted with are genuine and truly "get" our needs. We won't truly know until a very bad thing happens but I'm hopeful all will be at least "better" because of this project.

Braille is a Bridge

by Meka White, Chair, Families with Blind Children Committee

Today, thanks to the amazing effort and support of Mandy Gonnsen, Youth Services Librarian at the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library, and Danielle Miller, Program Director, the Washington Council of the Blind was able to host our very first Puget Sound Area Braille Challenge, a program of the National Braille Institute of America. Ten students, ages 6-12, participated in competitive testing that involved spelling, charts and graphs, reading comprehension, proofreading, and speed and accuracy. They were broken up in to first and second grade apprentices, Third and fourth grades were freshman and fifth and sixth grades were sophomores.

When I became the regional coordinator for the Puget Sound Area Braille Challenge, I had ideas of how the event would unfold. I asked plenty of questions from those who have been down this road before, but often reality is very different from what is envisioned. Fortunately, I had plenty of assistance from Mandy, a great group of scorers, and people willing to do whatever I asked of them.

All of that brings us to today, a day where students had the opportunity to hang out with one another. In between tests, there were art projects, bingo games, and other activities to keep the students engaged and interacting with one another. Everyone got to partake of different snacks and a pizza lunch. Parents and other family members got to meet the families of other students, and the laughter and conversation flowed freely. Students came from Eastern Washington, Vancouver, Seattle, and surrounding areas, so we had a great representation from around the state.

The tests are being scored even as I write this and will be submitted to the Braille Institute this week. Each student will receive an official score in the mail. Sixty students from across the United States with the highest scores

will be invited to participate in the finals that will take place in Los Angeles in June.

Today was not about who made the highest scores or got all of the answers correct. Today was all about building relationships, being passionate about braille, participating, and enjoying connection. It was also a huge learning experience for me, and my mind is already on the things that we could do differently next year. Today was about building a bridge where students and families could come together for something wonderful, and I cannot wait until we do it all over again.

Legislative Happenings in 2014

by Denise Colley

The beginning of a new year always means the beginning of the new legislative session, which started on January 13. Since this year is a short, 60 day session, bills had shorter time frames to move through the process.

I will begin this article reporting on the specific bills the WCB legislative committee were tracking and their bill status at the time of this writing. In the second half of the article I want to talk briefly about the 2014 legislative imperatives the American Council of the Blind is working on.

Second Substitute House Bill 1024 would have made the language in the Washington State Law Against Discrimination consistent with the requirements of the Federal Fair Housing Act as it relates to the use of a service animal that is necessary as a reasonable accommodation. Passage of this legislation would allow the Human Rights Commission to contract with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to investigate complaints of discrimination on the basis of disability in real estate transactions. This is a bill that was initially introduced in 2013 and reintroduced again this year. The bill did not come out of the House Rules Committee so is dead for this year.

Substitute House Bill 1321 would have required that all state agencies and other interested organizations adopt and begin implementation of a food and beverage service policy which clarifies that the “Dietary Guidelines for

Americans” must be used as a minimum standard for food and beverages provided to custodial populations. This bill was being tracked for possible impact on the DSB Business Enterprise Program. This bill never came out of committee so is dead for this year.

Substitute House Bill 1814 would reauthorize and reestablish the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT), which had been sunsetted. The ACCT was created in 1998 in order to advance and improve accessibility to and coordination of statewide transportation services for persons with special transportation needs who are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation. For the third year in a row this bill has made it out of the House Transportation Committee, but not out of the House Rules Committee before the cutoff date. The ACCT will continue to do their work even without the support in the legislature.

House Bill 2450 requires state agencies employing 30 or more people to submit an annual report to the Human Resources Director, the Director of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), and the Governor’s Committee on Disability Issues and Employment, outlining employment statistics related to individuals with disabilities by January 31st of each year. Along with information on the number of employees that were hired the previous year, and the number classified as individuals with disabilities, the report must also include information on the number of employees hired from a DVR program the previous year; planned hires for the current year; and opportunities for internships for a DVR client placement leading to an entry level position. This bill passed out of the house on February 11, and was referred to the Senate Health Committee, where it was amended. The amended report requirements “apply to agencies employing 100 or more people, rather than 30 or more. The report must be annual, submitted on a schedule determined by OFM, and include data from the prior fiscal year. The Department of Services for the Blind must be included in the list of those to be provided with the report and its clients must be included in the data collected by the report. Rather than reporting individuals classified as disabled, the report must include those individuals who self-identify as disabled.” The bill is currently in the Senate Rules Committee.

House Bill 2599 would have eliminated a provision in state law that requires pedestrians walking along a roadway without sidewalks to move entirely off the roadway whenever a car approaches (rather than just moving to the far side of the roadway). Apparently, Washington State is fairly unique, in that,

no other state has this requirement. The companion bill was Senate Bill 6504. Neither bill made it out of their respective Transportation Committees.

Senate Bill 6329 was another employment parity bill with a lot of the same reporting requirements as House Bill 2450. It also required that the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation annually report to the Department of Personnel and the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment on the number of DVR clients who have obtained jobs: in the private sector; in state government, broken down by agency; and in local government. It required that new state agency hires equal 5% of all placements by DVR, and agencies that show no good faith efforts in hiring DVR clients must have their budgets cut by 5% the following year. This bill did not make it out of the Senate Committee on Health Care.

March 13 is the last day of the regular session under the state constitution.

WCB, through its legislative and environmental access committees has also been tracking the progress of an overall transportation package with funding included for special needs transportation. No action was taken during the 2013 session. However, Senator King, chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, released a new transportation proposal earlier this month that included a significant increase in funding for special needs transportation (\$111 million over 12 years). We will continue monitoring this issue and provide more information as we get it.

The American Council of the Blind brought forward two legislative imperatives at this year's ACB Legislative Seminar. The first one addresses the exclusion of low vision devices under Medicare. In November of 2008, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) promulgated a regulation that has had a detrimental impact on the lives of individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies (DMEPOS) Competitive Acquisition Rule contains a provision entitled "Low Vision Aid Exclusion" which states that all devices, "irrespective of their size, form, or technological features that use one or more lens to aid vision or provide magnification of images for impaired vision" are excluded from Medicare coverage based on the statutory "eyeglass" exclusion. This proposal has had a significant impact on beneficiaries with vision impairments who depend on assistive technology that incorporates "one or more lens" to aid in their vision. The expansion of

the eyeglass exclusion has prevented access to devices such as hand-held magnifiers, video monitors, and other technologies that utilize lenses to enhance vision.

ACB is urging the House of Representatives to promptly pass H.R.3749, the Medicare Demonstration of Coverage for Low Vision Devices Act of 2013.

This legislation would evaluate, through a five year national demonstration project administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, the fiscal impact of a permanent change to the Social Security Act. This legislation would allow reimbursement for certain low vision devices that cost five hundred dollars or more as durable medical equipment. Individuals will be eligible to participate in the demonstration project only after completing a clinical evaluation performed by an ophthalmologist or optometrist who would then deem a low vision device as medically necessary.

The second legislative imperative is the Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act (H.R. 4040).

Since 1975, Public Law 94-142, now the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), has revolutionized educational opportunity for all children and youth with disabilities. However, without key improvements, our national special education system cannot fully keep IDEA's promise of a truly appropriate education for students who are blind or visually impaired. H.R. 4040, is intended to improve the delivery of appropriate special education and related services to all students who are blind or visually impaired and deaf or hard of hearing, including students who may have additional disabilities. Once enacted, the legislation will ensure that properly designed and individually tailored services are in fact provided, meeting the unique learning needs of students who are blind or visually impaired, and that the educators who serve them are prepared and supported to do their jobs well, based on evidence-driven best practice.

For more information on these legislative imperatives go to www.acb.org.

Let Vegas Be Your First!

by the First Timers Committee

We've all experienced firsts in our life time: a first tooth, first job, first love, and first convention. Well, if your list of firsts does not yet include an ACB Conference and Convention, let 2014 be the year and Las Vegas the place!

WCB will be sending one lucky member to attend the big event for our national organization, and this year it's being held at the Riviera Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, July 11-19, 2014! If selected, you will receive hotel accommodations for one week, a daily per diem to assist with expenses, and travel (gambling money not included!). But even if you never play a slot machine, roll a die, spin a wheel or be dealt a hand, you'll be a winner before you ever step foot near a casino. Because this will be a first of many more ACB conventions to come. We promise!

To qualify to apply for this incredible opportunity, you must have never attended an ACB convention previously, be a member in good standing (having no WCB loans in default), have joined WCB on or prior to July 13, 2013 (this is one year prior to the opening session of the convention), be committed to participating in the many aspects of convention week with a requirement to be seated with the WCB delegation during all business sessions as published in the official program and attend our affiliate caucus. Most importantly, you must send a letter to the First Timer Committee at: sweetmalissa@comcast.net no later than May 1, 2014; in it, sell yourself; toot your horn. Tell us why we should choose you over anyone else that's applying.

Although it's said "what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas," if you are selected to represent WCB at this year's ACB Conference and Convention as our first timer, that statement will not be completely true. You'll be called upon to share in the June issue of Newslite about your experiences and impressions at your first national convention. Of course, being this will be your accounting of your experiences that week, if some details happen to be left behind...

**The American Council of the Blind 2014
President's Meeting and Legislative Seminar**

by Julie Brannon

I had the privilege of attending the 2014 mid-year President's meeting and legislative seminar, filling in for Cindy who wasn't able to attend. I truly consider it a privilege.

As you can imagine, not a minute was left without fascinating developments and interesting happenings within ACB and blindness community partners. Let me share a few highlights.

Our very own Denise and Berl Colley, along with Marlaina Lieberg were major presenters on Saturday, Berl sharing about the opportunity at this summer's ACB convention to attend the ACB National Leadership Training Institute. Denise, as chair of the Board of Publications, then shared about what was potentially a controversial issue in regard to changes in the publication of the Braille forum, in that the Braille Forum is coming out every two months, supplemented by the E-forum. Marlaina, as ACB Radio Project Director shared about the exciting news that ACB radio is now available by phone.

It was great to hear from current ACB student's President, Josh Pearson and former ACB student's President and now board member, Sara Conrad that this affiliate is alive and well in pulling in more members all the time.

We heard from Joel Snyder, Director of the audio description project about how things are moving along in various arenas needing description. We were given ideas from ACB Treasurer, Carla Ruschival with suggestions for how to best manage affiliate funds.

Our luncheon speaker on Saturday was a representative from Vanda Pharmaceuticals talking about the non-24 sleep disorder research and FDA's acceptance of a drug for this disorder. None of us fell asleep during this discussion, it was very interesting.

The meeting for the half day on Sunday got down to more nitty gritty necessities for ACB functioning. Persons representing the ACB resource development committee shared about fund raising efforts. We then heard details about the new and improved membership database ACB is now using.

Sunday afternoon and Monday were then filled with issues relating to legislative action. We first heard about the need to progress for transportation funding by an Easter Seals public affairs representative and ACB transportation committee chairs. On Monday, an interesting transportation follow-up was given about an upcoming conference regarding service animals on airplanes by a U.S. Department of Transportation representative.

Monday we also heard all about what's going on at NLS from Director, Karen Keninger. She talked about NLS continued commitment to the need for available materials in braille, then shared with the audience a new program that NLS will be instrumental in facilitating and that is the free money readers, which will be distributed to blind persons who are signed up with NLS, at the ACB convention and NLS libraries.

As you can see, this was an information packed conference/seminar, worth every minute of the time spent. Thank you WCB for realizing the worth in sending the WCB President or a representative every year!

In Las Vegas with BEP

by Gloria Walling

It was early on Monday morning, the 10th of February 2014 and I was on my way to the airport. It was raining and the traffic from Olympia to SeaTac was slow and steady, with a lot of starting and stopping. I was ready to jump out of my seat because I was on my way to the 33rd Annual National BEP training conference in Las Vegas, NV and I could not get on the plane fast enough!

My daughter dropped me off in front of my airline and then decided to wait until I made it inside. That plan soon changed though, because she was told to move the car after being parked too long in the loading and unloading zone. It didn't matter though, because I was on my way to Vegas baby, and nothing, and I mean nothing, was going to get in the way of my trip! I was honored and excited that the other vendors saw me fit enough to talk about the Washington State vendor program in the absence of our

director!

When I first got to my hotel I called a close friend that I had met several years earlier on a similar trip to Washington DC. We both enjoyed getting together once a year and bragging about our programs and vendors. We would compare notes on the progress our two states had made in the last year. He came down to the lobby to meet me. I got checked in and then we called another vendor down to meet us for lunch. He had already met him in that same lobby earlier. It would appear that he had somehow become the “great meet and greet committee” of one. I was glad because I thought I was the only one from my state at the 2014 Sagebrush convention, put on by the Randolph-Sheppard vendors of America. I did not care though; I was already taking advantage of the opportunity to network with other professionals in my field.

We got registered, and of course made sure to do a little gambling practice, in hopes of being a winner at the slot tournament that was going to be held on Tuesday evening, before arriving at the “Welcome to Vegas!” reception held later that night. We would look over our packets and plan our week’s events.

We wanted to make sure and take in as much information as possible and yet make “The Fremont Street Experience”.

The theme for the 2014 training conference was “Let's Embrace Change - Change is the Steel We Can Forge to a New Future”.

As usual, it was a full program with sessions for SLA administrators and staff, a State Committee Chair session, and opportunities to visit with exhibitors and sponsors.

Some of the topics, speakers and events I most enjoyed were:

“User Friendly Universal Access to Touch Screen Technology”

“Accessible Technology for Business Management”

American Council of the Blind First Vice President, Jeff Thom provided updates on advocacy and events

The luncheon keynote speaker, Blake Lindsay, Communications Manager

at the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind, and Manager of Blazin' Blake Productions, gave a very exciting and motivational talk

There were many exciting events! I could never cover them all adequately and look forward to sharing with you all the things I learned as I cross paths with each and every one of you. I would love to go on forever, but I must stop here and thank the BEP Vendor's Committee of Washington for sponsoring me and making my trip possible.

Remember if you want to know more you can always visit www.rsva.biz The RSVA website to find out about the BEP in your state and upcoming events.

DSB Update

DSB continues to grow to meet challenges of building our employment services while cultivating our work with children and youth, their families, and the older blind by increasing our efforts to reach as many people in Washington State as we can and staying focused on the task at hand—“Inclusion, Independence and Economic Vitality for People with Visual Disabilities.”

FFY 2013 Outcomes and Highlights

DSB regularly shares these yearly outcomes in Newline and this year is no exception.

- 119 customers achieved successful employment outcomes with an average hourly wage of \$19.89.
- 109 of those individuals (or 91.5%) had some form of medical insurance benefits, whether public or private, at case closure.
- The Orientation and Training Center (OTC), which provides comprehensive training in the skills of blindness, careers courses, and recreational and community building activities for our customers, served a total of 48 students during FFY 2013, which included:
 - 39 full-time residential,

- Three full-time commuting, and
- Six part-time commuting students.
- Our Business Enterprise Program (BEP), which provides opportunities for our customers to operate successful food service businesses in government buildings, generated results that benefit the state and our economy as a whole.
 - All 25 facilities combined had total gross sales of \$9,413,000.
 - \$509,000 had been collected as sales tax from all facilities.
 - \$259,000 had been collected as payroll tax from all facilities.
 - BEP facilities employed 89 people and 15 (17%) of those employees had a disability.
- 1,467 individuals were served through our Independent Living Older Blind (ILOB) program, which is contracted through the University of Washington and local providers.

Federal Rule Calls for Increased Hiring of People with Disabilities

Upcoming legislative changes may help increase our employment outcomes in FFY 2014. This is due to the upcoming implementation of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs Final Rule changing the regulations implementing Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 503). Section 503 prohibits federal contractors from discriminating in employment against individuals with disabilities, and requires these employers to recruit, hire, promote and retain these individuals.

The Section 503 Final Rule introduces a hiring goal for federal contractors that seven percent of their workforce be qualified individuals with disabilities. This goal – which is applied at the job group level and ranges across all aspects of an organization – goes into effect on March 24, 2014.

New Online System Matches Employers with Qualified Job Seekers

The emphasis on hiring individuals with disabilities has federal contractors with more than 50 employees in search of skilled employees. To help these

employers find qualified, ready to work applicants, DSB has been active with the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and the National Employment Team (NET) in the development of the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP). Through TAP employers will have access to a talent pool of individuals with disabilities and the ability to search resumes, post jobs and correspond with job seekers who are active VR customers. The system also provides metrics reporting to help contractors in their reporting to the Department of Labor.

When the system is fully operational, vocational rehabilitation customers will be able to post confidential resumes highlighting their skills, search for positions that meet their career goals and even attend virtual job fairs. Job seeker privacy is protected and no information about disability is shared in the search function. DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors will also be able to search the system and refer customers to jobs that fit their skill sets.

We have high hopes that the TAP roll out continues smoothly and, as more employers and job seekers join the system, many more DSB customers will find fulfilling positions that meet their career aspirations.

For more information on Section 503, CSAVR and TAP, visit these sites:

- P Section 503 Final Rule:
<http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/section503.htm>
- P Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation:
<http://www.rehabnetwork.org/>
- P Talent Acquisition Portal: <https://tapability.org/>

Around the State

Compiled by Joleen Ferguson

Capital City Council of the Blind (CCCB)

by Berl Colley

December 7, 2013, CCCB had its annual Christmas Party at the Chambers restaurant in Panorama. There were 19 of us attending and we had good food, fellowship and a fun gift exchange.

We didn't have a chapter meeting in December, but January got off of the ground in a hurry. The Pedestrian Safety committee met early in the month to determine what recommendations to make to the Tumwater Public Works department. This committee is co-chaired by Zandra Brown and Berl Colley.

At our January chapter meeting, on the 25th we had Jay Eaton, Tumwater Public Works Director talk to us about their plans for audible signals. They will be installing a number of audible signals in their intersections this year. Tumwater is the last of our tri-cities to install audible signals. We will be monitoring them to see if they are done right.

We also had representatives from the Thurston County Auditor's office with our Automark voting machines to allow our members to vote on some midyear school referendums. Eight of us voted.

We now have four members certified to drive our transit vans so that we can go to community events like concerts or ball games.

At our February meeting Vice President, Alan Bentson ran the meeting, because President, Gloria Walling went to Tim Walling's mothers' funeral.

CCCB is updating its website. We invite you to go to <http://www.cccbinfo.org> and give us feedback if you have any.

Guide Dog Users of Washington State (GDUWS)

by Sheri Richardson, President

Greetings from the new kid on the block-or at least I may seem that way too many of you. I kind of jumped in to GDUWS leadership with both feet last November, or did I fall in head first? Either way, I am honored to be the new President of GDUWS and to lead the only statewide special interest chapter of WCB.

I have been partnered with guide dogs from the Seeing Eye, Inc. since 1978. I now work with Max, a yellow Labrador Retriever who is 10 years old. We live in Seattle near Lake Washington with my husband, Rick

Lappin. I retired from a 20 year career with the Social Security Administration in 2011, so Max and I now have the time and energy to devote to the causes and activities we love the most, like GDUWS.

I am very pleased and excited to share that GDUWS has several new members already this year. Here are a few snippets of news and information from some of the new and old members:

Sally Mayo of Yakima writes: "Last May I lost my working guide, Mandarin. I was supposed to go to class in September. I started a new job as a school psychologist and could not take the time off. GDB was able to do in home training with me and I got Geneva. She is a black lab. A very petite little girl 22 months old. The in home training was awesome. During the training the district decided to move me to a different school. The trainer was able to help figure out new routes. Three weeks after I received Geneva, my retired guide, Marjorie, who was 16 ½ years old died. Her systems shut down. It was like she was ok to go because Geneva would look after me now."

Camille Jassny is a new member from Seattle. She is partnered with Brietta, a yellow Lab from Guide Dogs for the Blind in Boring, Oregon. Camille is very active in several nonprofit organizations, including outreach for the UW Eye Institute. She can be contacted by anyone who would like more information about the Eye Institute or a support group for persons with vision loss in Seattle.

And here is Nathan Brannon's story about his beloved Mozart: "He is now about three years old. He is a pure lab with a beautiful golden color. At first, Guide Dogs for the Blind was going to use him as a breeder (lucky Guy), LOL. He is very obedient. I can take him on a route once and he will remember it. He finds bus stops, doorways and so on with ease. I have never known a dog that is so laid back and mellow. When he is in public and lying down under a table such as in a restaurant, no one would even know he is there. There was a time once when a roll had fallen under the table right by his nose and he didn't even take a nibble.

He had one of the best puppy raisers you could ever ask for. I believe this is why he has been such a well-trained Guide dog. No doubt I am very lucky.

Stay tuned for more news from our members next time!

I also want to highlight some of the important work in which GDUWS is involved. Dr. Kevin Frankeberger and his guide dog, Tomasso, represented blind/low vision persons and guide/service dogs on a panel to prepare a “tool kit” for emergency shelters. He incorporated feedback provided by other GDUWS members to make a significant improvement in resources for emergency preparedness personnel, including FEMA and the Red Cross. You can read more about this in an article written by Kevin for the Newslite. Many thanks to Kevin for this very important contribution!

This is just a snapshot of our diverse members, and I look forward to sharing more news in the coming months. Please contact GDUWS if you have any questions related to living and working with a guide dog. We also accept tax deductible donations as a 501© (3) organization. Until next time, we wish you all happy travels with your dogs, canes or sighted guides.

Greater Everett Council of the Blind (GECB)

by Chris Coulter

It's February. The skies are gray, the wind is blowing and the rain is coming down. But even under these conditions Greater Everett Area Council of the Blind is having a bright and beautiful winter. Let's go back and look at what's been going on.

In December we held our annual Christmas party at Denny's Restaurant in Everett. Unfortunately, yours truly wasn't able to attend the party but I heard that there were several fleece blankets under the tree. I hope everyone who got those blankets is enjoying them.

Elections were the major activity at our January meeting. Our officers are Danette Dixon, President, Gail Parrish, Vice President, Cindy Stormo, Secretary and Victor Harris, Treasurer. Congratulations to all of our newly elected officers.

In February our meeting began with a presentation by Marlene Swarts. She spoke to us about her work as a DVR counsellor and how DVR and its work are in some ways similar and in other ways different from DSB. She

answered many questions from us during her presentation and she ate lunch with us.

The only aspect of our winter that was momentarily less bright than the things I've just written about were some illnesses in January. Nancy Lind and Marcia White were unable to attend our January meeting because they were both in the hospital: Nancy with pneumonia and Marcia with a heart problem. They are both home now and were both at the February meeting.

We are all looking forward to our March meeting. It will be held on March 8th.

Our meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month with the exception of July and August, when we take a break from business. We have a picnic on the second Saturday in July and a vacation in August. Our regular meetings are held at Denny's Restaurant at 132 128th Street in Everett. Lunch begins at around 12:30 and the meeting starts at a little after 1:00. We invite you to join us for a meeting at Denny's or for our picnic on the second Saturday in July. Until next time, enjoy whatever winter is bringing you and look forward with us to a lovely spring.

Jefferson County Council of the Blind (JCC)

by Carl Jarvis, Secretary

President Nancy Kelly-Patnode positively sparkled with enthusiasm as she brought in the year 2014 by announcing that we had two requests for membership. Flora Lee Malone and Nancy Villagran were quickly and joyfully received into our midst. "This brings us to 24 members", declared Nancy, beaming with pleasure. With that announcement Nancy then called into order what turned out to be our longest meeting ever. Nearly two and one half hours!

Nancy recalled the work of the Ecumenical Christian Helping Hands Organization (ECHHO), presented to us by Ken Dane, back in April. She reminded us of all the volunteer services that ECCHO has provided Jefferson County over the years. She asked if we would consider giving them a contribution. Carl moved that we contribute \$100.00. Gunther Dohse seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

Sue Ammeter requested that John Ammeter read a letter from ACB President Kim Charlson. The letter outlined the many activities we have been involved in at the national level, over the past year.

Sue moved that we contribute \$100.00 to our ACB national office. Cathy Jarvis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Nancy introduced Cassandra Johnson from Habitat for Humanity. Cassandra gave a highly informative overview of the work they have done in East Jefferson County. Because of the few numbers of people in West Jefferson County, and the difficulty in travel, Habitat for Humanity only serves the eastern part of the county. In 15 years they have built 32 homes. They are also renovating several homes in the Quilcene area.

Cassandra told of a woman living in a single wide trailer in Quilcene, with her two children. They had no plumbing, no heat and they were paying \$700 per month. The woman was working two jobs but her earnings were not enough to enable her to move. She assisted the volunteers in building herself a two bedroom house. The monthly house payment is \$500 per month.

Cassandra told us that nationally, East Jefferson County is the second highest in production of new homes.

When Cassandra finished her talk, Nancy moved that we donate \$100 to the East Jefferson County Habitat for Humanity. Sue seconded it and the motion passed unanimously.

Pat Teal brought us up to date on DASH (Disability Awareness Starts Here) activities. They are doing ADA training with Jefferson County Medical Center staff. They plan to also do training on hospital staff in communicating effectively with blind and visually impaired people.

Lisa Monroe also briefed us on the Jefferson County Transit.

We had an open discussion time. Mention was made regarding a TV series about a blind man and his guide dog. The show is supported by Guide Dogs International. Dudley Merk talked about his several guide dogs, and how much a part of his life they've been. Dudley also wondered if anyone

knew about Charles Bonnet syndrome. He said he "sees" beautiful scenery when he is sitting in the meeting. Dudley is totally blind. The condition occurs when the brain's vision center decides to make pictures. Sometimes it takes what pieces of sight people have, and creates pictures of objects that are not there. Other times it can make images that appear very real, in the minds of totally blind people.

On that picturesque note, we will busy ourselves for the next three months so we will have another report for you.

King County Chapter (KCC)

by Linda Wickersham

I am very pleased to announce that after a several month stay in rehab, Fred Chapman returned home on the first Saturday of February. We were very happy that Fred could join us at our February meeting. Congratulations Fred, keep up the good work.

Shirley Taylor has moved to her new home; an adult family home. Each day she is getting a little stronger. We wish her the best and our prayers are with her.

At our January meeting we put together a list of possible speakers for coming meetings. We are planning on having another CPR course since our instructor is willing to return. Several members who couldn't make it for the first training would like to have him back.

At both our January and February meetings we celebrated some of our members' birthdays. In October we had celebrated Fred Chapman's. In January we celebrated Carrie Long's and in February we celebrated Julie Miller's 39th birthday (Ha Ha Ha) just like Jack Benny!

At our February meeting Rhonda Nelson gave a great report of the last state board meeting. Thank you for your good work, Rhonda.

Peninsula Council of the Blind (PCB)

by Kim L. Moberg

Wow, things have just gone by so fast since the last Newslite article! Again our chapter has been quite busy.

We did our second "Kid's Day" event with six kids in attendance. We had this event center around a Christmas theme. The kids listened to a DVD movie while wearing blindfolds. We chose a movie that the kids were familiar with. We later ask them questions about what it was like to listen and have things described to them instead of watching the movie with their eyes.

Then after the movie and questions we frosted cookies and ate them. We talked about smells and colors and what we expect things to taste like. We had mint and peppermint frosting for the kids to use on the cookies. They frosted the cookies with their blindfolds on of course.

Our chapter had its annual Christmas party in December. It was an awesome get together! We had it at All-star Lanes where each person could order whatever it was they wanted to eat. Santa came for a visit and many of us got our pictures taken with him. Everyone took part in a fun and interactive gift exchange. Chelsea Armstrong, Peninsula Council of the Blind member, brought her violin and we sang some Christmas carols.

We even gave out a couple of awards at the Christmas party. Jess Landby, Treasurer, got an award for her outstanding work as Treasurer this year. She has worked hard this year to make the treasurer's job accessible to all.

The other award that we gave out went to Tim Van Winkle, member PCB. He received this award for his awesome outstanding service to our chapter. Who can refuse to buy Braille Beans from Tim?

We just had election of officers and board members. We have a new secretary and the new board member and our Treasurer will remain for another term. Stuart Russell is our new secretary and Michelle Denzer is our new board member. Congratulations to all of you on your newly elected offices. It should be a great year.

Pierce County Association of the Blind (PCAB)

by Lori Allison, President

Oh how the weather has been atrocious, but the PCAB family has been great. In January of this year our chapter said good bye to our 2012 officers and welcomed in our new officers. The 2014-2015 officers are Lori Allison, President; David Edick, Vice President; Kitty Cummings, Treasurer; Hayley Edick, Secretary and Hongda Sao, Immediate Past President. With a group of officers such as this one we are hoping to have a great 2014.

Hongda Sao and his family hosted a terrific Christmas party in December, it was a full Christmas feast with all the trimmings; if anyone went home hungry it was their fault. The party was held at the Tacoma Area Individuals with Disabilities Center and it was a time for each one of us to get to know each other and our families better.

In February PCAB had our yearly outreach and fund raiser at the Desmoids Rest Area Safety stop. This outreach gives our members and some of our family members a chance to serve hot coffee, tea, chocolate and of course, cookies to those people traveling. We had Linda Wilder from DSB as our speaker at our February meeting and then we all gathered for lunch at a local restaurant. PCAB is going to make it a goal to continue this social gathering after each meeting.

PCAB hopes that if any of you ever come to Tacoma you stop by and say hi.

South Kitsap Council of the Blind (SKCB)

by Carol Brame, President

Greetings from South Kitsap Council of the Blind, hard to believe that another year has gone by already. Last year I was not good at writing in for the Newsline. Did you miss us?

Last year we had a speaker from the Lion's Club; Meka White came and

was a speaker on WCB happenings, and Kim Moberg, President of PCB. Members had great questions and a wonderful time. We took up a collection of glasses to be donated to the Lions Club. We had our annual picnic and Christmas party as well.

In October, Kevin Jones retired after 28 years and the club got him a life time Membership and the Moberg's made him a certificate from us and framed it.

Bob Herman just had his 65th birthday on February 4th. He said it is the same day as Alice Cooper and is still working.

Pat and Bob Whitlow had their 50th wedding anniversary, December 27th, Congratulations.

On March 22nd we plan on going to The Coffee Oasis on Bay Street in Port Orchard.

For fund raising we sold the Kitsap books and have a car wash coming up July 12th from 11 AM to 3 PM at Novus in Port Orchard.

Turn out at our meetings are good. We have a new member, Pat Herald. We welcome you and Pete welcome again too we are happy you joined us for your second year. Our meetings are changed to the 4th Saturday of the month.

Kevin Jones is now Chair of Membership Growth for our club and Pat is his first new member. Keep up the great work.

I am very busy as President of SKCB. I'm on the WCB Membership Committee and I am Exhibits Coordinator this year for Convention.

Our members are looking forward to convention in the fall. Some of our members have never attended.

One more thing before closing, our Vice President, Dorothy Bryant is 88 years old and came to the WCB Winter Board meeting in Tacoma. She could not hear well but, she really enjoyed herself.

Till we meet again, wishing you good days ahead.

United Blind of Whatcom County (UBWC)

by Gloria Riley, President

Here's From One Good Year to Another!

It's an honor and a privilege to be elected the new President of UBWC. Our goal is to make 2014 "A Year to Remember".

We caught the crest of the wave in 2013 and we are proud of our accomplishments. Here are some highlights:

- P A new member "Welcome Packet" compiled by Hope Nightengale, including a resource directory, was put on computer for large print or email.
- P We welcomed two new members, Holly & Jim Turri, who relocated from the east coast state of Maryland.
- P Christina White accompanied Bruce and Ron on cemetery visitations on Memorial Day. They took flowers to previous chapter members.
- P Educational speakers and a field trip in August to WTBBL in Seattle.
- P Holly Turri and Betty Sikkema and their guide dogs, Sarah and Bethers gave presentations at local schools.
- P Four members; David Engebretson, Jr., Ron Bradshaw, Bruce Radtke, and Gloria Riley, attended the WCB State Conference in Spokane.
- P Dr. William Freeman became a lifetime member of ACB and WCB.
- P Bruce Radtke received three Lifetime Awards. ACB acknowledged his outstanding volunteer assistance, when he attended the National Convention held in Columbus, Ohio in July. In November, WCB surprised Bruce with a lifetime membership at the annual conference held in Spokane. Bruce was also honored as a lifetime member of UBWC for 20+ years' of service at our Christmas party.
- P We doubled our projected income with fundraisers in 2013. Thanks to past President, Betty Sikkema, for leading the "Human Race" by personally collecting \$1395 and taking 3rd place.
- P Thanks to Ron Bradshaw, Betty Sikkema, and Bruce Radtke for

serving as greeters for the Annual Festival of Trees. Sixteen beautifully decorated Christmas trees were displayed for the public and presented for auction in the Leopold Crystal Ballroom. The historic Leopold Hotel now serves as a retirement community. One tree was sold for \$1450. Proceeds went to the Bellingham Health Support Center.

UBWC is a member of the Health Support Center. Founded in 1989, the center provides office and meeting space to our organization. This is made possible, in part, through the use of two facilities provided by St. Joseph Hospital and the financial support of United Way of Whatcom County.

P Kudos to our membership! We tallied 1098.5 volunteer hours for 2013.

Even though we worked hard, we found time to play by celebrating birthdays, monthly luncheons, monthly book club gatherings, a summer picnic, and holiday parties. Music was provided by Diane Haggith and Jim Turri on guitar, Betty Sikkema playing her Q Chord, and William Kindy playing a concertina and a unique flute crafted in a special walking cane.

We set the bar high and now we have set sail to make this a year to remember. Our new projects have already ignited enthusiasm. Three of our major goals for 2014 are: 1) Dining in the Dark, a fundraiser to provide an educational scholarship for blind and visually impaired students, 2) Vision Fair to be held in October, and 3) Writing the History of UBWC.

We will sit down and talk with our membership about things that have transpired in their lives, the things they want to be remembered for and their opinions about life and how UBWC has benefited their lives.

The roots of our chapter span over 40 years. So as we step aside for the leaders of tomorrow, we want to share our legacy. All history involves people, places, trends, and change. As we journey through life, the people and experiences that we encounter in our lives, afford many valuable insights. We are all survivors. The proof is that we are flexible. We learned that we can't change the wind, but we learned to adjust our sails. "A smooth sea never made a skillful sailor."

United Blind of Walla Walla (UBWW)

by Alco Canfield, President

The United Blind of Walla Walla has been very busy lately despite the snow, wind, and cold.

We did have our Christmas lunch at Smith's restaurant as planned on December 10.

We gained five new members at our January meeting, thanks to Ernie Jones who was instrumental in getting an announcement of our meeting placed in the Walla Walla Union Bulletin to which he is a regular contributor. Connections count!

Ernie also represented UBWW at the Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization Human Services Transportation Coalition. This bi-state (MPO) was established in Walla Walla on March 27, 2013. This federally mandated organization was formed to carry out the transportation planning process, to identify transportation service gaps and to strategize solutions to meet any unmet needs of special needs populations. The plan requires updating and this process will occur during the first part of 2014. This group will provide a great opportunity for us to have important input, and will be an excellent resource for developing community contacts.

Our constitution has been revised, though this is still a work in progress. This, along with our updated membership list and dues were sent to the appropriate individuals.

Our February meeting was at Clarette's Restaurant, and we voted to meet there again in March. This seems to be a viable solution as an alternative to meeting at the Merriam Street Apartments where we have been meeting for several years. We gathered thirty minutes before the meeting so people could have a chance to eat and socialize. Our February guest speaker was to be Sheila Turner from the Edith Bishel Center. She was to talk about services available from that agency, but she was unable to join us. We tried something new. One of our members is from Clarkston, Washington, about 90 miles away. We patched her in by iPhone with a Bluetooth speaker. She was able to hear most of what we discussed. We will continue to work to give her better reception. It is our hope that she feels more connected than

an at-large membership could provide. Thanks to Eric Hunter who urged her to consider joining our chapter. We spent our meeting time getting better acquainted with our new members. Joleen also brought her Pen Friend to demonstrate for new members.

Ferd Swenson celebrated his 90th birthday on January 26, 2014, and the Swensons rejoiced on their 65th wedding anniversary on January 29th.

So, stay tuned. There will be much more exciting news to come.

Yakima Valley Council of the Blind (YVCB)

by Harry (Bud) Kohl, President

YAKITY YAK FROM YAKIMA

Yakima Valley Council of the Blind (YVCB) has set two goals for 2014.

The first is increase in the membership. This is being implemented through several outreach activities. The first of course is through personal contact of prospects by each YVCB member. 4 X 6 inch contact cards have been printed as a tool for these contacts. The second outreach is through a local music group "Now and Then". Two of the five-member group are members of YVCB. Midway through the performance, one of both of the members talks about joining YVCB.

YVCB continues with our very successful Friday Bowling for the Blind followed by lunch and fellowship.

A formal calling list has been established and is being implemented by Dolores Acosta. The goal is to increase attendance at the YVCB meetings.

Future plans include a presentation on use of the Victor Reader by Bruce Goeble, and a "Sing Along" with the Now and Then music group.

Bits and Pieces

Compiled by Shannon Curry

This column is presented for your information and enjoyment. Inclusion of information, products, and/or services does not constitute endorsement by the Washington Council of the Blind. Email submissions to: Newsline@wcbinfo.org. Put "Bits and Pieces" in the subject line.

FCC's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau released an Order announcing the extension of the pilot program for the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP) for an additional year, until June 30, 2015. The NDBEDP was established pursuant to the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA). The CVAA authorizes the FCC to provide up to \$10 million annually for the distribution of accessible communications equipment to low-income individuals who are deaf-blind.

Links to the Order:

PDF:

http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-14-170A1.pdf

Word:

http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-14-170A1.doc

Text:

http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-14-170A1.txt

For further information contact Jackie Ellington, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, Disability Rights Office, 202-418-1153, e-mail Jackie.Ellington@fcc.gov; or Rosaline Crawford, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, Disability Rights Office, 202-418-2075, e-mail Rosaline.Crawford@fcc.gov.

The Access Fund's Work Opportunities IDA's are for jobseekers with disabilities engaged with a Seattle-King or Snohomish County Work Source Center. Individuals can save up for assets needed to overcome barriers to employment or self-employment and receive a 1-to-1 match. This IDA program is funded through the Department of Labor's Disability Employment Initiative grant ending September of 2014. **Accounts are still available and applications will be accepted through May 30th, 2014.**

Contact Emerson Sekins for more information! Email:
emerson@washingtonaccessfund.org or call (206) 328-5116

1. Safeway has adopted the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) version 2.0 level AA as its accessibility standard and has already made significant enhancements to its online shopping web site. For more information, visit www.safeway.com.
2. Shadows in the Dark offers a wide variety of braille greeting cards, including Valentine's Day and Saint Patrick's Day cards. All cards can be personalized. The company also offers many different types of braille playing cards.

For more information, visit www.shadowsinthedark.com

3. The Braille Authority of North America (BANA), at its November meeting in Louisville, Ky., affirmed Jan. 4, 2016, as the date by which the United States will implement the general use of Unified English Braille (UEB). This action was based on a year of dialogue and planning that included the UEB Transition Forum, held on Oct. 16. The forum, which involved 48 delegates representing 31 organizations from the braille community, was structured to help organizations craft the steps and timetable through which the United States will make an effective transition to Unified English Braille.

BANA recognizes that the implementation of UEB will require major adjustments to the infrastructures that produce, deliver, and teach braille, as well as time and strategies for braille users to become familiar with changes in the code. BANA continues to work with leaders throughout the field to build a carefully designed timeline and coordinated plan. Detailed timelines are under development by individual organizations, and transition efforts are now being initiated. BANA stands ready to collaborate with the braille community as it builds and adapts the infrastructure necessary for a smooth transition to UEB.

Hats Off to You

Compiled by Cindy Van Winkle, WCB President

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

Kevin Jones (SKCB) on his recent retirement from the Seattle Lighthouse after 29 years of service.

Terry Blankenship (UBS) on receiving his first guide dog, a male, golden-black lab cross named Tennessee from Guide Dogs for the Blind.

Bob Herman (SKCB) on the special occasion of his 65th birthday.

Sally Mayo (YVCB) on partnering with her new guide, Geneva, a petite black Lab from Guide Dogs for the Blind.

Bob and Pat Whitlow (SKCB) on the celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary.

Meka White (PCB) on her appointment to the Advisory Board for Washington Assistive Technology Action Program (WATAP).

Ferd and Libby Swenson (UBWW) who celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on January 29, 2014, and to Ferd on his 90th birthday, January 26, 2014.

Danielle Maher (USPO) on graduating from The Seeing Eye with her new guide, a golden-yellow cross named Davina.

If you have something to be considered for inclusion for future Hats Off articles, please send to newsline@wcbinfo.org with "Hats Off" in the subject line.

Introducing the 2014 WCB Committee Chairs

76 members comprise the 18 committees working this year on behalf of the WCB membership. Below is a list of contact information for the chairs of all committees.

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Scholarship: Tim McCorcle
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From My Kitchen to Yours

by Alco Canfield

Bran Muffins

1 c whole bran cereal and 1 c boiling water

When cool, add 2 eggs, slightly beaten, 2 c buttermilk, 1/2 c salad oil, and 1 c raisins. Blend well.

2 1/2 c flour, 1 c sugar, 1/2 tsp. salt, 2 1/2 tsp. soda.

Stir into wet ingredients. Fill greased muffin tins 2/3 to 3/4 full.

Cook at 375 dg. for 20-25 minutes.

Some ovens vary in temperature, so check them after 15 minutes. When a toothpick comes out clean, they are done.

Calendar of Deadlines and Events 2014

March

24: Diabetics Forum, 7:00 pm

25: Aging Forum, 7:00 pm

31: Deadline to apply for the WCB Leadership Seminar

April

1: On the Job Forum, 8:00 pm

3: Presidents call, 8:00 pm

8: Technology Forum, 7:00 pm

15: Book Club Forum, 7:00 pm

28: Diabetics Forum, 7:00 pm

May

1: Deadline to apply for the First timer scholarship to the ACB convention

2-4: WCB Leadership Seminar

4: WCB Spring Board meeting, 9:00 am-3:00 pm

6: Job Seekers Forum, 8:00 pm

13: Technology Forum, 7:00 pm

- 15: Deadline to request a travel stipend or loan to attend the ACB convention
- 26: Diabetics Forum, 7:00 pm

June

- 3: On the Job Forum, 8:00 pm
- 5: Presidents call, 8:00 pm
- 10: Technology Forum, 7:00 pm
- 17: Book Club Forum, 7:00 pm
- 23: Diabetics Forum, 7:00 pm
- 24: Aging Forum, 7:00 pm

July

- 11-19: ACB Conference and Convention, Las Vegas, NV
- 28: Diabetics Forum, 7:00 pm

August

- 7: Presidents call, 8:00 pm
- 12: Technology Forum, 7:00 pm
- 16: WCB Summer Board meeting, WTBBL
10:00 am-3:00 pm
- 19: Book Club Forum, 7:00 pm
- 25: Diabetics Forum, 7:00 pm
- 31: Deadline to apply for WCB Convention First-Timers Scholarship.

September

- 2: Job Seekers Forum, 8:00 pm
- 8: Call in for Convention Free Room opportunity,
9:00 am-12:00 pm.
- 9: Technology Forum, 7:00 pm
- 22: Diabetics Forum, 7:00 pm

October

- 2: Presidents call, 8:00 pm.
- 7: Job Seekers Forum, 8:00 pm
- 21: Book Club Forum, 7:00 pm
- 30: WCB convention begins, Tacoma WA.

December

- 4: Presidents call, 8:00 pm.

Announcements

NEWSLINE Article Submissions

The NEWSLINE is available in large print, on thumb drives, via email, and on our website at www.wcbinfo.org.

Articles should be no longer than 750 words and may be edited for clarity and space considerations.

Article submissions, address changes, and subscription requests must be sent to the NEWSLINE email address: email: Newsline, or by phone, toll free at 800-255-1147. Article deadline: To be considered for inclusion in the June issue, article submissions and other information for publication must be received by Saturday, May 31, 2014.