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**In accepting material for THE BLIND CALIFORNIAN, priority will be given to articles concerning the activities and policies of the California Council of the Blind and to the experiences and concerns of blind persons. Recommended length is 1800 words.**

**The deadline to submit material for the fall, 2017 issue of THE BLIND CALIFORNIAN is noon, August 15, 2017.**

**Please send all address changes to the Executive Office.**

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## **From the Editor's Desk**

**Mike Keithley**

**Welcome to the summer, 2017 issue of the Blind Californian. Be sure to put the BC, and whatever you use to read it, in your travel pack so you're never far away from CCB. "Master," King says, "don't you think people would like to put CCB away for a while and just relax?" Perhaps, but there's so much going on that I think it'll be a bit difficult.**

**There's President Wilkinson's article about a new and important survey, Paul Shane writes about his unexpected experiences at the CCB**

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**conference and convention plus upcoming fundraising adventures, and Susan Glass offers a comprehensive report on the convention. We also have a report in three voices about awards presented at the banquet, and a report from the Constitution Committee on the work of re-writing the CCB Constitution and Bylaws.**

**Add humor and poetry, plus hidden music, and you have the summer BC. Don't forget to water-proof it so it survives your river-rafting and kayak fun.**

## **Presidents Message: Who Are We?**

**Judy Wilkinson**

**Think Alice in Wonderland, the Disney version. The hooka-smoking caterpillar demands of Alice:**

**"a—who are a-you?"**

**Now consider the CCB variation, "Who are we?"**

**Steve and I pondered this question as we represented the CCB under the grant we received to attend a Convening sponsored by CFPB/FDIC. CFPB (Consumer Financial Protection Bureau) created by the Dodd-Frank Act, protects consumers in light of the financial debacle of 2008, and the FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation) established during the**

**depression, protects bank depositors from losing their money.**

**Both entities offer training packages, and this Convening trained us to train others to deliver them. The FDIC has 11 modules in its "Smart Money" training, ranging from opening bank accounts to "paying yourself first, to purchasing homes. Where on the spectrum, we wondered, do most of our members fit in? For instance, how many CCB members can afford to pay themselves first (i.e. create some kind of savings)? Similarly the newer FCPB offers a 9-module package "Your**

**Goals Your Money," ranging from making it through to the end of the month to areas of consumer abuse such as calls from debt collectors. How many in our CCB community don't know how they'll make it to the end of the month?**

**Then what a coincidence! Just 3 days after our return from Washington DC, what should appear in my email but the first draft of our CCB Demographics Survey, initiated by our Publications Committee, largely created by its member Catherine Schmitt Whitaker and put in Survey Monkey format and added to by our CEO Paul Shane. This survey will certainly give us the tools to help us decide which modules of the above**

**trainings might be most useful to our members, but more importantly will provide valuable resources for all manner of other benefits to CCB. Paul, with input from an ad hoc committee, recently put together our Case for Support, which tells donors why they should provide CCB with financial support, and almost as important, tells them who they are actually funding! Unfortunately, we have almost no verifiable data about who our thousand plus members really are! How old are we? How many of us work, or even want to work? What is our average income level? This, and so much other information will be available to us with your help. We need each of**

you to fill out this survey online or with assistance from Nicole Pacheco, our recently-hired Operations Manager. All information you provide remains anonymous. By the time you read this, the survey should be live and ready for completion. Watch for instructions and further information on our various lists.

In our ongoing efforts to encourage new folks to join us, our Membership

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Committee under its chair, Board Member Vivian Younger, will be offering a membership seminar on June 27. Watch for further information. Should you miss that training or if the BC reaches you too late, the call will be recorded for later playback.

We proudly point to ourselves as a "grassroots" organization. Well now let's hear from every single blade of that grass!

## **Conventions and CANES**

**Paul Shane**

**Greeting Friends and Supporters:**

I want to talk to you today about "Conventions, Canes and Celebrations."

If I am to be honest, I was a "tad" nervous about attending the 2017 conference and convention for the first time and had no idea what

to expect. What I found surpassed my greatest expectations. The enthusiasm was electric and contagious. Positive and passionate people could be found everywhere and I was very excited to meet people face-to-face for the first time.

By all accounts, the 2017 convention was a great success! Sure, we had some technology issues, random 14th floor fire alarms, and other challenges, but overall things went well and people had a great time.

I want to take a minute to give special thanks to all my "breakfast buddies," who stopped me from eating alone and shared their honest feedback, opinions and hopes for

the CCB. I truly appreciated your companionship and contributions.

Here are some comments from a few Sacramento volunteers who, at my request, helped out at convention:

"I am not sure how you constantly rope me into these things, and I was not all that excited about coming at first. Once I arrived, that all changed.

I found my experience at the convention to be truly humbling and life changing, and would not have traded it for anything!"

"I have been struggling without much of a purpose since graduating college. That changed in April of 2017 after being

**'voluntold' by my old boss to support the 2017 convention. I now have a renewed sense of purpose, and plan to pursue a Master's degree in social work beginning in the fall."**

**"I was terrified to come. I had never been around a blind person in my whole life and didn't know anything about them. To say that I felt trepidation would have been an understatement. Then I began to meet people from all over California who were truly amazing! Not "Blind People," just people. I met so many amazing people who openly shared their contributions and experiences with me. To some, I was a third of their age, but it did not stop**

**them from calling me a friend. I had a wonderful (if not exhausting) experience at the 2017 convention and would love to be invited back. Maybe I should listen to Paul more, then again, maybe not."**

**As we move into the second half of 2017, we will be planning and implementing the first "Canes Across California" annual fundraising campaign. The acronym CANES stands for Collaboration Through Advocacy, Networking, Engagement and Service. CANES will be a social media driven fundraising campaign that kicks off on August 1, 2017 and culminates on White Cane Day weekend in October of 2018. The purpose of**

**this event is to raise awareness for the CCB, raise activity levels, and raise resources for the important work that we do.**

**The CCB corporate office will coordinate the overall logistics of the event, and each chapter or individual will be responsible for their own activities and accomplishments. Funds raised will be shared through a joint revenue agreement between the CCB corporate office and individual chapters.**

**The format of the event will be a virtual activity fun walk, run, dog-a-thon, or any other creative active alternative that an individual or chapter decides to do. A significant amount of time and energy will be dedicated to encouraging**

**people from outside of the membership to support the event, and documenting our activities through various media.**

**The beauty of this event is in its individualism. For example, if you are not physically able, you can register as a virtual supporter. An entire chapter may decide to do a campaign-long event, or to just do one event at some point in the fundraising campaign. You may decide to do your virtual run on a treadmill at the gym or at home and wherever you do it, you can track your mileage. CCB members may also encourage their local Lions Clubs and/or other community organizations to do**

**something active to support the event.**

**It is equally important to capture our activities and supporters and share them with the world through our various media platforms. This will create the buzz which leads to greater awareness, relationships and funds for the CCB. It will also bring our chapters closer together and begin to build the broad-based community support that is essential to our longevity.**

**The CEO call in June will be about CANES and will gather feedback from you, answer questions, provide guidance and support, and help chapters to create their own CANES events. Be sure to read the California Connection for**

**the time and date of this call.**

**As the CANES campaign concludes, we will turn all our attention to Celebrations Week 2018. Celebrations week occurs from March 19-25, 2018. Included in Celebrations Week will be the 2018 conference and convention, which runs from Thursday, March 22 through Sunday, March 25, and will be held at the Sacramento Marriott, Rancho Cordova. Many other exciting things are planned for Celebrations week as well, including a tactile and sensory art show and sale, substantial community outreach and education, an employment panel, Capitol Day, a guided walk along the American River,**

**and a Dining in the Dark Fundraising event.**

**Dining in the Dark will be the signature fund raiser for the CCB in 2018, and its success is essential to our survival. Dining in the Dark takes place during our annual convention, and will be held at the Marriott, as a separate fundraising activity. To attend, you must purchase a separate ticket. Ticket prices will be commensurate with similar events and will be set with the purpose of bringing in the necessary funds to support the operational costs of the CCB. There will be no free or reduced-rate tickets to Dining in the Dark. We expect this to be a sold-out event, so please plan to buy your tables and**

**tickets early if you are interested in attending.**

**The event will feature a cocktail party and silent auction; live entertainment and dancing; a multiple course dinner in the dark in conjunction with a presentation on the CCB, and a bidding in the dark live auction complete with an affinity and reverse auction.**

**The chapter and/or individual who raise the most money to support the Dining in the Dark event will receive one complimentary double occupancy hotel room for the length of the convention (Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights) and meal tickets to all scheduled convention events for two people, two tickets to the Dining in the**

**Dark event, and recognition in the program and by the emcee at the event, all free of charge. The specifics and minimum benchmarks for this incentive will be set by the Dining in the Dark Work group, and broadcast widely across the membership once the criteria have been set in stone.**

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**I am looking forward to all of your support in the exciting and hectic days ahead. I can never thank you enough for all that you do to support the CCB. We appreciate and value your ongoing efforts.**

**With Every Good Wish,  
Paul Shane, CEO**

## **The Friend Who Just Stands By**

**Sugar Lopez**

**This year has brought me a kinder heart, a gentler spirit, and a much humbler way of looking at life with a heart of gratitude for all the blessings I have received. I am truly grateful for all the friendships that have surrounded me.**

**For as long as I am needed and wanted, I will always be that friend who just stands by, ready and free to give all I can.**

**When troubles come your soul to try, you love the friend who just stands by.**

**Perhaps there's nothing**

they can do, the thing is strictly up to you.

For there are troubles all your own, and paths the soul must tread alone.

Times when love can't smooth the road, Nor friendship lift the heavy load.

But just to feel you have a friend, who will stand by until the end.

Whose sympathy through all endures,

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whose warm handclasp is always yours.

It helps somehow to pull you through, although there's nothing they can do.

And so with fervent heart we cry, God Bless the friend who just stands by.

Dedicated to those who have surrounded me always with unconditional friendship.

Unconditionally, Sugar Lopez

## **Governmental Affairs Report**

**Jeff Thom**

Whatever else can be said, it is certainly true that there's never a dull moment in the advocacy world, and that's definitely the case in 2017. Let's

start with Washington, D.C.

We are at a hiatus in the effort to repeal and replace so-called Obama-care, with Trump-care.

**The House bill would cost California millions of dollars in Medicaid money, and potentially render thousands of Medicaid recipients ineligible.**

**Premiums for younger, healthier folks may decline, but those for seniors and persons with disabilities would certainly increase under state health care systems like Covered California.**

**However, the Senate is in no mood to rush action on this topic, so it remains to be seen what will happen.**

**ACB and others in the blindness community have re-introduced The Medicare demonstration on Coverage of Low-Vision Devices Act, HR2050. This bill would, for a five-year demonstration project,**

**cover low-vision aids, when prescribed. The goal would be to determine whether the cost of such coverage would result in offsetting savings through enabling persons with low vision to remain in their own homes and live independently. I urge you to write your Congressman and exhort him/her to co-sponsor this bill, which has authors in both parties. There had been speculation that a Medicare reform act might come up during this session of Congress, and our bill could be a candidate for incorporation into that act. However, it looks more like Medicare will be put on the back burner, for various reasons, so we'll need to continue to**

**pursue HR2050 on its own. One possibly positive outcome of the internal issues plaguing the Trump Administration is that little time and effort has been placed on the rolling back of regulations that harm business interests. Once that effort gets off the ground, we will be better able to predict whether the new regulatory slant will adversely impact our interest in a variety of areas.**

**Now, let's turn to the State Capitol.**

**As you may know, CCB is the only organization of people who are blind or have low vision actively participating in a statewide coalition to increase SSI payments in California: (Californians for SSI). In**

**this regard, last summer's revenue projections for this coming 2017-18 budget appeared to show a down-turn. Although revenues are actually higher than projected, errors made by the state in calculating Medi-Cal expenses have caused a situation where the Governor, in his May revision of the budget, is not including many increases in his budget. Thus, it is unlikely that we will see any increase in the state's share of SSI payments. However, next year will likely see a \$20 per month or more increase in the federal SSI payment due to changes in the cost of living.**

**Turning to AB1103, the bill that would allow bicycles to roll through stop signs**

or turn at a stop sign when the rider feels it is safe to do so, we are working hard for its defeat, and we had an initial victory when the author decided to put the bill on hold until January. He realized that the opposition was too great at the present time, but his goal is to come up with a compromise that will pass the Assembly in January. We will certainly be at the table, if the proponents of the bill truly decide to listen to our concerns. Get ready for a major fight on this bill.

The battle to end the existence of the State Guide Dog Board by defeating AB1705 is heating up. With Guide Dogs for the Blind, CCB, and NFBC joining many consumers not involved in

any organization to defeat efforts to extend the life of the board, we will make sure the Legislature and the Governor are aware of just how important it is that the board ceases to exist. In its first committee, we were already successful in reducing from four to two the number of years proposed for extension of the board, but we are not stopping there. The bill is currently in the Assembly Appropriations Committee and, although it is more than likely it will pass out of the Assembly, it still must pass the Senate and be signed by the Governor. Get ready to be called upon this summer, as we need all hands on deck, even those of you who are not guide dog

handlers, to carry the day. I want to conclude by mentioning work that will occur due to resolutions passed at the 2017 Convention. First, we are seeking to make the Legislature's websites and documents more accessible to those of us who are blind. I intend to work on this in the fall, and will be asking for help from those of you with expertise in this area. Secondly, next year we intend to seek state budget increases for more funding for the Braille and Talking Book Library and some funding for the Braille Institute Library as well. Third, we intend to

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seek legislation to address the lack of standards in the California Optometry Act governing low vision training and the prescribing of low vision devices. Finally, we are working with orientation and mobility instructors to address the issue of school districts making it difficult to take students off-campus or provide after-school instruction. If any of these issues are ones that you would like to work on, please contact me at [jsthom@comcast.net](mailto:jsthom@comcast.net) or by phone at 916-995-3967. Together we can move mountains!

## **CCB Convention Report**

**Submitted by Susan Glass: Silicon Valley Chapter President**

**{Editor's Note: Most of this report appeared in the May, 2017 SVCB In Touch newsletter.}**

**For the second time in recent years, CCB held its annual convention at the Hilton Hotel in Woodland Hills, CA. This is a delightfully accessible hotel with a warm ambiance and welcoming staff who clearly take to heart the hospitality that they extend to blind guests, and to all their guests. Many windows in the downstairs corridors make for a light and airy atmosphere. The surrounding neighborhood is reasonably walkable, and**

**the weekend's warm weather made walking a real treat. In my opinion, this year's convention planners get high marks for having plenty of volunteers on hand, especially those from local puppy raising clubs, who not only helped out in the dog relieving areas, but also served as indoor escorts to events and the exhibit hall.**

**So much for setting the scene. Let's get on with the conference/convention report.**

### **CCB Health and Growth**

**This is a sea change year for CCB: Our new**

**President, Judy Wilkinson, took office last June. Our long time Administrative Assistant Ed Branch retired, and CCB hired its first ever CEO, Mr. Paul Shane. Not surprisingly, every general session as well as the board meeting addressed issues pertaining to CCB's growth and health. In her opening remarks at the first General Session, President Judy Wilkinson, said that CCB is transforming itself from an organization of grass roots strategists, to a modern nonprofit organization that combines those grass roots strategies with newer techniques. This is necessary in order to re-establish our financial stability. We currently**

**have only enough funds to sustain our organization for the next 18 months. As a first step toward remedying this situation, we hired a grant writer who has already submitted an Operations Grant. We also made the first cut on a grant educating people about financial matters, and we are a finalist for a Vista grant which, among other things, will pay chapter members in more financially strapped communities to help raise the standard of living and education in those communities. Because these chapter members will be paid through a grant, they will not have to report their earnings if they are on SSDI or SSI. Judy Wilkinson explained**

that grants provide CCB with a concrete track record of its activities, which in turn make it a better candidate for more grant funding.

Paul Shane also discussed "The 4 C's: (Crisis Intervention, Career, College, and Civil Rights). CCB addresses Crisis Intervention through the Ellen Murphy fund, which helps women who encounter economic and domestic difficulties such as needing to pay the rent, keep the heat turned on, or pay medical bills. CCB scholarships help advance college education and careers for blind/visually impaired young people. And of course, our legislative activities at the State and Federal level our evidence

of our work in the area of Civil Rights. Paul Shane said we need to publicize this work everywhere and often, because it concretely articulates CCB's mission. He said that nonprofit organizations are always doing the mission money dance, either raising money or articulating their mission. It's crucial, he said, that neither part of the dance supersede the other.

### **ACB Legislative Report**

As an advocacy and consumer organization, CCB works with both State and Federal legislatures to pass laws that benefit the lives of blind and visually impaired people.

Accordingly, each of our CCB conventions always

features a Federal legislative report from ACB. At our second general session on Friday evening of convention week, we heard from Anthony Stephens, ACB's Director of Advocacy and Governmental Affairs. A journalist by trade, Tony Stephens has worked on social justice issues in venues ranging from the halls of Latin American monasteries to the halls of Congress. With us, he addressed issues concerning Medicare and Medicaid, education, employment, and civil rights.

Blind advocacy organizations are still working with Congress to pass a bill that would require Medicare to cover the purchase of low vision

aids such as magnifiers. On Thursday April 6, a bipartisan bill on Medicare coverage of devices for those with low vision was re-introduced. Tony Stephens said that we will need to wait until at least October 1 to learn the fate of this bill, because it is dependent upon the new Federal budget, which will not be in place until then. Between now and October, he said, Congress will engage in lots of posturing, and it will not be clear exactly what budget we ultimately have. He acknowledged that a Medicaid bill, which would have adversely affected the blind and visually impaired community, was rejected three weeks ago. However, he cautioned that Congress will now try

to push that unfavorable legislation through as part of a tax reform package. We will therefore need to remain vigilant. He said that 7 million Americans with disabilities are currently on Medicaid. That's a good number to remember when advocating.

One piece of good news, Stephens said, was that the Trump administration did not abolish the Office of Civil Rights. But he warned that we will receive far less help regarding our civil rights during this current administration. If the current proposed Federal budget passes, a significant chunk of money will be taken away from the Department of Justice (DOJ), which by

implication, will affect our civil rights, although exactly how it will affect them is as yet unclear. In coming decades, Stephens said, we will need to protect the rights of older citizens who are becoming blind. Due to aging baby boomers, the numbers of blind people will spike in the 2020s and 2030s. He said that the Work Force Innovation and Opportunity Act did great things for blind youth who were transitioning into their careers. But we need similar legislation for older blind/visually impaired Americans. He lamented the removal of the Home Maker Exemption provision from Supported Employment Services. This provision had

allowed blind and visually impaired homemakers to receive support from the Department of Rehabilitation. The loss of this provision undoubtedly makes life harder and more costly for these individuals, and may even preclude their ability to remain at home. The irony of course, is that institutional living will cost even more. This raises a crucial question: How can we help disabled Americans age in place, in their communities, at home?

Tony Stephens concluded his remarks by reminding all of us that it is our duty to advocate for those issues that shape our lives, and to exercise our rights as citizens to engage our democracy.

He urged that we all visit the ACB website and read about the legislative imperatives that ACB has set for 2017. Here is a brief glance at some of the imperatives:

**1. Safeguarding Programs that Promote Independence & Inclusion.**

Pass legislation that protects and promotes these programs:

- **Independent Living Services for Older Individuals with Blindness**
- **Helen Keller National Center for the Deaf - Blind**
- **Defense Department Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program**
- **National Library Service for the Blind & Physically Handicapped**

- **Education Technology Media & Materials Program**
- **American Printing House for the Blind**
- 2. **Securing Independence for Medicare Beneficiaries.**
- 3. **Ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty.**

**Special Interest Groups and Workshops**

**Technology**

On Thursday afternoon of April 6, CCB offered three technology workshops. In the first hour, San Francisco chapter member Vita Zavoli shared information about the IOS application developed by Kaiser that allows patients to schedule appointments, order medication, and communicate with their

doctors. The second segment featured demonstrations of three new braille note takers. Gabe Griffith, who works with HumanWare, shared information about the Braille Note Touch. Next, Bob Sweetman of Sweetman Systems, demonstrated the Braille Sense Polaris from Hims, which is scheduled for release in May. The Polaris retains many keyboard and operating features of the original Braille Sense, but now runs on an Android platform that, among other things, features swift and efficient web access. The now obsolete Windows CE operating system formerly used in the Braille Sense will be dropped. Andrea Pitsenbarger from Access

Ingenuity, concluded the note taker program segment by sharing the EIBraille from Freedom Scientific. The EIBraille is essentially a braille computer running Windows 10 and Jaws, with a braille display that slides into a docking station.

The final segment of the technology program focused on innovations and techniques that enhance quality of life for people with low vision. Dr. Bill Takeshita, who regularly hosts telephone conferences for the Council of Citizens with Low Vision International, shared tips for protecting one's existing vision both indoors and out. He recommended wearing yellow or amber tinted

glasses for indoors, and darker tints for outdoors. He also stressed the need to build color contrast into one's home environment, both for ease of mobility and safety.

### **BRLC**

The Braille Revival League of California (BRLC) held its business meeting on Friday morning, April 7. Following election of BRLC officers, members discussed ways of growing BRLC's membership and influence throughout California. Ideas now under consideration include hosting braille literacy and education sessions at public libraries (these especially geared toward children), and designing and teaching functional

braille literacy classes to people who lose vision later in life. The classes would teach just enough braille to enable a person to read things like ATM and elevator signage or room numbers in hotels. We also agreed to reaffirm our connections and donations to the Braille Institute and Braille Challenge. Perhaps BRLC could have a table at next year's National Braille Challenge meeting. BRLC president Linda Porelle reminded members of the April 12 telephone conference being sponsored by the National Braille Revival League, which would feature discussions of current braille displays, braille note takers, and braille computers.

## **CLUA**

The California Library Users (CLUA) also held its business meeting and program on Friday, April 7. Its morning program featured Mr. Reed Strege, Director of Library Services at The Braille Institute in Los Angeles. He told us that last year, The National Library Service, (NLS) added 3,000 new books to its collection. This is great news, he said, but added that when compared to the number of print titles available, it's only a drop in the bucket. He said that if readers can develop a tolerance for synthetic voice, many more books can become available. Several in the room expressed the wish that professional narrators

remain, even in the face of commercial audio book production and books recorded via synthetic voice. Reed agreed that the collection needs to balance its offerings between professionally recorded books and newer technologies. He told us that NLS is researching its next generation book player, but that at present, it's not clear what this player will look and be like. NLS is seeking patron feedback: Do we want the new machine to be voice activated? What size would we like it to be? Would we like it to be interactive? Would we want it to combine a refreshable braille display with an audio book player? Californians are one of the largest reading

populations, and now is the time for us to weigh in with our preferences.

Susan Glass, who is ACB's representative to NLS's Collections Development Advisory Group, (CDAG) invited CLUA members to share with her their wishes and preferences regarding NLS's current offerings, future growth, and website interface. She will attend the CDAG conference at the Library of Congress from May 24 through 26 of this year, and will carry reader suggestions with her.

Rob Turner updated CLUA members regarding changes happening at Book Share. Currently Book Share has 550 thousand books in its collection. Much of this

growth stems from the Special Education Grant which, after 5 years, is now up for renewal. Rob urged Book Share Users to contact their Congress people and recommend that this grant be renewed for another 5 years. Book Share will soon implement a new way to search for books: when you search, along with the display of titles, you will also see a list of authors. You can then choose a particular author to narrow your search. There will also be flexibility in the category search feature. Book Share is working on cover images for its books. As part of Global Literacy, Book Share continues to work on availability of books internationally. When a foreign publisher

produces a book, it will be accessible without Book Share engineers having to do anything to it. Ideally, it will have image descriptions, navigation by chapter, sections, and subsections. Book Share is also continuing its work on Math ML. They work with vendors who develop DAISY readers that can accommodate Math ML.

### **Guide Dog Program**

On Saturday morning of April 8, I attended the Golden State Guide Dog Handlers (GSDGH) program. Yes, this affiliate recently changed its name; you formerly knew it as Guide Dog Users of California, (GDUC). The program featured Ms. Peggy Rew, of RewCrew Collaborations, who

shared valuable information with us about guide dog first aid and CPR. This was a hands-on workshop in which we learned how to know if our dogs are overheating and how to cool them down if they do overheat, how to stop bleeding from a severe wound, how to perform a Heimlich maneuver on a choking dog, how to treat frost bite, and where to check for a dog's pulse. Ms. Rew's business is based in Sparks Nevada, and is currently the only such service available in the United States.

### **CCB Resolutions**

Perhaps the most important part of CCB's final session on Sunday morning is the reading of,

and voting on, resolutions. We always pass a resolution thanking hotel staff for hosting us, and another thanking all volunteers. It was especially delightful to do so this year, as the Woodland Hills management and staff were exemplary. President Judy Wilkinson invited as many staff as were available to be present when this resolution was read. In thanking volunteers, we paid special tribute to members of local puppy raising clubs who, not only helped out in the guide dog relieving area, but also provided sighted guide to any CCB member who needed it.

Here is a summary of the other resolutions:

**Resolution 2017 1:  
Mobility Education and  
Teaching Instruction**

**This resolution confronts unreasonable restrictions imposed by school districts on mobility instructors and blind students. CCB will take steps to prohibit districts from imposing unnecessary restrictions on their blind students such as preventing them from working on nearby street crossings with their mobility instructors, preventing them from meeting during school hours etc. Such restrictions interfere with Core curriculum. Since this problem is national in scope, CCB recommends that ACB address this issue as well. The resolution passed.**

**Resolution 2017 2:  
Work with legislative committees and websites to be sure all documents posted thereon are made accessible to blind and visually impaired persons and that this happens in a timely fashion. The resolution passed.**

**Resolution 2017 3:  
Library Services Funding. The Braille and Talking Book Library (BTBL) could lose up to 90 percent of its funding if President Trump's budget passes. CCB will ask that the California legislature fund both the BTBL and the Braille Institute libraries at the level currently funded by the Federal government. This resolution also passed.**

**Resolution 2017 4:**

The CCB Constitution and Bylaws Committee propose an updated Constitution. The process of designing and writing this constitution will make use of, but not be limited to, in-person and telephonic, web forums etc. In other words, CCB will do all it can to include all members in the process. The proposed Constitution will be distributed to the membership no less than 30 days before the next conference and convention and will require a 2 thirds vote to pass. The resolution passed.

Much more happened at the convention, but time and space constraints prevent me from covering it all. I believe that the

convention's general sessions were recorded and are available to those who would like to hear them.

Some of the best things happened after hours as we sat chatting together in hospitality suites or caught a late night snack in the hotel restaurant. I re-connected with people I first met at Camp Bloomfield in Los Angeles when I was a child. I also made some new friends from the San Francisco and Fresno chapters. These connections can't happen virtually; and even though cost can sometimes be prohibitive, I hope that we never eliminate our live conventions. They are community builders and they allow us to exercise

democracy, albeit on a small scale, at a time when all citizens need to feel

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that they have power and can make some difference in the world.

## **Move Over, John Milton**

**Olivia Ostergaard**

I guess we blind writers have John Milton to thank for paving the way for us. He probably had to dictate his poems to a scribe, who wrote them down. He must have gone through reams of paper or parchments. He also didn't think his works would ever be worth anything. That's what it's like for us writers. We spend our energy, putting words to paper, or now, fingers to keyboards. Sometimes it takes years for our work to get published. In today's world, you have to be

flush with cash. I can attest to this because it's been three years since my memoir was published. I still have boxes of it sitting in my living room. That's if you self-publish. These are just some of the obstacles I've faced. Oh, I had grandiose delusions of being a best selling author appearing on TV talk shows. Well, this hasn't happened yet. We trudge on, captive to the Internet for advice, suggestions for branding, and for having a social media presence. I think

God is definitely testing my patience.

The book is about my nearly ten year journey to get the right guide dog. I knew God had planned the whole adventure, and I learned so much! After years of editing, revising, selecting a publisher,

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proofreading, and finding a sponsor to help defray the cost, it was done! God opened doors I couldn't have imagined.

I also write for [myjourneyoffaith.com](http://myjourneyoffaith.com), and my website is [oliviaostergaardd.wordpress.com](http://oliviaostergaardd.wordpress.com).

## **Listening Blind to a Bewicks Wren**

**Susan Glass**

I've been a listener to bird song since the age of 4, and perhaps even earlier.

A first memory: I woke on a summer morning in Detroit Michigan, where from my bedroom, I heard crows scuffling and cackling and cawing in the garden outside my window. Their voices made the yard echo, and I

realized there was space out there, and that the crows were voicing that space for me, adding a new dimension to my blind world.

Another early memory: Lake Erie, Monroe Michigan, and dawn. Liquid warbling that sounded like water on stream stones, and high

pitched, ceramic wind chimes. The source? A flock of Purple Martins, which are a type of swallow. Their singing defined space, distance, and height, and blended with the crinkling sound of shells caught by tiny waves lapping on our beach, to create my personal Lake Erie picture. I was too young to know their proper name, but not too young to know that I loved them.

I carried this bird love with me to California where I've now spent more than 90 percent of my life. Our birds are harbingers of everything for me, of good times and bad. If the Golden Crowned Sparrows arrive later than usual in October, I get nervous. I worry that global warming

is detaining them in Alaska, and that they may be stranded there by subsequent snow storms. I sicken when I read that night flying geese and ducks are slamming by the thousands into cell towers, and all it would take to stop this carnage would be to change the continuous light emanating from the towers, to flashing lights. I love how birds enlarge my world, connecting me with far flung geographies and consequences of human endeavor.

For some time now, I've been expressing my love of birds through poetry. I recently finished writing a short poetry book called *Listening Blind to a Bewicks Wren*, which will be published in 2019 by

**Slate Roof Press, a book collaborative in western Massachusetts. Slate Roof plans to release audio, braille, and print versions of the book.**

**Here is the title poem. It is based on the song of one of our friendliest California garden birds.**

**A Bewick's Wren is singing in a sky space just beyond my patio. I slide open the French window, step into delicious cold, and know this is where I'll drink the day's first coffee.**

**His melody is symmetrical, practiced.**

**"Lalalalala seeee bert,"**

**he lilts from an oleander bush, rests three measures, then,**

**"Lalalalalala seebert."**

**His tail must be conducting, a black barred, white tipped baton curved over his back and flicking side to side.**

**Does the tail drive his music, or the music, his tail?**

**He solos,**

**I sip,**

**Listen for a rival's dueling song.**

**There's none.**

**Halfway through my steaming cup,**

he changes tunes:  
"Ta tee tee teeteete,"  
As though juggling  
mistletoe berries till their  
speed becomes a trill:  
"Ta tee tee teeteete."  
The trill bounces through  
toyon shrubs  
so that I must turn my  
head to follow it.  
"Chah! Chah chah chah!  
His scolding?  
His wife's?  
Chah! Chah! Zzzzz!  
His calls pounce in a  
tangle of leaves and twigs.  
I imagine his upward  
curving bill snatching a  
beetle,

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swallowing it whole  
then borrowing a  
sycamore leaf for his  
napkin.

Silence,  
And now, from much  
farther off,  
"Swee, Swehe, Swee."  
The same wren, or  
another?

In my next life,  
I want to be his bold white  
eyebrows and his  
ventriloquism,  
claiming the morning.

## **Awards**

This report in three voices  
details the awards

announced at the  
conference and

convention banquet on Saturday, April 8, 2017.

**Mike Keithley,**  
Publications Committee

Two awards are annually given for the best Lifestyle and Issue and Advocacy-oriented writings. Usually these are published in the Blind Californian, but they could be published elsewhere.

This year, Sylvia (Sugar) Lopez received the Issues and Advocacy award for "Dining in the Dark," published in the winter, 2016 BC. She's in the Fresno chapter, and her article described their successful Dining in the Dark Event.

Susan Kitazawa received the Lifestyle award for

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"What Would You Do If You weren't Afraid," published in the fall, 2016 BC. She belongs to the San Francisco chapter, and her article asserts that we might do much more with our lives if we weren't generally struggling with fear.

This year the Publications Committee initiated a New Writer Award aimed at encouraging first-time writers to submit material to the Blind Californian. Maureen Schultz received it for "13 Reasons I Enjoy Being Blind," spring, 2016, a very entertaining read. King talked to gophers he knows, but no one knows which chapter she is in.

## **New Hall of Fame Member: A Personal Tribute**

### **Bernice Kandarian**

In March, 1974, I attended the convention of the Associated Blind of California at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, where I first met Eugene Lozano, Jr. At that point, we were putting the final touches on the application for affiliation of the National Alliance of Blind Students to the American Council of the Blind. This process was completed at the ACB national convention in July, 1974 in Chicago. At the same time, Gene was graduating from San Francisco State University and embarking on a master's program at San Diego State University.

At the 1975 ACB convention in Mobile, Alabama, Gene became president of the National Association of Blind Students (NABS) now known as the American Association of Blind Students (ACBS) and at the 1976 convention in Hot Springs, Arkansas, he got the first of his long list of access resolutions passed by ACB. This one was about elevators. Later, he assisted Sam Genensky to get the circles and triangles on restroom doors in California, as well as contrasting lines at top and bottom of stairs. In 1976, he finished his master's and went to work

**in the disabled students program at CSU Sacramento, where he stayed for forty years, retiring this past year. Having been involved in organizing blind students and now, in his job, counseling them, Gene's interest became focused on physical access, the area where visually impaired people need to interact with people with other disabilities, so that making a facility more accessible for one group doesn't make it less accessible for another. Thus, he started the committee on access and transportation (CAT), leading to our famous joint Friday morning sessions at CCB conventions, sponsored by CAT and CCCLV.**

**In closing, here is the text of the plaque which was presented to Gene at the recent CCB convention.**

**California Council of the Blind**

**Hall of Fame**

**Eugene Lozano Jr., who has served as CCB's first vice president for the past four terms, while also working as Disability Student Services Counselor at Sacramento State University, where he mentored literally hundreds of blind and visually-impaired students.**

**For over forty years, He has been a vital contributing voice in many of the CCB legal and advocacy efforts ranging from access to Parks and recreation areas, to drug**

and prescription access to voting rights matters.

In addition to his duties as CCB Convention Planning Chair, He has also devoted countless hours in becoming a well-known nationwide expert on access issues, and has been the organizing force behind the now traditional Friday morning CCB

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Conference session of the Access and Transportation Committee which he Chairs, in cooperation with the California Council of Citizens with Low Vision.

Inducted this Eighth Day of April, 2017 in The City of Woodland Hills, California

## **CCB Membership Growth Awards**

### **Vivian Younger, CCB Membership Committee Chair**

The California Council of the Blind and the CCB Membership Committee congratulates the Braille Revival League of California for achieving the highest percentage of membership growth, and commends the California Library Users of America

for bringing on board the most members during the past year.

The CCB Membership Committee would like to encourage chapters and affiliates to continue striving towards increasing the total

membership growth of the CCB organization.

Certificates were sent to the BRLC and CLUA affiliates for their membership growth accomplishments.

### **CCB Chapter of the Year Award**

The Fresno Council of the Blind Chapter was presented the COTY Award during the CCB Banquet this year. This Chapter received the COTY Award for its extraordinary combined fund Raising and Community Outreach activities around National White Cane Safety Day, (now officially known as Blind Americans Equality Day). The appearance of chapter members in costume with their dogs

and canes, along with prize drawings and general informal interaction, netted the chapter over \$3,000, and a lot of good feelings in celebration of this special and successful day.

Sylvia Sugar Lopez said

"I have no words to express how much gratitude I hold in my heart for not only the COTY award that was presented to the Fresno Chapter, but for the beautiful plaque that we received as well."

Just as the Fresno Chapter earned the COTY Award for the past year, I hope other CCB Chapters and Affiliates will be inspired to start working on their COTY project for 2017.

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## **On the Lighter Side**

**Evelyn Drewry**

**Hello CCB friends. I am privileged to be back with another lighter side story, and I hope this will bring a smile to your day.**

**Although this happened many years ago, it still has that effect on me.**

**This happened to a good friend of mine, and even after all this time I can't help smiling every time her story comes to mind.**

**One day she was heading to the bus stop when she heard her bus pull in. She started running because of course she didn't want to miss the bus and have to wait for the next one. So, down the sidewalk she**

**flew and up the stairs and into the bus she ran!**

**As she came up onto the last step, her regular driver said, "Your seat's open in back." Without giving it a second thought she threw her hand across her back-side where she feared she would find a ripped seam.**

**What the driver was trying to tell her was that her usual seat which was right behind his was unoccupied.**

**Well, for a few reasons which we can all understand, she was quite relieved that she didn't have to get out the needle and thread.**

Even though this column isn't returning on a regular basis, I am still collecting stories for future appearances. So, as always I invite you to write to me with your stories. We heard some great ones last year at the Library

Users lunch in Alpine, so don't be shy about sharing your lighter side with us. My email address is [mixed.up@cox.net](mailto:mixed.up@cox.net)  
Until next time (whenever that may be ;) take care and always remember to look on the lighter side.

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## **Update from the CCB Constitution and Bylaws Committee**

**Steve Mendelsohn**

Your C and B committee has been busy: collecting data about what the law requires of our governing documents; gathering best practices information on how other successful membership organizations manage their affairs; and discussing the important decisions we must make.

It goes without saying that we need the input of all CCB members in this work. To that end, we are holding a series of town hall meetings designed to update you on our work, seek your answers to key questions, and answer any questions you may have. The first session, on June 7th, will probably have

occurred before you read this announcement, but there will be many more opportunities. Keep up with the California Connection for times and dates.

From our work so far, we know that one governing document will no longer meet our needs. Because of legal requirements surrounding state registration, stewardship of funds, and compliance with tax and other laws, we will need bylaws. These set out the board's legal responsibilities and the commitments the organization must make in order to comply with applicable laws and in order to be certified to engage in effective fund-raising. In addition, for the achievement of our

internal goals of continued self-government and membership control, we will need one or more other governing policy documents dealing with the matters covered in our constitution.

We will further explain this, address other matters, seek your input and answer your questions through these town halls and through a variety of other outreach efforts.

Thank you from your Constitution and Bylaws Committee for your continued interest.

Gabe Griffith chair;  
members: Sarah Harris,  
David Jackson, Steven  
Mendelsohn, Roger  
Petersen, and Frank Welte.

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## **Candle in the Window Presents Its 2017 Retreat**

**Distributed on the ACB-Leadership email List**

**Our topic this year is How do you DO That?:**

**Teaching each other skills we've always wanted to learn.**

**We'll be meeting once again at the lovely and gracious Wooded Glen Retreat Center in Henryville, Indiana, located minutes away from Louisville, Kentucky. It's a great opportunity to connect with friends and to enjoy conversations that explore the impact of internal and external factors on ourselves as people who are blind.**

**Our agenda? Well, that will be up to us as**

**participants. Anyone who would like to teach something is invited to get together with those who would like to learn. Skills could range from things like "how to ask for help," to "what the Heck do I do with this iPhone," to perhaps "how to whittle." The possibilities are limited by the imagination of those willing to teach or learn.**

**Retreat Date: Wednesday September 27 through Sunday October 1.**

**Fee, which includes round trip transportation from the Louisville KY airport to the retreat center, all**

meals and your room per person is as follows:

double occupancy: \$550;

single occupancy: \$705.

We have group transportation to Wooded Glen, and we would like to arrive there by 3:00 PM.

Therefore please try your best to arrive by 1:30 Pm at the Louisville

International Airport. If you arrive later than 1:30 PM, you may need to arrange your own

transportation from the airport to Wooded Glen in Henryville, Indiana.

Please try to arrange your departing flights from Louisville for no earlier than noon on Sunday, August 14. If your flight departs earlier than Noon, you may need to arrange your own transportation from Wooded Glen in

Henryville, Indiana to the airport in Louisville KY.

If you live in Louisville or aren't using the airport, please arrive at Kathy Szinnyey's home at 2349 Payne Street no later than 1:30 PM on September 27.

You will be arriving back to Kathy's home on Sunday, October 1, probably by late morning or just around noon. You can call Kathy at 502-759-1288 or 502-895-0866.

All registration fees must be paid in full by September 8. We limit attendance to 20 participants, so it would be advisable to make your reservations early. A \$40 deposit (non refundable) will reserve your spot. If payment is received before August 15, a \$15 discount is offered.

**Registration closes  
September 15.**

**Payment through PayPal  
should be sent to the  
email address  
candleinthewindow1@gm  
ail.com. Payment by  
check may be sent to:  
Carlos Taylor, 925 S Luick  
Ave, Muncie, IN 47302.**

**Make check payable to  
Candle In the Window.**

**For more information  
contact Kathy Szinnyey at  
joyfulrenegade@gmail.co  
m or call her at 502-759-  
1288; or Patrick Votta at  
pvotta@verizon.net or call  
him at 718-797-2475.**

**We look forward to  
meeting you!**

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## **Summaries of Board Meeting Minutes**

**Compiled By Ardis Bazyn, Secretary**

**January 26, 2017;  
Approved March 9, 2017  
Judy Wilkinson brought  
the meeting to order. A  
motion was passed to  
accept the executive  
session Minutes for  
October 4. A motion  
passed to accept the  
November 10 meeting  
Minutes. Motions passed**

**to ratify the motions in  
email on the travel policy  
for employees and on  
ending the agreement with  
the current car donation  
program with John  
Learned.**

**A motion passed to adopt  
a revised volunteer policy.  
A motion passed to adopt  
a gift acceptance policy.**

**Paul Shane gave an assessment of the "CCB one mission, one vision and resource development" efforts. A motion passed requesting an appropriation from the Newel Perry Trust.**

**A motion passed to accept the budget as presented. A motion passed to end the contract with conference direct since we've been working with a new person who isn't as proficient as in the past. When Jeff Thom gave a convention update, he said Tony Stephens from ACB will be attending and the menus look good. A motion passed to adjourn.**

**Appendices:**

- a. Board Volunteer Policy**
- b. Gift acceptance policy**
- c. Proposed budget**

**March 9, 2017; Approved April 6, 2017**

**Judy opened the meeting. A motion passed to accept the January 26 Minutes as sent. Plans for the 2018 and 2019 conference and conventions were outlined. The hotel is near Sacramento. A motion passed to go forward with the contract. The dates are the third week in March both years.**

**A motion passed to increase the credit card limitation to \$10,000 to mitigate unanticipated expenses that may occur at the 2017 conference and convention. This year \$8,000 in sponsors was raised thus far. A motion passed to accept Paul's case for the "Support" document as an ongoing**

living document to be changed as necessary.

Paul is working on a grant for finance management for persons with disabilities. This grant is backed by FDIC and is a "train the trainer"

program. He mentioned a website where members could purchase products with a logo. He'll check the ACB store for their affiliate program. Peter gave the year end Treasurer's report. Judy asked Peter to have the updated report to the Board at least seven days before the convention.

GDUC has changed its name to Golden State Guide Dog Handlers. The Compton chapter is dissolving. CCB is working with AMC studios and AIR B&B and fast food

chain kiosks, as well as the Alameda voting machine issue. Noel Runyan has been very helpful. CCB is also working on the San Mateo online voting capability.

Judy explained the monthly document on volunteer hours and fundraising reports. CCB has hired a contractor to get a new host to get the CCB website up and running. Eight members of CCB went to the ACB midyear meetings and to Capitol Hill.

After hearing concerns, Judy mentioned there would be a specific date of each month for chapter forms to be submitted. There was some frustration about miscommunication. Gabe said he and Sarah are

working on the  
Connection. A motion

passed to adjourn.

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## **California Council of the Blind Officers and Directors**

**July 1, 2017**

[Editor's note: We are indebted to Donna Sanchez, who updates and corrects the list of CCB officers and Directors, including the number of the term each is presently serving, the year elected to that term, and the year next up for election. Terms begin on July 1 following election. The presence of an asterisk means that the individual served a partial term before the first full term.]

### **Officers**

**President: Judy Wilkinson (16-18, 1st term), San Leandro, 510-388-5079 c, judy.wilkinson@ccbnet.org**

**1st Vice President: Frank Welte (16-18, 1st term), San Leandro, 510-541-1442 c, frank.welte@ccbnet.org**

**2nd Vice President: Gabe Griffith (\*17-19, 1st term), Concord, 925-768-8195, gabe.griffith@ccbnet.org**

**Secretary: Ardis Bazyn (17-19, 2nd term), Burbank, 818-238-9321 h, ardis.bazyn@ccbnet.org**

**Treasurer: Peter Pardini (16-18, 4th term), Mill Valley 415-990-9202 c peter.pardini@ccbnet.org**

**Immediate Past President: Jeff Thom (16-??),  
Sacramento, 916-995-3967 c, jeff.thom@ccbnet.org**

## **Directors**

**Gail Crossen (16-18, 1st term), La Habra, 562-691-3391 h,  
gail.crossen@ccbnet.org**

**Sarah Harris (17-19, 1st term), Fresno, 559-816-1507 h,  
sarah.harris@ccbnet.org**

**Pamela Metz (17-19, 2nd term), Chatsworth, 818-882-3610  
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**Sharlene Ornelas (16-18, 1st term) Oceanside, 619-339-  
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**Paul Patche, Jr (16-18, 2nd term), Sacramento, 916-662-  
0861 c, paul.patche@ccbnet.org**

**Linda Porelle (17-19, 1st term), San Francisco, 415-577-  
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**Karen Shrawder (17-19, 1st term), Sacramento, 760-604-  
3735 c, karen.schrawder@ccbnet.org**

**Rob Turner! (16-18, 1st term), Sunnyvale, 408-203-9300 c,  
rob.turner@ccbnet.org**

**Vivian Younger (\*17-19, 1st term), Downey, 562-879-6693  
c, vivian.younger@ccbnet.org**

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**Susan Glass, Associate Editor**

**Susan Harris**

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**Donna Sanchez**

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**\*\*\***