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The American Council of the Blind strives to increase the independence, security, equality of opportunity, and to improve quality of life for all blind and visually impaired people.

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All blind musicians, all the time at the ACB Radio Café,
www.acbradio.org.

President's Message: Description for TV: Progress and Future Horizons by Kim Charlson

One of the areas in which I have focused a considerable portion of my advocacy efforts over the years is on audio description. Initially, my passion for description was focused at the local level with description for live theater. I co-authored a book entitled "Making Theater Accessible: A Guide to Audio Description in the Performing Arts," which is a guide for advocates and a step-by-step resource for theater staff to follow when implementing a program of audio description. It includes how to get started, a planning calendar, marketing and outreach ideas, information on the equipment required, and finding trained describers. Copies of the book are still available in regular print to share with theater staff or potential

fundere, as well as in electronic, large print or braille formats. There is no cost for the publication. You may request it from me directly by e-mailing kimcharlson@acb.org or by calling (617) 501-5853.

I also had the opportunity to work with WGBH, since I live in the Boston area, on early research and consumer testing of audio description for public television. It was this experience that really captured my excitement about how important description is for accessing and understanding television programming for adults and children who are visually impaired. Public television has always held my highest regard for their early and ongoing commitment to description. I was so thrilled when we started to have described television content on network television, and devastated when the court overturned the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) mandate to provide description for television in 2002.

ACB then turned its advocacy efforts to Congress to get legislative language to support and enable the FCC to

once again require audio description on television. That effort, with our many partners, resulted in the 21st Century Communication and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA), which was signed into law by President Obama on Oct. 8, 2010. I was truly honored to be at the White House on that momentous date to witness the signing of this important legislation.

Since that time, ACB has been very active in submitting comments on various issues surrounding description and accessing it with equipment. Comments have been submitted to the FCC, the Department of Justice, and the Access Board on many aspects of audio description and its use.

Most recently, two activities took place that are moving audio description forward. On July 24th, I was honored to partner with Paul Schroeder, vice president of programs at the American Foundation for the Blind, in co-hosting a teleconference call on the topic of audio description for television. Over 115 callers participated, and for two hours

we discussed how to access audio description on television, what markets have description, what networks are required to provide programming with description, and what shows are described on TV.

As of July 1, 2012, America's top national broadcast and cable networks are each required by law to provide at least 50 hours per calendar quarter, approximately four hours per week, of prime time or children's television programming that is described for people with vision loss. Currently, the following networks must provide described programs: ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC, USA, the Disney Channel, Nickelodeon, TNT, and TBS.

Officially, the FCC's mandate to pass through description only applies to the top 25 markets, but implementation of this is voluntary by other network affiliates outside of these market areas. I would strongly recommend that you check in with your local affiliates and advocate for them to pass through the description signal. The top 25 markets are: 1) New York City, 2) Los Angeles, 3) Chicago, 4)

Philadelphia, 5) Dallas-Fort Worth, 6) San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, 7) Boston-Manchester, N.H., 8) Atlanta, 9) Washington, D.C., 10) Houston, 11) Detroit, 12) Phoenix-Prescott, 13) Seattle-Tacoma, 14) Tampa-St. Petersburg, 15) Minneapolis-St. Paul, 16) Miami-Fort Lauderdale, 17) Denver, 18) Cleveland-Akron-Canton, 19) Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne, 20) Sacramento-Stockton-Modesto, 21) St. Louis, 22) Portland, Ore., 23) Charlotte, N.C., 24) Pittsburgh, 25) Raleigh-Durham-Fayetteville.

One theme that came through loud and clear during the call was that people who are blind are experiencing many challenges to getting the audio description on their TVs. There are many factors that make this an issue, from the television itself to assistance accessing the on-screen menus to set the description to be on, to the local network affiliate, to the cable provider. There are currently many places in the pipeline where the process can breakdown. This means that anyone trying to get description on television must be persistent and talk to several people along the way. Each person's case has its own unique

factors, from location to cable provider, to the type of television set being used.

ACB's Audio Description Project (ADP) is trying to help people experiencing difficulty getting description to work for television programs. Please check out the vast amount of information on this topic on the ADP web site, www.acb.org/adp. You will also find information there about which programs are described and what commercial DVDs are being released with a description track. You can also learn practical tips on how to turn described TV on and who to talk to when you have trouble getting description to work.

Another useful resource for finding out what is on television with description has been developed by the American Foundation for the Blind. It can be found at www.afb.org/tv. Select "Described TV Listings," and enter your zip code, cable provider and a date and time, and you will get a listing of programs with description.

There are so many components to the issue of access with audio description for television, including the hardware used. While passage of the CVAA has already resulted in many more hours of audio described content, we still need to see television sets and other electronic devices that are used for displaying video with audio to be accessible. This is likely to take place within the next two to three years as the result of the FCC's regulations currently under review. ACB's information access committee, along with our colleagues at the American Foundation for the Blind, has been expertly voicing our concerns on these issues for many months now. We expect final word on these regulations to be out in the fall.

I am confident that there is much happening in the area of audio description. I urge anyone experiencing difficulty to let ACB know their issues, and we will do our best to work with you to get things resolved. Please do stay tuned for updates. It is important that you let ACB know if you are experiencing issues getting description to work for you. ACB needs to share your accounts with the FCC to let

them know the real-world problems people who are blind are having accessing the wonderful audio-described content on television now and the increasing availability coming in the future. Right now, our progress is literally being made one television set at a time; but with more advocacy by ACB and our partners, we will see more people getting audio description more easily in the future.

A Familiar Person Returns to ACB in a New Role by Melanie Brunson

The following announcement was posted to ACB's e-mail lists on September 5th.

When ACB's new administration took office in July, one of the tasks that was handed off to our new president was assisting with the continuing search for a director of advocacy and governmental affairs. This search was necessitated by the resignation of Eric Bridges in July.

As president Kim Charlson and I began reviewing applications for this position, we also had several discussions about how the job itself has changed over the years. We started to realize that this might be a good time to redefine both the job duties, and our expectations of the successful candidate, in order to reflect those changes. As a result of these discussions, we have altered the focus of the position to reflect the fact that government is only one of the entities this individual needs to interact with on behalf of ACB. Relationships with representatives of business, industry, ACB members, and the general public, as well as government officials, policy makers and agency staff, have become essential to success in this position. In acknowledgement of this fact, we have restructured the responsibilities of this position and have changed the title to reflect these multiple new roles as director of external relations and policy.

Since Eric Bridges was the person who was largely responsible for broadening the reach of this position over the course of his tenure in it, we decided to seek his input

on the approach we wanted to take. To make a long story short, Eric decided to offer himself as a candidate for the new position! He had some serious competition, and we thank all of the other candidates who provided it, but the fact is, Eric has had a stellar record at ACB, so we found his offer to be one we couldn't refuse! We are pleased to announce that Eric will be returning to ACB as director of external relations and policy on Sept. 9. We look forward to working with him to build on what we started under his leadership, as well as forge new alliances to advance ACB's advocacy and public policy agendas. Please join us in welcoming Eric Bridges back to ACB!

Eric has now returned to ACB in his new role. He has, as you might expect, hit the ground running, and you will be hearing from him directly over the next few months. In the meantime, please join us in welcoming Eric back to the ACB staff.

Visiting Vegas by Janet Dickelman

The 53rd ACB conference and convention will take place from July 11-19, 2014 at the Riviera Casino and Hotel in Las Vegas, Nev. Our first tours and the 2014 Leadership Institute will be on Friday, July 11th. There will also be tours daily Saturday, July 12th through Thursday, July 17th. Tech sessions and some ACB committee and affiliate meetings will begin on Saturday the 12th, and run through Thursday, July 17th.

Join the Nevada host committee for the welcome party on Saturday evening. Our opening general session will be Sunday evening, with daily morning sessions Monday through Thursday and our final all-day general session on Friday, July 18th. Our annual banquet will be held Friday evening. Stay for the post-convention board meeting and our final tours on Saturday, July 19th.

Several members of the convention committee will be visiting the hotel in late September. We will meet with the

host committee, and begin the process of obtaining sponsorships, recruiting volunteers and visiting potential tour sites.

Traveling to Las Vegas

McCarran International Airport (code LAS) is a short taxi ride from the Riviera. The average taxi cost is \$15. Las Vegas is served by all major air carriers and many smaller airlines, including Air Canada, AirTran, Alaska, Allegiant, American, British Airways, Condor, Copa, Delta, Frontier, Hawaiian, JetBlue, Southwest, Spirit, Sun Country, United, and US Airways.

You can travel by bus to Las Vegas on either Greyhound or the Megabus. The closest Amtrak stop is five hours away in Bakersfield, Calif. Amtrak provides a bus from Bakersfield to Las Vegas.

For paratransit services in Las Vegas, fax your certificate of eligibility to the Clark County TRC Paratransit certification office at (702) 676-1732. A certificate and

necessary paperwork will be issued to the rider. The requests must be submitted at least one week in advance.

Bringing Food to the Riviera

Each year there is a question as to whether individuals, affiliates and others may sell food items at the ACB conference and convention. Here is what is stated in our contract with the Riviera. "Food & Beverage: The Riviera does not allow any food and beverage to be brought into the hotel. If it comes to our attention that food and beverage is being brought into the hotel suites for hospitality purposes in violation of this policy, then the hotel will automatically post a daily charge of \$500 to that guest's folio."

This also means that there can be no sale of food in the exhibit hall, Market Place, or during general sessions or from an individual's room.

Reservation Details

Room rates at the Riviera are \$870 (single and double) plus \$10 per additional guest. Room taxes are currently 12%. Make telephone reservations by calling 1-800-634-0675 or online by visiting the ACB web site at www.acb.org and following the 2014 conference and convention link.

Convention Contacts

Stay in touch by joining the ACB convention e-mail list. Send a blank e-mail to acbconvention-subscribe@acb.org.

For exhibit information, contact Michael Smitherman by phone, (601) 331-7740, or via e-mail, amduo@bellsouth.net.

For advertising and sponsorship information, contact Margarine Beaman by phone, (512) 921-1625, or via e-mail, oleo50@hotmail.com.

For any other convention-related questions, contact Janet Dickelman, convention chair, at (651) 428-5059, or via e-mail, janet.dickelman@gmail.com.

First-Timers Enrich Convention and Vice Versa

If you attended the 2013 ACB conference and convention in Columbus, you had the pleasure of hearing and meeting the 2013 DKM first-timers: Frank Ventura and Guillermo Robles. Both Frank and Guillermo were enriched by the experience and by their new acquaintances in ACB. Next year ACB and the DKM committee will give two more up-and-coming leaders the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of learning and interaction provided by the convention.

In January 2014, the official invitation to apply for DKM first-timer selection will be extended to the ACB family.

Eligible applicants must meet each of the following criteria: be age 18 or older; blind or visually impaired; member in good standing of ACB or one of its state or national affiliates; never have attended the ACB national conference and convention.

Between now and January, identify members of your ACB affiliate who meet these criteria and who show leadership potential. Urge them to apply for the first timer program. In addition to a letter of application, eligible individuals also must submit a letter of recommendation from their respective affiliate president. Watch the January "ACB Braille Forum" for the DKM application announcement and the beginning of an enriching journey.

Get Ready, Get Set, Go for the ACB Holiday Auction

If you participated in the 2012 ACB holiday auction, you know how much fun we had. If not, never fear because the 2013 ACB holiday auction is on its way.

Our ACB Radio staff and auction committee have teamed up to bring you a wonderful shopping experience and the perfect opportunity to support ACB Radio! Whether you want to buy that special gift for a loved one, or get something for yourself that will turn your friends green with envy, the ACB holiday auction will have it all. Everything from jewelry to sports memorabilia, from novelties to holiday items, from comedy to the kitchen, and much, much more, can be yours. The live radio auction will be held in early December, and you will be able to phone in your bids. Lane Waters and his very capable staff will handle all of the financial transactions as they do for the auction held during convention.

If you would like to make a contribution to the holiday auction, please contact Cindy Van Winkle, either by e-mail at Cindy.vw@gmail.com or by phone at (360) 689-0827,

and let her know what item you are contributing. You may also ship items to the ACB Minnesota office, 6300 Shingle Creek Pkwy., Suite 195, Brooklyn Center, MN 55430.

Please provide information to Cindy and any items, other than baked goods or other perishables, to the ACB Minneapolis office by Nov. 4.

Stay tuned for more details and get ready for the fun to begin.

Mardi Gras ACB Style by Jim Jirak

The most famous place to celebrate Mardi Gras in the United States is in the city of New Orleans. But it is not the only place to go for a carnival atmosphere. Mardi Gras tradition is strongest in America where French and/or Catholic communities settled. The popularity of the New Orleans' Mardi Gras party atmosphere has also meant that many big cities and communities throughout the U.S. now

celebrate Mardi Gras as a way of getting through the last cold days of winter and looking forward to spring.

While Mobile, Ala. has the oldest Mardi Gras, St. Louis claims to have the biggest Mardi Gras event outside of New Orleans. Souldard is St. Louis' best known Mardi Gras party. But there are a number of other balls and parades that take place all over St. Louis when it's Mardi Gras time.

It is the backdrop of St. Louis' Gateway Arch that saw the culmination of the collaborative efforts of several Midwestern states to launch a successful leadership training in August 2011. Dubbed the ABC's of ACB Leadership, each agenda item worked around this theme and provided a cohesive and meaningful conference experience.

Building on the momentum of this conference and the successful national leadership training held at the 2012 ACB conference and convention in Louisville, Ky., several individuals from the states of Illinois, Iowa, Michigan,

Minnesota, Nebraska and Oklahoma have gotten together to discuss having another Midwest conference Marti Gras weekend in 2014. The host hotel is the Hyatt Regency St. Louis at the Arch, 315 Chestnut St. Room reservations are now available and can be made online at <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/MidwestLeadership> or by calling 1-888-421-1442. The conference dates are Feb. 28-March 2, and the group rate is \$99 plus tax.

This time, we are reaching beyond the Midwest to invite affiliates and people who could possibly benefit. Please begin thinking about who would benefit most from a program such as this. Guidelines for consideration include, but are not limited to, having a scholarship winner who has expressed genuine interest in and follow-through with projects. Perhaps you, or board members, are new and need to share the experiences of others.

The festivities begin Friday, Feb. 28 with an icebreaker. Some of the topics being discussed Saturday, March 1 include running an effective meeting, protocol and

etiquette, membership recruitment and retention, legislative advocacy, fund-raising, and public relations. We will conclude with a Saturday evening banquet.

If you're looking for a singularly effective means of increasing affiliate membership, training tomorrow's leaders, improving the ability of current leaders, and creating a vibrant, active and empowered state affiliate, look no further than ACB's leadership training seminars. If you have further questions, would like to help in the plenary process, or need more information about the conference in general, please contact the committee at acbmlc2014@gmail.com, or Jim Jirak by calling the ACB of Nebraska Omaha chapter's Share-A-Fare line at (402) 827-9814.

When you mention Mardi Gras in St. Louis, many Missourian's think of Souldard, home to one of the largest Mardi Gras celebrations outside of New Orleans. The Souldard festivities last for weeks, ending on Fat Tuesday. And while the Midwest Leadership Conference's festivities

won't last indefinitely, it is hoped the knowledge, wisdom and benefits gained help to create "tomorrow's leaders today."

Revving Up for Crossroads II

Last year's Crossroads Leadership Conference in Louisville was a tremendous success, and we're about to do it again. Join us March 21-23 in Louisville for the second annual Crossroads Conference. All ACB members and friends are invited. Some 55 people from six states participated in the 2013 Crossroads conference, and they enjoyed five general sessions, 16 small group break-outs, 4 delicious meals, and two special leadership activities.

The Kentucky Council of the Blind is once again hosting this event, and it welcomes participation in the planning meetings from those affiliates who plan to send members to Crossroads. More details will be forthcoming regarding the planning group and its activities.

Be a Change Agent in the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) System: Legally Mandated Ways to Let Your Voice Be Heard by Doug Powell

**(Editor's Note: Doug Powell is the chairman of the
rehabilitation issues task force.)**

As this article is being written, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the Rehabilitation Act are currently under discussion in Congress for reauthorization. In periodic e-mails, we have been supplying you with our concerns that you can use to advocate on the federal level to maintain and improve services to blind and visually impaired consumers. Under WIA, state agencies apply every year through their state plan to be licensed to provide rehab services to us. There are various ways for us to have meaningful input into the policies and program services administered by the state agencies - from the individual

counselor or teacher all the way up to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Next month, we'll give members information on the grievance procedures when a specific rehab case is not going the way the client wishes. This month, we'll outline some of the more formal ways, mandated in the Rehab Act, you can give feedback to the agency on what is working and what is not.

Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

The state rehabilitation councils (SRCs) are a body of citizens appointed by the governor to oversee the policies and programs of the VR agency. They are responsible for administering and reviewing the results of consumer satisfaction surveys. Different states survey with various frequencies - some survey consumers yearly, while others solicit input only when a case is closed. The SRCs use information gathered in these surveys to make necessary changes to service provision.

Public Comment at SRC Meetings

The SRCs meet at least quarterly. On each regular meeting agenda, there is time set aside for public comment. If you can get to the meeting site, or if you are allowed to call in to the meeting, you can make your comment directly to the SRC and key people on the VR staff who attend these meetings.

Public Meetings

Each year, the SRC and VR staff are responsible for holding a series of public meetings to get input from consumers and advocates around the state. Often these meetings are held on a regional basis, or by phone. Membership organization conventions such as your affiliate or chapter conventions or meetings may provide good opportunities for direct contact with VR staff and SRC representatives to receive input of concern from your affiliate. The comments from these public meetings are published by the SRC and VR staff, and are considered when formulating changes to policies and programs in the

next year's state plan. (The state plan is the request for licensing that outlines pretty specifically what the agency is going to do to provide services to their consumers for the coming year.)

State Plan SRC Attachment

The attachments to the yearly state plan is where the details of what has been done, what the results were, what will be done, and what the expected results will be are outlined. One of the attachments, "4 2(c) Summary of Input and Recommendations Made by the SRC," is an opportunity for the SRC to express concerns with current programs, policies, and services, and these concerns are supposed to be specifically answered by the VR staff. It is a way to potentially draw Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) attention to a problem that the staff doesn't feel they can address or solve.

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)

Every three years, the agency must undertake an assessment of their effectiveness at reaching and providing services to all citizens who would qualify for those services. The major focus of this exercise is to determine as well as possible who is eligible for services, where they live, and whether they are getting the services they need. It attempts to identify unserved and underserved populations so that better attempts can be made in the next several state plans to contact and provide adequate services to those populations. Surveying stakeholders is one aspect of the CSNA process, so ACB affiliates can provide input into future outreach by the VR agency.

RSA Monitoring

Every three to five years, each state agency is assessed by a team of RSA staffers. They look at all of the documents above as part of their assessment of the performance of the agency. The RSA report can point out

persistent issues of non-performance, and either suggest improvements or mandate compliance if the agency is out of compliance with the provisions of the Rehab Act. Input is sought from the SRC and, in some cases, affiliate presidents on top of auditing documents.

As always, change will happen sooner and more smoothly if we have good relationships with our VR management and staff. Most VR professionals are trying to do the best job they can (they aren't in it for the money). But when informal discussions don't work, you can resort to the options above to be heard and, if plausible, you will be able to enlist the support of RSA to exert pressure on your behalf to bring the state agency into compliance with the law.

We hope you find this useful. Next month, we will focus on the individual consumer and their options for changing the course of a case that is not meeting their needs. And in December, we'll discuss the SRC in more detail, and why it is important to have ACB representation on yours.

Questions or suggestions for future rehab information in the ACB Forums? Contact Doug Powell via e-mail, doug.powell.oldjock@gmail.com.

The Dawn of a Bright New Day in Health Coverage by Ron Pollack

(Editor's Note: Ron Pollack is the executive director of Families USA, the national organization for health care consumers.)

On the first day of October, health insurance "marketplaces" will open in every state. Three other key provisions of the health reform law, the Affordable Care Act, will also go into effect that day, and they will greatly benefit older Americans.

The first of these provisions will benefit everyone who shops in the new marketplaces, but it will be especially

valuable to adults between the ages of 55 and 64. On Oct. 1, people with pre-existing conditions, who may have previously faced denials of coverage or burdensome additional charges because of those conditions, will have the opportunity to buy health insurance that covers their conditions without having to pay additional costs.

This is more than a token change. In 2010, Families USA worked with one of the nation's top health care and human services consulting firms to study the breadth of problems people with pre-existing conditions face. We found that approximately 57.2 million Americans under the age of 65 — more than one-fifth of that age group (22.4 percent) — had diagnosed pre-existing conditions that could lead to a denial of coverage in the individual health insurance market.

Even more astounding was the finding that almost half of the people in that group — more than 30 million people — were aged 55 to 64. So while this provision of law will benefit everyone looking for coverage in the new

marketplaces, its biggest and most direct positive impact will be on adults between age 55 and the age of Medicare eligibility.

A second key provision of the law that goes into effect on Oct. 1 is the expansion of Medicaid. States that have decided to expand Medicaid will have new opportunities to offer health coverage to all low-income adults. This could be particularly helpful to those below age 65 who aren't yet eligible for Medicare. In these states, the income eligibility level will be raised and standardized at 138 percent of the federal poverty level (about \$21,400 for a family of two), and other barriers to eligibility will be thrown out as well.

Why does this matter? As Families USA found in 2011, it matters to seniors and their families because 15 percent of America's seniors — and almost 45 percent of people with disabilities — receive health coverage through Medicaid. But until now, many people just below age 65 have been closed out of the program.

Medicaid will continue to be there to support seniors and people with disabilities who need long-term care. As the largest payer for nursing home care in the United States, Medicaid covers the home- and community-based care that makes it possible for 2.8 million seniors and people with disabilities to remain in their communities.

The third big provision of the law that takes effect on Oct. 1 will benefit everyone shopping for health coverage, not just older people. On that day, consumers shopping for coverage in the marketplaces will be able to tap health care "premium tax credits" that can lower their health care premiums each month, making their health coverage much more affordable. Those with the lowest incomes will receive the greatest financial assistance and will pay the lowest premiums. Families with incomes as high as \$62,400 for a household of two will be eligible for this assistance.

A bright new day in health coverage is about to dawn.

What Do AMD Patients and Caregivers Need to Know about the Telescope Implant For End-Stage Age-Related Macular Degeneration?

Approximately 2 million Americans have advanced forms of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), which is the leading cause of blindness in older Americans over the age of 65. Patients with end-stage AMD have a central blind spot or missing area in their vision. Despite the availability of drug treatments that slow the progression of AMD, the number of people with end-stage AMD is expected to double by the year 2050. Now, there's a possible treatment option for patients with end-stage, age-related AMD – the telescope implant. Here's some information on this new option.

CentraSight (www.CentraSight.com) is a treatment program using a tiny telescope that is implanted inside the eye to improve vision and quality of life for patients with

the most advanced form of macular degeneration: end-stage AMD. The program is designed to help patients see the things that are important to them, like their loved ones, and re-engage in everyday activities, like reading, walking and preparing meals.

Smaller than a pea, the telescope implant uses micro-optical technology to magnify images which would normally be seen in your "straight ahead" or central vision. The images are projected onto the healthy portion of the retina not affected by macular degeneration, making it possible for patients to see straight ahead. The implantation procedure is performed on only one eye, and involves removing the eye's natural lens and replacing it with the tiny telescope implant. The other eye remains as is to preserve peripheral vision, which is important for balance and orientation. The surgery is done in an outpatient setting by a specially trained ophthalmologist called a cornea/cataract surgeon. To watch a video that shows how the implantable telescope works, visit www.centrasight.com/centrasight_technology.

The telescope implant is FDA approved, available through Medicare and has been clinically demonstrated to improve vision and quality of life for patients with this advanced form of macular degeneration. It is important to note that the inclusion criteria to be considered a possible candidate are narrow. An ophthalmologist must first confirm that you:

- Have irreversible, end-stage AMD resulting from either dry or wet AMD;
- Are no longer a candidate for drug treatment of your AMD;
- Have not had cataract surgery in the eye in which the telescope will be implanted; and
- Meet age, vision, and cornea health requirements.

The CentraSight treatment program is coordinated by retina specialists who treat macular degeneration and other back-of-the-eye disorders. A unique aspect of the evaluation is the ability to simulate, prior to surgery, what a person may expect to see once the telescope is

implanted to determine if the improvement possible will meet the patient's expectations. Once the telescope has been implanted by an eye surgeon, the patient will need to work with vision rehabilitation therapists for approximately 6 to 12 weeks to learn how to use their new vision in daily life. Risks include all those associated with cataract surgery, such as postoperative inflammation, raised intraocular pressure, corneal swelling, and the potential for compromised corneal health.

CentraSight treatment centers are located across the nation. Patients or caregivers can call 1-877-99-SIGHT (1-877-997-4448) for more information and to find the treatment center in their area.

The ACB Mini Mall Is the Place in Cyberspace by Carla Ruschival

The ACB Virtual Mini Mall is the place for useful, fun, and unusual products for home, school and work. Whether

you are shopping for the kids, mom or dad, the boss or neighbor, or the senior set, you'll find the perfect product for every occasion.

When you shop at the ACB Mall, you help the American Council of the Blind in several ways. Proceeds from every product support the work of the American Council of the Blind. The more products we sell, the more ACB can help people who are blind or visually impaired.

Another way you help the American Council of the Blind is by purchasing and using ACB logo merchandise. When you wear an ACB T-shirt or carry an ACB gym bag, when you give a friend an ACB ceramic travel mug or a sleek ACB magnet, you are spreading the word about ACB and its good work. If you keep CDs in our round fabric-lined wooden box with the ACB logo on top, and that box sits on your desk at work, you are raising awareness about ACB with everyone who visits your office. When your sister-in-law adds an ACB car magnet to her van and drives her kids to their soccer game, she is telling

hundreds, maybe thousands, of people about the American Council of the Blind.

ACB Treasures

The ACB Treasures Shop is the first store to open in the Mini Mall. The ACB Treasures collection includes an expanded line of ACB logo merchandise and special products that commemorate ACB events. The first two Treasures designs, Full Steam Ahead and Day at the Races, commemorate the 2012 convention in Louisville, Ky. 2013 designs include Discovery, Galaxy Swirl, and New Stars. Future designs will recognize ACB conferences and conventions, holidays, and significant events or accomplishments.

Visit the many fun departments in the ACB Treasures shop. Find iPhone cases with tactile ACB logos in the Case Place. Grab a new T-shirt, sweatshirt, or pair of yoga pants or PJ's, or shop for baby, kids, junior sizes - all with the ACB logo or a special ACB Treasures design, and all

at the Clothes Rack. Let your guide dog or pet get in on the fun; visit the 4 Paws Boutique for doggie tees and hoodies, stoneware pet bowls, and pet tags, all with the ACB logo. Stop by Bags and Tags for a gym bag, beach tote, leather mini wallet or elegant satiny clutch. Explore Puzzles and Plush, the Home Center, The Gift Basket, and ACB About Town for soft huggable bears, cookie jars, mugs and steins, water bottles, keepsake boxes and much, much more.

October Features

Discovery: Christopher Columbus first arrived in the New World on Oct. 12, 1492. The theme of the 2013 ACB Conference and Convention in Columbus, Ohio, was "ACB: Discover New Worlds."

The ACB Treasures design of the month is Discovery. It features the explorer's flagship, the Santa Maria, sailing to the New World, flanked by his other two ships, the Nina and the Pinta. The image depicts the little brown boats

with their white sails, the vast blue-green ocean, and the light blue sky with thin white clouds. It includes the ACB logo and the words "Discovering New Worlds," and is available with or without the words "Columbus, Ohio" added to the caption.

You'll find Discovery on T-shirts, sweatshirts, blanket wraps, mugs, steins, cookie jars and much more. All Discovery products are available online and can also be ordered by phone.

Columbus T-Shirt: Did you miss out on the official 2013 T-shirt with its Columbus theme? The shirts are red with a silver gray sketch of the Santa Maria on the front and the caption, "American Council of the Blind, Discover New Worlds, 2013 National Conference and Convention, Columbus, Ohio." The back of the shirt shows the Santa Maria in the center surrounded by the conference sponsors. Limited quantities in youth sizes S, M and L, and adult sizes M, L, XL, and 5XL. Phone orders only, please.

Mini Mall Catalog

Our Mini Mall Catalog includes items from the ACB Treasures shop PLUS canes, SD card holders, conference pouches, audio-described DVDs, talking thermostats, accessible games, and more. Download in text (txt) or Microsoft Word (doc) formats from the Mall home page. Or request a copy in braille, large print or audio CD by calling 1-877-630-7190.

Contact Us

Visit the ACB Virtual Mini Mall by following its link from the ACB home page at www.acb.org. Subscribe to the mall e-mail list by sending a blank message with the word "subscribe" (minus the quotes) in the subject line to mall-subscribe@acb.org. Reach us by phone by calling 1-877-633-7190.

Affiliate and Committee News

WCC Breast Cancer Support Group Call

In honor of October being breast cancer awareness month, the women's concerns committee reminds everyone that we host a monthly teleconference for blind and visually impaired women who are or who have experienced breast cancer. The group is facilitated by two social workers and is 90 minutes in duration. Whether you are newly diagnosed or in treatment, or a 5-years-plus survivor, you are welcome to join the discussion. As blind women with breast cancer, we share a unique experience and can help our fellow sisters as well as receive support. Meetings are the first Tuesday of each month and start at 8 p.m. Eastern. The dial-in number is (218) 548-7688 and the access code is 25463. Long-distance charges will apply to this call. For more information, contact Lori Scharff at loris1@optonline.net or (516) 695-6370.

BITS on Twitter

Blind Information Technology Specialists (BITS) is now on Twitter! To follow them, go to www.twitter.com/BITS_ACB/. This is just one of the exciting developments we expect to be reporting in the coming year as we strive to bring BITS into the forefront as both a resource and advocate for the technology needs of blind and visually impaired people.

Washington Council Convention

The Washington Council of the Blind will hold its convention Nov. 7-9 at the Red Lion at the Park, 303 W. North River Dr., Spokane, WA 99201; phone (509) 326-8000. Room rates are \$89 per night plus tax. Register by Oct. 15 to get the convention rate, and be sure to mention the WCB convention (code Wash1106).

For those in Washington state, WCB offers to those living in Kitsap, Pierce, King and other surrounding counties or along the route to Spokane, two buses, free of charge and with no membership requirement. The Seattle bus will

depart from the Hotel Max, 620 Stewart St., at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, Nov. 7. It will return on Sunday, Nov. 10, leaving Spokane at 10 a.m. The Bremerton bus will depart from the Baymont Inn and Suites, 5640 Kitsap Way, at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, Nov. 7, picking up in Tacoma at Loves Travel Stop, 1501 33rd Ave. E. about 10:30 a.m. This bus will return on Sunday, Nov. 10, departing Spokane at 9:30 a.m. To make your reservations on either bus, or to inquire if we could add a stop, call Shirley Taylor at (206) 362-3118.

Guest speakers will include Jeff Thom, ACB's first vice president. Friday's program will include WCB business, presentations on transportation concerns in our communities, accessible prescription labeling, competitive sports for the blind, and hosting a foreign exchange student. Friday afternoon's breakout session will include: in-person shopping and using e-commerce, show and tell technology, independent living tips and tricks, interviewing techniques for the job seeker, and a session on yoga and meditation. During the luncheon, the awards committee will present this year's awards. There

will be a tour of the Inland Northwest Lighthouse at 1:30 p.m. The exhibit hall will be open throughout the day. Don't forget the talent showcase and sing-along Friday evening!

On Saturday morning we will hear a report on ACB's activities, hear about the services offered by the Lilac Foundation and Inland Northwest Lighthouse, be inspired by those on the ever-popular employment panel, and hear from the directors of our three agencies serving the blind. And, oh yes, on Saturday afternoon we will hold the annual business meeting with elections, resolutions, amendments to the constitution and bylaws, our annual budget and much more. On Saturday evening, we will hold the scholarship reception, followed by the banquet. The banquet will kick off with the final hour of the annual silent auction, and include the scholarship presentations, among other things.

You may register electronically at www.wcbinfo.org or over the phone by calling Meka at (360) 689-1678. Each

person must register individually. Registration will not be complete until payment is received in full. Forms must be submitted by Oct. 15. On-site registrations will be accepted at the convention beginning on Nov. 8.

For up-to-date convention information, call the WCB info line at 1-800-255-1147 and press 6, or go to www.wcbinfo.org.

Passings

We honor here members, friends and supporters of the American Council of the Blind who have impacted our lives in many wonderful ways. If you would like to submit a notice for this column, please include as much of the following information as possible.

- Name (first, last, maiden if appropriate)
- City of residence (upon passing)
- State/province of residence (upon passing)

-
- **Other cities/states/countries of residence (places where other blind people may have known this person)**
 - **Occupation**
 - **Date of death (day if known, month, year)**
 - **Age**
 - **ACB affiliation (local/state/special-interest affiliates or national committees)**

Deaths that occurred more than six months ago cannot be reported in this column.

Sharon Linda Sutlic

(Reprinted from "The News Journal.")

Sharon Linda Sutlic, age 59, of Newark, Del., passed away on June 21, 2013.

Mrs. Sutlic was born in Woodbury, N.J., on Feb. 8, 1954. A longtime advocate for the visually impaired, she worked at the Delaware Association for the Blind and served as

president of the Delaware Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired. She was recently appointed to the Governor's Council on the Blind and sat on the Access Advisory Committee at the Winterthur Museum. She was a member of Hope Lutheran Church in New Castle, Del. for 31 years.

She is survived by her husband of 39 years, Vincent Sutlic; daughter, Christina Fisher; son, Vincent Sutlic II; mother, Barbara Kean; five brothers, two sisters, and two grandchildren.

Her funeral service was held June 26th at Hope Lutheran Church. Interment was held privately. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Delaware Association for the Blind, 2915 Newport Gap Pike, Wilmington, DE 19808; or to Hope Lutheran Church, 230 Christiana Rd., New Castle, DE 19720.

Letters to the Editor

The contents of this column reflect the letters we had received by the time we went to press, Sept. 16, 2013.

Letters are limited to 300 words or fewer. All submissions must include the author's name and location. Opinions expressed are those of the authors.

Keeping Up with the Joneses

On one hand, I can talk about how the sighted can go to a local store and buy a paperback book for \$5 or \$10, and I can go on and on about the braille copy of this particular book being ridiculously priced for any blind person who wants the same pleasure of reading that text. I can go further with this, where I am starting a trivia entertainment business.

The Perkins Library recommended a book, which I will assume costs \$10 in a store as a paperback because it is 67 print pages. It is a book about the history of religion

and of the world. If I want this same book in braille, not only for my trivia business but simply because I want to read it as the sighted would, I would have to pay \$150 for one copy. What can we do to put a stop to this madness? Yet we are supposed to keep up with the sighted as much as possible.

Your thoughts are welcome.

- Bob Branco, New Bedford, Mass.

Re: California Council of the Blind Sues Alameda County over Barriers to Voting

The same problem exists in Minnesota. For the past two election cycles, I've used the "handicap-accessible" voting machines and encountered problems with them. The on-site volunteers claim that the machines work properly (they do, unless you actually try to use them!) but are unwilling to take trouble reports. The county office in charge of the machines won't do anything about it, and the

second time I called, they refused to talk with me because I'd called two years before with the same complaints.

I did find a workaround for using the machine and was able to complete my ballot (correcting the "mistakes" or built-in biases of the machine), which in Minnesota is a paper ballot printed by the machine.

The accessible features of these machines must be tested to ensure their effectiveness prior to opening the machines to the public on Election Day.

Let us note that the programming in these machines may include the ability to modify votes according to a preset bias only on Election Day, a problem that does not appear when the machine is tested on any other day. I

encountered what seemed to be just such a programming bias, as I mentioned above. I would caution all voters, no matter which method you use to vote, to double-check your choices to make sure they're the ones you intended them to be. Even if the programming errors are honest and

innocent, they should not remain in a public release of the software.

- Ken Moses, Stillwater, Minn.

Here and There edited by Sharon Strzalkowski

The announcement of products and services in this column does not represent an endorsement by the American Council of the Blind, its officers, or staff. Listings are free of charge for the benefit of our readers. "The ACB E-Forum" cannot be held responsible for the reliability of the products and services mentioned. To submit items for this column, send a message to sloving@acb.org, or phone the national office at 1-800-424-8666, and leave a message in Sharon Lovering's mailbox. Information must be received at least two months ahead of publication date.

Ski for Light in Alaska

The 39th annual Ski for Light International week will be held in Anchorage, Alaska from Feb.23-March 2, 2014. Participants will stay in downtown Anchorage at the Hilton Hotel and Conference Center, and ski at nearby Kincaid Park. A highlight of the week will be the ceremonial start of the Iditarod Sled Dog Race on March 1 in downtown Anchorage.

Applications are due Nov. 1, and a partial financial stipend may be requested when completing the application. For more information, visit the web site, www.sfl.org. If you do not have computer access, or need more information, contact the visually impaired participant application coordinator, Lynda Boose, at (906) 370-7541 or via e-mail, LBoose@up.net.

Rothstein to Step Down

Perkins School for the Blind recently announced that its president, Steven M. Rothstein, plans to step down. Rothstein has committed to remaining as president through the end of December, and possibly through the end of the academic year. During his 11-year tenure, he played an important role in advocating and raising awareness of Perkins and its commitment to helping students reach their fullest potential by providing the highest level of education and services for children and adults who are blind, deaf-blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities.

Change in Leadership at GDB

On July 15, Bob Burke was named interim president and CEO of Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB). Burke replaces Paul Lopez, who has resigned to pursue other opportunities. George Kerscher, who currently serves as GDB's vice chair of the board, will take on the interim role of board chair.

Burke has served on the GDB board since 2008, most recently as board chair. As interim president and CEO, he will work closely with the full board, staff, volunteers, and the alumni association board.

New Commissioner in Massachusetts

Paul Saner was recently named the new commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. Paul, a longtime community leader and advocate for the blind, is a former managing director of BankBoston (now Bank of America) and previously worked as a real estate executive.

After leaving the private sector, Paul used his passion for helping fellow blind residents become fully included in their communities through his work with numerous non-profit and community organizations. He has served as a volunteer vision rehabilitation teacher and is currently vice chairman of the board at the Carroll Center for the Blind in Newton, and as a leader with the Perkins Braille and Talking Book Library in Watertown.

Paul is a co-founder of Boston's Metropolitan Waterworks Museum, and served until recently as its board chair. He was a member of MCB's Rehabilitation Council for seven years, and is also active in his local government, serving as a Town of Brookline meeting member and co-chair of the town's Economic Development Advisory Board. He holds an MBA in finance from the University of Rochester and a bachelor of arts from Trinity College.

Changes at Serotek

Mike Calvo, long-time CEO and co-founder of Serotek, has changed jobs. He is now working with the Accessibility Is a Right (AIR) Foundation, concentrating on taking universal access to developing countries. Michael Fox will be assuming the responsibilities of CEO at Serotek.

Audio-Described Capitol Tour

Visitors to the U.S. Capitol who are blind or visually impaired now have a helpful new resource: an audio-described tour of Exhibition Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center. The tour was developed and produced by the Office of Congressional Accessibility Services (OCAS), and allows visitors who are blind or visually impaired to enjoy the Exhibition Hall exhibits through a self-guided, narrated tour. As exhibit documents are changed and/or rotated in the displays, the tour will be updated as needed.

This new audio-described tour is available on a handheld device, which you can request at the North Information Desk in Emancipation Hall. Visitors can also download the tour on a personal device at www.visitthecapitol.gov/visit/visitors. For more information, call OCAS at (202) 224-4048, or e-mail David_Hauck@SAA.senate.gov.

Tired of Captchas?

There's a campaign on Change.org to get rid of inaccessible visual and audio captchas on the web. The point of the campaign is to raise awareness about how inaccessible captchas exclude people who are blind or visually impaired from participating in a range of web sites. To sign on, visit www.change.org/en-AU/petitions/its-time-to-finally-kill-captcha-2.

Summit Outlines Successful Disability Inclusion Strategies

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce recently hosted its second corporate disability summit with the U.S. Business Leadership Network ® (USBLN ®) to highlight inclusion practices related to disability employment. The groups also released a joint report that outlines specific strategies for businesses to recruit and retain individuals with disabilities, creating a diverse workforce, marketplace, and supply chain.

The report, "Leading Practices in Disability Inclusion," highlights strategies that can be used by all businesses to create a more inclusive workplace. It outlines real-life examples that are important in helping businesses realize opportunities provided by disability employment, and the featured companies provide valuable insights on the success in all aspects of their business operating that have resulted from the inclusion of people with disabilities. The report also includes a tool to initiate and enhance disability-friendly corporate practices. To get a copy, visit www.uschamber.com/reports/leading-practices-on-disability-inclusion.

New Design for Pebble HD

Pebble HD has a new design. Its features include a new HD camera with a 4.3" LCD screen; adjustable magnification from 1.25x to 13.5x; large tactile buttons; adjustable brightness; 28 available color select modes; audible feedback; a real-time clock and calendar; a rechargeable battery with up to 3 hours of continuous use;

and more. It also includes a carrying case. And you can use it in the folded reading position, the hands-free position, or the writing position. For more information, call 1-888-811-3161.

Affordable Access Solutions

ViewPlus® Technologies recently introduced the new **EmBraille®**. The **EmBraille** is a lightweight desktop embosser that can do single-sheet as well as tractor-feed braille printing. It embosses 25 characters per second, and has a **USB** connection for ease of use. It can handle paper between 3" and 10" wide.

ViewPlus is also the U.S. distributor for the **Voiceye®** technology. What does **Voiceye** do? It's a barcode-reading application that will give users access to a variety of print documents, from medication labels to work documents and more. Download the free **Voiceye®** app from the **App Store** or **Google Play**, and then scan the code using your **Android**, **iPhone** or **iPad**. The text

contained in the code is then available on your device, and you can choose your method of access: voice, large print/high contrast, braille, or translated language. The scanned information is retained in the device history for easy access later, and can be shared through e-mail, Facebook or Twitter.

For more information, visit www.viewplus.com or www.voiceyeus.com, or call 1-866-836-2184.

Upgrade for ZoomText

Ai Squared recently released ZoomText 10.1 for Windows 8. It offers full support for Windows 8. It's compatible with Office 2013 and Internet Explorer 10. Touch-screen support is also available. It's now available electronically, and will be available to ship in a few weeks. Visit www.aisquared.com for more information, or call 1-800-859-0270.

Maps of Kansas

The Princeton Braillists recently released "Maps of Kansas," a single volume with 11 maps, including an overview of the state followed by individual maps of cities, rivers, counties, highways, farm and mineral products, and yearly precipitation. A more detailed map shows the vicinity of Kansas City. For more information, visit Mysite.verizon.net/resvqbx/princetonbraillists, or write to The Princeton Braillists, 76 Leabrook Ln., Princeton, NJ 08540; or phone (609) 924-5207.

World Braille Usage Version 3

The world's most important and comprehensive braille reference book, "World Braille Usage," has been updated for the first time in 23 years – and now includes more braille codes for indigenous languages from every corner of the globe. The new edition includes braille codes for 133 languages. It was released at the Braille Summit held at Perkins in Watertown, Mass., in June.

For this edition, a special effort was made to collect braille codes for indigenous and mother-tongue languages, which will allow more children who are blind to learn braille in the language they speak at home and in their communities. The book includes native languages such as Ndebele from Zimbabwe and Khmer from Cambodia. Also new for this edition are braille codes for eight of the most commonly used tribal languages in South Africa, several Latin American indigenous languages, plus Inupiaq (from Alaska) and Hawaiian from the United States.

To get a free downloadable PDF copy, visit www.perkins.org/worldbrailleusage. An electronic braille version is in the works.

Perkins Brailier Repair

John Harden has started his own brailier repair business, Quality Brailier Repair LLC. For the last eight years, he has done all the brailier repair work at the braille and talking book library in Florida. For more information, contact John

Harden by phone at (386) 238-5871 or by e-mail, jharden01@cfl.rr.com.

A Spiffy Giant and a Tiny Turtle

National Braille Press now has "The Spiffiest Giant in Town" by Julia Donaldson available as both a print/braille children's book and in contracted braille. It's for ages 5 and up. The book tells a tale about George, who goes from being a scruffy giant to the best-dressed giant, to being kind and generous to others.

NBP also has "One Tiny Turtle" available. It takes you on a journey into the world of the loggerhead turtle. Chock-full of illustrations, the book tells the story of a female loggerhead turtle swimming for 30 years and thousands of miles searching for food. Then one summer night, she reaches a beach to lay her eggs – the same beach where she was born.

For more information on either selection, contact National Braille Press, 88 Saint Stephen St., Boston, MA 02115-4302, or call 1-800-548-7323. Or visit www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/publications/index.html.

Seeking Materials

The Louis Braille Memorial Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped in Bangladesh seeks donations of gently used books and magazines, including religious material in braille, large print, or regular print; white canes; braille embossers; computers; writing guides; talking watches; braille watches; and Perkins brailers. The library welcomes the donation of braille paper as well as educational materials and equipment. Send all items free matter for the blind to Plot #11/1, Road #06, Block #E, Mirpur-12, Dhaka-1216, Bangladesh. For more information, contact the library by e-mail, louisbraillememoriallibrary@gmail.com.

FIDS Seeks Materials

The Fima Institute for Disabled Society (FIDS) is seeking materials for its blind, deaf-blind, visually impaired and physically disabled clients. If you have any kind of literature, whether books, general-interest magazines or journals, religious books or magazines, they would be helpful. Staff is looking for braille, print, and large-print materials to help clients gain knowledge and comprehension of the English language. FIDS is also seeking braille paper, a braille printer, braille slates and styli, Perkins braille writers, a braille translation program, a braille copier (such as a Thermoform machine), talking watches, talking calculators, white canes of various sizes, a computer, audio player-recorders, video players and recorders, DVD player-recorders, a projector, and eyeglasses. If you have any of these items to spare, send via free matter to: M. Milon, Secretary and Chief Librarian, Fima Institute for Disabled Society, 12, E 5/6, Mirpur, Dhaka 1216, Bangladesh.

High Tech Swap Shop

For Sale: CCTV Freedom Machine by Vision Technology, with auto-focus 22" color screen. In excellent condition. Asking \$600. Contact Max Steward at (816) 674-4945.

For Sale:

Several packages of braille paper containing 500 unpunched sheets. I have 8 1/2" x 11" and 11" x 12". Asking \$15 plus shipping per package. Contact Irena Franchi via e-mail, bluabirdo@hotmail.com, or by phone (305) 932-8856.

For Sale:

Sendero GPS 4.2. Includes speaker, receiver, software and compact flash card. Asking \$798, which includes shipping and handling. Contact Victor via e-mail, andrews17@verizon.net, or djponji09!@gmail.com; you may also call him at (347) 987-1304. He accepts PayPal.

For Sale:

Ruby handheld viewer. In good condition; lightly used. Asking \$325. Merlin CCTV. Asking \$1,200. In excellent condition; rarely used. Contact Brenda Eads at (812) 325-0172.

For Sale:

15" LCD flat-screen Eclipse 74E003 desktop color CCTV. Asking \$1,500. Contact Alice at sunshinecrespo1@aol.com.

For Sale:

Braille Note PK with KeySoft version 7.2. Asking \$500 or best offer. Power Braille 40-cell refreshable braille display. Asking \$1,300 or best offer. Contact Philip at (703) 581-9587 or via e-mail, philip-ashley2006@hotmail.com.

For Sale:

PACMate Omni. Comes with carrying case, adapter, and SD card. In pristine condition. Asking \$700 including shipping within the U.S. and Canada. Contact Ali at (316) 990-1212 or e-mail him, a.j.rajadi@gmail.com.

Wanted:

LED-120 braille embosser from Triformation Systems.
Contact Micheal Hudson, (502) 899-2365, or e-mail him,
mudson@aph.org.

Wanted:

New or gently used Victor Stream (first generation),
handheld or pocket-size model. Can't afford full price, but
can pay \$100-\$150. Call Brooke Segal at (937) 293-2815
(home), (937) 430-2273 (cell), or e-mail her at
havashalom@sbcglobal.net.

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