

**THE BLIND CALIFORNIAN**  
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**CCB Happenings is a weekly news service provided:**

- **By phone: in English and Spanish at 800-221-6359 Monday through Friday after 5 PM and all day on weekends and holidays.**

- **By email subscription: send a blank message to [ccb\\_happenings-subscribe@ccbnet.org](mailto:ccb_happenings-subscribe@ccbnet.org);**
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**Submissions for CCB Happenings can be emailed to [ccb.happenings@ccbnet.org](mailto:ccb.happenings@ccbnet.org).**

**Non-members are requested and members are invited to pay a yearly subscription fee of \$10 toward the production of THE BLIND CALIFORNIAN.**

**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 2019 issue of THE BLIND CALIFORNIAN is noon, August 15, 2019.**

**Shop at Amazon, donate to CCB. Access <https://smile.amazon.com/>, log on to your account and select California Council of the Blind as your charity.**

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

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Editor's Corner, Mike Keithley.....6**

**The Other Faces Of Advocacy, Judy Wilkinson.....8**

**Grass Roots Advocacy Lives On In CCB Governmental  
Affairs, Alice McGrath.....15**

**Accessing Free Ebooks And Audio Books, Deborah  
Armstrong.....21**

**Meeting Elvis: Evolving Views Of An Idol, Judy  
Wilkinson.....37**

**Membership Committee Happenings, Vivian Younger....47**

**The Top 14 Things I Wish I Knew Before Getting A Guide  
Dog, Maile George and Susan Glass.....50**

**If You Could Only Hear What I'm Doing, Olivia  
Ostergaard.....58**

**Longevity, Family And Community: A Profile Of The East  
Los Angeles CCB Chapter, Susan Glass.....60**

**ACB Leadership Meetings, Ardis Bazyn.....64**

**CCB Teleconference Board Minutes Summaries, Ardis  
Bazyn.....74**

**CCB Officers and Directors.....78**

**Donation.....83**

## **Editor's Corner**

**By Mike Keithley**

**Welcome to the summer issue of the Blind Californian.**

**Our conference and convention doesn't happen until early June this year, so we won't know what went on there in these pages until the fall. But I'm looking for the two- or three-person perspective like last year's convention report. It sure underscores the value of two or more views of the same event.**

**We find President Wilkinson wearing two hats, serious and teen-age ish. Most entertaining! Plus we have a great profile of the East LA chapter and Alice Turner's**

**first report as co-chair of the Governmental Affairs Committee. And if you're contemplating entering the guide dog style, check out Susan Glass' "14 things I Wish I Knew Before Getting A Guide Dog."**

**Interested in reading free books? You'll love Deborah Armstrong's meticulously detailed descriptions of how to do this.**

**The Publications Committee has established the "CCB-writers," a group of people interested in writing to carry on the work of CCB. Wanna join? send an email to ccb-**

**writers+subscribe@groups.io. There will be monthly teleconferences, and the next one is slated for June 26 at 7:30 PM. Contact Publications Committee**

**chair Linda Porelle for more info.**

**So find a peaceful time and read the summer BC!**

## **The Other Faces of Advocacy**

**By Judy Wilkinson**

For decades, when people ask what CCB did, we all knew to answer, "CCB gives scholarships and does advocacy work for people who are blind or have low vision."

Yet when we use the term "advocacy," most of us think of our legislative efforts, so competently handled for years by Jeff Thom and now adding our new advocate, Sylvia Reese. We think of Capital visits and efforts like the successful District Days recently undertaken by our members under the guidance of the Governmental Affairs Committee, co-chaired by

Alice Turner and Ardis Bazyn.

But there are a number of other strings to our advocacy bow which all too often remain in the shadows.

Year in year out, we have two seats on the Department of Rehabilitation's Blind Advocacy Committee (BAC): whose current chair is Chris Fendrick, president of the Greater Bakersfield Chapter; for years Jeff Thom and Mitch Pomerantz (immediate past chair) served. Jason Holloway is our other member at the BAC table, and in my distant youth, even I once served. Year



**in, year out, this group which advises DOR on matters of concern to blind people impacted by the department, holds day-long quarterly meetings.**

**We all love our library services, and several CCB members serve on the advisory committee to the Talking book Library in Sacramento. Warren Cushman is our official representative, but CCB members Richard Rueda and Connie Bateman serve as well. This committee too meets in day-long gatherings quarterly, year in year out!**

**Jeff travels far and wide representing our interests: on Wednesday (May 15) he will serve on a panel at the Northern California conference of AER (Association of**

**Educators and Rehabilitation) discussing key legislative issues. He also serves as secretary on the board of Disability Rights California (DRC). Just before our convention, DRC is sending him to a conference in Baltimore where, though he technically represents them, he will obviously bring back anything crucial to the interests of CCB. He often tells me, almost offhandedly, of various places he's been invited to present.**

**From time to time, we are invited to sit on other advisory groups. As a result of our recent partnership with Cruise Automations, we are filling out the necessary paperwork to enable us to**

**give feedback on this vital autonomous vehicle issue to the California Public Utilities Commission.**

**Before leaving this aspect of our advocacy work, I extend deepest gratitude to Eugene Lozano! I can't tell you how many emails I get like one I received last week from an O&M instructor at CSB (The California School for the Blind) in Fremont, lamenting dangerous crossings without proper APS (Accessible Pedestrian Signals) near the school. What a no brainer! I forwarded her email to our transportation and infrastructure access guru, Gene Lozano! For decades, Gene served and still serves quietly behind the scenes on various**

**access committees including those monitoring access to various park and trail systems. Sorry Gene, I don't have room for that many names.**

**In our ongoing legal efforts, the lawyers don't do all the work! Since I assumed office, I have attended several day-long mediation sessions where litigants work with a mediator to reach a resolution of their differences before opting to go to trial. On occasion, Jeff has accompanied me, and my husband Steve Mendelsohn, in his capacity as Chair of our Advocacy Committee, always attends to advise me in my capacity to act on behalf of CCB. These**

**sessions are often grueling and exhausting. I need to come up to speed (become an expert) on legal matters often new to me. For instance just last Thursday, May 9, we attended a mediation session involving DHCS (the California Department of Healthcare Services): regarding inaccessible documents which Medi-Cal recipients need but do not yet receive in alternative formats. I had to learn a whole alphabet soup of terms; had to become clear about a number of laws and statutes and court rules like General Order 56, so as to render intelligent comments to our attorneys from DRA (Disability Rights Advocates, and DREDF (Disability Rights**

**Education and Defense Fund) both based in Berkeley) as well as DRC (Disability Rights California). Thank goodness for Steve's invaluable coaching and advice!**

**Over the past two years, I attended mediation sessions on behalf of our accessible voting case in San Mateo County and our accessible voting machines case in Alameda County, where I was ably informed by Noel Runyan who served on the taskforce implementing and monitoring voting machine access. We were awarded \$25,000 in that case, but our oversight expertise was due in huge part to Noel. But others served ably: member**

**Jeremy Johansen and Mike Cole.**

**Another kind of session I've attended are "monitoring" sessions. Once a settlement is reached, often there is a period where monitoring occurs to make sure the defendants are doing what they have agreed to do. Just ten days before last week's mediation session, I attended a monitoring session along with Christina Mills, Director of CFILC (California Foundation of Independent Living Centers) with AirBandB regarding guest access for people with mobility issues and guide dog users. AirBandB staff has been tremendously cooperative since our settlement and have**

**willingly given us feedback during these sessions. For instance, they are dealing with hosts who all of a sudden have developed allergies to animals; they have been warned about such behavior. A host asked if he could charge a wheelchair user more because of supposed extra cleanup. He was told he had to charge all his guests the same rates! I look forward to attending the last of these monitoring sessions in November.**

**Then there are the countless individual calls for advice: everything from how to deal with social security to housing problems to job discrimination: calls ably**

handled mostly by Jeff and Steve.

We can't help everyone, especially those who think we are a service agency, like the irate individual from San Leandro who was indignant when he demanded we provide O&M instruction! (Of course he isn't a member). There are other calls where all too often we don't have anyone in the area. A caring nurse at a rehab facility in Grass Valley called recently, hoping we could help by hooking a blind patient due to be discharged with someone in the area who knew something about blindness. Our database turned up no one, though I talked with her generally

about adjusting to blindness.

Many of you are representing these other faces of advocacy in your local communities: serving on various task forces such as accessible transportation commissions; you serve on civic boards; you attend hearings. I don't know your names, but you advocate for CCB all the time.

Someone told me recently that a person they were having lunch with said no one should bother with CCB since it was being sucked into a black hole. Frankly, nothing will suck us into that black hole faster than people with attitudes like that! Thank goodness most of us are out there on the

**front lines, far too busy  
doing the Council's work**

**to notice what a failure the  
organization is!**

## **Grass Roots Advocacy Lives On in CCB Governmental Affairs**

**By Alice Turner and Ardis Bazyn, Co-Chairs of  
CCB Governmental Affairs Committee**

As many of us know, when our CCB Convention and Conference is held in the Sacramento area, Jeff Thom, CCB Governmental Affairs (GA) Director, and GA Committee members plan and execute a "Capital Day." This endeavor is the basis of the mission of the California Council of the Blind to make our voices heard in the legislative arena. When we learned that we were not returning to Sacramento in 2019, Jeff proposed a solution: District Days. The concept was voiced on many occasions by Roger

Petersen long-term leader in CCB and a founding member of the Silicon Valley Council of the Blind. The goal is to prepare members who are interested in visiting their local Assembly Persons and Senators in their respective offices. The visits are designed to let our own representatives know what is important to us as members of CCB and as constituents who live in their voting districts.

CCB Governmental Affairs Committee members voted with a resounding "yes" to

launch this process at the end of April and beginning of May, 2019. A task team was formed under the leadership of Alice Turner and Ardis Bazyn, and we were on our way.

The building blocks for putting this plan in motion are the same as preparing for Capital Day: identify the imperatives that are most important or timely for CCB and our members, summarize the information in separate documents, reach out to the offices to schedule appointments with representatives, attend practice calls, and finally meet with Assembly members, Senators or their designated staff.

For 2019, it was the perfect opportunity to engage the Chapter

Legislative Liaisons and CCB members interested in meeting with their local representatives when they are in their offices, rather than at the State Capital. The members of the Governmental affairs Committee supported their chapters and respective affiliates by encouraging members to partner with them and "buddy up" to plan and attend the meetings. The power of these individual meetings goes way beyond the one-time meeting at the Capital.

### *Imperatives for 2019 District Days*

Jeff Thom identifies for CCB the imperatives for us when we visit the Capital for Capital Days, as he did for District Days. The selection is based on



knowing what issues we have the best chance of moving through the legislative process in this current year, and laying the ground work for the year to come. Also, specifically for local visits, it is important that the imperatives address the variety of issues and passions of our CCB members, and balance those with time for a meeting. It is a recipe that Jeff knows very well, and Governmental Affairs Committee members provide input and learn from each other.

The imperatives for District Day included AB169 (Lackey): Attacks on service animals; AB947 (Quirk-Silva): Special Education Legislation; AB1286 (Muratsuchi):

Electric scooters and similar vehicles; and AB1434 (Kalra): SSI/SSP benefits. Jeff and Sylvia Reese, Assistant Governmental Affairs Director, worked on writing the issue summaries and talking points, and these are referred to as "leave behinds". When we visit with our representatives in their local or Capital offices, it is important that the documents are clear and include who to contact for more information. Nicole Pacheco, CCB Office Manager, prepared the documents for us and electronic copies were sent out to all who expressed interest in visiting their local representatives. We were also prepared to send out

hard copies if anyone needed that support. We sent the documents to anyone who just wanted to learn more this year, and participate next time, or more importantly refer to the summaries to make appointments in the near future.

### ***Practice Makes Perfect***

30 CCB members attended the planned practice calls, conducted by Jeff Thom and Sylvia Reese, who served as "Senator Reese" during the calls. The members on the calls had a chance to practice as they discussed the issues that were of most importance to them individually. These "mock presentations" helped everyone learn that speaking about what is

important to us as voters is not too difficult. It is blending the facts from the imperative points and putting the issue in your own words. As Jeff Thom commented on the calls, "Remember, whomever you are meeting with, staffer or Assembly person or Senator, they want to meet you and learn what is important to you."

We had the chance to learn from members who have participated in Capital Days as well as visits with their own local representatives. It was wonderful hearing Connie Bateman speak about AB947 - Special Education Legislation. Connie and other members on the calls who are grounded in their experience with the

education of youth who are visually impaired, were compelling and inspirational, because they explained the points from their own perspective as educators. Hearing Diane Deutsch, Co-Chair of GSGDHI Advocacy Committee, present in her practice session AB169, Attacks on service animals, in her own words was motivating for all on the call, as this issue is near and dear to Diane's heart.

### ***Follow-up: Next Steps and Celebration***

CCB members who visited with their representatives were sent an email to gather feedback about their visits. The feedback focused on the results of their meetings so we can

learn who are our "allies", as well as what was helpful for them this year.

Andy Baracco, Governmental Affairs Committee member, and Bob Acosta partnered up and wrote to us in their email: "we met with staffers who were polite and treated us well.

"They showed interest in our organization, and the issues that we presented. In both cases we gave brief presentations on the four bills that comprise our legislative agenda.

"They expressed support for our position on all issues, but both expressed interest in what we said about AB1286 and said that we were the first persons to express concern about the issue of

scooter safety, even though they actually shared that concern personally."

Warren Cushman also wrote: I believe that this District Day approach worked well. I would recommend it again." Many suggested that we rename the initiative "District Weeks" as appointments may be made over a period of a few weeks.

So why celebrate? We know that results are two-fold: passing of the bills and knowing you can reach out to your representatives again as they have now met you. Both of these results are important to CCB. When our legislators have a question about an issue

pertaining to the rights of individuals who are blind or visually impaired, they now can look to the person in their district for answers or feedback.

*Thank You!*

Thank you to all who participated in District Days and we know the work is only beginning for this year. So at your next chapter meeting or affiliate call, ask a fellow member who joined this year about what they learned and continue supporting each other in the months ahead. Celebrate accomplishments along the way as CCB members, and we will make an impact both locally and in the halls of the State and National Capitals.

# **Accessing Free Ebooks and Audio Books**

**By Deborah Armstrong**

Public libraries are providing more and more of their content in a digital format. For libraries, it saves on space and staff time, and providers are stepping up to deliver video, music, eBooks and audiobooks electronically.

## ***Why It Works***

Libraries purchase collections from a provider. This gives their patrons the ability to "borrow" content using a computer or mobile device. When the loan period is over, the content is automatically "returned". For example, if you check out an eBook, it becomes available on your device for reading

immediately. When the loan period ends, you can no longer open the book, and it may get automatically deleted from your device. If a library has several copies of a book, more than one patron is permitted to borrow it simultaneously. But if all copies are checked out, your request to read the book will be on hold until another patron's loan period expires.

## ***But Is It Accessible?***

Sometimes the content of eBooks is text-based and sometimes, more in the case of magazines, the eBook is simply pages with images. If you are determined for

instance to read a magazine which is displayed only as pictures of pages, you might be able to use OCR software like the free Seeing AI to read a page at a time.

Some providers offer both an image view and an accessible text-based view. The Michigan Quarterly Review, for instance, provides a free searchable archive of all issues, but only the pictures of the pages appear. Click on the "accessible view" button however and you can read the text of any page.

But a surprising number of providers are supplying accessible eBooks by default to libraries, and the content is always free to borrow. This gives you a risk-free

way to determine accessibility for any given eBook source.

One big reason for more and more content becoming accessible is that text-based materials can easily be searched. For example, library databases like SkillsPort, Safari, Gale and Ebsco let you search through thousands of eBooks, plus newspaper and magazine issues to locate articles. Searching for arthritis, for example produces everything from general-interest articles to news on the latest research. I have spent many a happy weekend afternoon trawling library databases to read interesting stuff.

### *Signing Up*

Different libraries work with different

providers and have varying policies. For example, the San Francisco public library issues cards that expire four years later, and though you can fill out a form online to receive your card, you must visit the library in person to actually obtain it. The Los Angeles library on the other hand issues e-Cards which don't require you visit in person, but do expire after a year. For San Francisco's library you need only be a California resident, for Los Angeles you must live in that city. Some public libraries require you reside in their county, but not in that particular town. Patrons of the NLS regional library located in Sacramento and serving northern California can get

a free Sacramento public library card without needing to visit in person.

Many smaller city libraries belong to larger organizations which are partly funded by their county and which oversee all digital content. For example, smaller cities and unincorporated areas of Santa Clara county are handled by the Santa Clara County library district. People visit their individual cities to obtain cards, but log in to a more centralized system for accessing digital content.

Schools also purchase collections from the same providers, so if you are a student anywhere, signing up for access to their library can increase your access to information.

If you want to get as much free content as possible, become a patron of as many libraries as you can.

Library cards have a bar code with a number which is unique to you. To use digital services, you'll need the digits in this bar code and also your email address and password, so you need to create an online account through your library first. I keep all my library card bar codes, along with their passwords and expiration dates in a file on my computer.

### ***How It Works***

Here is where google is your friend. In a search box, type the name of your library followed by the word eBooks. This is the quickest way to get to

your library's page explaining the digital services they offer.

The library will usually list the providers and offer tutorials on how to use these different services. Often local libraries also offer in-person classes where you can ask questions and watch a demo.

Each provider has a different interface and way of doing things. For example, if you are accessing Overdrive on the web, you first search for a book, then check it out, and finally download it to your computer, then optionally download the book to a portable device. If you access Overdrive through its app, the process is more automatic: check out a



book and it's immediately downloaded to your device. On Hoopla, press the "borrow" button and you can immediately stream the content. On Axis 360, you can only read books with a mobile device app, but it integrates with the library's catalog so you can borrow directly from there.

Policies vary with provider and library. With most libraries, RB Digital lets you borrow up to 35 titles at a time, whereas Ebsco limits you to nine books. Overdrive lets you keep a book for three weeks, though you can shorten your borrowing period to one week if you want to borrow more books sooner. Hoopla always limits you to five

titles per month. Some providers let you renew a book to borrow longer if nobody else is on a waiting list; other providers don't have a facility for you to create a waiting or wish list at all.

Libraries also vary in what products they purchase from a provider. For example, though Hoopla offers both books and movies, some libraries choose to offer only videos from Hoopla. The reason your account with a provider needs to be tied to a library is so the provider knows what content you are permitted to borrow.

Many of the providers let you log in to their service directly. For example Overdrive encourages you to set up

an account, which links to the libraries where you are a patron. You can then search its collection across the various libraries, so you don't have to log in to each individual library to locate books.

There are often two ways to access a provider, by going through the library's site or directly to their page and logging in to an account you set up with the provider. Either way though to access free content for which your library has paid, you'll need to know your card number and password. Hoopla for example requires you create an account with them, whereas Overdrive does not. But Hoopla can't search across various

library holdings; you must log in to one library and can only search its content. Some providers let you associate your email address and/or user name with multiple libraries—others do not. To get around this limitation, I have two accounts with two different email addresses for two different libraries.

When searching a provider's site with a screen reader, you'll find the default way of displaying results is a grid view, showing pictures of book covers. You can often change this to a list view to read titles and book descriptions more easily. Poke around your settings or profile to change the way results are displayed.

When you perform a search, you often can specify filters, ways of narrowing down the search. For example, in searching for "Roman Empire," I might want history or historical fiction. In searching for "bipolar disorder" I might want current research or articles of general interest.

Once you locate a book, it may not be available—a situation common with most popular eBooks and audio. Most providers let you put the book on hold, and some tell you the approximate number of days you'll be on the waiting list. Some providers let you add it to a wish list. Some providers and some material can only be read

online, but in that case it won't need to be checked out and will be instantly available.

After you have checked out or borrowed a book, you have several ways to read or listen. Some providers require you use only their app or web interface to do this. Others let you move the book to another player or eBook reader. Some of these readers and players are wonderfully accessible while others are a great disappointment. Writing directly to the support staff for a provider often does result in improving the accessibility of their software.

### ***Fully Accessible EBooks***

Bookshare, an eBook library specifically for the

print-impaired, is free to students in the United States. If you live outside the US or are not a student, many public libraries will grant you free access to Bookshare via your library card. You must contact your local public library to discover or request they add this service. Several NLS regional libraries also offer free Bookshare access to their patrons.

One drawback of Bookshare is that publishers frequently will not permit them to include images with the accessible text they provide. As a blind reader, you might not consider this important, but being able to either magnify or ask a friend to describe an image can help you

understand a chart, map or drawing better. Also, tables and other textual materials can be images, so if they aren't available, you cannot run them through optical character recognition.

### *A Sampling of Providers*

#### *OverDrive*

OverDrive was the first provider to sell digital rights to libraries. They offer apps for Mac and iDevices. Their Libby app is currently inaccessible, but they also offer the OverDrive app, which is.

Overdrive provides audio books, eBooks, and some video. Their offerings vary depending on what a particular library has licensed. Audio books are mostly in the

**MP3 format, but a few are still in the WMA or Windows media format which has copy protection. EBooks are in EPuB or PDF formats and must be downloaded and accessed through Adobe Digital editions, an accessible reader. Unfortunately Digital editions doesn't let you move through text via headings, but it does let you skip to particular pages or links.**

**OverDrive in partnership with Amazon also offers Kindle books for borrowing. When you check out a Kindle book, you are taken to Amazon's site to add it to your Kindle where it will automatically expire after the end of the loan period. The Kindle app can read**

**most of these books with VoiceOver. The digital editions app is also accessible, but I find the Kindle app easier to use and it's better at not losing your place in a book.**

**One unique thing about OverDrive is that you don't need to read books in their app, though you do usually need to choose between the Kindle app or digital editions. For audio, you can move the book to a portable device such as a cheap MP3 player, so you can listen without running down your phone's battery. I use Overdrive's audio books with an inexpensive Zen Stone MP3 player, as well as several Daisy players.**

## ***RB Digital***

On the web, you can check out audiobooks, eBooks, magazines, videos and courses. Accessibility of the material varies, and you need to use their app to access the content you checked out. Though the RB digital site is readable, it can be confusing to access.

The app is accessible, but its interface is somewhat confusing. For example, instead of tapping on a title to open its description, you need to tap on the image above the title to open its page. After you learn your way around though, you can easily locate and check out content with just a few taps.

RB digital offers the "Great Courses" library with hundreds of video lectures on topics ranging from cooking and psychology to health and history.

RB digital lets you toggle between multiple libraries without logging out, but you can't search across libraries.

## ***Hoopla***

Hoopla offers eBooks, audio books, movies, and music for streaming through the web, or downloading on to an iDevice.

There is also a Hoopla Alexa skill. More oriented to entertainment rather than education, Hoopla doesn't require a checkout nor does it put content on hold. You are limited to five titles per month and a

borrowing period of five days. Some audio books though, can be borrowed for as long as three weeks.

Hoopla's site is readable, but filled with so much data it can take some time to navigate. Their eBook reader presents text for most books, and audio books can easily be paused, fast forwarded or rewind while streaming on the web. Their music offerings have many movie sound-tracks and other family-oriented material such as Christian music and songs for singing on the road.

The app is much easier to use from an accessibility standpoint. Select from broad categories like movies, audiobooks, eBooks, and

music. Next, select a subcategory or genre such as cooking under eBooks, self-help under audiobooks, or popular under music. You can then scroll through a list of titles, tap on one to read more about it, and press the Borrow button. The video and audio players work well, but the eBook reader is a bit trickier to use with screen readers.

Hoopla requires you log out and log back in if you plan to use it with multiple libraries.

### *EbscoHost*

This is both an article database and a nonfiction eBook collection. It is academically oriented: For instance, searching on health and science topics brings up research results rather than general

interest articles. Economics, history, literature, and a multitude of other subjects are covered. EBooks range from beginner's guides to various computer operating systems, to advanced scientific treatises.

Articles can be emailed to you in accessible PDF files with pictures included. This makes it useful for someone who wants to work with a screen reader, but magnify the visual content of an article. Full eBooks must be borrowed using Adobe Digital Editions.

Ebsco has several offerings for libraries, so some may only give you access to eBooks, while others will have both

eBooks and articles. Some will only let you read online, while others will let you download for offline reading.

### ***Safari Books Online***

Accessed only through a browser, this is the most accessible way to read technical books with all their visual content included. Though the site layout is complex, it is very screen reader friendly and consistent. Most of the titles are about technology, Windows, Mac, mobile operating systems and software engineering.

### ***Gale Reference Library***

This is another searchable database of articles, but they tend towards more general interest and the



magazines and newspapers it searches are less scholarly. It's a great place to find that recipe in "Good Housekeeping" your neighbor told you about or an article in Popular Mechanics you wish to locate. It also emails you PDFs that are accessible, or you can view the full text of retrieved articles online. This database doesn't index eBooks.

### ***Axis 360***

This provider is similar to Overdrive, except that its site is both easier in some places, and harder in other places to navigate with a screen reader. You can borrow a book for as little as two days or as long as three weeks. Both eBooks and audio books are available,

and searching is easy with many ways to sort and filter the results.

The app is very accessible and easy to use with no confusing unlabeled buttons or extra tabs. When you place a book on hold which is this app's term for a wait list, you get an estimated time—for example the app estimated that in 84 days a book I wanted to read would be available.

On iOS, the app recognizes when VoiceOver is running and offers some help for VoiceOver users, though only beginners really need the extra assistance. This is the most accessible of all the provider's apps.

Axis 360 offers eBooks in its own format which can be read through

their app or protected ePub that can be read in Adobe Digital editions. They do not offer Kindle books. You must log in through your library's site.

One disadvantage to Axis 360 is that it only works with one library. So even if you have cards for several libraries that use this service, you can only associate one library with your login account. You can get around this by having multiple email addresses, but you can't search across libraries.

### ***Cloud Library***

Accessing this provider through the browser is a confusing experience for screen reader users due to animation, unlabeled buttons and clickable elements along with a

constantly refreshing rotating carousel of book cover images.

Their app however has been recently updated and is the most accessible one by far. It's very simple to locate, borrow and begin reading both audio and eBooks. You can stream or download for offline reading. But unfortunately you cannot search across libraries. You can, however, associate a single account with multiple libraries.

### ***SkillSoft or SkillPort (formerly Bookx 24X 7)***

Some libraries list this database under its former name and it's very accessible. It contains technically-oriented books like Safari, but is aimed more towards computer users rather than

programmers or network engineers. It's a great place for example, to read chapters in a "For Dummies" book on a software package you wish to master. You can look through the table of contents or search across all books or a range of books for a particular keyword.

Books can only be read online, but there are different levels of heading and links with meaningful labels. Like Safari, all visual content is also included, making it easy to either magnify or have pictures in these technical books described.

### ***Conclusion***

Another great source for general information are encyclopedias, which browsed through the

library and are nearly always accessible. Most libraries have the easier to read World Book Encyclopedia, while some libraries offer Britannica.

This report has been a snapshot in time. For example, an update may either render a particular app more or less accessible, or a database might change its name or its offerings. The best way to locate what your library has to offer is by searching google for the library's name, followed by what you seek, for example "Sacramento public library databases." Your library will often have classes you can attend to master searching, downloading and reading books, and they often

have video tutorials to demonstrate features.

***Bio***

Deborah Armstrong is alternate media specialist at De Anza Community College in Cupertino, CA.

She helps print-impaired students access materials in the format which works best for their needs. In her spare time, she's an active volunteer for NorCal Golden Retriever Rescue.

## **MEETING ELVIS: Evolving Views Of An Idol**

**By Judy Wilkinson**

It has been pointed out that one of the advantages of not being restricted by the costs of producing braille and print versions of the BC, is that articles such as the one below could never have been printed. I hope many of you will be tuning in to the streaming of our 85th birthday CCB conference/convention. One event I'm particularly looking forward to is our banquet entertainment, a concert by an Elvis Presley impersonator. I originally wrote this article for the 50th anniversary of the never-to-be-forgotten October 26, 1957 Elvis

Presley concert in San Francisco. The article, briefly to be sure, raises a serious issue for people who are blind or visually-impaired: When if ever, is it permissible to play "the blind card".

Twice in my life I've realized the Bay Area resident's dream of making Herb Caen's column. The first time I was 8 and at Enchanted Hills, a camp for the blind near Napa. Because I had sold the most raffle tickets for a first prize of a sewing machine, I was allowed to draw the winning ticket. Feeling around a big box, I pulled out a ticket, and

yes, when they read out the phone number and address, Kelog 4-6983, 2180 Ransom Avenue Oakland, it was the one ticket my mother had purchased.

My second appearance? In an Examiner column for Sunday October 27, 1957, in addition to describing the end of Southern Pacific's transbay ferry service, in paragraph 4 you'll read:

"To ballyhoo l'affaire Presley here yesterday, KYA's Hawthorne staged a 'Why I Like Elvis contest'-- the winner to get a ducats and the dizzying opportunity of meeting The Great Man himself.

"The winner: Judy Wilkinson, 14, of Oakland, who still doesn't know

what her idol looks like. She's blind."

Realizing this year is the 50th anniversary of Elvis' first Bay Area concert, I became curious about what local newspaper coverage had been for an event which remains so vivid in my memory. I not only found a San Francisco Chronicle ad for the concert (tickets for \$2.75 or \$3.75) but an article by one Caroline Anspacher describing the concert and its preceding press conference: the one I attended; the one where Elvis put his arm around me, the one I'll never forget.

Anspacher's article takes the tone of most adults in those days: condescending to Elvis

and demeaning to his fans.

**"Presley Here, Hip Hip Hurray**

**"Thousands of preconditioned San Francisco Adolescents were "shook up" yesterday by Elvis Presley, the hip-waving vocalist from Memphis Tennessee."**

**How different my memory of the same event.**

**On a late October Wednesday afternoon, answering the telephone in my East Oakland home, I experienced all the cliches: knees turned to jelly, stomach filled with churning butterflies. I recognized the voice even before Hawthorne himself, host of Radio KYA's popular afternoon**

**program congratulated me.**

**I had won the station's contest: two tickets for a Friday night private showing of the-soon-to-be-released Jailhouse Rock, two tickets for the Civic auditorium concert on Saturday afternoon, and best of all, an invitation to attend the preconcert press conference to meet and have my picture taken with the man I'd been dreaming about for two years.**

**To this day, when people ask me what I wrote to win the in 25-words-or-less-why-do-you-want-to-meet-Elvis contest, I squirm with embarrassment. I was so desperate to win, I had played the blind card!**

**"Since I can't see him because I'm blind, the only way I'll ever get to see Elvis is if I meet him in person!" Twenty-four words.**

**Oh to be thirteen (Herb got it wrong) and in love with the singing idol that even Ed Sullivan would bestow his blessing upon. To the day, I knew when a new song would be released and played on the air. I begged my Mother for his albums, going without lunch to save enough money to purchase them. In 1957 he was 22, I 13. I figured that I was young, but he was only 9 years older; people married girls who were nine years younger didn't they?**

**That fantasy died an instant death in the reality**

**of my excitement mixed with terror at the mere prospect of meeting him.**

**All evening the phone rang and rang with congratulatory calls: from blind friends in the Saturday afternoon programs for young people at what was then the San Francisco Rose Resnick Lighthouse; from newer friends, Rainbow Girls Oakland Assembly 11, the Masonic organization I had joined just two months earlier. The next two days at Bancroft Junior High in San Leandro, I was the most popular girl in the whole school.**

**I didn't mind missing the Friday evening Jailhouse Rock Sneak Preview. With 3 younger siblings in our home and**



my mother working nights as a waitress, it was difficult enough for my parents to take me to the concert, amuse my younger siblings and find me afterwards.

Matching skirts and sweaters were in that year, and that Saturday I was wearing mine: soft to the touch and soft pink in color; even then I knew what an expensive gift my mother had given me that previous Christmas. I knew I looked my very best, because I had received lots of compliments on this special outfit.

Ms. Anspacher about the press conference:

"Pasty-faced and nervous, he wiped his sweating hands over the front of his tight trousers

and grimaced at the group in front of him.

"In response to what they took for a smile, the young girls huddled close together. One burst into tears; seven snapped pictures of him. Three sketched him. Then they began raising their hands as if they were in class, asking recognition.

"In his husky drawl Presley said he didn't know when he was going in the army. He was 1A, he said, and waiting to be called.

No, he said, he didn't wear a wig. No, he never did say he didn't need the press any more.

"One girl asked, "Who are you mad about now?" Presley twitched slightly. He said, "no one in particular."

"Another girl asked, "What's your ultimate ambition?"

"My ultimate ambition is to become an actor. I couldn't handle anything real heavy now; I'll have to work up to it."

"He was asked, "Are you studying drama?" Presley twitched again: "I'm not studying anything. I figure it's experience that counts not studying. I never had any lessons. I just take things as they come, and when this comes up, I'll make the best of it."

"Then came an interlude of photographing. After that, Presley autographed everything handed to him: shoes, programs, handkerchiefs, scarves,

bits of paper. They all read, "Loving you, Elvis."

"He called all his young admirers "Honey," and absently rubbed their shoulders and necks."

I remember none of this. I was too busy worrying about my own hands. Elvis' may have been "sweaty," but mine were clammy. What would I do? What if he wanted to shake hands? I had nothing to wipe them on—I certainly couldn't use my skirt). They were getting more sopping wet by the minute. Why didn't I have any Kleenex! Why oh why had I listened to my Mother who had advised me not to carry a purse!

For a moment, after the "interlude of photographing," (probably during the "general

autographing session" I feared I had been forgotten, but almost as the panic formed, Hawthorne was at my side, and we pushed in with the rest. I'm not sure he had worked out in advance how he was going to get his contest winner her big moment, but a space must have opened up because without any warning, no time to get the knees shaking or the hands more sweaty, or to give a final agonizing thought to what I might say, Hawthorne was saying, "Elvis, this young lady has won our contest and is looking forward to meeting you."

I needn't have worried about my clammy hands. Elvis put his arm around me and we both stood for a moment saying nothing.

"He's so tall," I thought. If I had known anything about sex, I would have recognized this arousal for what it was. His arm was definitely pressuring my waist; the left side of my body was actually touching his. A warm fuzziness suffused me.

"Are you nervous Honey?" (Ms. Anspacher and I both remember the "honey" part.)

"N-no"

"Well that's good Honey."

Finally, desperately my small voice sounding distant through the roaring in my ears, I blurted, "I know the concert will be wonderful."

"What's your favorite song?"

"I Want you I need you I love you," I breathed.

"I'll sing it just for you Honey; you enjoy the concert now!"

And I did.

Anspacher wrote:

"Presley, wearing a pompadour, a pout, sideburns to his chin and a wine-red suit, played at the Civic Auditorium to afternoon and evening audiences whose shrieks carried down to Market Street."

Well we at least agree that the screams were probably heard down to Market Street.

Joyful stomach butterflies suffused my entire body. Our seats were in the absolute front row. At one point I reached out and touched

the rope separating us from the stage. The previous days and especially the past hour were filled with excitement yes, but fear, panic and terror too: all at an almost unbearably painful intensity. Now instead of being a taut violin string, I became the singing violin joining the ritual, the fevered frenzy of hysterically-screaming girls, shrieking as one.

"Whether the preponderantly female audience came to hear Presley sing or to watch his caricature of sex, could not be determined. They roared through every one of his 14 rock-n-roll offerings in such crescendo that three policemen and four

firemen were forced to leave the building."

Roar we did! Generally prim and reserved, I sobbed and shrieked with thousands.

"Don't Be Cruel," with that famous, sexy, "ummmm" and all of us in ecstatic screaming harmony!

"I Was the One Who Taught Her to Cry"; panting and hoarse with delirious exhaustion; "Heartbreak Hotel"; and then some time in the middle of the set, "I Want You I Need You I Love You," surely sung especially for me!

For years I locked this memory away: Shamed by what I did to win, and by a high school friend who derided my "childish infatuation." I told no one

about my magical experience during my 10 years at UC Berkeley: Elvis made movies, invaded Las Vegas; I barely noticed.

But during the 1970's, one in credible song, "In the Ghetto" reminded me that "The King" as he now was, possessed a great soul. I had let Elvis back into my heart. So in 1977 while preparing lessons for the fall semester at Skyline Community College (where I taught 28 years) when I heard the news from Graceland that Elvis had died, the tears flowed. Had it been 20 years since a dynamic charismatic boy had put his arm around me?

And now another 42 years later, looking forward to our banquet

entertainment, finds me  
once again remembering  
Elvis. I no longer worry  
about any contest shame.  
With the legend of "The  
King" still so large yet so  
poignantly sad, I  
remember as clearly as if  
it were this very week, not  
the bloated drug-fogged  
shell, but the polite young  
man of 22 who gave a  
young girl a moment of  
supreme happiness.

[Hold me close, hold me  
tight

Make me thrill with delight

Let me know where I stand  
from the start

I want you, I need you, I  
love you

With all my heart

Ev'ry time that you're near

All my cares disappear  
Darling, you're all that I'm  
living for

I want you, I need you, I  
love you

More and more

I thought I could live  
without romance

Until you came to me

But now I know that

I will go on loving you  
eternally

Won't you please be my  
own?

Never leave me alone

'Cause I die ev'ry time  
we're apart

I want you, I need you, I  
love you

With all my heart

...]

## **Membership Committee Happenings**

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

**Greetings to All!**

**The 2018-19 CCB Membership Committee invited all members to actively engage their CCB chapters and affiliates. The following projects are included in the committee's lofty endeavor: Chapter of the Year (COTY focus call, Success to Win focus call, Promoting Positivity within CCB focus call, CCB Membership Breakfast, and First Timer's Seminar.**

**September's COTY Awards focus call introduced the membership committee's effort to stimulate chapter**

**and affiliate interest in developing meaningful community engagement projects. Strategizing ways to implement project ideas, call participants shared chapter AND affiliate goals, past successes and the positive impacts of those achievements such as winning a CCB Chapter of the Year Award. The call was well-attended, an excellent morale builder to promulgate the start of COTY season.**

**October's Success to Win focus call garnered ten viable suggestions for winning a CCB Incentive Growth Award. Most**

recommendations involved existing members reaching out to their communities, such as volunteering time to formally present information about CCB, local chapters and affiliates to local organizations dedicated to disabled, blind, and low vision advocacy. Additionally, advertising chapter/affiliate meetings, activities, and special events in local publications were among the ideas. One creative notion involved inscribing chapter or affiliate meeting times and locations on three by five index cards to distribute at opportune moments. Ultimately, the importance of regularly contacting absentee members as well as involvement in community

activities, including tabling at local fairs and conventions, was stressed.

April's Promoting Positivity within CCB focus call culminated the membership committee's chapter and affiliate outreach. Participants explored a myriad of avenues for establishing and sustaining a culture of positivity within CCB. Members discussed accessibility and legislative issues, advocacy, accomplishments, and a novel approach to solving problems that arise among active chapters and affiliates, an approach identified by the acronym PACA:

P define the  
**PROBLEM**



**A list ALTERNATIVES  
for solving the problem**

**C evaluate  
CONSEQUENCES for each  
alternative (positives and  
negatives)**

**A take ACTION, make  
the final problem-solving  
decision**

**The June 2019 CCB  
Convention marked the  
occasion of the CCB  
Membership Breakfast  
themed Strive to Survive.  
Diners were encouraged  
to share stories of  
success and triumph  
during the breakfast  
hosted by the membership  
committee. Further, the  
committee moderated the  
First Timer's Seminar  
which invited first-time**

**attendees, along with  
those who may have  
missed a few conventions,  
to learn about the CCB  
organization, convention  
activities, membership,  
and to form meaningful  
relationships through our  
supportive CCB network.  
To conclude the  
membership committee's  
year, Chair Vivian Younger  
was privileged to present  
the 2019 Chapter of the  
Year Award.**

**As Membership Chair,  
I thank each committee  
member for the hard work,  
commitment, and  
teamwork that contributed  
to these 2018-19 CCB  
Membership Committee  
accomplishments.**

## **The Top 14 Things I Wish I Knew Before Getting A Guide Dog**

**Compiled by Maile George and Susan Glass**

The Golden State Guide Dog Handlers Inc affiliate (GSGDHI) has been super busy this spring. In January, we held a telephonic program that addressed the role of play in the lives of our dogs. In February, we held our first telephonic guide dog lounge, an opportunity for handlers to share anything they wished about working with their guides, encounters with the public and more. We held our March program on line, calling it "The Top Ten Things I Wish I Knew Before Getting A Guide Dog." Members posted their

thoughts to our GSGdHI email list. At the end of the month, Maile George summarized the posts submitted by GSGDHI handlers. It turned out that we received 14 post, all worth including here. Some addressed what it's like to train in a guide dog class. Others discussed the bonding process with a dog, the transition from class to home, and the adjustments that one's family members may need to make. We'd like to share our thoughts with all readers of the BC, especially for those who've been thinking about getting a guide dog,

but haven't yet made the plunge. All in GSGDHI would be glad to chat with prospective applicants; and if you are attending the CCB convention, many of us will be there.

### **1. *Lynda Johnson:***

I wish I knew earlier how much a guide dog would open my world. During one of my first walks with Dodd, my first guide dog, I could not believe how fast I was walking- feeling so free and independent. I felt like I got back to my athletic self. I can remember the harness handle moving side to side in my hand and what an odd sensation it was. When I got home, People had to jog to keep up with us!

### **2. *Susan Glass:***

Guide work can be bumpy during the first few days of instruction. Learn to feel your dog's pull into the harness and follow your dog. I remember my instructor telling me, "You're new to Kelsey and you've never followed a dog before. She's used to experienced trainers handling her, but not you. Give each other time.

### **3. *Gil Johnson:***

Enjoy and make the most of every moment of your journey with your guide dog because you never know how long your partnership will last! My first guide dog, Nero, decided to stop working at the age of six! There's no set length of time a guide dog will want to work. Keep your school in the

loop whenever something about your dog's behavior or health changes or seems off.

#### **4. *Toni Eames:***

I truly didn't realize every guide would stop at curbs and stairs and walk around obstacles. When I was matched with Charm in 1967, I was so impressed that my Golden girl was competent at all these tasks! Also, I had a friend who was convinced that his dog had to be relieved on the schedule set by his school. He truly believed the dog would automatically pee and poop as soon as the clock struck. This is not necessarily so!

#### **5. *Maile George:***

I wish I'd known how high maintenance a guide

dog would be! Egan, a thick coated black Lab, my first guide dog, had to be groomed every couple of days, which was, as it turned out, a good way to bond and check for lumps and bumps. He also required daily tooth brushing, and to prevent ear infections, periodic ear cleaning. I also didn't know that even though we walked on a lot of rough paved streets, he'd need to go to his vet to have his nails trimmed every 3 or 4 months.

#### **6. *Jim Blackston and Madera:***

I wish I'd known how having a guide dog like Acura would open up a whole new world to me. Before Acura, I was concerned that having a guide dog would take up

too much of my time, but because of what he did for me, I willingly took care of him, and that's what really bonded us together forever! When we started to bond and I learned to trust him, our relationship took off!

I remember what an exhilarating feeling it was to speed walk on the sidewalks of San Francisco, weaving around people just like some drivers weave in and out of traffic. Having a guide dog has helped me to lighten up a bit, and not to be so serious. I became more expressive with people because Acura had a way of breaking the ice when we were introduced- he liked to flirt very much!

## ***7. Toni Eames and Adora:***

I wish I'd known how fighting for my right to have a guide dog in grad school would turn me into an activist! People who know me now, can't believe how reserved I was before getting my first dog.

## ***8. William Elliot and Leif:***

The main thing I wish I had known when I got my first Guide Dog, my only guide dog as yet, was how much of a celebrity he is. Wherever Leif goes, he causes people to talk to him, and as his social secretary it has made life for me an adventure. Neighbors want to say hello, bus drivers know him by name, people ask where he is if I dare leave

home without him. He has more friends on Facebook than I do.

Having a guide dog has taken me from the invisible blind guy with a white cane to being the blind guy who works with Leif.

When working with our guides I think we need to celebrate our inner celebrity.

### ***9. Veronica Hernandez and Ella:***

Before I was trained with Gigi, my first guide dog, I wish I'd understood how having a guide dog would affect my family life and friendships because it's not always easy. A new partnership with a guide dog is not only an adjustment process for guide and handler, it's one for the entire family as

well. I wish I'd known that as a result of my partnerships with my guides, I'd be doing as much educating as I've done. Upon my return from GDB with Gigi, my family made me a welcome home cake and threw us a little party. I was excited to share the experience. They asked a lot of questions but respected my rules around interfering with Gigi's guide work. A few months after I came home with Gigi, I noticed a negative tone from the kids and even my husband when it came to whether or not she would go places with us. The kids would eagerly jump up and say things like "I want to guide you." My husband at the time would say things like, "let her stay home, she's

out with you all the time anyways."

Though Gigi was an excellent guide with nearly perfect guiding skills, I started to question our work when they were around. I made a list of when it was realistic to leave Gigi home so I could focus on the needs of my family.

#### ***10. David Jackson and Iowa:***

I wish I'd known that it would take Rollo and me a long time to learn to communicate with each other. I didn't know that I'd be learning the language of the guide dog. I did all of the prep before coming to class and imagined giving commands to the dog. I soon realized however, this idea was unrealistic

and a bit foolish. It took Rollo and me a long time to learn how to communicate with each other, which included giving commands, providing praise and learning the nuance of body language- both his and mine. There was lots of practice and we had many failures which led us to learn how to communicate with each other. In the end; however, it all worked out because Rollo and I were a successful guide dog team traveling and enjoying each other's company.

#### ***11. Pam Metz and Franklin:***

I wish I'd known how hard it would be to learn to trust my dog. I was 42 when I lost my sight, and

before that, I was driving a car; all I had to do was to trust myself. Suddenly, I had to learn to trust this little black dog named Delancey, and trust her to guide me safely all over the place.

### ***12. Sharlene Ornelas:***

I wish I had known how exhausting the training would be. It was more mentally exhausting than it was physically. At the end of each day during the first two weeks; however, I would sleep very well because I was so tired! Things got better as time went on and by the end of training; being so tired was a thing of the past!

### ***13. Frank Welte and Jeep:***

I wish I'd known how pleasantly surprised I'd be at how simple and unrepugnant the task of picking up after Jeep would turn out to be! To be honest, one of the biggest reasons why I resisted getting my first guide dog for many years was that I was put off by the idea of having to pick up my dog's droppings.

### ***14. Alice Turner and Cora:***

When I was partnered with my first guide dog Kato, I often spoke to local puppy raising clubs in the area. With Cora I do the same, speaking with school-age kids and other groups. This is the analogy I often share with these groups.



**What I wish I knew ...**

**Traveling with a trusted guide, is like sailing on the water with the wind, full blast at my back ... easy and effortless. Even though I was a good cane traveler**

**for many years, I was often tired at the end of the long day. When I lost my vision, it was more akin to carefully rowing a boat to make sure I stayed steady. Much prefer sailing, and Cora and I sail through our days!**

## **If You Could Only Hear What I'm Doing**

**By Olivia Ostergaard**

Something happened the other day I just have to share, and know you'll laugh as much as I did.

Having cats, we've blocked the kitchen entrance to their food. Retired guide dog Fenway occasionally noses through, grabbing a snack.

About a week ago, our border Phil nailed him in the kitchen.

"Oh no you don't!" he said, catching him in the act.

"What's going on?" I asked, startled.

"Livvie, you wouldn't believe it! Fenway's smart." Phil said cracking

up. "You should see him crawling on his front paws to get to the cat food. He's not making a sound. I'm telling you, he's smart!"

"You've got to be kidding!" I exclaimed, catapulting up from my chair near the table. Phil continued:

"He knows when the bells on his collar are ringing, you can hear him. Obviously, he's doing the 'creep crawl,' so you won't hear them."

"Get up here, you stinker," I demanded, pointing to the couch. He obliged, with his usual grunt. "You Stay! You know better, Mister!"

**"You should see his face. He knows he's been busted." Phil chortled. I burst out laughing.**

**I shared this incident with my classmate Kristi. "Wesley does that too!"**

**Fenway may be retired, but I'm still Mom, and always will be forever.**

# **Longevity, Family and Community: A Profile of the East Los Angeles CCB Chapter**

**By Susan Glass**

If you dial the telephone number listed for the East Los Angeles chapter President Stephanie Rewd, you'll hear a warm, informative voice reading a dynamic message about chapter and CCB events. By dynamic, I mean that her message changes every few weeks so as to give chapter members the most current news about their meetings, and about CCB. The message for May 20 2019 encourages them to listen to the recording of the new proposed CCB bylaws, and to participate in the live call where they

can ask questions and seek clarifications. Stephanie urges members to do this in order to provide feedback to their convention delegate so that she may accurately represent them when she votes. The message concludes by reminding members to attend their summer fiesta celebration at the Garcia home. You'll learn a lot about the Garcia family as you continue reading this article.—

I've been president of my chapter for 3 and a half years, and it never occurred to me to set up a

phone line and recorded message where members could stay abreast of chapter happenings, as well as feel connected to their president and to each other. What an inclusive strategy! Thank you, Stephanie Rewd. I'm going to try it.

Inclusiveness, longevity, family, and community are the words that come to mind when describing the East LA Chapter of CCB. John Lopez and Mannie Lopez were its founders, establishing the chapter on March 9, 1963. According to current member Louis Herrarra, they advocated capably on behalf of blind and visually impaired people. John Lopez, who worked with troubled youth in

Juvenile Services, showed his sighted charges how to read and write braille, and they became interested in the needs of blind people. According to Louis Herrarra, this set a precedent for the East LA chapter's involvement in community life. The East LA chapter sometimes held community dances as a fund-raiser.

Initially the chapter held meetings in the American Legion Hall and the Knights of Columbus facility. Then in 1974, a sighted couple, Philip and Virginia Garcia, offered to prepare home cooked meals for the chapter's monthly meetings, and in 1982, they offered their backyard as the meeting location. The chapter has

been meeting at the Garcia home ever since, and the cost for the luscious home cooked meals is only \$5 per person. Though Philip and Virginia Garcia have passed away, their children carry on the tradition of hosting the chapter's meetings.

One of the East LA chapter's most far reaching endeavors is a project called the International Friendship Circle. Members collect braille paper, slates and styluses, braille writers, and other much needed literacy materials, and then bring them to blind people in Mexico, or donate them to people in countries where the cost of such items might otherwise be prohibitive. Chapter member Louis

Herrarra also repairs broken braille writers, including the old Hall model, and a Belgian braille machine that resembles a lunch pail. "If we can bring a braille writer back to life," Louis says, "We send it to someone!"

Like many other CCB chapters, East Los Angeles faces the reality of an aging membership. It currently has 31 members. It strives for balance between providing social activities, and encouraging advocacy. In the near future, the chapter hopes to arrange an outing to a local old time radio museum. Some members would like to sponsor assistive technology workshops. As with other

**CCB chapters, fund-raising is an ongoing need. One possible goal for fund-raising would be to sponsor local high school blind and visually impaired students to attend the CCB convention.**

**So, if ever you find yourself in East Los Angeles on the second Saturday of the month,**

**consider spending from 10:30 to 1:30 with the East Los Angeles chapter. You're sure to enjoy the experience.**

***President:***

**Stephanie Rewd**

***Vice President:***

**Marie Herrarra**

***Membership Contact:***

**Lynn Coates**

## **ACB Leadership Meetings**

**By Ardis Bazyn**

[This was published in the RSVA Venderscope for spring, 2019.]

At the Presidents' Meeting, Kim Charlson, ACB President, gave opening remarks and Eric Bridges, ACB Executive Director, outlined logistics. Kelly Gasque, Executive Assistant and Multimedia Design Specialist, announced the website ([www.acb.org](http://www.acb.org)) update and how ACB is developing a coordinated Affiliate web presence for the future of including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. She suggested affiliates adding mission statements for the organization and committees with photos,

Facebook page links, LinkedIn, etc. If affiliates need help placing a new logo or getting the latest ACB logo, they can contact Kelly. You can send an image to her for design changes. Send your website and Facebook or LinkedIn pages to Kelly. Add a calendar of events to your site as well.

Jeff Bishop, ACB Board of Directors, updated audience members on ACB Radio and ACB Link. Use [www.acbradio.org](http://www.acbradio.org) or 605-475-8130. You can activate Alexa with ACB Radio using ACB link. Just tell Alexa to get what you want. Say "open ACB



**radio mainstream," open  
ACB radio treasures,"  
"ACB radio interactive,"  
"ACB live event." All  
channels will likely be on  
Alexa by ACB convention  
time.**

**Paul Edwards and Deb  
Lewis, Board of  
Publications elected  
members, provided an  
overview of 2019 key BOP  
Initiatives including  
themed issues of the ACB  
Braille Forum and E-  
Forum, modernizing the  
BOP Editorial Policy  
Manual, ACB Awards, the  
Large Print convention  
program, ACB Town Hall  
and Candidates' Webpage  
and Forum.**

**Carla Ruschival,  
Treasurer, Kentucky  
Council of the Blind, and  
ACB Mini Mall Chair, listed  
ACB Mini Mall offerings**

**and the 2019 Crossroads  
Leadership Training  
Workshop. To purchase  
from the mini mall, call  
877-630-7190 or go to  
<http://mall.acb.org>**

**The mini mall catalog  
is part of the February  
ACB Braille Forum issue  
and will be in 3 issues  
each year. December was  
the biggest month ever for  
the mini mall. She  
mentioned a few new  
products: 4 port wall  
charger, quick charger for  
iPhone 8 or higher, power  
banks with ACB logo that  
lights up when charging,  
thumb drive bracelet- 32  
gig, and a thumb drive  
bag.**

**Two break-outs  
occurred. One on  
membership incentives  
was led by planned  
Membership Development:**

**Strategic Action Team on Affiliates and Membership** chaired by Rebecca Bridges. The second one on fundraising was planned by the Fund-Raising: Strategic Action Team on Development and Fund-Raising chaired by Tom Tobin.

Janet Dickelman, Chair, Strategic Planning Team on Meetings and Conventions and Carla Ruschival presented the latest on ACB's Professional Development (CEC) Programs relating to employment, self-advocacy, low vision, and social skills are relevant. CEC are available from Saturday through Wednesday. Members can join the continuing education email list: continuing-education-

subscribe acblists.org. Sign-ups will be added when received. Members are responsible for getting to sessions on time, staying for the entire session, and tracking the beginning code and ending code, unique for each session. Required forms must be returned. ACB is working on recording sessions to offer them online. Sign up for convention emails at [acbconvention-subscribe@acblists.org](mailto:acbconvention-subscribe@acblists.org).

Janet also gave convention updates for 2019 in Rochester, NY and 2020 Schaumburg, IL. This year's dates are July 5-12. One member benefit offered this year is getting to register before nonmembers. Members may register between May

**22-25. Then anyone can register until June 22. Convention dates for 2020 are July 3-10 in Shaumburg, IL. The hotel is close to O'Hare airport. In 2021, the convention will take place at the Hyatt in Phoenix from July 23-30.**

**Nancy Becker, ACB Chief Financial Officer, spoke on affiliate organization practices. she urged affiliates to follow their Constitution and Bylaws. She said organizations need insurance for liability. All officers and board members should sign confidentiality and conflict of interest forms. 990 forms need to be filed and accessible to anyone. Officers should have copies. She suggested**

**checking your affiliate contact info for your current president and officers. Affiliates should have a timeline for their budget, events, and certifying members.**

**Zelda Gebhard, DKM First-Timers Committee, Cindy LaBon, and Anthony Ackerbie spoke on the DKM First-Timers Program and the Leadership Fellows Award opportunities for 2019. ACB and affiliate sharing fund-raising activities overviews were given by Dan Spooone as Resource Development Co-Chair, Donna Brown as ACB Walk Chair, Michael Garrett as Monthly Monetary Support Member, David Trott for ACB Braille Forum Raffle, Dan Dillon, for ACB**

**Angels Tribute, and Tom Tobin for Legacy Endowment and Giving Societies. The Walk goal for 2019 is \$100,000. Donna suggested writing letters to friends and families. Michael suggested inviting members to join MMS. Members wishing to pay tribute for someone on the Angels Wall need to have donations of \$500.**

**Steven Mendelsohn, President, American Association of Visually Impaired Attorneys explained Five New Tax Benefits for People with Disabilities in the New Tax Law:**

**1. Take advantage of the ABLE Act. You can transfer from 529 fund to an Able account. Contributions can come**

**from family or from work. If earning under \$35,000, a person can contribute more than \$12,000.**

**2. If permanently disabled, a person can be freed from loans for education but the amount will be counted toward income. It can be changed by saying it's not taxable so watch for technicalities.**

**3. Take advantage of the Family Medical Leave Act. Employers can choose to pay these wages and then take a tax credit. The 2018-2019 demonstration project should be extended. The employer needs to file an application and it has to be written correctly.**

**4. The standard deduction doubled. For 2017 and 2018, medical deductions were changed**

to 7.5 and in 2019 the medical deduction goes back to 10 percent. Check last year's filing to see if you might be eligible for a refund. Blind still get a double deduction.

5. IRWE itemized deductions can be used. Miscellaneous deductions were abolished but these were not. IRWE are not limited to over 2 percent for work related expenses. In a civil rights lawsuit, attorney fees counted as income. Remember, an accountant may not understand disability deductions.

[I highly recommend that you talk to Steve!]

The next topic was using Zoom Cloud meetings. Brian Charlson, Chair ACB Information Access Committee, told

how your affiliate can use it to improve communication and save money. Jeff Bishop, ACB Board of Directors, Larry Turnbull, Managing Director, ACB Radio, and Judy Dixon, Member, ACB Information Access Committee told how the Zoom Cloud meeting could be used for a limited time basis for free. The 40 minute conference can be for up to 100 participants.

The cost is \$14 per month charged monthly or annually for \$12 per month. You can mute all on the phone or mute an individual. It allows participants to raise your hand to speak. The Pro version allows you to bring a person's volume up. You have more options. Jeff connected

with his iPhone, opening with Zoom app. Anyone can make the call with phone, computer, and iPhone. It's saved in the cloud and can be saved in MP3 and saved as video. The \$14 month unlimited is for 100 people. It's a small fee to increase to over 100.

Joel Snyder, Director, gave an update on the ACB Audio Description Project. A movie screening of Bird Box occurred in the evening.

### ***2019 Legislative Seminar***

Kim Charlson, President, Eric Bridges, Executive Director, Claire Stanley, Advocacy and Outreach Specialist, and Clark Rachfal, Director of Advocacy and Governmental Affairs gave

welcomes and intros. Panelists Jeff Bishop, Tom Tobin, and Chris Gray spoke on "Living with Diabetes." They discussed issues faced by blind and visually impaired persons with diabetes.

Stephanie Willis, Esq., Crowell and Moring, explained the legal implications: how to legally approach discrimination of those living with diabetes". Tony Stephens, Executive Director, Downtown Baltimore Family Alliance followed with a brief discussion of potential legislation to ensure the rights of blind and visually impaired people with diabetes.

Mark Richert, Director of Public Policy, gave an

update from the National Disability Institute. The guest luncheon speaker was Matt Handley, Esq., Handley Farah and Anderson. Tony Stephens also reviewed the low vision devices legislation. Will Schell, DAC Designated Federal Officer, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, Disability Rights Office, FCC told what's new at the federal communications commission. A panel spoke on an autonomous vehicles discussion and proposed legislation before the production and regulation of such vehicles. Panelists included Carol Tyson, Government Affairs Liaison, Disability Rights and Education Defense Fund and Reagan Payne,

Manager, Emerging Technologies Policy, General Motors. Kevin Mills, Board Member, AmericaWalks spoke on building a relationship with AmericaWalks.

Blind and visually impaired Americans continue to experience access issues. The three issues discussed during the seminar are below.

**Autonomous Vehicles:** The potential for the use of autonomous vehicles for people who are blind is closer than ever. It is critical these cars remain fully accessible, so individuals who have the most to gain through such technology are not forgotten. Blindness organizations and the auto industry supported legislation to establish

**working groups to focus on accessibility and prevent discrimination in operating such vehicles based on disability. ACB calls on Congress to move forward with legislation continuing to drive this technology forward.**

**Accessible Durable Medical Equipment: Advancements in health technology have resulted in a watershed of durable medical equipment (DME) monitoring vital health activity and conditions such as diabetes, one of the leading causes of blindness in the United States. A failure by the DME industry to make devices accessible has raised serious health concerns by those living with such conditions who are blind and visually**

**impaired. Devices such as glucometers have notoriously been a challenge for diabetics who are blind. This can all change through the development of accessible DME interfaces like smartphone apps and other devices capable of using nanotechnology incorporating simple accessibility solutions. Congress can play a role in ensuring such technology adheres to the latest software technology standards, such as Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) provide assurances accessible DME devices make their ways into the hands of individuals who are blind and visually impaired.**



## **Low Vision Aid**

**Exclusion: In November of 2008, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)**

**promulgated a regulation with a detrimental impact on the lives of countless individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies (DMEPOS) Competitive Acquisition Rule contains a provision entitled "Low Vision Aid Exclusion" which states all devices, "irrespective of their size, form, or technological features with one or more lens to aid vision or provide magnification of images for impaired vision" are excluded from Medicare coverage based**

**on the statutory**

**"eyeglass" exclusion.**

**ACB knows this extremely restrictive reading of the "eyeglass" exclusion has resulted in the denial of vital assistive devices for seniors and other Medicare beneficiaries who may have disabilities. The expansion of the eyeglass exclusion has prevented access to devices such as handheld magnifiers, video monitors, and other technologies utilizing lenses to enhance vision. Advocates should discuss this issue with your representatives. Stress the importance of these materials to older individuals' ability to continue to live independently.**

## **CCB Teleconference Board Minutes Summaries**

**Compiled by: Ardis Bazyn, CCB Secretary**

***February 7, 2019,  
approved March 14***

**President Judy Wilkinson opened the meeting and Ardis Bazyn called the roll. Rob Turner was absent.**

**Approximately 19 guests were present. A motion was approved to accept the January executive session minutes.**

**A motion was approved to accept the preliminary treasurer's report. A motion was approved requesting the president and treasurer to alert the Board of the current status of the CCB**

**insurance policies within twenty four hours.**

**The Phoenix committee developed a volunteer packet and resource guide. They discussed the possibility of moving away from an office setup. The committee held the unanimous consensus for keeping CCB focused on the key mission of CCB. A dues increase was discussed. A Fall remote auction is planned. A motion was approved to accept the Phoenix committee report.**

**A notice was received for the Upgrade CA grant**

to be canceled because of the possible PG&E bankruptcy. CCB was told it might be reinstated later. Jeff Thom gave a Governmental Affairs Committee report including updates on the introduction of bills and a resolution. Jeff asked participants to attend the CCB convention to celebrate CCB's 85th anniversary. A motion was approved for all CCB expenses over \$50 to be approved by President Judy Wilkinson or Treasurer Lisa Presley Thomas. Paul Shane compiled a grant kit for CCB to use. Other announcements were given.

*March 14, 2019,  
approved April 11*

President Judy Wilkinson called the meeting to order. Ardis Bazyn, Sarah Harris, and Sharlene Ornelas were absent. Twenty four guests were present. A motion was passed to approve the February 2019 minutes. A motion passed to approve the December 2018 minutes.

Judy mentioned the Energy Upgrade California grant and how CCB is getting funding. She stated some chapter rosters are still needed. The Board is working on an updated CCB brochure. She also mentioned subleasing the CCB office space, the ACB leadership meetings, and a CCB auction. The latest Blind

**Californian is on the website. The CCB credentials form is also online.**

**CCB monthly expenses are currently about \$7,500. A motion was passed to approve the Treasurer's report. Some concerns were expressed about a second year in Fresno with the higher room rates, nine months between conventions, and the cost of a convention. A motion was approved to rescind the previous approval for the 2020 Fresno Double Tree contract. A motion was passed to approve the concept of a one-day state-wide convention in multiple locations. The date and locations will be submitted to the Board for**

**approval no later than the June Board meeting.**

**Approximately \$148,000 is currently in the Newell Perry fund and \$70,000 is the corpus. A motion was approved to request the Newel Perry Trustees to pay in three installments the remaining money in the trust down to the corpus to meet staffing and other ongoing expenses. As part of this agreement, the Board will forward monthly treasurer's reports to the trustees.**

**Vivian announced the membership focus call on positivity in CCB on April 10. CCB has two e-books on its web site, one for newly blinded seniors and one on tax savings for people with disability. CCB is asking chapters to**

**donate to assist scholarship winners attending convention. A call for award nominees and Board candidates will be in this week's**

**Happenings. The California Colossal will be walking again this year at the ACB convention. The meeting was adjourned.**

# **CCB Officers and Directors as of July 1, 2018**

**(Updated May 1, 2019)**

## **Officers**

### ***President:***

**Judy Wilkinson**

**(18-20, 2nd term)**

**San Leandro**

**510-388-5079 cell**

**[judy.wilkinson@ccbnet.org](mailto:judy.wilkinson@ccbnet.org)**

### ***1st VP:***

**Gabe Griffith**

**(18-20, 1st term)**

**Concord**

**925-768-8195 cell**

**[gabe.griffith@ccbnet.org](mailto:gabe.griffith@ccbnet.org)**

### ***2nd VP:***

**Ken Metz**

**(17-18, partial term)**

**deceased May-2018**

***Secretary:***

**Ardis Bazyn**

**(17-19, 2nd term)**

**Burbank**

**818-238-9321 home**

**ardis.bazyn@ccbnet.org**

***Treasurer:***

**Lisa Presley Thomas**

**(18-20, 1st term)**

**Fresno**

**559-250-6760 cell**

**lisa.thomas@ccbnet.org**

***Immediate Past President:***

**Jeff Thom**

**(16-??)**

**Sacramento**

**916-995-3967 cell**

**jeff.thom@ccbnet.org**

## Directors

**Sarah Harris**

**(17-19, 1st term)**

**Fresno**

**sarah.harris@ccbnet.org**

**Pamela Metz**

**(17-19, 2nd term)**

**Chatsworth**

**818-882-3610 home**

**pamela.metz@ccbnet.org**

**Sharlene Ornelas**

**(18-20, 2nd term)**

**Oceanside**

**619-339-6043 cell**

**sharlene.ornelas@ccbnet.org**

**Paul Patche, Jr**

**(18-20, 2nd term)**

**Sacramento**

**916-662-0861 cell**



**paul.patche@ccbnet.org**

**Linda Porelle**

**(17-19, 1st term)**

**San Francisco**

**415-577-8437 cell**

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**Karen Shrawder**

**(17-19, 1st term)**

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**Rob Turner**

**(18-20, 2nd term)**

**Sunnyvale**

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**Frank Welte**

**(18-20, 1st term)**

**San Leandro**

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**Vivian Younger**

**(\*16-17, partial term, 17-19, 1st term)**

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**562-879-6693 cell**

**vivian.younger@ccbnet.org**

**\* Partial terms do not apply to the maximum term limit**

## **Publications Committee**

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**San Francisco**

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**linda.porelle@ccbnet.org**

**Mike Keithley, Editor**

**Mountain View**

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**Susan Glass, Associate Editor**

**Gabe Griffith**

**Sarah Harris**

**Lynne Nishihara**

**Roger Petersen**

**Bonnie Rennie**

## **Donations**

If you or a friend would like to remember the California Council of the Blind in your Will, you can do so by employing the following language:

**"I give, devise, and bequeath unto the California Council of the Blind, a nonprofit charitable organization in California, the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ (or \_\_\_\_\_) to be used for its worthy purposes on behalf of blind persons."**

If your wishes are more complex, you may have your attorney communicate with the Executive Office for other suggested forms. Thank you.