

March 2010

HAB FORUM

Advocating for
Independence, Equality, Opportunity

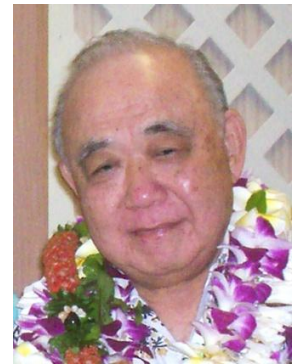
ALOHA! The Hawaii Association of the Blind (HAB) is proud to introduce everyone to the **HAB Forum**. This newsletter is published twice a year.

HAB is an organization comprised of blind and sighted members, who strongly believe in advocating for independence, equality, and opportunity for all blind persons. The officers are:

- President: Warren Toyama, vendor at the Tripler Army Medical Center
 - First Vice-President: Filo Tu, President and CEO of Blind Vendors Ohana
 - Second Vice-President & Scholarship Chairman: Don Thomson, Retired Professor
 - Secretary: Maureen Sheedy, Ho'opono Volunteer
 - Treasurer: Amelia Cetrone, retired hotel CEO
 - Board Members:
 - Myles Tamashiro, vendor at Kona Airport
 - Norman Ota, dark room technician at Tripler Army Medical Center
 - Landa Phelan, self-employed
 - Ronald Flormata, HAB webmaster
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PRESIDENT'S CORNER – Warren Toyama

“Times they are a-changing” is the topic assigned to Lea Grupen as she speaks at the 43rd Annual Convention of HAB. This very same topic could be given to Fusako Miyashiro as she shares the problems at the Library with us



Ho’opono and the Library form the cornerstone of services for the blind in Hawaii. Therefore, HAB has taken a position of doing whatever we can to assist these two State agencies during the current economic hard times. I call on all HAB members to add to Ho’opono’s resources rather than be a drain on scarce revenues. Some of you may consider volunteering your skills since workers have been terminated.

Filo Tu and I have already met with Acting Administrator Lea Grupen to voice our support for her and the agency. We have placed our services as leaders and as a responsible organization at her disposal. We publicly support Lea.

HAB has lobbied Joe Cordova, DVR Administrator, to hire a Braille teacher, as that position was eliminated by the Lingle Administration. Need I comment on the importance of a Braille teacher within Ho’opono? I think not.

Indeed, the times they are a-changing!

HAB’s New Year’s Party – Beth Flormata

Every year we celebrate the coming of a new year with much anticipation and excitement. This year is no different. While our economic situation has dampened the spirits of some, it has not dampened the hope that 2010 will bring better tidings and that our faith in God and in each other will see us through the new year.

We celebrated HAB's New Year's Party at the Pagoda Hotel. It started with messages of hope, gratitude, and aspirations from President Warren Toyama and Vice President Filo Tu. Let us not forget to acknowledge the Social Committee Chair, Myles Tamashiro, for emceeding and keeping things running smoothly. After a sumptuous buffet where we shared fellowship and camaraderie, the gathering was highlighted by our Bingo social that brought a lot of laughter and fun during the evening. How we wished the prizes would not end so we could continue playing! Then the grand raffle prizes were drawn sending the 2 winners home with wide smiles. But like all good things, they must come to an end, with the promise that the next one will be even better!



The Social Committee would like to express its sincerest thanks to the members and officers who worked together to help make the occasion something we would like to do again in the future. Your generosity was appreciated and we are all grateful.

As we bid farewell to the old year and welcome the coming year, let's make it the time for new beginnings and new starts in life. Let go of the past and accept what has happened for they happened for some reason. We cannot turn back time and we must let the New Year be the time to start afresh and do things that would make someone else smile. Let's make a pledge to make at least one person happy each day. Happy New Year!

Technology – Ronald Flormata

The world we live in today is full of digital objects, both hardware and software. Not long ago, blind and visually impaired individuals could only





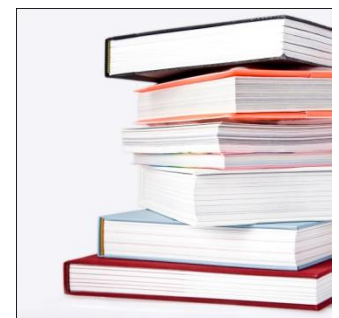
dream of holding a portable MP3 player in their hands while navigating through the menu. If only these wonderful gadgets were accessible.

Well folks, dream no more because a good number of these popular electronic entertainment devices are in fact accessible. Just to name a few, we have iPhone 3GS and iPod Nano 5th generation, both from Apple and are accessible – they have screen readers integrated in the software installed in these miniscule machines. What's interesting is that mainstream companies are now slowly but surely considering the market potential of the blind community, not to mention the social aspect of reaching out. The point I'm driving at here is cost. These accessible devices have got to be affordable for many blind people to enjoy. Olympus is another electronic company which came up with accessible digital players/recorders and their prices are also down-to-earth. The actions of these companies are indeed commendable.

- Accessible Portable Digital Players

Did you purchase an accessible portable digital player? Maybe you got a Victor Reader Stream or BookSense? Now you can download your favorite music to these tiny devices. But wait, aren't you supposed to be able to read audio books from these gadgets too? And, being a registered client of the Library for the Blind, aren't you entitled to get audio books from the Library via the Internet?

Unfortunately, the process is long and complicated to some, especially if you are not familiar with computers and the Internet. Let me show you how to set-up your player to read digital books.



- 1) Email Address – First of all, you have to have an email account. If you don't have an email account yet, there are a number of free email services online such as Yahoo Mail (<http://www.yahoo.com>), Gmail (<http://www.gmail.com>), and Hotmail (<http://www.hotmail.com>).
- 2) National Library Services Account – As soon as you get your email account, register with NLS BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) online at <http://www.nlsbard.loc.gov>. At this stage, I assume you are a client at the Library for the Blind. Select your appropriate digital player from the combo box upon registering. After that, the next step is waiting. You will receive an email from NLS BARD acknowledging your registration and they will check with your local library if you are actually a client, and they also notify the manufacturer of your digital player. So, you will receive an email from Humanware (for Victor Reader Stream) or GWMicro (for BookSense) with instructions on how to authorize your player to read eBooks from NLS. Make sure you follow these instructions!
- 3) Download eBooks and eMagazines – Once you cleared the previous obstacles, then it's time to download from the NLS BARD website, <http://www/nlsbard.loc.gov>. Now you can log in!

Please note that the files you download are in compressed formats (zip). Therefore, after downloading the compressed file, you have to extract or decompress these eBooks to a unique folder on your PC for subsequent copying to your digital player. It is important that you copy the eBook folder on your PC to \$VRDTB (for Victor Reader) or DAISY/NLS (for BookSense). If you fail to follow this step, your player will not read the book.

There is no limit to the number of books you can download. Your only limit is the size of your memory card. Other than books, you may likewise download magazines. As of this writing, there are 47 titles available.

What can I say? Before I got my BookSense XT, I could only dream about reading my books on a small portable digital player. Now I am a happy camper!

The Blind Vending Program – Filo Tu

The bad economy has definitely hurt blind programs. Last year, Warren and I found out that the vending program was about to lose a vending specialist. The timing was good because a Senator had already scheduled a meeting with us to come in and look at a bill she was planning to introduce in the 2010 session. In that meeting, we told her that the vending program would lose a vending specialist because she got bumped by another employee at Ho'opono. We explained that this employee had a settlement with the State two years ago that said this employee would not be allowed to work with the blind vending program. While we were still in her office, the Senator got on her computer and sent an email to the head of the Department of Personnel and explained the situation. Two weeks later, we received calls from the vending specialist thanking us for saving her job.



Mrs. Fujimoto, thank you very much for keeping us informed on the situation. We were glad we were able to help you with your job and were able to keep a good vending specialist with the vending program.

Special thanks goes out to one of the nicest persons you will ever meet. I am talking about Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland. I

honestly feel that she is there for one thing, which is to help all disabled people. Thank you very much Senator! We just can't find enough words to express our appreciation for all you do for the blind in Hawaii.

Another issue the vending program had to face was saying goodbye to two great people, Dave Eveland and Jon Koki. Their final day at Ho'opono was the last working day in December 2009. These gentlemen will surely be missed. We wish you both well!

But, I can tell you that Ho'opono will still be in good hands. Joe Cordova has some very good people working for him. He has found a great person to take over for Mr. Eveland. She is a wonderful person and I believe we will enjoy working with her. Lea Grupen, congratulations and we look forward to working with you for many years to come!

My Fresno Experience – Beth Flormata

Arriving on a cold night, about 30°, at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center in Fresno, California was an experience to remember. Not being used to the cold weather, I came well prepared with my bonnet, muffler, and boots. It was my first time to attend an affiliate's annual convention, not to mention going solo, made it even more memorable. My roommate, Landa Phelan, arrived earlier and has been in a freeze zone when I stepped into our room.



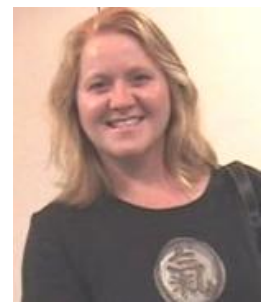
Attending the Fall 2009 California Council of the Blind's Diamond Jubilee Convention, which celebrated 75 years of advocacy and service, was an exciting new adventure. Overall, my convention experience was very positive. It was highly informative and I met a number of interesting attendees.

Some of the sessions and mini-events I attended: 1) Rehab Services Committee Workshop that focused on Social Networking, using Facebook and Twitter, and using adaptive technology to increase independence and employment outcomes; 2) discussion with Michael Moore, a lawyer on disability rights; 3) Kevin Walsh, a staff engineer from Fiskar Automotive in Irvine, CA who talked about their silent car and focused on the fact that “automobiles must be acoustically detectable to pedestrians when powered on”; 4) President’s Dinner and Banquet on Saturday night, where the HAB delegation was acknowledged by President Jeff Thom.

Would I be interested in attending another affiliate convention in the future? The answer is a resounding yes! The reason is that you gain valuable knowledge and experience during these conventions, and it gives a sighted HAB member like myself the much needed insight and perspective both in terms of learning how the blind community is able to advocate for each other and how the individual blind person is able to survive in an environment that is dominated by sighted people, an environment that thrives on the determination to succeed despite the disability, and the ability to overcome every obstacle in order to lead a rewarding and fulfilling life. Mahalo HAB for the opportunity and experience!

Hawaii Association of Parents of the Visually Impaired (HAPVI) – Amy Downard

HAPVI hosted its annual convention on Saturday, September 12, 2009 at the Pagoda Hotel. Fusako Miyashiro shared the exciting news that RFB&D (Recordings for the Blind & Dyslexic) received a federal grant to provide free annual individual memberships. This is a



great assistance to students and adults who need access to audio textbooks and other reading materials. At Ho'opono, a summer work readiness program was provided to students who are blind and visually impaired. They had 14 participants who learned job skills, including building a resume, job shadowing and skills to be a good employee. A presenter from the DOE shared that there are approximately 250 students in Hawaii who receive services based on their visual impairment. This is also the second year where there are no vacancies in the state for VI teachers and O&M instructors. The HAPVI convention was well attended by families, educators and various community resource programs for the blind. It is always great to catch up with everyone at the annual convention. See you next September for the 10th year of HAPVI!

HAPVI continues to work with families by assisting them to access services statewide for their children. The next HAPVI activity is being planned for May 2010, so keep your ears open for times and locations. Contact President Myles Tamashiro at 626-0535 if you know of a family seeking assistance and advocacy for their child.

Keiki and Parents of the Visually Impaired (KAPVI) – Carol Hotta

In this austere DOE year, HAB has been a blessing and has made it possible for us to continue great lessons and KAPVI activities with our students. I would like to share some of the comments and stories about the Maui students.



Megan, who rides a small bus for more than two hours each way, comes from the isolated rural community of Hana, where there are no traffic lights, fast-food restaurants, or shopping centers. Everybody in Hana knows Megan, the only blind child in

her community. She comes to the “Big City” of Kahului where she brings her Braille shopping lists and learns “city-skills”. She says that she is so happy that HAB can help with the costs of her trips.

Karl, a third-grader, recently participated in the judo workshop in Honolulu. He wrote to HAB, “Thank you for giving Carrol Hotta the money to get things like tickets to go to judo last Thursday in Honolulu. It was funny when I got thrown ten times (Each time he relates the story, the number of throws increases). My stomach felt weird after I got thrown. I learned three throws and one pin. I ate a pizza, drink, two musubees, oreos, cheetos, snickers, and pudding. I started to go wild after judo. I fell asleep on the plane going home”.

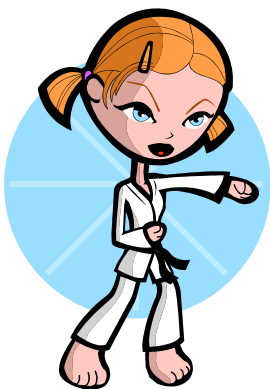
In December, I was working in the community with a little multi-impaired girl who was having difficulty managing her cane. Then I saw that it was because she was trying to hold her pants up while using her cane. Apparently, earlier that day, she had spilled paint on her pants, and was now wearing her spare pair of pants, which were much too big for her. Since we were at Walmart, we were able to turn the lesson into a shopping/dressing skills lesson, and thanks to HAB, she got some pants that were on sale, and fit her well. She looked so cute, and her mother was grateful to HAB for the quick rescue of her daughter before she lost her pants.

Also our KAPVI group is grateful for the help from HAB for the recent Pumpkin Decorating party, the Christmas-Bingo party, the Valentine luncheon, and the upcoming Easter Egg hunt. KAPVI continues to welcome new students and their families. It is mainly a social group, but it includes parent/student advocacy when needed. Again, we invite all of you to join any of our activities if you are on Maui.

For more information regarding KAPVI or any of these events, please call President Marge Masterson at 669-0928, or email teachers Carol or Margy at: carol_hotta@notes.k12.hi.us, or margaret_greiner@notes.k12.hi.us.

State of Hawaii Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (SHAER) – Amy Downard

SHAER has been busy supporting some great activities this spring. First, SHAER has assisted the Deaf-Blind project in bringing in top notch presenters to in-service teachers and other service providers on topics of communications needs and teaching students with cortical visual impairments. SHAER also supported a recent hands-on demonstration from USABA-US (Association of Blind Athletes) and USA Judo, who sent out two amazing athletes in the sport of Judo. Some of our students, age 5-18, participated in a two-hour Judo program, promoting fitness and self-defense. The presenters, Scott and Heidi Moore, immediately received our attention when they started their training by flipping each other with a loud “thud” on the mats at the UH Manoa Athletic Center. The students soon were able to flip each other, and be flipped. They also learned to pin each other and escape from a pinned position. Judo is a wonderful martial art sport for the blind and visually impaired. It is more like wrestling, with less kicks and punches and more hands on movements. The best part was that local Judo trainers attended and are assisting our students and their families to locate and join the sport of Judo locally. Every student was so thrilled to participate and we must acknowledge the presenters, since they were so professional and fun. We’d love to have



them come back and possibly have a large group with adults who are blind and visually impaired attending as well. We did have some former graduates who participated in the training as well and had a great time!

Other items from DOE include the new regulations and eligibility requirements that have been finalized for Chapter 60 and IDEA Reauthorization. The main change in terms is that Visual Impairment (VI) had been changed to Visual Disability (VD). In fact, all students with a documents disability will have “disability or disabled” as their legal definition instead of “impairment or impaired”. So now, instead of being referred to as TVI (Teachers of the Visually Impaired), we’ll be TVD (Teachers of the Visually Disabled).

Ho’opono 75th Anniversary – Keith Okazaki

Ho’opono is turning the Big 75 this year and the Hawaii New Visions Association is inviting you, your family and friends to join all of us for tons of fun at the Ho’opono 75th Anniversary Fundraiser. This special event will be held on Sunday, April 25, from 3 to 8 PM at Ige’s Restaurant & 19th Puka (across from Buzz’s Steakhouse). Come and meet up with old friends and make new ones! Enjoy ono pupus, live entertainment and dancing! Win door prizes and raffles! Best of all, besides having a great time, proceeds will go towards supporting a great cause – Ho’opono’s New Visions Program! Here are just a few ways your kokua will be helping New Visions:

- Repair broken Braille writers and buy new ones



- Purchase appliances and supplies for kitchen
- Acquire materials and tools for woodshop
- Fund activities and outings for students
- Provide outreach to community

Tickets are \$20 per person and includes heavy pupus, soft drinks, coffee and tea (No-host cocktails will also be available for purchase). Please contact Sharon Ige at 542-9912 (sharonige003@hawaii.rr.com) or Shelford Cantan at 585-8139 (jrcantan@yahoo.com). See you there!

BLINDSIGHT NEWS – Landa Phelan

- Lighthouse Stores in Hawaii

South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind is one of many companies associated with the National Industries for the Blind. The main objective of NIB is to promote employment for people who are visually impaired. The South Texas Lighthouse will soon be opening an office supply store on Sand Island for the Coast Guard, and they specifically want to hire people from the blind community. Once this store is established, they want to pursue other opportunities at Pearl Harbor and other military installations or government buildings in Hawaii.

The Point of Sales system they will be using in their stores is compatible with ZoomText (a magnifier/speech software). This system is set up like a home computer with a keyboard and cash register, and it has the ZoomText software which will magnify the screen and use speech while being operated. Employees will learn how to use this system, and they will also have duties such as stocking shelves and keeping track of inventory.



The company came to Hawaii looking to hire individuals with residual eye-sight, and the only one who responded was Shontel Jones. Pat Bishop, the Supervisor, was sent here all the way from Texas because they could not find anyone here in Hawaii. He is currently training Shontel to use the keyboard and the ZoomText software. Dave Marshall, a Lighthouse VP, was shocked to find out that people in Hawaii did not have the opportunity to be introduced to different kinds of technology available for the visually impaired. He definitely wants to hire local people and will keep me informed of any further news.

This is indeed a blessing for the visually impaired in Hawaii. It is not often that a company specifically comes looking for people who are visually impaired and gives them the opportunity for employment with benefits.

- Airports

More and more airports are becoming sensitive to the fact that our service dogs are also our pets. They are now creating relieving areas for our dogs. At the Oakland Airport, there is now a relieving area at the Southwest terminal in Terminal 2. Here in Hawaii, there is one near the American Airlines departure area. Would you believe they even have a fire hydrant and a tree! My dog Miss Pearline tells me this is a big blessing (lots of tail wags)!



- Social Security

Lots of “kudos” to the American Council of the Blind. Now we can have Social Security information sent to us in a format of our choice. You can call: 1-877-708-1776. The five choices you have are: 1) standard print, 2) certified mail, 3) first class mail and a call five days later to help you with questions, 4) Braille, and 5)

compact disk. You can also go to their website for more info: www.socialsecurity.gov.

Inspirations – Beth Flormata

Let me welcome you all to this new column of the HAB Forum! Why the title “Inspirations”? I believe that we are always inspired by someone or something every day. What better way to share with you inspiring and motivating stories, articles, and poems that hopefully will make you feel good and make your heart sing. This will also be an opportunity to share with you delicious recipes and any other topic of interest.



Let me start by sharing with you a story about **Attitude**. It was sent by a friend of mine a while back and has always inspired me as I start each new day with a positive feeling. I hope you will give it much thought, let it really sink in, and let it inspire you to have the right attitude and make the right choice. Here goes...

John is the kind of guy you love to hate. He is always in a good mood and always has something positive to say. When someone would ask him how he was doing, he would reply, ‘If I were any better, I would be twins!’

He was a natural motivator. If an employee was having a bad day, John was there telling the employee how to look on the positive side of the situation. Seeing this style really made me curious, so one day I went up and asked him, ‘I don’t get it! You can’t be a positive person all of the time. How do you do it?’

He replied, ‘Each morning I wake up and say to myself, you have two choices today. You can choose to be in a good mood, or you can choose to be in a bad mood. I choose to be in a good mood. Each time something bad happens, I can choose to be a

victim, or I can choose to learn from it. I choose to learn from it. Every time someone comes to me complaining, I can choose to accept their complaining, or I can point out the positive side of life. I choose the positive side of life.’

‘Yeah, right, it’s not that easy’ I protested.

‘Yes, it is’ he said. ‘Life is all about choices. When you cut away all the junk, every situation is a choice. You choose how you react to situations. You choose how people affect your mood. You choose to be in a good mood or bad mood. The bottom line: It’s your choice how you live your life.’

I reflected on what he said. Soon after, I left the Tower Industry to start my own business. We lost touch, but I often thought about him when I made a choice about life instead of reacting to it.

Several years later, I heard that he was involved in a serious accident, falling some 60 feet from a communications tower. After 18 hours of surgery and weeks of intensive care, he was released from the hospital with rods placed in his back. I saw him about six months after the accident. When I asked him how he was, he replied, ‘If I were any better, I’d be twins...Wanna see my scars?’

I declined to see his wounds, but I did ask him what had gone through his mind as the accident took place.

‘The first thing that went through my mind was the well-being of my soon-to-be-born daughter’ he replied. ‘Then, as I lay on the ground, I remembered that I had two choices: I could choose to live or I could choose to die. I chose to live.’

‘Weren’t you scared? Did you lose consciousness?’ I asked.



He continued, ‘The paramedics were great. They kept telling me I was going to be fine. But when they wheeled me into the ER and I saw the expressions on the faces of the doctors and nurses, I got really scared. In their eyes, I read ‘he’s a dead man’. I knew I needed to take action.’

‘What did you do?’ I asked.

‘Well, there was a big burly nurse shouting questions at me’, said John. ‘She asked if I was allergic to anything. Yes, I replied. The doctors and nurses stopped working as they waited for my reply. I took a deep breath and yelled, ‘Gravity!’

Over their laughter, I told them, ‘I am choosing to live. Operate on me as if I am alive, not dead.’

He lived, thanks to the skill of his doctors, but also because of his amazing attitude. I learned from him that every day we have the choice to live fully. Attitude, after all, is everything. Therefore, do not worry too much about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:34)

After all, today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday. And now, you have two choices, ignore this or share it with the people you care about. You know the choice that I made!



Comments and Questions

What do you think of this newsletter? If you have any questions, would like more info about something, or have any ideas for future stories, please contact HAB by Phone: (808) 521-6213, or Email: ToyamaJ005@hawaii.rr.com.

HAB Scholarship

The Hawaii Association of the Blind is offering scholarships to legally blind college students who are also Hawaii residents. The students may be attending any accredited university or college regardless of location. May 15th and November 15th are the deadlines for Fall and Spring applications.

Scholarships may be offered on an annual or a semi-annual basis as determined by the scholarship committee. The committee reserves the right not only to accept or deny scholarship applications, but also to determine the amount and duration of the scholarship. Scholarship recipients must re-apply in order to be considered for future scholarships. Those who are denied a scholarship are eligible to re-apply in the future. Scholarships will not exceed one-year in duration and are not expected to be less than \$500 per semester.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be legally blind as defined by national standards.
- Must be planning to attend college for the period which he/she is applying.
- Must be a resident of the State of Hawaii.
- Must not be a member of any national organization other than The American Council of the Blind, the parent organization of the Hawaii Association of the Blind (since other national organizations have their own scholarships).
- Persons who are not affiliated with any national organizations of blind people are encouraged to apply.

For further inquires please call (808) 521-6213.

College Scholarship Application Form

Hawaii Association of the Blind

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

College: _____ Major (if any): _____

Completed Credit Hours: _____ Class: _____

- Must be legally blind as defined by National Standards.
- Applicants must submit a letter of no more than two pages describing his/her educational goals, and informing us of information he/she deems relevant to the application.
- Applicant must provide the scholarship committee with official college transcripts. If the applicant has not attended college or is in the first semester of attendance, official high-school transcripts are required.
- Applicant must submit at least two letters of reference, one of which must come from a professor or teacher.
- The committee reserves the right to ask the applicant for further information.
- Relevant false information given will cause any scholarship recipient to have his/her scholarship terminated and legal action will be taken to reclaim money already awarded.
- Information omitted which is relevant to the requirements of the scholarship shall be considered to be falsely presented, and thus will result in the same penalty.

Please send scholarship applications to:

Hawaii Association of the Blind
College Scholarship Committee
1255 Nuuanu Avenue, #1102
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

Hawaii Association of the Blind
1255 Nuuanu Avenue, #1102
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

**FREE
MATTER
FOR
THE
BLIND**