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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 people who are blind or have low vision. Recommended length is 900 words, 1800 max.

The deadline to submit material for the winter, 2022 issue of THE BLIND CALIFORNIAN is noon, November 15, 2021.

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

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Editor's Corner

By Mike Keithley

Welcome to the Fall Blind Californian, where things are calming down, the fire season is over (I hope) and you're getting ready for Christmas!

And we have stuff to get you going: a nice article from Beverly Clifford puts technology in its proper nook in the larger scheme of things.

We also have two articles addressing disabled people in the workplace, one by Deborah Armstrong explaining important things you need to consider in approaching a job interview.

Jeff Thom and Regina Brink summarize this year's legislative session and what will likely happen next year.

And of course there's more, like obituaries of Bob Ringwald and Mitzi Friedlander.

So relax somewhere, open the windows, listen to the birds, feel the last of the warm weather, and read the BC. What could be better? Well my ghost dog King would say, "a nice walk has the BC beat." Ah come on king, that's only because you can't read. "Hmph"!

CCB Governmental Affairs Report

By Jeff Thom and Regina Brink

By the time you read this, the machinations of California politics, through the September 14 election, will already have produced either a new Governor or a defeat of the effort to recall Governor Newsome. In addition, the uncertainty of the impact of the Covid-19 delta variant casts another shadow across the landscape. Yet, with everything going on around us, CCB can't afford to drop the advocacy mantle on behalf of people with vision loss. Simply put, if we, in CCB, don't do it, then who will.

Of course, the big news, in just about any

year, is the state budget. With revenues being far more than anticipated, along with the large infusion of federal funds from the American Rescue Plan, the budget news is better than expected. This year, much of the advocacy we have done for the past ten years in the area of SSI cost of living and restoration of pay cuts at the state level have paid dividends. The California Council of the Blind, along with a variety of concerned organizations across our state, came together and obtained a Golden State Stimulus for the people receiving SSI. This \$600

stimulus payment will not count against resource limits, similar to the federal stimulus. On top of this, the legislature and governor have finally decided to restore the \$83 cuts implemented 11 years ago when our state was in financial trouble. SSI recipients will finally receive \$36 in 2022 under the current budget and are slated to receive another \$36 in 2024. Of course, we must keep the pressure on the legislature and the governor to make sure this restoration remains in the 2024 budget. However, that isn't all. In 2023, the yearly cost of living adjustments to the state SSI contribution will be reinstated going forward. Lastly, food stamp benefits requirements

were adjusted to give people more time to appeal changes and to make sure these raises do not adversely affect food stamp allotment. Currently, the California Council of the Blind, along with our national organization, are advocating to make sure the Social Security Administration continues to adhere to the court order requiring notification from SSA in accessible formats of the recipient's choice.

The California Spending Plan, which had to be submitted to the federal government to indicate how millions of new dollars for Medicaid and other social programs would be expended, created a furor of

advocacy. CCB led the advocacy efforts on behalf of the blindness/low vision community to get a piece of the pie from this federal funding for services to people with vision loss, especially in the area of services to enable people to transition out of hospitals and nursing homes and to prevent them from having to leave their homes for such settings. Although our advocacy did not result in specific program elements for people who are blind or have low vision, there were two positive aspects to this effort. First, the broad scope of the funding elements for long-term care services clearly would allow entities that provide services to adults who are

blind or have low vision to look at seeking Medi-Cal dollars for their services. Secondly, our efforts were supported both by elements within the blindness field and by nonprofits outside our field. This is somewhat of a breakthrough for us, as our community has not engaged in the type of public awareness necessary to engender this support. If we continue our educational and advocacy efforts, we think that we have a real opportunity to acquire allies with which we can work to help us in the years to come. We can't overemphasize the importance of working with mainstream advocates in an era when we are just too small to

win major funding battles by ourselves. Finally, CCB is already working with legislative allies to begin advocating for possible Medi-Cal funding initiatives for the next fiscal year.

Let us now turn to a couple of bills. AB468, sponsored in part by Guide Dogs for the Blind, and which would curb certain practices of those selling emotional support animals or providing certificates to those claiming to need such animals, seems likely to pass the Legislature during its last month and go to the Governor in September. We do not, however, have any information concerning the Governor's view of the bill and it would not

surprise us if advocacy will be needed from CCB and GSGDHI members on behalf of this bill. With respect to AB371, CCB's bill to require that insurance cover personal injury or property damage to pedestrians injured by the negligence of shared mobility device companies or the end users of these devices, many of you are already aware that we were forced to delay the bill until next year when the Senate Insurance Committee asked us to take amendments that would have likely resulted in no insurance for this purpose. However, we don't need to start over, but just work on a solution and begin where we left off. Moreover, we have already begun talks with

one of the shared mobility device companies who requires their e-bikes and e-scooters to be placed in docking stations when people are finished using them. We are hoping that such conversations will result in solutions that will satisfy all of us. We have plenty of time to find common ground, but we are not going to accept anything short of an easily enforceable remedy.

Many thanks go to Governmental Affairs Committee co-chairs, Alice Turner and Ardis Bazyn, along with all CCB members who participated in our recent Capitol Week process. By the time you read this, the committee will have analyzed this process in an effort to

make it even more successful next year.

This article would be remiss if it didn't include kudos to CCB members serving on the Blind Advisory Committee (BAC) to the Department of Rehabilitation with respect to a couple of important issues. Chris Fendrick, the committee chair and committee member and our first vice-president Sarah Harris, along with non-committee member Margie Donovan, worked extremely hard on the issue of sexual misconduct and bullying concerns in programs funded by the Department of Rehabilitation. Special commendation also goes to committee chair Mitch Pomerantz for his

outstanding work in this area. They have presented a variety of recommendations to the department to attempt to put processes in place to deal with this extremely serious problem. In addition, the BAC, along with advocacy by CCB, has worked to forestall efforts by the department to cease using private contractors, known as independent service providers, to provide services to clients who are blind or have low vision or who have other

disabilities. As of yet, we do not know the degree to which our advocacy efforts will be effective in these areas, but you can be sure CCB will continue to focus on these important topics.

So, what will the next few months bring in our advocacy efforts? We have no way of knowing the answer to this question, but we can assure you that there will be plenty for all of us in CCB to do.

Mythology Meets Technology: Why I'm Not Curious

By Bev Clifford

I'm going to tell you a story from Greek mythology, which may not

appear relevant in a world which for many of us, feels overrun by

technology. But have patience: the meaning will become clear.

The Furies were three sister goddesses, whose names were Alecto (meaning Unceasing in Anger), Tisiphone (meaning Avenger of Murder), and Megaera (meaning Jealous). And they looked just like what the word "furious" might bring to your mind if you were into Greek mythology—ugly women with wings, carrying whips, with poisonous snakes entwined in their hair and around their arms and waists, and dressed either in black mourning robes or as huntresses. They lived in the underworld, but they came to the overworld of Earth to pursue the wicked. A

couple of their primary concerns were wreaking vengeance upon men, and meting out retribution for offenses against the gods. A person could call down the curse of the Furies, who would express their wrath in a most severe fashion: by inflicting tormenting madness upon the offender, not to mention a possible fatal disease! You could only pacify the wrath of the Furies by undergoing a ritual of purification and by completing an assigned task of atonement.

This myth connects directly with my own life experience. You see, I constantly find myself furious when it comes to my daily dealings with computers. I need to admit

here that there is not a curious bone in my body when I'm trying to relate to technology. I want my machines to work—now! The Furies live inside me, and they demand their pound of flesh—in this case, they want a pound or two of software and hardware and storage space, and I'm just fighting to stay afloat on buffeting waves of frustration. Am I curious about why something I worked hard on turned out to be a tangled mess of a disaster, just because I failed to follow some little step or other on the machine? Am I curious about how I might solve the problem? Absolutely not! Alecto's unceasing anger causes me to gnash my teeth. Tisiphone's

desire to avenge murder just makes me want to kill my Android tablet by throwing it across the room, where it will finally get what it so richly deserves. And Megaera's jealous nature manifests in me by increasing my jealousy and envy of the people I know who are tech wizards and who, when confronted by a computer dilemma, simply stop for a minute to think, and then say smugly, "HmMMM!: that's interesting, what's this about?—let's figure it out." Those furious goddesses within me, with their smothering, ugly wings, suffocate any inkling of curiosity, beat my brain with their whips, and strangle any feeble confidence I may have

with their venomous serpents. It's hard for me to foster a positive attitude toward resolving a pesky computer issue when those three Furies are working overtime to instill negativity and squelch curiosity.

I'm not really a wicked person who deserves vengeance, and to my knowledge I haven't offended any gods lately—unless you care to count the Zoom gods who may be angry when I've blamed them for technical glitches during meetings—but those Furies still hunt and torture me by driving me into impotent madness, which doesn't help one little bit! Do I now have to look forward to an even more fatal fate? Enough is

enough, I say! Leave me be, you three, and lift your curse!

But perhaps there's hope in sight. What about that ritual of purification, and that task of atonement, which might placate the Furies in my head? Since curiosity (in the light of technology and in the pressure of the moment) seems to be more than I'm capable of at present, I need to find some effective way to combat being furious. Maybe I need to step away from the machine and all its complications, sit down far away from it and, in a spirit of meditation and calm, allow my mind to cleanse itself. Just a few quiet moments might

help—or it could take a bit longer.

Back in my college days, when I was younger and wiser—yes, one can sometimes forget the wisdom of youth—I would stop in the middle of a fruitless effort to write a term paper or study a difficult passage, forget it for the time being, and put on some of my favorite music, letting it pervade my body and soul until, at some point, I could return to the task at hand, refreshed and ready to continue. It almost always worked—could it work now? Or maybe I could say to myself, "Oh, just chuck it!—I'm gonna go make some spaghetti!" A bracing walk with my husband to get out of the house, plus some light

conversation about the ordinary aspects of life, might be an idea. Or just a relaxing cold or hot drink out on my back patio could make a difference.

Point being: The Furies don't like it when I choose to do something I really enjoy, and they tend to leave me alone. After all, allowing joy to come in again is a kind of atonement for the fact of forgetting what's most important in my life, forgetting that technology isn't everything my life is made of. And after I've completely changed my line of thought and allowed myself to remember that there's much more to life than battling technology, I may be able to return to my assigned task with a

purified attitude, one that might possibly let in a teensy crumb of curiosity

toward figuring out my next steps.

What The Job Developers Don't Tell You

By Deborah Armstrong

When you talk to job readiness professionals, they tell you to dress nicely for the interview, adopt a professional demeanor, and use professional language. They tell you to be on time, to use acceptable social skills, and to be positive, never complaining about previous jobs or your personal situation. Emphasize your strengths, they say. Having applied for many jobs and dealt with career clubs and job counselors, I'd like to share a few things they do

not tell you. I've held my current work position for 20 years, but twice when it looked like our department would be dissolved, I did have to go look for work, so I do have recent job search experience. Luckily my current job did not disappear.

I am 64 and have worked since I was 19, always as a blind person, so I think I know something about the job search. But it wasn't until I started serving on hiring committees that I really learned about how people

get hired. Everyone at our college, staff and faculty alike is expected to serve on hiring committees. Doing so is legally mandated by the state of California. We also have very specific rules: For example, we have to ask all candidates the same questions in interviews, and treat every candidate identically. When we screen applications to decide who to interview, we fill out a spreadsheet ranking each candidate on their skills and experience, and how closely those skills and experience relate to the actual job description. This is where most candidates fail.

They give us a beautiful list of skills and responsibilities they held in previous jobs or hold in

their current job. Often these skills and responsibilities aren't at all related to the position we are advertising. For instance, when our job announcement seeks candidates with experience working with college students whose first language is not English, we aren't interested in your chores as a landscaper or how you helped children in kindergarten learn to finger paint. I think job developers mistakenly tell people to stick everything they've ever done into a resume, but to us, it just looks like the candidate is desperate and not qualified. If we are looking for an administrative assistant, we don't need to know how many articles

you wrote for the local newspaper, or that you won a ribbon for the largest pumpkin you exhibited at the fair. If however, you included volunteer activities that showed your clerical and organizational skills, we'd be very interested. And for the counselor working with students learning English as a second language, we would certainly consider volunteer tutoring with this population as absolutely relevant.

The second mistake candidates make that job developers don't tell you about is writing a cover letter that looks like it was copied and pasted in to a hundred different applications. How can you truly be excited to work for

us if you don't even appear to know what the job's responsibilities are! Your cover letter is there to convince us that you are a good fit for our position, so don't waste space telling us you are a good fit: show us.

And this is the third place where candidates fall down: They have a resume that doesn't match the cover letter. Though resume writers tell you to demonstrate leadership in your resume, if the position isn't requesting leadership skills, don't make your whole resume sound like you single handedly bailed out your last employer from every emergency. If the position wants you to collaborate, then ensure your resume has specific examples of

how you collaborated with other groups in your organization. If the position is looking for technology skills, don't wax poetic about your love of technology; give us specific examples of systems and applications with which you are familiar. And when we ask you to demonstrate your commitment to equity, don't just paste in some boilerplate generalization about how all people are created equal, but rather, tell us how you made a difference specifically.

Too often during an interview, many applicants, perhaps through nervousness or lack of preparation, continue to spout generalities.

I just sat through fifteen interviews where everyone ensured us they had a "passion" for counseling. We asked why they wanted to work with college students. It was sad how unoriginal their responses were. The people we selected had real experiences and stories. They'd worked with students; it was clear from their tales of success. They did not have to tell us about their passion because they were full of concrete examples that demonstrated it in spades.

One way you can do a better job is to read books containing the most popular interview questions and practice answering them. What are your strengths and

weaknesses? What did you like most and least about a previous job? What makes you uniquely qualified for this position?

Look carefully at the job description and imagine the types of specific interview questions you might encounter. For example, if you were asked for demonstrated ability to resolve customer complaints, we don't want generalizations about how customers come first and listening to them is important. We didn't ask after all if you listened but rather did you resolve their issue? And we asked how you resolved it, which of course requires you be specific.

Candidates often don't pay attention to the interview question. In our situation at the college, we do give them a printout of all the questions ten minutes before the interview begins, so it's particularly vexing when they give a beautiful answer that doesn't match the question. For example, we asked candidates for the counselor position to describe a situation where they had a disagreement with a colleague on a professional matter that was meaningful to them, and how they handled the situation. Thirteen of our fifteen candidates chose either to generalize about mutually desirable outcomes and negotiation skills, or they discussed disagreements they had

with students—everyone who works at a school has disagreements with students, so this was a copout. We asked about a disagreement with a colleague! It was clear they were either not listening or avoiding the question. Ask yourself, would you hire people who avoided answering direct questions?

In another hiring committee experience, we asked candidates to describe a project with many moving parts they had coordinated. Most people again dropped in to generalizations about managing projects and would not let us see the true challenges they faced and overcame. It made us wonder if they actually had as much project

management experience as their resume suggested.

In another team interview, we asked candidates what made them want to work here. Few candidates mentioned specific programs we offer, special populations we serve, unusual projects we spearheaded. Had they explored our website, they would have found plenty of specific information that would have shown they had good reasons to want to work here.

Career counselors encourage you to promote your skills even when you have little proof of their authenticity. But I think it backfires. Instead, apply for more jobs you do qualify for without needing

to inflate your abilities. If it's your first job it's more difficult to have specific examples, but pull some from your real life rather than bore the interviewer with generalizations they've heard before. When I interviewed for a first job where I was asked about handling conflict, I talked about being a babysitter. When I was asked about taking messages, I explained how I did it all the time for my stay-at-home mom's volunteer work. As a working professional, I wouldn't use these examples today; I am no longer a teenager who needs examples from my teenage life. But since I've never been a supervisor, if I was asked about supervision

responsibilities, I'd discuss how I tactfully and gently managed student workers, especially when their behavior was less than responsible. I have never worked as a coordinator, but if I was asked to demonstrate coordination skills, I'd talk about the newsletters I edited and getting all the writers to turn in work on time and agree to the changes I made to their articles. If I was asked about my organizational skills I'd never dream of telling them I am organized: instead I'd describe duties in my current and possibly previous jobs that required those skills. If your first job is interviewing for tech support, explain how you

fixed your uncle's computer. If you have never solved a tech problem as a volunteer, I sure don't want to hire you to do my computer support!

Too many blind people complain the employer didn't select them because of their disability. That does happen of course, but remember that it is often

your own inability to convince the employer you can do the work. If you apply for a job for which your only answers are generalizations, it's likely it's not a good fit for you. So don't try to shove your square peg in to a round hole: instead, keep searching for work that is a good fit, and your interview is sure to go much easier.

Richard Archuleta Interview

Submitted By Margie Donavon

Link:

aphcareerconnect.org/succeed-at-work/our-stories/government-jobs/interview-with-richard-archuleta-medically-retired-veteran-working-at-the-environmental-protection-agency

In support of National Hire a Veteran Day, APH CareerConnect caught up

with Richard Archuleta to ask about his employment journey after retiring from

the Air Force following an injury causing blindness. Mr. Archuleta shares his adjustment to blindness and the perseverance it took to attain gainful employment. He also offers advice to career seekers who are blind or visually impaired.

APH CareerConnect:
Can you tell us a little about yourself?

Richard Archuleta:
I grew up in Colorado and graduated early, joining the United States Air Force (USAF) at seventeen and medically retiring at nineteen. I'm an extrovert. I've always decided to do anything I can try to do, whether it's skiing, martial arts, hunting, kayaking, golfing. I've never tried to

limit myself just because of my visual impairment.

APH CareerConnect:
Is there anything you'd like the readers to know about your vision and how you lost your sight?

Richard Archuleta:
I was an aircraft armament/munitions specialist, a bomb loader, on a B-52 during Desert Storm. I was in a one-in-a-billion type of accident where I fell to the ground. I never hit my head, but the jarring of the fall started to atrophy my optic nerves. I was medically retired in March of '91.

APH CareerConnect:
How would you describe your journey to accepting blindness?

Richard Archuleta:
Blindness was so new to me. It was difficult. Still, there's times when it's difficult. You get sad. I think that's where your support system with friends, family, and a good counselor helps. Early on, the journey was especially difficult, but it was lessened with the ability to know that I needed a counselor or someone to talk to about this. It was a loss, one that comes with anger and grief. I think the other thing, which is good and bad: I was medically retired at nineteen and was married at twenty-one. It came with challenges; your brain isn't finished developing until your mid-twenties. There was a lot of immaturity. Through the

grace of God I was able to make it this far.

It helped to have structure. I knew I wanted to work. I took the Myers-Briggs personality type indicator; I knew where I wanted to go with a loose understanding of what I wanted to do. All those things, and faith, really played a part in helping me accept blindness.

APH CareerConnect:
Can you tell us about your career journey since medically separating from the USAF?

Richard Archuleta:
After medically retiring at nineteen, I asked the Veterans Affairs (VA) what I should do and was told I didn't have to do anything:

I'm retired. That wasn't an option for me.

While I was in college at the University of Colorado, I worked in HR at Six Flags. I was blessed to have people who were forward thinking and accepting of people with disabilities. Whatever adaptations I needed they would help to make. I did that a couple of summers.

I was also a stay-at-home-dad for a couple years, and that was the toughest job I've had!

But I always wanted to work in Finance or HR. The VA assisted me in getting a position at a bank. I learned they weren't very accommodating. I think they are more now.

I was very discouraged (while actively searching for the right job). I kept getting told to work for the government. I didn't want to do that! I didn't want a handout. I fell into despair, meeting so many barriers. I told myself, "MAYBE I should try this federal government thing."

I had been told I could get a government job easily by walking in, but it took me nine months to get a summer position! Finally at the ninth month I went to a career fair. I played the part right. I dressed in a suit. I had my resume in hand. I really didn't want to be there; it hadn't worked before. I met a woman who hired me for a summer hire. All I needed was that initial

step in until I could show them the skills that I have, not only communication, but analytical and all the things I learned in college.

That summer hire turned into a permanent position. I was the training officer for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in our region, and then I became the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) director for a couple years. I've worked in our tribal program, now in the enforcement program for 15 years. I think you just have to keep going forward no matter how discouraging it may be.

I've been on that other side. I've worked in HR, I've gone to career fairs for persons with

disabilities. I know how difficult it is. Even as a veteran who has preference points, it's still difficult to break through. I kept going to informational interviews, motivating myself for those. I would go right to the president of the company and have an interview with him! I would try to network and do whatever I could to explore different possibilities in the different career paths I wanted.

APH CareerConnect:
What does a normal day of work involve on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) policy team of the Enforcement Compliance Assurance

**Division (ECAD)
Immediate Office?**

Richard Archuleta:
I handle all the tips and complaints that come into our region, Region 8, which covers six western states. Any environmental complaint that comes in through our website or call center I get and distribute to the appropriate individual. I also am the federal facility coordinator for enforcement for the six states. Any type of enforcement actions or environmental issues that come up with federal facilities, I help to coordinate the inspections and any mitigation or remediation in those areas, whether a DOD facility, VA, campground,

park and wildlife/forest land, or post office.

I also plan and target inspections for our different media sections: Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and our Resource Conservation and Recovery Act which has to do with solid and hazardous waste, so anything that might contaminate the land. I also coordinate all the inspector's credentialing.

My summer detail is to develop administration orders for public water systems which have violated the Safe Drinking Water Act. Ill be remotely conducting sanitary survey audits and assisting in compliance assistance for their emergency response

programs for the different states.

APH CareerConnect:
What Assistive Technology and blindness-specific strategies do you utilize on the job?

Richard Archuleta:
Technology is moving so fast now, but on a consistent basis I use ZoomText and ZoomText with speech. I was able to get an OrCam, and that's good, but I have the first version with a bunch of wires and the battery doesn't last too long. I use the CCTV, but I know the newer ones have the ability to scan a picture and it reads it back to you. That would be nice for larger documents.

Regular devices have come so far with assistive technology, especially Apple. I use an iPhone. I use VoiceOver and zoom. I have different apps that take pictures of a document if I'm in a meeting and read it back to me using my air pods. All of that wasn't there when I became injured and lost my eyesight. Nowadays so much is electronic.

APH CareerConnect:
What are the iPhone apps you utilize?

Richard Archuleta:
I have the KNFB Reader, and I like it because it doesn't use connectivity to the internet. You don't have to have cell service, which is helpful if I'm in a

government building. The downside is it is \$100.

The other app I use quite often is Seeing AI, a Microsoft app; that one is pretty robust. It can read product barcodes. And let's say I'm on the train and I want to know if there's anyone around me, I can point my phone around and have my ear buds in and it will tell me what's in the room. It works really well.

Those are the two I use on a daily basis. I also use BARD, the talking book library, and bookshare, though not for work.

APH CareerConnect:
How did you learn the blindness-specific skills necessary to succeed in the field?

Richard Archuleta:
When I first became blind, I went to a VA blind rehabilitation school in Palo Alto and they taught me mobility skills and daily living skills. They also had a program teaching adaptive computer technology; I was eligible to go to that in early '92. You can imagine technology in '92. Over the years I've learned about different software packages on my own and self-taught. Nowadays there is YouTube and tons of tutorials.

I also went to the Colorado Blind Rehabilitation program. I had somebody come to my house for follow-up care. I did receive quite a bit of rehab initially.

So, I went right from discharge (medical retirement) to the blind rehab program. There are advantages to that. You're learning new skills. The disadvantages are you're still trying to process things mentally, the loss and anger. It was tough. An administrator told me to wait six months and then come, and I didn't understand why at the time; I was eager to learn. Looking back, I can see why he suggested it. I say, either way. Everybody has his own path, and there are pros and cons to both of those.

**APH CareerConnect:
How did you learn the job-specific skills?**

**Richard Archuleta:
I went to college and**

started off with very basic classes; I remember math was very basic math. I remember somebody asking a question about multiplication. I thought, "I think I'm going to be okay.." I received a Bachelor's Degree in Finance. I did have to take Calculus and higher-level mathematical courses. I did so with a tutor.

Everybody at the time was pushing me towards being a counselor, but my interests were in finance and accounting. I stuck with it.

The finance background set a good foundation for the analytical thinking that I utilize all over.

**APH CareerConnect:
What advice would you**

give to a veteran with recent vision loss?

Richard Archuleta:

It's awesome that you ask that. In 2019 I went to a Wounded Warrior program in Alabama. There was another person, he was 19, who lost his eyesight with a similar eye condition that I have. It brought up all these emotions. I found myself wanting to talk to him and tell him to be patient. Don't slip into negativity. It's going to be there.

And you are not alone. I know you feel isolated. You have to be aware there is a loss. What has gotten me through the accident and loss is counseling.

Keep going forward. I didn't want to go to that

career fair, but I still went. You will find a job, it just takes time.

APH CareerConnect: What has contributed to your career success?

Richard Archuleta: Having a good support network and perseverance has helped me, as well as having a good counselor. Also, it helped to find a career I was motivated to pursue, not a job someone else wanted me to have.

APH CareerConnect: Anything else you'd like to communicate to job seekers who are blind/visually impaired?

Richard Archuleta: Not everybody is going to accept people with disabilities. Not everybody's going to be

nice. Keep going forward anyway.

You have to be okay with yourself first. Be confident and seek counseling. If you don't have that piece, it's hard for others to have confidence in you.

And be willing to teach people about having a disability. You have to be your own advocate, and with that comes educating others.

It's also good to separate your career goals from your passions.

Pursue something that you can be gainfully employed at.

Make sure you can be as professional as possible when having a first impression. Do a mock interview or phone call. You're not going to get a pass because you're disabled. Be prepared.

And follow the path you want to pursue. My path and my journey haven't been easy, but I wouldn't change it for anything.

Seniors' Corner

By Robert Acosta

I am so very pleased to introduce this column to our readers, especially to the senior blind.

It has always been my feeling as a senior blind person that we can be overwhelmed with

important details like legislation and Social Security issues which ask us to go through numerous steps to respond. At present, ACB is negotiating with the Social Security Administration, which will force seniors and others to create accounts and to give them the format they prefer. My wife called Social Security and the Specialist said she knew not a thing about this project.

Although this and other issues like this are important, my wife and I live alone and want to know the practical services available to us. How does one do his/her shopping? Yes, markets will deliver groceries but the delivery person just

drops them on our counter. Such services as Instacart are beyond me.

One service available to seniors is Meals on Wheels. This service operates in virtually every community in America through their network of more than 5,000 independently-run local programs. While the diversity of each program's services and operations may vary based on the needs and resources of their communities, they are all committed to supporting their senior neighbors to live healthier and more nourished lives in their own homes. Contact Meals on Wheels America at 888-998-6325 and they will give you the number

of the local provider that services your community.

In this column we invite you to send us tips which can keep us living independently in our homes. At a later time, we shall no doubt discuss Assisted Living and Nursing Homes, but let's first discuss services which give us immediate and personal assistance. We also welcome topics

from our readers. Send your comments and suggestions to me at boacosta818@gmail.com.

This column will last as long as there is interest.

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Escape With Sound Scape: My Nebraska Adventures

By Susan Glass

Those of you who attended this summer's ACB virtual convention may have heard a presentation by the Microsoft Team on a way-finding app that they

have developed called Sound Scape. It's an app that you run on your phone that uses maps, GPS, directional sound cues, markers, and beacons to allow you to

navigate your environment. I had the opportunity to try out the app extensively this past June while John and I were visiting cousins in Lincoln Nebraska. Here's what happened:

John had been attending an all-day ham radio Field event, and Omni and I were on our own. We decided to walk from Lincoln's Embassy Suites where we were staying to a local bar and grill 2 blocks away. Once there, I ordered salmon, risotto, and asparagus for supper. The place was lively, and I enjoyed listening to other people laughing and talking and clinking glasses while I ate dinner. I hadn't realised how much Covid had kept me from such real time

stimulation. I finished my meal with plenty of daylight still filling the prairie sky, and my guide dog Omni bouncing and doing her happy dance. Clearly it was not time to return to our hotel. I decided we'd use the Sound Scape app to take a leisurely walk around Lincoln. I had set our Embassy Suites Hotel as my beacon, (the beacon is an auditory cue) so Omni and I could meander and not worry too much about remembering every turn that we made. Sound Scape gives plenty of verbal and tonal feedback which is useful even without directional headphones. It says things like "Approaching 13th street. 13th goes right. O Street continues

straight ahead."

"University Performing Arts Center on left." If you come to a parking lot, Sound Scape says "Parking Lot." If you come to a crosswalk, Sound Scape says "Crosswalk." At intervals, it announces the distance that you are from your beacon (350 feet, 425 feet, 100 feet) and the speed, pitch, and rhythm of the beacon tone increases the closer you come to it. Omni and I walked for an hour without feeling lost, and I did not find that the Sound Scape clues distracted me from guidework. I had my phone on a belt clip, so my hands were free to direct Omni. Using Sound Scape, we explored the University of Nebraska Lincoln campus, the Lide

Performing Arts Center, and the local movie theatre. We arrived back at our hotel feeling elated. We'd just spent an evening independently sightseeing.

Three days later we visited one of my favorite Lincoln spots: Pioneers Park, a beautiful preserve of wetlands and tall grass prairie. We used Sound Scape to take a 1 mile hike there, setting the Nature Center as our beacon. Barring a few minor twists and turns, all went well there too. I doubt that Sound Scape could navigate through a wilderness, because it would have no markers to call out. But as long as the space you are navigating has decent GPS coverage, and as long as there are at

least some markers (buildings, named roads) the app can be a great help.

I have since learned that during the Covid pandemic, O and M instructors used Sound Scape to give their students virtual mobility lessons, and even share live routes remotely. An O and M instructor can create a customized note for a student that augments a pre-existing landmark. He or she can send this note directly to the student's Sound Scape App. Here's an example:

Assume for a moment that the address which the student has set as a landmark is 3544 Oak Street, and that this is her

office building. Assume also that it's an easy building to miss since all doorways on the block are identical. But two doors beyond the student's office, the sidewalk inclines sharply. The instructor can add a note to the student's Sound Scape app that says, "If you reach the incline, turn around and trail the building back two doors. The second one you come to is your office."

Blind and low vision athletes are also using Sound Scape, in particular for the sport of Orienteering. Orienteering is a competitive walking/hiking activity that requires one to use maps, GPS, and other landmark clues to navigate to a destination. It's a sport

sighted people have long enjoyed, and now those of us who are blind or have low vision can enjoy it too. Some blind people are using Sound Scape to enhance kayaking and other water sports. My ambition is to find a way to navigate with it when I'm riding my horse. There is a branch of Orienteering that's done on horseback. Maybe the Sound Scape team can help me become an Equestrian Orienteer.

I'd love to connect with anyone else in CCB

who is using Sound Scape. How have you used it? What's worked, and what's been challenging? I like how this app allows me to explore the world around me with more confidence. Combined with my valiant lab guide Omni and my I D cane, I'm feeling intrepid and adventurous. All I need now are some fellow blind or low vision explorers. Any takers?

How Learning Braille Changes Brain Structure Over Time

Featured in Neuroscience, July 12, 2021

Summary: A study of people learning to read braille reveals how white

matter reorganizes itself across different brain

regions and timeframes to meet the brain's needs.

Source: SfN

Learning changes the brain, but when learning braille, different brain regions strengthen their connections at varied rates and time frames.

A new study published in the Journal of Neuroscience highlights the dynamic nature of learning-induced brain plasticity.

Learning new skills alters the brain's white matter, the nerve fibers connecting brain regions. When people learn to read tactile braille, their somatosensory and visual cortices reorganize to accommodate the new demands.

Prior studies only examined white matter before and after training, so the exact time course of the changes was not known.

Molendowska and Matuszewski et al. used diffusion MRI to measure changes in the white matter strength of sighted adults as they learned braille over the course of eight months. They took measurements at five time points: before the training, three times during, and once after changes in motor, visual, and language-related white matter areas over time. White matter in somatosensory areas strengthened steadily over the course of the training. But white matter in the visual cortex did not

reorganize until halfway through the training, the point where the braille words start to take on semantic meaning. White matter in both regions went back to the pre-training level two and a half months after the training ended.

These results demonstrate white matter reorganizes itself across regions and different timeframes to meet the brain's needs.

Bob Ringwald, 1940-2021

By Molly Ringwald, Special to The Bee.

Molly Ringwald is an actress and author.

Sacramento jazz musician, 80, lived the sounds of a good life.

Jazz musician Robert Scott Ringwald, known to most as Bob, and to a lucky few as Dad and PopPop, died Tuesday, Aug. 3. He was 80.

Bob was born Nov. 26, 1940, in Roseville to Ferman and Aloha (ne Jensen) Ringwald. It was immediately clear that there was something wrong with his vision, and he was considered legally blind as an infant, becoming totally blind as an adolescent. At 5 he

began taking piano lessons, which became his main instrument along with guitar and banjo, and at 13 he formed his first band "The Rhythmaires." Four years later, at the age of 17, he was able to grow enough of a beard to be able to pass for an adult to play in nightclubs as a professional musician, an occupation he held for the next six decades. As a preteen, he attended the California School for the Blind in Berkeley. After a couple of years, he returned home to Citrus Heights and graduated with the Class of 1960 at San Juan High School. That same year, he married Adele Frembd, his wife of 60 years.

Although Bob was first drawn to modern jazz,

performing at local Beatnik spots such as The Iron Sandal, it was the music of Louis Armstrong that inspired him to shift his musical focus—instilling a lifelong passion for the performance and preservation of "traditional" New Orleans jazz.

In 1961, he worked at one of his all-time favorite gigs, Capone's Chicago Tea Room and Pizza Joint, a club on Fulton Avenue in Arden Arcade inspired by the '20s speak-easies. To enter the establishment, a customer had to go into a fake telephone booth, turn the crank on an old phone and push on the rear wall to reveal the club's entrance. Bob and the other members of the

band used to go outside on breaks just to observe customers trying to figure out how to get in.

Anyone who knew Bob also knew his mischievous streak, and his ever-present, slightly ribald sense of humor. If you didn't sufficiently beg to get off of his email joke list, you would have received one just a couple of days before he died.

By the 1970s, with a family of five (having lost their firstborn son Robert Scott Jr. to leukemia at age 3), Bob played piano seven nights a week, including playing piano at intermission for Turk Murphy at Earthquake Magoon's in San Francisco. He formed The Fulton Street Jazz band,

which performed at the first Sacramento Jazz Festival in 1974, a local cultural mainstay that Bob helped organize as an original board member—although, in his typical modest fashion, he always claimed to be "just the guy who said it would never work." (The festival took place every Memorial Day in Old Sacramento and its environs for the next 44 years.) In 2012, Bob was honored by the festival as "The Emperor of Jazz," which both touched and embarrassed him.

Despite having been a performer for nearly his entire life, he was never comfortable having attention bestowed on him unless he was on stage with a piano.

Nevertheless, Bob drew attention wherever he went. His natural charisma, authenticity and sense of humor made people fall in love with him and want to be around him.

Some of the many bands he performed in include "Sugar Willie and the Cubes," which he joined in 1968; "The Great Pacific Jazz Band," which he formed after having moved to Los Angeles in the 1980s; and "The BoonDockers," a comedy band he originally played with in the early '60s and reunited with years later. During his time in Los Angeles, he hosted a radio program on KCSN-FM called "Bob Ringwald's Bourbon Street Parade," featuring jazz artists

mostly from his extensive record collection.

In addition to his music, Bob was a licensed ham radio operator (call letters K6YBV), communicating with people from all over the world in Morse code, long before there was such a thing as the internet. He was also an avid baseball fan, never missing a game for his beloved Dodgers—he even once served as guest announcer, during which he read the lineup in braille while standing on the field.

Though he never wanted to be defined by his blindness, he couldn't help being an ambassador for changing the perception of what is

possible to do while living with a disability. His dignity, humor, strength of character and courage will always be remembered and cherished by everyone whose lives were touched by his. A lyric to the song "Old Bones," which he performed often in his later years, summed up his philosophy around a full life well-lived.

I love life, I'd like to live it again ...

Just to have the chance to turn back the hands

And let my life begin

Oh yeah, I'd like to do it again

...

It never failed to bring down the house. Again and again.

In addition to Adele, his wife of 60 years, Bob Ringwald is survived by his sister, Rene Angus; daughter Beth Ringwald Carnes; son Kelly Ringwald; and daughter Molly Ringwald; two grandsons; two granddaughters; two step-granddaughters; one great-grandson; and one step-great-grandson.

A memorial service is pending. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made either to the Foundation Fighting Blindness or to CURE Childhood Cancer.

Mitzi Friedlander Passes

From the BITS email list

Mitzi Friedlander, Louisville: Mitzi Friedlander, 91, passed away on 8/11/21.

Mitzi was a performer (actress and singer), narrator of Talking Books, social activist, teacher, mentor and friend to many across Louisville.

Her light brightened many rooms and lives. She loved big parties with friends, especially the legendary Friedlander Christmas parties. She is enshrined in the Atherton Hall of Fame, a U of L Alumni award winner, and

is an American Federation for the Blind Alexander Scourby Awardee for excellence in narration.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 60 years, William, and is survived by her daughter Fadel Fulkerson (Greg) and her son Eric (Indigo).

In lieu of Flowers, the family would appreciate donations in Mitzi's honor to Christ Church Cathedral, Louisville Interfaith Paths to Peace, or the American Printing House for the Blind.

Transforming My Life: How A Little Girl Taught Me Spanish And So Much More

By Daveed Mandell

In February of 1955, right in the middle of first grade, my parents transferred me from a day school for the blind in Los Angeles to a school with sighted children in Santa Monica. I had already attended my Synagogue's nursery school with sighted kids, so this change wouldn't be completely new to me. Even so, I had mixed feelings about it. I was both excited and apprehensive.

On the first day of school, I remember sitting on the rug with the other children. My teacher, Miss

Cussy, introduced me to the class and told the other kids I was blind, but I was just like them. She said the only difference was that I couldn't see. I remember a few kids approaching me somewhat hesitantly. A few avoided me altogether. Still others made fun of me.

One little girl who sat next to me was fascinated by this little blind boy. Gloria Rivera remembered seeing blind beggars in Mexico. She wanted to get to know this boy. But how? After all, she spoke no English and I, no

Spanish. However, Gloria's determination, initiative and creativity brought us together and forged a strong bond for the entire semester.

I remember Gloria taking my hand and saying, "Hola. Me llamo Gloria. Cómo te llamas?" Loosely translated, "Hi. I'm Gloria. What's your name?"

I sat there thinking a moment. And then I responded, like a robot, "Me llamo Sparky." Sparky was my nickname.

Gloria then asked me, in Spanish, how old I was. She said "Yo tengo seis años." "I'm six." I thought for a moment and repeated, again like a robot, "Yo tengo seis años." "Oh," said Gloria, "tienes seis años

también." "You're also six."

And that's how it all started. Buoyed by her success, Gloria took my hand and put it on my head and said, "Tu cabeza." She then touched my face, my nose, my mouth, my hand, saying what these were in Spanish. I repeated the Spanish words and then said each word in English.

Suddenly, Gloria grabbed my hand, pulled me up, and said, "Ven conmigo." "Come with me." I didn't understand her, but I followed her obediently. We walked around the room, touching a wall, a table, a chair, a book, the blackboard, the door. She identified each object in Spanish and I in

English. We were actually communicating!

Learning another language wasn't a new experience for me. My parents and grandparents spoke a Jewish Eastern European language called Yiddish. This skill was very helpful when learning to communicate with Gloria in Spanish.

Miss Cussy, our teacher, spoke fluent Spanish and occasionally worked with Gloria on her English. She watched our interaction with amazement. Seeing Gloria take me under her wing, so to speak, touched something in her inner being, and Miss Cussy decided to do all she could to support and strengthen our friendship. She taught me a few basic

verbs and encouraged Gloria and me to speak to each other in our two languages. She asked my resource teacher, Mr. Bowers, if it would be possible to obtain some short bilingual books for me in braille.

Every day Gloria and I spoke together in both Spanish and English. We walked around the room, and later outside, exploring, learning, talking. Needless to say, I was thrilled with both the attention and the accomplishment.

Of course I spent time with other kids as well. They touched my braille books, asked me how I did things without sight, and sometimes included me in their play and their games.

At other times I was lonely, but for the most part—thanks especially to Gloria—I began to enjoy my new school.

Day after day, week after week, Gloria and I practiced each other's language. I couldn't believe our progress! No longer were we just memorizing and repeating words. We were actually starting to speak to each other, express thoughts, share experiences. We each spoke haltingly in each other's language, but we never tired of it. Gloria told me about her life in Mexico. I told her about my life as a Jewish kid growing up in Los Angeles.

Toward the end of the semester, Gloria invited

me to her home for dinner. She lived quite close to our school. I don't know how our parents interacted with each other, given that her parents spoke almost no English and mine no Spanish. All I know is that one afternoon I found myself in their small apartment and had a wonderful time.

Gloria's parents were warm and welcoming. I couldn't understand every Spanish word, but I certainly understood the general sense of what was said. They were patient and kind, but never overly solicitous. As for the food, it was absolutely scrumptious!

I don't remember Gloria's several siblings, but I will always remember

their very sweet boxer dog who came up to me right away and licked all over my hands and face. She had just given birth to five puppies. The family offered me a puppy, and my parents approved. I was so excited to take home a souvenir of this fascinating, unforgettable visit.

In many ways Gloria Rivera transformed my life. Not only did I begin to

learn Spanish, but I also began to improve my social skills. Gloria taught me to act, initiate, take charge, make things happen, give to others. She gave me the courage and the impetus to dare, accept challenges, take risks. I will forever be grateful to this little girl who helped me understand and so much more appreciate the world around me.

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"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, please contact the executive office for additional information. Thank you.