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Gabe Griffith, CCB President

Concord, CA

925-222-5762

president@ccbnet.org

Executive Office

California Council of the Blind

**2143 Hurley Way Suite 102, Sacramento,
CA 95825**

**916-441-2100 voice; 916-441-2188 fax;
1-800-221-6359 Toll Free**

Email: ccotb@ccbnet.org

Website: www.ccbnet.org

Ardis Bazyn and Alice Turner, Co-Chairs

Governmental Affairs Committee

800-221-6359 Toll Free

governmentalaffairs@ccbnet.org

Webmaster

webmaster@ccbnet.org

Mike Keithley, Editor

650-386-6286

editor@ccbnet.org

Susan Glass, Associate Editor

408-257-1034

editor@ccbnet.org

Deb Runyan, proofing and large print production.

Andrea DeKlotz, CCB Happenings Editor

Email submissions for the CCB

Happenings to:

submit.happenings@ccbnet.org

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Table of Contents

[Editor's Corner, Mike and King Keithley](#)

[Governmental Affairs Report, Regina](#)

[Brink and Jeff Thom](#)

[Have a Disability? What to Know about
Medicaid and Scams, Carol Kando-Pineda](#)

[Advocacy 101: Become the Change You
Seek, Deborah Armstrong](#)

[The False Choice Between Autonomy and
Safety, Shana Ray](#)

[United We Stand, Divided We Fall,
Joshua Saunders](#)

Get Real! 7 Keys to Develop Leadership Authenticity, Randy Conley

Sight Unseen Art Exhibit, Kurt Weston

Free to be Free: Why Human Rights Matter, Daveed Mandell

New Streaming Service to Focus on Disabilities

Thoughts on Home Care, Maureen Schulz

Assisted Living Versus Aging in Place, Nelly Emerson

Online Business Expo, Ardis Bazyn

Making That Last Minute Adjustment: When Plan A Fails, Christy Crespin

[Meet 'Annie', World's 1st Self-Learning Braille Device](#)

[CCB Membership Incentive Awards, Christy Crespín](#)

[Equity and Diversity: Before Political Correctness, Regina Brink](#)

[ACB Conference and Convention Dates for 2024](#)

[California Diabetics in Action Begins Recruitment Campaign, Nelly Emerson and Olivia Ostergaard](#)

[CCB 2050 Vision: 9. Chapter Fundraising and Statewide Fundraising, Frank Welte](#)

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Editor's Corner

By Mike and King Keithley

Your editors are experimenting! Rather than writing from our view points, we'll let our dogs do the work, and we comment and they might talk back!

Of course, we don't know how they think and howl; it's just an outlet to have a bit of fun.

So let me introduce Kingsley, my last dog that I had to put down in 2007 at almost 16 years.

Yes, I'm King, waiting for master to

wander into the real world that starts at the Rainbow Bridge. He's busy elsewhere, but I heard about this project from cane 690, and Prince Rainbow made me a special keyboard I walk around on to write this stuff every other month. "It better be good." O, I'll do the best I can. Haven't I always?

Anyway, Guide Dogs gave me to master on the rebound in 1990. I never found out what I did wrong the first time, but master and me (grammar error, ah shut up) worked just fine, and when he introduced mommy, all was well.

So here I go, telling you about some

things in this mag.

Ever want to advocate? I do! Like “Stop climate change, it’s killing our feet.”

That’s a common action item around dog parks these days when we’re not playing, and it’s true! So, Deborah Armstrong tells us how to get started. Debee promises a series of advocacy articles. And be sure to read the Governmental Affairs report and two pieces from the front line.

Get Real! 7 Keys to Develop Leadership Authenticity. O boy, master’s in trouble. “Not really, I think I’m safeish.”

And Frank Welte gives us part 9 of his CCB 2050 Vision series on fundraising.

O there's much more! That Mango ice cream with the bacon bits is especially nice.

I hear that the Editor's Corner in the next issue of the BC will be written by Omni, Susan's dog. Give it a read!

Governmental Affairs Report By Regina Brink and Jeff Thom

Some years, like last year, it seemed like action was non-stop related to bills that we were sponsoring, supporting, or

opposing. This year the pace for us has been, unfortunately, much more sedate.

Two bills that we sponsored did not even make it out of the first house. AB1518 was a bill that CCB initiated, but which ended up being a collaboration effort with several organizations, including NFBC, Canine Companions and Guide Dogs for the Blind. The bill would have required that the Department of Consumer Affairs undertake an informational campaign aimed generally at informing the business community pertaining to certain issues relating to service animals. The bill died because of

cost factors in a year where state expenditures had to be reduced.

However, we are committed to working with the author, Assemblywoman Friedman, on a way to bring this bill back in an acceptable form. Stay tuned!!

AB488 was an effort on the part of CCB and Assembly member Nguyen to require existing Medi-Cal funds to be spent on educating nursing facility staff and providing for facility program changes in the area of blindness and low vision.

However, the bill died when we were told that we needed to attempt to work with the State Department of Health Care

services to have them implement our request. Unfortunately, as we tried to tell them that effort did not bear any fruit. Thus, we are hoping, therefore, to re-introduce that measure as well.

We did have one success this year. In our bill to require e-scooter renters to have insurance against pedestrian accidents, AB371, the braille, tactile and large print signage requirements were written in such a way as to be all but impossible for the scooter manufacturers to implement. In a collaborative effort, we worked with Assembly member Jones-Sawyer to pass AB410 that fixed

the concerns that the manufacturers had with these requirements. The bill was passed by the Legislature and was signed by the Governor.

In light of the current state of our budget, the California for SSI Coalition, in which CCB is an important member, wished to concentrate on 3 things: maintaining the Cost-of-Living Adjustment passed last year and continuing to remind the state that people on SSI still remain below the poverty level, making adjustments to transitional and emergency CalFresh to assure people do not experience delays

in benefits. They also want to reestablish the special circumstance program to offset large expenses such as replacing appliances, large home repairs, or deposits to move from untenable living situations. The coalition also hoped to work on making the public benefit websites in California accessible and usable for people who are blind or have low vision. The coalition managed to keep the cost-of-living adjustment for the state, so SSI recipients will see an increase. There will be some changes to CalFresh to smooth out the delivery of SNAP or food stamp benefits here in California and the applications for Medi-

Cal will be made accessible in the upcoming year as a part of CALAIM implementation. The coalition will continue to pursue its goals in 2024, but feels it has done as well as could be expected, given the current budget constraints.

Another effort in which CCB has played an important role is that of state legislation on website access. AB1757 is an effort involving both the disability community and the business community to attempt to resolve many outstanding issues concerning website access. Steve Mendelsohn, on CCB's behalf, has ably

represented us in negotiations involving the language of that bill. One of the unique aspects of this bill would be to regulate the actions of 3rd party website designers who design websites that do not meet legal requirements. We are hopeful that this compromise legislation can be enacted, not only because it contains much that is disability friendly, but also because the small business community is hard at work to impose severe restrictions on the ability to bring access lawsuits, including those on website access. Passage of bills like AB1757 can reduce the pressure that the business community can bring to enact

such legislation.

In addition, serious discussions have begun about the decades-old problem of procurement by the Department of Rehabilitation for assistive technology for consumers, with blindness and low vision being at the center of this topic. Consideration is being given to undertake a legislative effort to remove or limit restrictions imposed by the Department of General Services with respect to the authority of the Department of Rehabilitation. Again, stay tuned!!

Finally, in the fall we will begin to make

decisions about other issues that are on our plate, including whether to introduce special education legislation and long-overdue drug labeling legislation.

Remember that our CCB agenda is driven by you, our members. So, we urge you to talk with us or let the Governmental Affairs Committee co-chairs, Alice Turner and Ardis Bazyn know about what issues you think CCB needs to attack.

Have a Disability? What to Know about Medicaid and Scams

By Carol Kando-Pineda

Attorney, FTC's Division of Consumer and Business Education

<https://tinyurl.com/MedicaidScams>

Every July, Disability Pride Month is a powerful reminder about the importance of disability rights. This July, it's also a time to talk about Medicaid renewal scams that could affect millions of people with disabilities.

To make sure people had insurance during the pandemic, states had to keep people enrolled in Medicaid—but that

requirement has been phased out.

So where do scams come in? Well, people eligible for Medicaid now need to re-enroll. If they're not eligible for Medicaid, they need to find new insurance. And that means scammers will start targeting those people—including people with disabilities.

To avoid the scams, here's what to know:

- Medicaid won't charge you to renew or enroll. Your state Medicaid agency may call, text, or email you to renew. But it won't ask for money or information like your credit card or bank account number.

Learn about eligibility at:

<https://tinyurl.com/Medicaid-Eligibility>

1. Start at: www.healthcare.gov if you need new insurance. HealthCare.gov

compares insurance plans, coverage, prices, and your eligibility. It only asks for your monthly income and age to give you a price quote. Don't share your bank account or credit card number to get a quote for health insurance. That's a scam.

2. Scammers try to sell medical discount plans that are not medical insurance. Medical discount plans charge a monthly fee for supposed discounts on some medical services or products from a list of providers. They're not a substitute for health insurance. Some plans just take your money for little or nothing in return. If anyone pressures you to sign up quickly for a medical discount plan, that's a red flag.

During Disability Pride Month, share this

information with your friends, family, colleagues, and social networks. And if you spot a scam, tell the FTC at:

<https://reportfraud.ftc.gov/#/>

Advocacy 101: Become the Change You Seek

By Deborah Armstrong

Part One, Getting Started

Got an issue you feel strongly about? Don't know how to make your voice heard? In this series of articles, I'll help you learn the basics of how to advocate effectively.

The first step is to understand your

issue. Your concern may be strictly local, statewide, or national. Some issues, like accessibility may encompass all of these. Other issues, for example, your city's lack of disabled representation on advisory boards is a local problem. You need to speak with other advocates, possibly in your ACB chapter, independent living program or senior center to discover who makes decisions that affect your issue. You can also do research online or telephone people in your city or state government to learn more.

For example, I was frustrated that busy

intersections near both my home and workplace had no audible traffic signals. I wear hearing aids, making it more difficult to read traffic than when I was younger. When I went to a community meeting where city staff outlined plans for downtown revival, I also learned the city was implementing measures to improve the flow of traffic by shortening the timing on traffic lights. So, a light that turned green for pedestrians that previously gave us 45 seconds to cross, might now only give us twenty seconds. They hoped this change which ironically, they labeled “traffic calming” would encourage more downtown business.

By speaking up, I got them to commit to having a push-button and audible signal at every intersection which would lengthen the light when a pedestrian needed to cross. Sometimes advocacy is simply being aware of plans that can affect you and making the planners aware of your needs. Because I pointed out the safety concerns with having shortened traffic light timing, I was listened to.

At my workplace in another city, we already had a push-button which lengthened the time the light remained green. When I spoke with that city's

traffic engineers, I discovered they had abundant funding for audible signals, but since nobody had requested them, they had not been installed. By the following week, the intersection near my office had audible signals. This happened with a single phone call, so this example shows that you don't need to always have endless free time or be obnoxious to become an effective advocate.

To keep up with local issues, you can attend city council meetings. Often cities let you attend virtually, or the meetings are recorded so you can watch videos of them on your own schedule. You can also

sit in on many other public meetings, such as transportation advisory boards, planning commission meetings or neighborhood groups. Don't forget other groups whose interests could align with yours, such as pedestrian advocates, parent groups, churches, LGBTQ pride, or minority affinity organizations. For example, blind folks could never on their own get manufacturers of some hybrid vehicles to install sound emitters to make these previously silent cars easier to locate. But when a sighted child on a bicycle was killed because he did not hear a silent car behind him, parents sprang in to action to support the need

for hybrid cars to make noise, especially when they were backing up.

Showing up in person helps you become a visible and friendly presence to civic leaders, community organizers, local politicians and other decision makers. Collect contact information for people who can influence the change you wish to affect.

Many issues we face as blind people go beyond our hometowns. CCB tracks bills which come before the state legislature and also advocates for relevant legislation to improve our lives. Keep up with the governmental affairs reports in

The Blind Californian and CCB's weekly happenings announcements. If you have email, get on the mailing list for your California congress people. Subscribe to the free email newsletter offered by Cal matters.

Listen to your public radio station. Listen to the ACB community calls. For example, long-time transportation advocate, Ron Brooks, has been hosting a series of community calls on untangling transportation.

ACB also advocates on the national level, lobbying both the House of Representatives and the Senate to make

our needs known. You can subscribe to the ACB advocacy podcast, regularly call the legislative hotline and listen to recordings of ACB's leadership seminars. You can learn about ACB's legislative imperatives, which are decided each year as our organization's top advocacy priorities.

Many initiatives require financing. Researching how funding works in your situation is important. For example, a mandate requiring schools to comply with stricter earthquake safety regulations is difficult to implement if the district doesn't have the money to

remodel its older buildings. In our area, bus stop improvements are funded by both a federal grant and provisions in our county budget, while it's our local transit agency that actually negotiates with cities on how to use the funds.

Being knowledgeable about available grants plus tracking down whose budget will fund a project can be an adventure, but knowing more about funding resources gives your advocacy efforts greater weight.

Become familiar with the laws that affect our civil rights, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) plus section

504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Though these laws broadly define discrimination, the Department of Justice issues detailed rulings that spell out exactly how these laws should be implemented. Various court cases also set precedents on how a law can be interpreted. For example, though these laws do not specifically state that a blind student needs Braille to succeed, students not receiving Braille can negotiate with and potentially sue their school for not providing it because there are court cases that have won victories for those who were not receiving classroom materials in Braille. Studying

the history of an issue can help you understand its background to increase your effectiveness.

You may be thinking you don't have time for all this, but the idea is that you do a little research each day. Perhaps its listening to the California Report on public radio, or calling a friend to get an update on one of your concerns. Maybe you go to one meeting a month or keep up with a newsletter that matters to you. Perhaps you call a reference librarian to locate who serves your district politically on both the state and national levels. Maybe you listen to a city council

meeting or call your city to find out if they have an office of disability concerns. Nobody can research everything, but get yourself started and do what you can.

Don't be shy about recruiting a volunteer to assist you with research. A blind friend who is computer savvy can help you go online to read newspaper articles or the text of bills or court rulings. A sighted volunteer can assist you in the library. Consult your local blindness organization, Rotary or Lions Club, senior center or volunteer bureau to locate a helpful volunteer. And remember that many scout troops and high schools also

have community service projects where a young volunteer might be available.

And speaking of libraries, if you cannot go online, and even if you do, a reference librarian is just a phone call away. Your local librarian can answer questions like how to contact your State Assembly Representative, how to search back issues of a city newspaper, how to find the text of a previous ballot initiative or where to locate a particular court ruling. If you have email, most library sites have an “ask the librarian” section where you can request a detailed answer.

You can also chat with leaders in your

CCB chapter to learn who in CCB can help you better understand an issue.

Lastly, get inspired by study which might at first not seem relevant. Our local college teaches grassroots advocacy and every California Community College offers introductions to Political Science. Taking these courses can help you learn about community organizing and how the government works. You can also get inspired by reading biographies of change-makers, like blacks who fought discrimination, women who argued for the right to vote, union organizers who improved labor conditions and disabled

folks succeeding in spite of the odds.

Part two of this article will discuss how to contact politicians and other leaders who can represent your interests. We'll also begin to explore steps that let you take action.

For a deeper dive in to community organizing, you might wish to consult the following books. (Type the ISBN of a book in to your internet browser to locate electronic and print sources.)

Title: Building Powerful Community Organizations: A Personal Guide to Creating Groups that can Solve Problems

and Change the World

ISBN: 9780977151806

Author: Michael Jacoby Brown

Publisher: Long Haul Press.

Copyright: 2006.

Available on Bookshare and Kindle.

**Title: Tools for Radical Democracy: How
to Organize for Power in Your
Community**

ISBN: 978-0-7879-7909-6

Authors: Joan Minieri, Paul Getsos

Publisher: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Copyright: 2007

A [PDF is available online.](#)

**Title: Leadership on the Line: Staying
Alive through the Dangers of Leading**

ISBN: 1578514371

Authors: Ronald A. Heifetz, Martin Linsky

Publisher: Harvard Business School Press

Available from NLS in Braille as

BRC00052

**Title: Getting Better Results from the
Meetings You Run**

ISBN: 0878222146

Author: Michael Renton

Publisher: Research Press

Copyright 1980

Available from NLS as DB 28972 or

BR07828

**Title: PEOPLE OF VISION: A History of
the American Council of the Blind**

ISBN: 978-1410729569

Authors: James J. and Marjorie Megivern

Publisher: 1st Book Library

Copyright: 2003

**Available from NLS as BR14800 or DB
56115, and also available from
Bookshare.**

**The False Choice Between
Autonomy and Safety
By Shana Ray**

**Do we want the freedom of movement
that autonomous vehicles (AV) can**

provide, or do we want to be safe while entering or exiting these vehicles? This was the false choice presented by most people who spoke at a recent hearing of the California Public Utilities Commission in San Francisco. There was little nuance between the arguments of those who think that AVs are unsafe death traps and those who think AVs are a wonderful innovation that should move full speed ahead. Why can't we have both autonomy and safety?

I would love the freedom of ordering an AV through an app and riding to where I need to go no matter what time of day

and without a driver making assumptions about me because I am blind. I don't know how many times a driver has canceled on me after I send a message informing them that I am blind and have a cane and asking them to look out for me. My only assumption is that they see the word "blind" and automatically assume I have a guide dog. They shouldn't be discriminating against guide dog owners either, and AVs would be a great benefit to these people as well. But while people are enjoying the freedom of AVs, they should also be able to feel safe while doing so.

AVs that cannot recognize a pedestrian in a wheelchair near them are not safe. AVs that drop people off in the middle of the street are not safe. Cruise Automation vehicles do not pick passengers up at the curb but often in the middle of the street. While using Uber or Lyft, on the other hand, I am always picked up at the curb. Another thing that an Uber or Lyft driver can do that an AV can't is to let me know if it is safe to get out of the car. I would want the AV to be able to provide me this information, Therefore, regulations are needed to make sure that Cruise and Waymo provide this information in all of

their vehicles. I don't want the price of my freedom to ride in autonomous vehicles to be my life.

While I look forward to the day when disabled people can ride in AVs safely and independently, we clearly haven't yet reached that point. As one of the speakers at the hearing of the Public Utilities Commission put it, we need "way more" regulation. The commission should reconsider its decision to allow Cruise and Waymo to operate 24 hours a day in San Francisco because autonomy and safety should go hand in hand.

United We Stand, Divided We Fall

By Joshua Saunders

When attending the California Public Utilities Commission hearing on August 10, I was reminded of something very important. As people with disabilities, it is essential to reach out to our colleagues in the disability community to gather strength. It's also important to reach beyond the disability community, if possible, for support. Neither I nor anyone I saw at the hearing engaged in this practice. At the time of the

Revolutionary War, Patrick Henry said: "United we stand, divided we fall." I believe this is equally true for the disability community or any other movement today.

The commission was going to decide whether to expand the use of autonomous vehicles for both Waymo and Cruise Automation in San Francisco. When speaking in person to the commission, I encourage them to draw up both accessibility and safety regulations for the companies if they chose to expand the service. The one thing that became painfully evident

engaging in, and watching these proceedings, was how fragmented the disability community was. The director of the Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired in San Francisco spoke in favor of autonomous vehicle use. The director of the National Federation of the Blind of California spoke in favor of the use of autonomous vehicles. Someone from Senior and Disability Action, which is a disability organization in San Francisco, spoke against it.

With regards to non-disability groups, many Lyft and Uber drivers spoke out against the expansion of autonomous

vehicles. Several of them mentioned disabled passengers that they had helped. On the side of promoting the expansion of autonomous vehicles, testers for the technology spoke up. All in all, the testimony and the meeting were fragmented.

My experience on August 10th sent a clear message to me. In the future if we want to be more effective at advocating, we should reach out to important stakeholders in advance of any meetings. We should try to see if we can all agree on goals that we share. Disability advocacy will be more powerful if we can speak with one voice.

Get Real! 7 Keys to Develop Leadership Authenticity

By Randy Conley

Hey leader. Get real! It's time to quit trying to be something you aren't. It's time to be authentic.

Authenticity is an essential component of being a trustworthy leader. People are longing to follow leaders who are sincere and genuine, and when they find one, they will offer that leader 100% of their energy and engagement. You can be that kind of leader if you try, and it's not rocket science to figure out how. Start

with these 7 keys:

1. Be humble: A recent study showed that only one out of four CEOs were described by their own executives as being humble. CEOs that were rated as highly regarded were nearly six times more likely to be described as humble (34% vs. 6%). Humble leaders use their power to benefit others, share the same values as their followers, and look for ways to empower others to reach their potential.

2. Be vulnerable: Take your work seriously, and yourself lightly. Don't be afraid to laugh at yourself every once in

a while, because when you do so, it shows your followers that you actually are a little human (and just like them). Fear holds us back from being vulnerable with others, but take a little risk and get down to earth with your staff sometimes.

3. Admit you don't know: Admitting they don't know something can be incredibly difficult for leaders. After all, isn't that why they're leaders? They're supposed to have the answers for everything! Admitting you don't know something shows you have a realistic appreciation of your own strengths and weaknesses. Being a leader doesn't mean you know

all the answers, it means you're willing to work hard to figure them out.

4. Walk the talk: It's easy to talk the talk but authentic leaders make sure they walk it as well. Consistency in behavior is imperative for authentic leadership. Your actions need to be in alignment with your words otherwise people will quickly see you don't actually believe what you say you do.

5. Admit mistakes: If you messed up, own it. Don't try to shift blame, make excuses, or throw someone else under the bus. If you made a mistake, admit it, apologize if necessary, and then work

hard to repair any damage. Authentic leaders are secure enough in their identities to deal with mistakes in a humble, genuine fashion that results in actually increasing trust and respect with their followers rather than eroding it.

6. Do what you say you will do: Following through on your commitments is a must-have for authentic leadership.

Maintaining reliability with others through consistent and predictable behavior builds trust and confidence in your leadership. Authentic leaders can be trusted at their word. If you say you are going to do something, then do it.

7. Act with integrity: Be honest, do the right thing, make ethical decisions, keep promises, treat people with respect, don't lie, cheat or steal—pretty much everything you learned in kindergarten!

Authentic leaders value their integrity above all else. When you leave the workplace each day, you should be able to hold your head high because you conducted yourself with integrity. A leader of high integrity stands out above all others. The world is in desperate need for authentic leadership and you can play a part. Start with these seven keys and you'll be on your way to leading with trust and authenticity.

Sight Unseen Art Exhibit

My name is Kurt Weston and I am a legally blind photographer and artist. For those of you in the San Francisco Bay Area, please check out the exhibition "Sight Unseen" at the Bedford Gallery in Walnut Creek, 1601 Civic Drive Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Sight Unseen is an international exhibition featuring my work along with 12 other very accomplished blind artists. The exhibit explores ideas about the nature of seeing. The gallery presents

the work with braille descriptions, and some of the artworks are touchable. The exhibition is at the gallery until September 17th. Here is the link to the Bedford Gallery:

<https://tinyurl.com/Sight-Unseen>

Also, I was part of an interview on Friday, July 14th from 9am - 10am PST on KQED regarding the "Sight Unseen" exhibition. Here is a link to the KQED "Forum" interview:

<https://tinyurl.com/Visualize-World>

Sincerely,

Kurt Weston

Free to be Free: Why Human Rights Matter

By Daveed Mandell

Human rights matter. They affect every aspect of daily life. Yet they are gradually eroding in this country and throughout the world. In too many instances, we are seeing hate and intolerance become the norm.

What Are Human Rights? Human rights are universal rights we have, simply because we are human beings. Unlike civil rights, they are not granted by any state. We are all equally entitled to

human rights, regardless of nationality, gender, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, disability or sexual orientation.

Human rights are embodied in the thirty articles of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was adopted in 1948. It has become the standard for basic equality and human dignity. Fundamental human rights include everything from the right to life and freedom of movement, to the rights to food and water, education, work, health and liberty.

The UDHR was the first legal document

to outline the fundamental human rights to be universally protected. It continues to be the foundation of all international human rights law and provides the principles and building blocks of current and future human rights conventions, treaties and other legal instruments.

The UDHR together with the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights comprise the International Bill of Rights.

Human rights are inalienable and should not be taken away, except in specific

situations and according to due process. For instance, human rights can be withheld, to a certain extent, if a person is guilty of a crime.

Why Human Rights Matter

- 1. Human rights ensure that people's basic needs are met, because everyone needs and deserves access to healthcare, food and water, clothing and shelter.**
- 2. Human rights protect vulnerable groups from abuse, such as people of color and LGBTQ.**
- 3. Human rights allow people to stand up**

to, and speak out against, societal corruption and abuse.

4. Human rights encourage freedom of speech and expression.

5. Human rights give people the freedom to practice their religion, or not practice any religion.

6. Human rights allow people to love whom they choose.

7. Human rights encourage equal work opportunities.

8. Human rights give people access to education.

9. Human rights protect the environment.

10. Human rights provide a universal standard that holds governments accountable.

New Streaming Service to Focus on Disabilities Edited from the tech-vi email list

A first-of-its-kind streaming service is launching this week showcasing films connected to the disability experience.

ReelAbilities Stream will go live with more than 50 movies by and about people with disabilities.

The service is an offshoot of the ReelAbilities Film Festival which has been held in more than 20 cities around the world since originating in New York in 2007.

Isaac Zablocki, co-founder and director of the festival, said the new service will include films that have screened since the early days of the festival up to the last two years. More recent works are still appearing at festivals.

“They are treasures,” Zablocki said of

the collection, “many of which cannot be seen anywhere else.”

While the idea of a streaming service has been in discussion for years, Zablocki noted that being forced to go virtual during the pandemic reinforced that streaming could be a way to make the festival even more accessible to various audiences.

The initial launch will include dozens of films ranging from “Keep the Change,” a romantic comedy starring adults with autism that won big at the Tribeca Film Festival, to “Kills on Wheels” about two teenage wheelchair users who team up

with a hitman, and “4 Quarters of Silence,” a short about a deaf high school football team. More films are expected to be added regularly.

All of the movies will have open captions and audio descriptions, and additional accessibility features for neurodivergent viewers are in the works, Zablocki said. Movies can be accessed individually for \$1.99 to \$3.99 each.

ReelAbilities Stream will be available initially through its website:

<https://reelabilitiesstream.org>

and apps for major platforms are expected soon.

Thoughts on Home Care

By Maureen Schulz

When I reflect on the numerous calls I have taken in my profession as Social Worker in Senior Services, at the point when people were facing the inevitability of bringing someone into their home to help with daily living tasks that until now were taken for granted, it is exactly at that point that people were admitting to themselves: "I'm getting old, it's happening. This is serious."

People struggle, often with a sense of their identity, when they realize "I am

not the competent person I am used to being.” The majority of these callers, of course, have been sighted. And I think this is one of those areas where living with a disability, has given us skills and tools that help us to start “ahead of the game,” as it were, when facing this issue. For us, both providing help and needing it, that whole continuum, is something we are intimately familiar with. We do not equate competence with “never needing help.” And our sense of independence and what it means, is not tied to physical independence alone.

We know what it is like to hire someone,

to interview them, either by phone or in person, to clearly describe and explain the tasks we need help with. We can plan an hourly or daily routine for a potential caregiver, and we can in many situations keep track of and oversee the work. We know the importance of finding backup options, and of creating a good working relationship with a potential caregiver. All these are strengths we bring to the process.

Nevertheless, finding the right caregiver has definitely become more difficult over time. The IHSS (In Home Support Services) system paying for care for

those on SSI/Medi-cal, does not pay for enough hours in many cases, and in spite of years of trying, we have not been able to get it to recognize reader services, for instance, as a valid service category.

And in many cases, people have to find their own workers, as home care registries are shutting down, unable to find safe and reliable workers to whom they can refer.

We have not invested, on the state as well as county level, in worker training, nor in making home care work a viable, long-term option for workers financially.

The IHSS Public Authority, once at least a consumer-oriented entity, is now a shadow of itself, as it has become integrated into the county system.

All these are issues of serious concern that, in spite of the strengths we bring to the table, create barriers and make our continued diligence and advocacy essential.

Assisted Living Versus Aging in Place

By Nelly Emerson

Are you a Baby Boomer? If so, perhaps you have thought about where you might

live in later life. If not, you may decide to create a long-range life plan. This article discusses two scenarios of real people with fictitious names. Options to consider to aid in decision making are also shared.

First let's meet Leah and her husband John. Leah is legally blind due to AMD. John has major orthopedic impairments from myasthenia gravis and heart disease. As a couple they decided to enter assistive living mainly because Leah was physically unable to care for John. They found the services and amenities at the facility appropriate to

John's needs. Soon John died and Leah had to consider her options. To continue living at the assistive living costs upward of five-thousand dollars a month. Leah decided to move into a condo rental in a senior complex. Her rent was less than half which made it possible for her to pay for services she needed due to vision loss.

Now take a look at Mark and his dilemma. Mark is a widower and retired. He has partial vision loss due to stroke. The stroke also caused partial right sided paralysis resulting in ambulation difficulties. His large two-story house is

paid for. He loves his home. He has friends to socialize with. He cannot find reliable help to clean, cook, and do laundry. He has fallen several times and injured himself in those falls. He knows that assisted living can provide the services he needs along with increased safety. Mark chooses to visit assisted living facilities in his area and learn what services and amenities are available as well as the price.

Here are some things to think about. Ageing in place might be possible if your rent or mortgage is within your means. What additional services do you need?

Are you able to find reliable readers, housekeepers, gardeners, home repair workers, while having enough money left for groceries, utilities, and routine medical expenses?

On the other hand, you may visit assisted living facilities in a community you like. You want to be sure that the rooms and/or apartments are clean and comfortable according to your standards. Find out if the services and amenities you need are part of the monthly cost. Are some services extra? What about the food? Nutrition is critical for your good health. Is there air conditioning? What

are the residents like? Is transportation provided by the facility? Is there public transportation close by? Does a prospective resident have the option to stay for a few weeks to a month at the facility prior to making a commitment to move in?

So whichever living arrangement works for you, do not allow well-meaning friends or family members to coerce you into making a decision which will be an unhappy one. Always remember it's your life and you are in charge.

This article was submitted on behalf of the California Alliance on Ageing and

**Vision Loss. You can join us. The CAAVL
e-mail address is:**

ccb.caavl@gmail.com

Phone number: (510) 255-1732.

Online Business Expo By Ardis Bazyn

November 4, 2023

**IVIE is offering the following opportunity
to blind or visually impaired business
owners/entrepreneurs. When you join in
our Online Business Expo, you can
describe your products and services,
pass on contact information, and allow**

participants to ask questions. For IVIE members, the fee for a half hour is \$10 or \$20 for an hour. Not an IVIE member? Then, the fee is \$25 for a half hour session or \$35 for an hour. Nonmembers have the option of having \$15 of the payment used to pay IVIE dues for 2024.

All those participating in the call will use the same Zoom information to connect. The date and time line would be November 4, 2023, from 11:30 am to 7 pm Eastern. At 11:45 am, an introduction of all the vendors participating with their specific time slots would be given along with instructions for those attending. A

wrap-up at the end of the presentations would be available for anyone to ask any final questions of those exhibiting online.

The deadline for purchasing a time slot is October 21, 2023. To purchase a time slot or ask questions, send an email to:

info@ivie-acb.org

with your request to present/exhibit.

Please send your business name, product line, your telephone number, and your email address. You will be sent a link for payment and additional information. If you wish to attend the IVIE Online Business Expo and listen to this unique shopping experience, there is no cost.

However please send an email to register so we can send you the Zoom call details.

Send the email request to:

info@ivie-acb.org

or contact Ardis Bazyn, phone:

818-238-9321

Making That Last Minute Adjustment: When Plan A Fails By Christy Crespin

It was the morning of two big events, and life was good! That is, until the time of the first scheduled event. You know the saying, “Murphy is alive and well!” or perhaps “We’re under attack!” Yes,

**indeed! And you also know the saying,
“The show must go on!”**

We’ve all had the experience of getting everything ready, feeling confident, and knowing the time is near for getting on to Zoom to either facilitate or participate. I turned on my computer only to find that I had been signed out. Do you think I remembered my password? Of course, not! After getting help from a sighted friend because JAWS wouldn’t read the screen, changing my password, and hurrying into the Zoom room, I facilitated our first event. It went pretty well, I thought, and I was confident our

in-person event would be “a piece of cake”.

We continued having problems throughout the morning, including paper jams, difficulty finding song lyrics, and the granddaddy of them all, a shelf collapse, causing kitchen equipment to fly and rain down over my husband as he called for help. I thought things would settle down.

The music, I thought, would go smoothly, since I could simply have my Echo play it on request. I moved the Echo from my kitchen to the living room and we were ready to begin. We handed

out the packet of materials. I asked the "A" Lady to play the first song. "Sorry, you are experiencing an internet connection problem ..."

So, Plan B came into effect. My friend brought up the music on her laptop, clearly impromptu, and the sound was not optimal. Ironically, after everyone was gone and I moved the Echo back to its spot in my kitchen, it no longer experienced an internet connection problem and the "A" Lady responded.

When we make plans and our Plan A fails, what do we do?

How we perceive the situation can be effective. I recognized that it was necessary to think fast on my feet. If not this, then that. Instead of beating myself up and blaming myself, I told myself this is simply something beyond my control and rested in that knowledge. I utilized the knowledge, abilities, and counsel of those in my support system. Getting stuck in our own thinking and mindset, and believing that only we have the solution, puts us on the fast track to combustion. I utilized my “village” to ensure a successful outcome.

Where I had some difficulty was in the

area of the food set-up. My heart was set on finding a certain set of dishes to display the fruit and vegetables. I never found that perfect set of dishes, and I wasted energy, effort, and time on what I now recognize as superfluous. Everything worked out in the end. In fact, I believe the day was pretty powerful.

What I learned is that by making the last-minute adjustments, allowing others to assist, and keeping an open mind, the events evolved into a much more inclusive, welcoming, and powerful experience.

Here in CCB and ACB, we have many avenues of support. When our Plan A fails, by becoming involved, finding our “village” of support, giving of our own time, talents, and treasure, and being honest, open, and willing, we can make those last-minute adjustments. We can be resilient as we face those “Murphy” events in our lives.

For information about California Diabetics in Action please write to:

cda.ccb22@gmail.com

For more information about California Alliance on Aging and Vision Loss, please write to:

ccb.caavl@gmail.com

or call (510) 255-1732

Meet 'Annie', World's 1st Self-Learning Braille Device That Also Acts as a Personal Tutor

<https://tinyurl.com/Meet-Annie>

When Sanskriti Dawle, Aman Srivastava, Dilip Ramesh and Saif Shaikh were in their second year of college at BITS Pilani, Goa, they teamed up as part of Project Mudra. Together, they created a braille alphabet song box on a Raspberry Pi, which is a credit card-sized computer.

They then visited a blind school with their song box. “When we went there, our entire perspective changed. We couldn’t believe that teenagers were playing with such a simple device. They were interested and engaged in the product,” Sanskriti recalls.

This led them to research braille, which became their first introduction to the gap in braille literacy in India. After consulting with various stakeholders, they identified the main issue—a shortage of educators and outdated teaching methods.

Braille education demands significant human involvement, with teachers needing to dedicate their full attention and time to students.

This motivated them to work in the field further. They co-founded Thinkerbell Labs, an ed-tech platform in 2016.

And their first innovation is Annie, a braille device which works like a personal tutor.

“Students often find it very difficult and rather boring to learn braille, which results in many of them losing interest in education. Annie is the world’s first

braille literacy solution that helps learners to read, write and type braille in their own regional languages,” says Saif, adding that it offers a fun and interactive experience for children.

Saif adds that Thinkerbell Labs have established Annie smart classes in more than 80 learning centres across 16 states. They’ve also launched their US variant ‘Polly’ in the United States and want to expand to the UK, Europe, South Africa, Australia, and the Middle East.

[Editor’s note: Access

<https://tinyurl.com/Meet-Annie> for

pictures and video.]

CCB Membership Incentive Awards: Chapter of the Year and Affiliate of the Year

By Christy Crespin

On behalf of the CCB Membership Committee, I invite all CCB Chapters and Affiliates to consider applying for the two incentive awards, Chapter of the Year and Affiliate of the Year.

Over the past years we have recognized a chapter for wonderful projects and these awards have been much deserved. However, it has come to our attention that many chapters and affiliates have

done some very innovative, wonderful, enlightening and inviting things that have never been recognized.

These two awards are meant to allow each chapter and affiliate to showcase what differences they have made in the lives of blind folks in CA and beyond.

Perhaps your chapter or affiliate has sent items to the needy and/or forgotten populations. Perhaps your chapter or affiliate has hosted calls, given out scholarships, collected braille materials and canes, put on educational programs, gone to nursing homes and spent time contributing to the inclusion of others.

The year is fast-closing, and it is now time to talk amongst your members to see who will write up your event, project, or cause.

Please stay tuned as the CCB Membership Committee will send out instructions shortly to gather all of our wonderful submissions. Remember, nothing is too large or small, so tout and brag about your chapter and affiliate's innovative inclusivity of members, community, and beyond.

Equity and Diversity: The ED Column Before Political Correctness By Regina Marie Brink

Regardless of how you feel about this subject, it may surprise you that there are people in our country and around the world who have been practicing political correctness for centuries. People from marginalized groups, including diverse ethnic, religious, and gender identities, have automatically censored their speech in front of people from the dominant culture. Many times, this was to avoid

uncomfortable responses, censure, or outright physical violence. After a particularly insensitive or bigoted remark, people from these marginalized groups would say nothing, laugh it off, or change the subject.

When this happened to me, it was often accompanied by a sick feeling in my stomach or a feeling of pressure in my head. It is hard to ignore insults, misconceptions, and derogatory statements. People with visual disabilities may too have experienced a degree of this, although without animus, contempt, or raw hatred.

Political correctness, if exercised with compassion, can actually display a sensitivity toward people outside one's daily experience. Conversely, the self-censure of marginalized groups has been and still now may be a matter of survival. Saying the wrong thing at the wrong time won't result in an angry social media post or an appalled reaction in the room. It could have and still can result in injury or death. If people from the dominant culture are honest, they know some may take advantage of this hesitation and fear to say and do what they want to people from marginalized groups. All too often, there have not

been and still are no consequences for these hurtful comments and actions. In extreme cases, physical violence still occurs, and the members of the marginalized group know to keep quiet about it or there will be worse violence coming to them.

Historically, this has not been a subject of polite conversation. People would rather pretend we are all equal and are all treated according to our merits or shortcomings. It is easier to pretend all is well. All is not well when many groups still must self-censure in order to survive and those from the dominant culture

become angry when asked to be sensitive to others who are not like them.

The California Council of the Blind is concentrated on reaching people who are currently experiencing vision loss. The 2 groups losing their sight at the highest rates in California are African Americans and Hispanic Americans. I am not suggesting an outlandish attention to our speech that seems ridiculous or a hesitation about saying “Merry Christmas.” Instead, I am appealing to us to be kind and thoughtful about how words, actions, and tone of voice may

affect people outside our cultural or religious reference.

It seems so easy to say it. Still, practicing it may take us out of our comfort zone and ask us to examine our inner thoughts and motivations. It really comes down to a simple truth: if you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem. As Maya Angelou famously said, “when we know better, we can do better!”)

This column in the Blind Californian is dedicated to the issues surrounding equity and diversity concerning racial and ethnic disparities in all aspects of life

with an emphasis on those experiencing vision loss. The short name for it is the ED Column. We seek to educate each other. Often, bias increases because we simply do not know people outside our circle and don't hear from people who are not in our ethnic or racial group often enough or honestly enough. How much can you say in the grocery store or at a bus stop?

Many people from our affiliate, Inclusive Diversity of California, will be submitting articles. Our Publications Committee for IDC will be glad to accept articles from members not in IDC for this column. All articles will be reviewed to make sure

they are not caustic or insulting in any way and meet CCB guidelines. We want this to be a place to hear from one another and learn.

Send submissions to:

inclusivediversitycalifornia@gmail.com

ACB Conference and Convention Dates for 2024

The 2024 American Council of the Blind Conference and Convention will be held July 5th through July 12th at the Hyatt Regency Riverfront Hotel located at 225 E Coastline Dr in Jacksonville, FL.

Opening general session will be on Saturday evening, July 6th.

Our banquet will be held on Thursday night, July 11.

The exhibit hall will open on Saturday, July 6 and close on Wednesday, July 10th.

We will have day long tours both Fridays, July 5 and 12 with many other tours throughout convention week.

Special-interest affiliates, committees and our business partners will hold sessions throughout the convention.

**For any convention-related questions,
please contact Janet Dickelman,
convention chair,
(651) 428-5059
or via e-mail at:**

janet.dickelman@gmail.com

California Diabetics in Action Begins Recruitment Campaign By Nelly Emerson and Olivia Ostergaard

**We are California Diabetics in Action. The
benefits of membership include:**

- Advocacy: We support local and
national efforts for accessible medical**

equipment for all persons with vision loss and diabetes.

- **A community made up of persons who want to live a healthy and independent life while managing diabetes.**

- **Education through on-line programs, articles from trustworthy sources on nutrition, equipment, sleep, and other relevant topics.**

- **Information and referral to related organizations.**

- **Peer Support via community calls where topics of interest are discussed and information is shared among your peers.**

California Diabetics in Action recently reached out to current members to learn what content is needed and how our organization can best meet member needs. We also want to know what current and potential members are interested in sharing to strengthen the organization and provide optimum service to the diabetic community. As we grow, we can do more to support all persons with diabetes and vision loss.

Our Board Members work hard to serve you. The Board Members are: Christy Crespín, President; Olivia Ostergaard, Vice President; John Ross, Secretary;

Nelly Emerson, Treasurer; Nicolett Noyes, Board Member 1; and Nancy Ungar, Board Member 2. Dues are twenty-five dollars a year or fifteen dollars if you belong to ACB CDA. New members who join now will continue through December 2024.

Our e-mail address is:

cda.ccb22@gmail.com

You may contact Nelly Emerson, Treasurer for payment options at:

nelly.emerson@att.net

[Editor's note: According to a recent email, a Zelle account has been set up to pay dues online. Contact Nelly!]

CCB 2050 Vision:

9. Chapter Fundraising and Statewide Fundraising By Frank Welte

In the previous installment in this series, I began our discussion of fundraising by reviewing some important truths about donors.

- 1. Grants are not gifts. They're investments.**
- 2. Grant providers do so to bring about THEIR vision of a better world, not yours.**
- 3. Fundraising has a transactional**

component and a relational component.

In this article we'll consider the unique characteristics of chapter fundraising activities and of our statewide fundraising efforts.

A. Chapter fundraising

Your chapter's fundraising activities will tend to be personal, with individual members interacting directly with donors. Often, these potential donors will be people whom your members already know: family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and other acquaintances.

Your chapter's fundraising activities will have a local focus, primarily the city or county where most of your members live.

Your chapter fundraisers will be organized and implemented by volunteers, not by fundraising professionals.

Your chapter's fundraising efforts will tend to be characterized by generous investments of time rather than investments of funds.

Here are some steps your chapter can take to strengthen your fundraising

capacity, even if you aren't currently in a position to hold formal fundraising activities at this time.

1. Organize a fundraising committee. The committee is responsible for planning and overseeing your chapter's fundraising efforts, but all members need to play a role in these activities to ensure success.

2. Develop a fundraising plan. This will be the subject of the next article in this series.

3. Prepare a Case for Support. A case for support is a document that tells potential

donors about your chapter's mission, goals and projects. It tells your donors why your chapter deserves their support and how your chapter's work can forward the donors' own goals. Include stories to show the human side of your chapter's work.

4. Develop other promotional materials for your chapter: flyers, brochures, public service announcements, articles, etc.

5. Start to compile a list of likely donors that you can contact during future fundraising campaigns.

6. Research fundraising resources in your community: service clubs, organizations that help community groups and nonprofits, businesses that donate to or sponsor nonprofits or that help with community fundraisers, community leaders who are active in philanthropy, etc.

7. Educate yourself about fundraising. A future article in this series will contain a list of useful fundraising resources, books, periodicals, websites, organizations, etc.

B. Statewide fundraising

While CCB's statewide fundraising efforts have some similarities to chapter fundraising activities, there are significant differences.

While personal relationships are just as important for statewide fundraising as they are for local fundraising, our statewide organization is in a better position to interface with large donors and institutions, such as corporations, foundations and government entities.

As a statewide organization, CCB is in a position to engage in a statewide fundraising program that is not restricted to a particular local community

or region.

As a California nonprofit and tax-exempt organization, CCB has significant legal compliance and reporting obligations.

This means that there is a need for adherence to accounting standards and other professional business practices that are not applicable to local chapters. CCB's fundraising activities must operate within that legal and procedural framework.

Given its greater legal obligations and statewide jurisdiction, it is to be expected that CCB will need to engage in more capital-intensive and professionally

implemented fundraising strategies than those applied at the local level.

Finally, I believe CCB has the opportunity to provide technical support for chapter fundraising programs and to coordinate their various activities.

Here are a few recommendations for strengthening CCB's future fundraising program.

1. Because fundraising is an integral part of an organization's larger mission, CCB should start by updating its strategic plan in order to clearly identify its priorities along with a set of SMART

goals in order to turn those priorities into concrete action.

2. In the context of its strategic plan, CCB should prepare a revised Case for Support document and a fundraising plan in order to obtain the necessary financial resources to achieve our goals.

3. Because CCB is largely a volunteer-driven organization, we should include line items in our budget for board training, staff training, leadership training for CCB committee members and local leaders, professional services, including legal, accounting and fundraising/professional consulting.

4. CCB should build a donor database.

The next installment in this series will show you the elements of a strong fundraising plan and how your chapter can develop and implement such a plan.

I welcome your feedback on this and other articles in this series. Send questions, ideas and criticisms to:

Frank.A.Welte@gmail.com

Also, I'll be happy to send copies of the previous articles in this series to interested readers.

Well Connected

[Editor's note: The Well Connected program was described in the Fall, 2019 Blind Californian by Bonnie Rennie. The piece is entitled "New Name, Same Great Program."]

Spring has Sprung! Along with the May flowers, Well Connected (WC) programs are blooming as well! Well Connected and Well Connected Español bring people together to explore, learn, and share experiences by phone or online. Participants and facilitators build meaningful connections with others

through hundreds of classes, activities, conversations, games, and support groups that are available 365 days a year.

Since 2004, Well Connected has meaningfully engaged older adults as both participants and as group facilitators - all from the comfort of home.

FALL 2023 CATALOGS

The catalogs include descriptions and dates for each group. Once individual participants are enrolled, they will receive everything they need to get

started right away, including a participant Calendar that includes group times and instructions about how to join groups by phone or online. The Calendar is available in braille and there is a flash drive recording available of the complete Catalog, but no Large Print Catalog is available. Once you are enrolled, the Catalog can be accessed Online. There are three separate sessions each year, January 1 to April 30, May 1 to August 31 and September 1 to December 31.

How to Enroll in WC Programs?

WC Programs include: Well Connected, Well Connected Español, and Social Call.

Any English or Spanish-speaking older adult (60+) living anywhere in the United States is welcome to join any or all of the Connection Programs as an individual participant at no cost! Enroll Online or by Phone!

English

Enroll Online:

<https://tinyurl.com/WellConnectedPgm>

Enroll by Phone:

877-797-7299

Español

Registrarte en línea:

<https://tinyurl.com/WellConnectedEsp>

**Comunicándote con nosotros al:
877-400-5867**

Enroll and ENJOY!

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July 1, 2023**

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Gabe.Griffith@ccbnet.org

**1st Vice President: Sarah Harris (2023-
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Sarah.Harris@ccbnet.org

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Immediate Past President: Judy Wilkinson (2020-2024), San Leandro, 510-388-5079, Judy.Wilkinson@ccbnet.org

Board Members

**Regina Brink (2022-2024, 1st term),
Sacramento, 916-393-0662,**

Regina.Brink@ccbnet.org

**Christy Crespin (2023-2025, 3rd term),
Highland, 909-800-7189,**

Christy.Crespin@ccbnet.org

**Andrea DeKlotz (2022-2024, 1st term),
Orange, 714-921-0289,**

Andrea.DeKlotz@ccbnet.org

**Larry Gassman (2022-2024, 2nd term),
Fullerton, 562-706-7710,**

Larry.Gassman@ccbnet.org

Joe Green (2023-2025, 1st term),

Sacramento, 916-317-7957,

Joe.Green@ccbnet.org

Daveed Mandell (2023-2025, 1st term),

Berkeley, 510-504-3211,

Daveed.Mandell@ccbnet.org

Pamela Metz (2023-2025, 1st term),

Chatsworth, 818-388-4995,

Pam.Metz@ccbnet.org

Jeff Thom (2022-2024, 2nd term),

Sacramento, 916-995-3967,

Jeff.Thom@ccbnet.org

Penny Valdovinos (2023-2025, 3rd

term), Bakersfield, 661-378-8282,
Penny.Valdovinos@ccbnet.org

Publications Committee

Mike Keithley, Editor, 650-386-6286 H,
editor@ccbnet.org

Susan Glass, Associate Editor,
editor@ccbnet.org

Sarah Harris and Andrea Deklotz co-
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Donations

If you, a family member, or a friend would like to remember the California Council of the Blind in your Will or estate planning, 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, please

**contact the executive office for
additional information. Thank you.**