# THE BLIND CALIFORNIAN

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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.

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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.

Please send all address changes to the Executive Office.

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# Editor’s Corner

## By Omni Glass and Susan Glass

“Miss Omni, you are bouncing like a super ball, banging your tail, and jingling your Christmas bell, and today is only November 29. What’s up, puppy?”

“What’s up is that we finally have a feature in the BC about dogs. It’s a poem by Debra Armstrong called ‘Thinks His Name Is No’.”

“Well, that is cool, and we’re featuring two other poems by Deb as well, one about the joys of climbing around in braille library stacks, and another about hiking on Mount Madonna. We’ll publish all three pieces under the title Deb’s Poetry Folio.”

“And then can you and I go hiking on Mount Madonna?”

“Of course. But first we need to share what else folks can read in this winter edition of the BC.”

“Well Mom, Jeff Thom is passing the torch as chair of Legislative Affairs. And we have a summary report about Assembly Bill 1902.”

“We also include a piece about the history of Talking ATMs, and information about Amazon’s expanded grocery delivery subscription services.”

“Right, Mom. And Regina Brink shares a thoughtful editorial called ‘Beyond Blindness Skills’.”

“Don’t forget Deb Armstrong’s article on cultivating gardens in the city.”

“Okay, so Happy Tails to everyone. Let’s go read our BC.”

1. \*\*\*

## Passing the Torch

## By Jeff Thom

I am pleased to report that, as many of you may already know, in 2024 CCB had two bills pass the Legislature and be signed by the Governor.

First, AB3193 requires the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) to adopt regulations, in consultation with the Department of General Services (DGS), and other stakeholders, to implement a system of purchasing assistive technology-related goods and services for DOR clients that will avoid the use of the burdensome requirements currently imposed by DGS. Unfortunately, the bill is limited to purchases of less than $10,000, but compromise is a major part of lawmaking. We will certainly be at the table in order to ensure that the system will achieve the goals of ensuring that purchases are made in a timely manner and making them appropriate for meeting the specific needs of the consumer.

Secondly, at long last, California has a law requiring people who are blind, low vision, or that have other print disabilities to be given, upon request, labeling in accessible formats for prescription drugs, pursuant to the enactment of AB1902. Like AB3193, this bill also requires the adoption of implementing regulations, this time by the Board of Pharmacy. We will certainly be active in this process as well.

Thus, even without the possible introduction of any legislation, CCB will have a busy year advocating on issues of importance to us. In fact, before 2024 is even over, we will be working on finding Legislators for the priorities that we decide to adopt for next year.

Despite some of the problems that have beset this organization in the last few years, I think we can be very proud of our legislative accomplishments. We manage to pass, on average, a bill just about every year. Considering that we use volunteers almost exclusively to accomplish this task, that is a record that many larger organizations may well envy. It is humbling to be part of an organization that has so many fierce advocates and I hope you are as proud of yourselves as I am of you.

I say these things because it is now time for me to step aside as the leader of our Governmental Affairs efforts, to be replaced by someone who I am confident will achieve outstanding results for CCB in the future. Regina Brink, who has worked as my assistant for the past few years, will be taking over as Director of Governmental Affairs. She has already proven her mettle through her leadership on AB1902. Her tenacity, energy, organizational skills and policy acumen will serve CCB in good stead. It will be my pleasure to work as her assistant, a role that will allow me to continue sharing my institutional knowledge of the Legislature with Regina and all of you. In addition, due to Alice Turner’s time commitments, we now have a new co-chair of the Governmental Affairs Committee. Joshua Sanders, who has been working in the SSI space for CCB, will now join Ardis Bazyn as our committee co-chairs.

If any of you have that fire in your belly to continue your advocacy journey by joining the CCB Governmental Affairs Committee, I would urge you to talk with either of our co-chairs and President Harris. Of course, even if you are now on that committee, your advocacy is of utmost importance to the blindness community in California. Thanks for advocating, and may 2025 be our best year ever!!!

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# AB1902 Press Release: A Long-Awaited Bill to Improve Prescription Label Accessibility Was Just Signed into Law by Governor Newsom!

## California Council of the Blind

## October 1, 2024

A new law going into effect January 1, 2025, will expand prescription drug labels to increase safety and accessibility for Californians who are print disabled, including those who are blind or have low vision. AB1902 (Alanis), recently signed by Governor Gavin Newsom, would require pharmacy dispensers to provide no-cost accessible prescription labels upon request.

State law requires pharmacy dispensers to provide translated directions for prescription drug use on the prescription label, container, or on a supplemental document in specified languages for non-English speaking individuals. In 2013, a Working Group under the United States Access Board published a list of voluntary recommendations to make prescription drug labels accessible to patients who have low vision, are blind, or are elderly. Although certain chain stores and providers of prescription drugs by mail have already largely implemented these vital accommodations, state law does not require implementation of these recommendations.

Medical dosage errors have become a serious issue for people who are print disabled, especially people with vision or cognitive disabilities, large numbers of whom are over the age of 60. “Prescription medications are critical to maintaining one’s health, and a lack of access to information about prescription medications can have serious, life-threatening consequences, such as accidentally taking an incorrect medication or dosage.”

AB1902 would require that pharmacies provide, upon request, to people with print disabilities, including those who are blind or have low vision, or their authorized representatives, no-cost accessible prescription labels that meet prescribed requirements. Labeling may be in braille, large print or audio formats, but must be in a format appropriate to the individual’s disability.

The California Council of the Blind received many personal stories concerning the need for accessible prescription drug labeling, including one of our consumers, Jennifer, who stated, in this regard: “This is much needed legislation because this is not the first such incident I have experienced, only the latest one.”

The bill received widespread support from local and statewide organizations, including members of the California Collaborative for Long-Term Services & Supports.

As Regina Brink, the Council’s Assistant Director of Governmental affairs, puts it: “This important new law will save lives, prevent serious illness, and further the goal of enabling Californians with vision loss and print disabilities to live independently while promoting more effective health outcomes.”

“I want to thank the countless stakeholder groups who not only advocated for this bill throughout the entire legislative process, but also provided valuable feedback to ensure that our pharmacies are adequately prepared to implement this policy,” said Assembly Member Juan Alanis.

The California Council of the Blind is the largest and oldest organization of Californians with vision loss empowering people through advocacy. Since 1934, the council has sponsored many initiatives that will enable Californians who are blind or have low vision to live independently in their own communities. For more information about accessible medication labels, contact the California Council of the Blind at:

email ccotb@ccbnet.org

or call us at:

916-441-2100

8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday-Friday.

[It is important to note that you must request accessible labels from your pharmacy. Don’t assume it’s available.]

1. \*\*\*

# Beyond Blindness Skills

## By Regina Brink

One does not need a degree in psychology to realize loving oneself, not as in having an inflated ego, but as in self-care, is important to a strong sense of self-worth and one of those soft qualities that promotes success in our society. However, it has also been clear to me what a struggle this is for many people with vision loss of all degrees. Many factors contribute to this, including family dynamics, messages in our media and literature, and life experiences in school and at work. The message that one is “not good enough” or “not as good as” our sighted peers continues from infancy on or, in the case of people losing their sight later in life, as soon as we find ourselves categorized as “legally blind.” Well-meaning sighted people say things to us that convey this message. How many of us have heard “Let me do that, I can see. I can do that faster/easier/better …” or “I’m not like your mother/father/Grandma … I can see.” When my mother said something like this to my children for the first time and I tried to explain to her how it undermined my authority with my young children, she didn’t get it. I had to be rather unpleasant with her. I had to tell her these were my children and whether she agreed of not, she had to respect my wishes and not say that to them. As a young mother, I knew my young children accepted my authority without question and they would grow up questioning it and challenging it on their own quite enough without the added message that my blindness allowed them to “get away” with not doing what I expected of them. I don’t believe my mother ever got it, even though she raised me to be independent and have a strong self-esteem. She did honor my wishes, however, which was all I could reasonably ask.

It is difficult for us to think of a movie or popular fictional story about a strong, valuable blind person who is not a superhero or a music star. Where are the blind scientists, authors, teachers, or receptionists. They do not just appear in popular films and novels. They are not part of the “normal” fabric of daily life. We are still depicted as objects of pity and charity or superheroes. Well-adjusted people who are blind or have low vision who run a vending stand, answer phones in an office, or work as social workers or data entry professionals are not seen. Therefore, people do not expect to see them and hesitate to hire them in these roles.

In order to achieve strong self-esteem, many of us who are blind or have low vision are motivated to shun our blind or low vision peers. If we want to be one of the “cool kids” as so many of us do in school or at work, we need to help sighted people feel comfortable with us by appearing as much like them as possible. Now, I am not debating the value of skills training, professional grooming, or orientation and mobility competency. These are necessary to successful and independent living. Rather, I am reflecting on the way these messages are conveyed to us. In the attempt to impower us, the condition of being blind or having low vision is made the emphasis of our lack or deficiency or, in some extreme cases, shame. How many of us at one time or another have sought to hide that we can’t see or see differently than sighted people? How many of us have rejected people who did not live up to our picture of how a competent person who is blind or has low vision should be? How many of us have felt the horrible drop in one’s tummy and the feeling of extreme embarrassment and failure when we blundered as a blind person. Perhaps we spilled something we did not know or forgot was on the counter or knocked over a podium or microphone stand when we walked up to speak in front of a group of predominantly sighted people. Perhaps this happened in front of a large crowd of people with vision loss. It is still intensely humiliating for many of us. For some, the lack of witnesses doesn’t matter. We feel the same even when we do things and we are the only ones who know about it.

When a child is classified as blind or low vision or we lose our sigh at any age, very little attention is paid to our mental health. Very little if any funding goes to assisting us in adjusting emotionally. Even those of us with resources are not encouraged to seek mental health services. We are expected to concentrate on learning new skills. Those of us who have melt downs or crying jags either attempt to hide them or are considered “difficult” or “troubled” by blindness services agencies and professionals. Some of us have even felt that way about other people experiencing vision loss because we are so conditioned to do so. We dealt with it and overcame, so this person has to as well.

What about all the people with vision loss who do not “make it” as we believe we have? How many of us have conditions such as, depression, substance abuse, hypertension, ulcers or other intestinal problems and do not share these struggles with anyone? How many of us struggle alone because, if anyone knew the truth, they would know we felt less than or lacking or somehow deficient, not good enough?

We cannot know how many people who are blind or have low vision feel this way deep down inside. However, I believe it is way more than we think and contributes to some of the statistics we all know so well, especially those of us who are advocates. I have worked since I was sixteen years old, in many professional capacities where I was the only blind person on staff. I have received commendations and awards and appeared on TV and in newspaper articles. Still, I have felt this way. During this holiday season and beyond, let’s remember to extend love and encouragement to our blind and low vision peers. When advocating, let’s remember the mental health needs of the vision loss community. Let’s take a moment to reach out to someone who needs mentorship that goes beyond skills training and resources and offer guidance in self-love and self-care. Let’s work together to change the perception in our society so people coming after us might experience an easier road to success as a person who is blind or has low vision.

1. \*\*\*

# Amazon Expands Grocery Delivery Subscription Options with New Annual Plan and Affordable Access for Prime Members

## By Cord Cutter News

<https://is.gd/nRmLn7>

Amazon continues to enhance its grocery delivery services with the introduction of a new annual subscription plan, offering Prime members even greater savings and benefits. Following the successful launch of its monthly grocery delivery subscription earlier this year, Amazon has now unveiled an annual plan priced at $99.99 per year. This plan is designed to provide Prime members with substantial savings on grocery delivery for orders over $35, covering Amazon Fresh, Whole Foods Market, and various local grocery and specialty retailers on Amazon.com. As an added incentive, Prime members who opt for the annual plan will receive two months free.

In a significant move to make grocery delivery more affordable, Amazon is also extending its discounted grocery delivery subscription benefit of $4.99 per month to all Prime Access members, regardless of their qualifying form of government assistance. This discounted rate offers a $60 savings on a grocery delivery subscription compared to the monthly option available to standard Prime members.

The grocery delivery subscription benefit includes several attractive features for subscribers:

* One-hour delivery windows at no extra cost (where available)
* Unlimited free 30-minute pickup on orders of any size
* Priority access to Recurring Reservations for a weekly grocery order
* Exclusive savings in Amazon Fresh and Whole Foods Market stores

These benefits come on top of the many other perks that Prime members already enjoy, such as free shipping, Prime Video, and more.

[To get started, go to:

[www.amazon.com/Grocery-Pass/dp/B0CJ9DGD6N](http://www.amazon.com/Grocery-Pass/dp/B0CJ9DGD6N)]

1. \*\*\*

# CCB: With Your Help and Support It Will Survive!

## By Daveed Mandell

During the past several years, CCB has lost members, lost its nonprofit tax status, lost influence, lost momentum. We have become a shell of what we once were. The leadership and the Board have lost touch with the membership. Advocacy is at an all-time low. Members receive very few benefits and services.

That’s why we want and need to hear from you, our members. The membership committee recently sent out a survey. But we need more than just a survey. It’s time for us to work together and plan CCB’s future.

Let’s start a dialog. What issues concern you the most? How would you like CCB to move forward? What does CCB mean to you? How can we make it work better for all of us?

We just celebrated CCB’s 90th Birthday, and we should be extremely proud of the many accomplishments of our organization since 1934. For decades, we were very well known and respected by state officials, legislators and the media. Our membership numbered in the thousands, and hundreds of members attended our semiannual conventions.

Thanks to CCB, blind people and people with low vision teach in schools and serve on juries. Thanks to CCB, despite our current difficulties, starting next year, pharmacies must provide accessible drug labeling for blind people and people with low vision.

We want and need to hear from you. What do you expect from CCB? What skills and talents will you contribute to make CCB the best it can be? What challenges do you face as blind people and people with low vision? What advocacy issues would you like CCB to concentrate on?

Please send your comments, ideas and suggestions about CCB to:

editor@ccbnet.org

This is your organization. Without you, our members, there can be no CCB. With your help and support, CCB will survive, grow and flourish!

1. \*\*\*

# Adventures of a Blind City Gardener

## By Deborah Armstrong

In sharing my gardening journey with readers, I also wish to pass on tips for those wondering how to garden while blind. I was lucky that I grew up with a mom who loved to grow flowers, and a dad who tried his hand at raising vegetables. Their successes and failures taught me that having a green thumb was more about the willingness to experiment than having a particular talent.

When I moved in to my first apartment, being on SSI, it wasn’t an inspiring place. I had no yard, no patio, no balcony and not even a porch. But when tomato and some herb plants went on sale, I got creative. The local thrift store had a pile of half-broken chests of drawers they were selling for pennies. I brought home all the drawers, lined them up on either side of the walkway to my front door and filled them with soil from a friend’s garden. There was no need to drill drainage holes: the broken nature of these drawers already had plenty of drainage! Adding a few marigolds and daisies along with the tomatoes, basil, marjoram and thyme, I had an impressive mini garden.

Later, after reading most of the gardening books on NLS, I got more ambitious. I filled my apartment with houseplants and went to local salvage places to gather up suitable materials for tending larger plants. Examples included old washtubs, chimney flues and rusted wheelbarrows. By that time, I’d moved to an apartment complex with a run-down side yard where my motley collection of makeshift growing containers held peas and beans, larger tomato plants and even some mini-fruit trees.

Later, as a homeowner with a career, I was able to leave SSI behind and create a garden which no longer resembled a junkyard. I had raised beds made of landscape timbers: bottomless wooden boxes that were two to three feet tall and three to four feet wide of varying lengths. Much has been written about the advantages of raised beds including their ability to support a larger number of plants in a smaller space and how they protect plants from extremes of heat and cold. They relieve the gardener from the chores of digging and turning soil and they reduce the need for water. But for the blind gardener, they have one additional advantage.

If you are sighted and grow directly in the ground, you can walk around your plot and see what needs tending. You add a little water here, pull a weed there, prune off some dead flowers and add a stake or two to prop up a plant that needs more support.

But if you are blind, you need to touch every plant to see how it’s doing. Or if you have some vision, you might have to bend close to inspect each plant.

And if your garden is on the ground, you will soon have a sore back from bending, aching knees from kneeling and you’ll become tired overall from crawling around to tend to everything.

This is why we blind folks need to use raised beds. We can walk alongside our beds touching everything at a comfortable height, or sit on a stool for a longer session.

Now that I’m a senior citizen, I garden from a sitting position even more. I have a couple of folding canvas stools and a sturdy garden cart. And, unlike when I started, raised bed kits are readily available from Amazon, Walmart, Lowes and Home Depot. They snap, clamp and/or screw together. You no longer need to have woodworking tools or hire someone with carpentry skills to build them from scratch. There are also some wonderfully large fabric growing bags which you can place on bricks to raise them to a reasonable height for tending by touch.

Many people do garden in containers, and I still add quite a few pots to my garden. But it is far more labor saving to have one or several raised beds, as they need watering less often and can hold a larger amount of soil with its accompanying plant nutrition.

To save on the expense of soil and add to its nutrient density, I put a layer of dead fallen leaves at the bottom of my beds before the soil is added. These will gradually rot, and meanwhile keep weeds from growing up through the ground on which the bed rests.

Quality garden soil and compost can be purchased and delivered by Walmart, Lowes or Home Depot, and many cities give compost away for free at certain times of the year. Or you can search locally for landscape supplies and purchase soil by the cubic yard.

Many cities also offer composting classes and compost bins for free. Though I used to make my own compost, I no longer do so simply because I don’t have a lawn with grass clippings or enough vegetable scraps to put in to it.

In my raised beds I use the square foot method which, though not designed for blind people, is a wonderfully helpful way to keep your garden organized. I divide all my beds in to one-foot squares. With wooden beds, I screwed I-hooks in to the sides of the beds and strung clothesline across the bed so each growing space was a square foot. Currently my bed is galvanized steel, so I use magnetic I-hooks with heavy-duty twine to mark my squares.

Since I know what’s supposed to grow in each square, it’s easy for me to locate anything that shouldn’t be there like a snail or a weed.

Keeping records is also important. I note what I planted where and when. For example, on June 29, I planted one square of salad leaf basil, two squares of royal burgundy bush beans and three squares of different varieties of Swiss chard. This way if a seed doesn’t germinate, I will know when I sowed it and it can be replaced.

These days, I keep this record on a spreadsheet, but thirty years ago, I simply carried a micro-cassette recorder around my garden for recording my progress, and later transcribed my records in to Braille. I also continue to note how plants are doing and what the weather is like.

I keep my seed packets in zip-lock bags with a Braille card describing the name, variety, height and growing notes. They are in a file box in alphabetical order. One tip I’ve shared with those new to Braille is to simply assign each seed packet a number which you can label on the zip-lock with large felt-tipped marker or Braille. Then on your phone or computer, write out the information corresponding to the number. For example, your record might look like this:

#22 Nasturtium, variety Little FireBird. Hanging habit, 60 days to maturity. Tolerates some shade.

#23: Oak Leaf Lettuce, 8 inches high, not heat tolerant, 65 days to maturity

This numbering technique also makes creating plant labels easier should you choose to do so. I don’t bother with labels because my spreadsheet tracks exactly where everything is planted, but when I did use labels, before computers, I also just gave each plant a number and kept more detailed records corresponding to each number in my files.

These days, my iPhone can read the seed packet to me and since I order on the internet, I have all that information in my email order receipt as well. This way I can make my own labels for my zip-lock bags of seeds. Before the internet, I relied on readers or volunteers to acquire this information.

Sowing seeds by touch involves some tactile discrimination, similar to reading braille. Carefully empty a few seeds into your palm, lift out two or three, and sprinkle them around your square. Radishes, of course take up much less space than a tomato, so you need to divide your square in to a grid mentally, for example, I plant nine bush beans in one square, but only four lettuce plants.

The official square foot method—google for the square foot foundation—has grids you can place over your squares to properly position seeds or plants. But since I’ve used this method for almost forty years, I don’t really need their grids to accurately space my plants.

Very fine seeds can be sprinkled too, if you mix them with sand or coffee grounds in a pepper shaker. But I use this method only if I want a haphazard bunching of wildflowers, because the more exact your spacing, the easier it will be for you to locate weeds before they take over.

Overhead sprinklers waste a great deal of water, though admittedly, they do save labor, but there will always be spots that don’t get enough water while other places get too much.

Many folks simply use a hose with a spray nozzle to water plants. This can be hard to aim accurately without vision and you need to be careful not to wash soil away or drown little seedlings. It works fine for larger shrubs but for small plants, I prefer a bucket with a dipper, such as an old sour cream container. I simply dip out water to empty into each square, after testing with my finger to see if the soil is dry. When I had a larger garden, and was also responsible for tending plants belonging to my sighted house-mate, I used soaker hoses—these have tiny holes drilled into them and can be strung around and in between plants to evenly water everything. Both these techniques save water and ensure all the water you use goes to your plants’ roots. You can also buy drip irrigation kits with little plastic nozzles that you aim at each plant. Because I grow a lot of annual flowers and vegetables, I find these a pain to move around and fiddle with, so I no longer use them. But they are quite easy to assemble by touch.

For me, besides the pleasure of eating food directly from my own harvest, I also love fragrant plants. You don’t need to visit a fragrance garden designed for the blind, and in fact you can grow a more varying collection in your own yard. The non-profits with public fragrance gardens must stick with mostly herbs, because flowering shrubs can be fussy, but oh, the fragrance they bring is heavenly. I love scented Pelargoniums which have fragrances ranging from lemon and chocolate to rose and lime. Some fragrant shrubs, of course, will need a large pot or raised bed of their own such as Datura, Brugmansia, Pittosporum, Jasmine, Daphne and Mock Orange. But you can also grow annual fragrant flowers, like Night-Scented Stock or Heliotrope. Or you can grow fragrant bulbs like Fresia or Tuberose and if you grow real roses, get yourself a pair of elbow-length lambskin gloves and you will be impervious to thorns. I have found my own scented gardens provide a much richer aromatic experience than I’ve ever had in a so-called garden for the blind.

Should you ever despair of having a green thumb yourself, get a volunteer to help you scope out the trash dumpster in the back of a typical plant nursery. It’s a great way to discover which plants will not grow in your area, and helps you realize that your microclimate and soil, not to mention your humidity and weather, will determine your success: your thumb has nothing to do with it!

1. \*\*\*

# Am I Actually an Entrepreneur? What About You?

## By Ron Brooks, Phoenix, Arizona

I’m on the Board of the ACB special interest affiliate known as IVIE. IVIE stands for “Independent Visually Impaired Entrepreneurs,” and while I’ve got the visually impaired part down, I’m not too sure if the label of “entrepreneur” actually fits. In fact, when I hear someone refer to me as an entrepreneur, I sort of feel like an impostor. After all, I haven’t invented anything—at least not yet. I haven’t gone out and raised a bunch of money from angel investors or venture capitalists. I haven’t ridden the high of meteoric growth, and I haven’t plummeted into the depths of poverty alongside some brilliant idea that just never caught on. All I did was sit down at my kitchen table, go online, and complete the paperwork for incorporating my small consulting business, Accessible Avenue, and I only did that because it was 2020; we were in lock-down; and I knew I was going to lose the job I already had working for someone else. And let’s be clear: Accessible Avenue is really little. In fact, I’m still working a full-time job—just to make the ends meet while I continue trying to bootstrap Accessible Avenue to breakeven. Me, an entrepreneur? Really?

Well, the answer is an emphatic “yes!” And I’m betting there are lots of other people out there, who have no idea that they are just as entrepreneurial as I am, maybe even more so.

## How Can I Tell if I’m an Entrepreneur?

According to Merriam-Webster, an entrepreneur is “one who organizes, manages, and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise.” Definitely sounds like someone who starts or runs a business, and that’s definitely true. But wait! There’s more. People who manage or assume risk for a business—or an enterprise—also fit into Merriam-Webster’s definition. So, if you ever served as a manager with decision-making authority with a business, or at any other organization, then you’re also in the Entrepreneur’s club. In fact, I’ve read books and heard speeches from entrepreneurs, where they told their stories, and many of those stories began with newspaper routes, lemonade stands, and all manner of creative ways these people found to scrounge money or create something new. I can tell you that in my own case, I have been an entrepreneur for decades—not because I was always a business owner, but because I treated my job and my duties like any other owner might treat his or her own small business. So, for me, being an entrepreneur is more of an attitude than a special category of people who own things.

## From “Being In Charge” to True Entrepreneurship

Based on Webster’s definition, anyone who owns or manages a business, or who tells subordinates what to do can technically be called an “entrepreneur.” But if you want to succeed as an entrepreneur, there’s a sixteen-letter word that defines the attitudes and habits you will want to cultivate. That six-syllable word is “entrepreneurship,” and in my opinion, it’s what really differentiates the true entrepreneurs from those who just happen to be in charge. Now if you ask fifty entrepreneurs what that means, you’ll get fifty answers. In fact, there are entire libraries of books written to define that single powerful word, “entrepreneurship.” But we don’t have the time nor the space to cover all that ground, so here are just a handful of the biggies. Some of these ideas are mine. Others come directly from some of the most successful and famous entrepreneurs of all time. All of them are attributes that can help anyone develop a more entrepreneurial mindset.

Be curious. It is easy to make assumptions based on prior experience. By approaching every new opportunity, every new challenge, every new task, every new relationship with curiosity instead of preconceived notions based on what happened last time, you may find that things have changed, and the circumstances that generated difficulties in the past, offer potential for success today. Here’s a simple example. In the past, PDF documents could not be read by screen reading software. If I let past experience govern my feelings about PDF documents, I would never try to open them, meaning that I would never know that Adobe Systems has done a lot of work to make PDF documents more accessible, and today, most of them can be read using screen readers and braille displays. The same is true for the entrepreneur. Past experiences do not determine present and future outcomes. Use them as learning experiences, and do not assume that they will determine your success or failure going forward.

Say “yes” when you can. Whether it’s volunteering for a new project, or trying something different, or taking on a new role, saying “yes” is the only way to move forward. Saying “no” ends conversation. Saying “yes” opens doors and makes new possibilities available. It creates the space for risk, and also the space for reward. To be clear, there are times to say, “no.” If an opportunity is not in keeping with your personal mission, goals, or interests, it could become a huge distraction. But when a new opportunity presents itself, try to assess it from a place of possibility. As a friend puts it, “Start with ‘yes’, or at least ‘maybe’. You can always say ‘no’ later.”

Take ownership. There are two pieces to ownership: taking on the work, and taking responsibilities for the results.

First, doing the work: When I began my career back in 1993, I knew very little, but somewhere along the line, I had learned the value of taking ownership. Every time my boss asked for a volunteer—and this is for anything at all, I raised my hand. As a result, my boss gave me more opportunities to try new things. As a result, I tried more, failed more, learned more, succeeded more. Eventually, I got a promotion, and then a better job with a new employer. Then, another job, followed by additional promotions and more money. It was this self-induced progression that gave me the chance to learn what I needed to know in order to launch my own business.

And the second component of taking ownership: taking responsibility for the results—good or bad. I learned this one at a personal development workshop back in 1998, and taking responsibility for the results is one of the most powerful lessons I have ever learned. Here’s why. First, if I accept responsibility for what happens, I have at least some ability to affect the outcome—even if it’s just in how I react to what is happening around me. Second, and more to the point of entrepreneurship, trying and falling short is the best way to create the motivation for learning to do better, but only if you take responsibility for having fallen short in the first place. After all, who is going to keep trying if their efforts cannot affect the outcome? Short answer: no one. So, in a very real sense, failure breeds success, because it’s the trying, falling short, taking responsibility, learning, and trying again, that results in success.

Be persistent. In the words of Albert Einstein, “I tried and failed 99 times, and on the 100th time, came success.” It doesn’t always take dozens or hundreds of attempts to succeed, but practice and repetition create the opportunities to learn and refine—whether you’re playing the piano, honing your skills as a writer, or designing a product or process. Being persistent also pays in terms of finding ultimate success. As Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple, put it: “I’m convinced that about half of what separates the successful entrepreneurs from the non-successful ones is pure perseverance.”

Dedicate time to self-reflection. Most mornings, one can find me at my keyboard, journaling, and one of the questions I ask myself each day is this: “What did I learn yesterday, and how can I use that information going forward?” Some days, it’s easy, and I can write paragraphs about what I did, what I learned, and how I can do better tomorrow. On other days, it’s harder, and I find myself reflecting on the fact that I learned, yet again, that I like fried green tomatoes. Nevertheless, I force myself to dig deep for some kind of self-reflection each morning, and my reason for doing it is simple. If I don’t learn something from what happened yesterday, I’m doomed to repeat the lesson today, tomorrow, and into the future. Put another way, I can’t move forward until I learn from what just happened. But don’t take my word. Elon Musk puts it this way: “I think it’s very important to have a feedback loop, where you’re constantly thinking about what you’ve done and how you could be doing it better.” If it’s good enough for Elon, it’s good enough for me.

Be optimistic. I inherited optimism from my dad, and it has served me well. No matter how hard my life or my job seems, I always feel like there’s a brighter day out there in the future, and the only question is how to find it. And for the entrepreneur, optimism isn’t just a feel-good thing. Optimism is the attitude that makes the effort, the occasional failures, and the perseverance to keep going possible. Hey, this is hard stuff. If I weren’t so optimistic, I would have given up a long time ago.

## If You’re an Entrepreneur, IVIE is for You.

I joined IVIE back in 2020 because I had started a business, and I figured I might be able to learn something useful, maybe meet a few other blind and visually impaired business owners along the way. Those were good reasons to join, but now that I’ve been an entrepreneur as well as an IVIE member for a few years, I want everyone to know that there’s more to entrepreneurship, and there’s more to IVIE than owning a business.

If you are a present or aspiring entrepreneur, IVIE is for you. If you want to develop the attitudes and habits of an entrepreneur, IVIE is for you. If you want to meet other people who are entrepreneurs or learning entrepreneurship, IVIE is for you. So, check us out: our monthly calls, our quarterly newsletter, or our annual business meeting, and then join us. You’ll be glad you did. And if you want to learn more about IVIE, you can do that too. Head over to:

<https://ivie-acb.org>

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# Talking ATMs: Early History in California and Beyond

**Law Office of Lainey Feingold**

<https://www.lflegal.com/2009/09/atm2-2/>

[Some URLs in the original article have been omitted as unnecessary.]

October 1, 2009 marks the 10th anniversary of the first Talking ATM installed in the United States. From that first accessible ATM in 1999, there are now tens of thousands of Talking ATMs around the world. Below, you can read about early Talking ATM history. You can learn more about Talking ATMs in the FAQ section of this website at:

<https://tinyurl.com/Iflegal-Questions>

If you have a Talking ATM experience you would like to share, the Law Office of Lainey Feingold would love to hear it. Please read the post about sharing your Talking ATM story at:

[www.lflegal.com/2009/04/talking-atm-stories/](http://www.lflegal.com/2009/04/talking-atm-stories/)

and, if you are a person who is blind or visually impaired and have not yet tried a Talking ATM, the tenth anniversary is a great occasion to do so.

## Early Talking ATM History

Blind community advocates laid the groundwork for Talking ATMs in the 1980’s and early 1990’s with important policy work on federal legislation and regulations, with advocacy efforts with the banking industry, and by serving on standard setting committees. Banks were first contacted using Structured Negotiations in the mid-1990’s, and, as described here, by 1999 all of these efforts resulted in the first installed Talking ATMs in the United States.

## CCB advocacy leads to Wells Fargo’s 1999 Statewide Commitment

Three months before the first Talking ATM was installed in the United States, Wells Fargo and the California Council of the Blind (CCB) announced an historic plan to install Talking ATMs throughout California. Read the June, 1999 Wells Fargo / CCB press release at:

[www.lflegal.com/1999/06/wells-fargo-plan-release/](http://www.lflegal.com/1999/06/wells-fargo-plan-release/)

The plan was reached using Structured Negotiations and was the first agreement reached using this collaborative dispute resolution process. Read more about Structured Negotiations at:

[www.lflegal.com/negotiations](http://www.lflegal.com/negotiations)

When the first twenty Wells Fargo Talking ATMs were installed the following April, 2000, Wells Fargo became the bank with the most Talking ATMs in the country, and another press release was issued. Read the April 2000 Wells Fargo / CCB press release at:

<https://tinyurl.com/IflegalPressRelease>

From there, in 2002, Wells Fargo announced state-wide plans for Talking ATMs in Iowa with ACB’s Iowa affiliate, and Talking ATMs in Utah with ACB’s Utah affiliate. In 2003 Wells Fargo announced that its Talking ATMs would provide spoken instruction in Spanish, and by 2009, all of Wells Fargo’s more than 7000 ATMs are Talking ATMs.

## 1999: First U.S. Talking ATM Installed in San Francisco City Hall

The first Talking ATM in the United States was built by Canadian accessibility company T-Base Communications, Inc. for the San Francisco Federal Credit Union, and installed in San Francisco City Hall. Read the San Francisco Chronicle Article about the First Talking ATM at:

<https://is.gd/hExTji>

## California Council of the Blind’s 1999 Citibank Announcement

One month after San Francisco’s Talking ATM was up and running, on November 9, 1999, the California Council of the Blind announced that Citibank had installed five Talking ATMs in California. The announcement was the result of an agreement that CCB and individual CCB members, including Steven (“Steve”) Mendelsohn who spearheaded early Talking ATM legal efforts, had reached with the bank using the Structured Negotiations process instead of litigation. Eighteen months later, Citibank announced that it had installed the first Talking ATMs in New York. Read Citibank’s New York Talking ATM press release at:

<https://is.gd/od7Is1>

The early Citibank Talking ATMs were touchscreen only, with unique tactile input devices along the bottom of the screen. That input method, while innovative and effective at the time, proved cumbersome, and today all Talking ATMs, including Citibank ATMs have tactile keypads.

## Bank of America’s 2000 multi-state Talking ATM Commitment

Bank of America was the first Bank in the country to agree to install Talking ATMs in more than one state. In March of 2000, the Bank announced that it had worked with CCB to develop a plan to install Talking ATMs in California and Florida, and that it would work out a plan for the rest of the country in the following year.

Using the Structured Negotiations process, Bank of America, California Council of the Blind, and several blind individuals signed three different settlement agreements, ultimately calling for installation of Talking ATMs at every Bank of America location in the country. Read the national Bank of America press release

<https://is.gd/6BOj0b>

The Bank is now very close to meeting that goal, with over 15,000 Talking ATMs installed across the country.

Please check back over the next two months for more information about Talking ATM history.

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# What Is Assisted Living?

## As seen on the ccb-l email list

More than one in 10 California nursing facility residents have low care needs and could potentially be well served in more residential, supportive settings like assisted living communities. Although assisted living has primarily operated as a private-pay residential model, eligible Medi-Cal enrollees can gain access to assisted living through some specialized pathways.

The publication “Opportunities to Advance Community-Based Care for Medi-Cal Enrollees” aims to help Medi-Cal managed care plans and other stakeholders learn more about assisted living and its role for Medi-Cal enrollees, including through CalAIM. This publication is available at:

<https://is.gd/3sQnX5>

## Key Takeaways

The two most common licensed assisted living settings in California are residential care facilities for the elderly (7,492 facilities with 201,610 beds), that serve residents age 60 or older, and adult residential facilities (5,754 facilities with 38,618 beds), that serve residents age 18 to 59.

In addition to helping residents with daily activities like bathing and medication management, assisted living communities provide social engagement, nutritional support, physical fitness programs, and more.

The two primary mechanisms for Medi-Cal enrollees to access assisted living today are the Assisted Living Waiver and the Nursing Facility Transition / Diversion to Assisted Living Facilities, one of CalAIM’s optional Community Supports.

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# Deborah Armstrong’s Poetry Folio

## Thinks His Name is No

“Fetch” means bring my paper, not every newspaper in every driveway on this block.

“Wait” means relax, not shoving or snorting.

“Move” means sleep elsewhere, not roll over, spread out and block the hall.

“Stay” means in one place, not lick, leap or lunge.

“Heel” means by my side, not bouncing, bounding or barking.

“Stop” means desist, not lick my wagging finger.

“Come” means get over here, not stall, sniff or saunter.

“Sit” means plant the rear, not wag, woof or wander.

... and stop looking cute when I’m scolding!

## Poetry Magazine In The Library For The Blind

Bookshelves from floor to highest ladder rung

While their curious fingers run

Across the spines between the tomes

Questing finger-poems.

By bay windows up front and most foremost, Patterson, Cussler and Grisham rule,

Haphazard volumes half off the shelf,

One ratty volume on its side by itself

Up front Baldacci’s dots are clotted

Pages threaten to elope from spines

Damp and smushed from those many fingers pressing

Escaping with Grafton for afternoon guessing.

But tap to the back in the caves of the stacks

Dark for the bats need no light,

Past couches fragrant with last reader’s perfume,

Enter dust-free but unoccupied room.

One-handed balanced on ladder, outstretched touching title words up high,

Carefully lower book to knee

Back there in that gloom no volume misfiled,

No book in this back room was ever defiled.

On rearmost counter where no fingers before explored

Poetry Magazine, stacked orderly decades

Fresh dots, never touched, like drill bits,

There, the introvert bat-reader sits.

## Mount Madonna

Slippery slugs and slimy snails,

Flummox our footing on ferny trails,

Dark redwoods drip and block the light,

Ponderous ginormous, longer than night,

Below a brook burbles loudly but still, unseen,

Slide down the slope and you’ll splash in that stream,

Squint through the mist for the source of bird-flutes,

And remember next time to bring hiking boots!

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# Introduction to Accessibility & Training Services

## As seen on the ccb-l email list

Hello, you may have heard that ACB is starting an Accessibility & Training Services program. This new initiative will include multiple elements: assessment of websites & mobile applications; remediation of inaccessible components; monitoring of digital content; training on various topics; usability studies; and surveys for our members. The usability studies and surveys will provide opportunities for compensation to our members who choose to respond and are qualified for the specific project being done. ACB will collaborate with different entities to bring important work to our members, from pharmaceutical studies to technology, to entertainment and more. If you are interested in the opportunity being offered, please respond to that particular outreach. If you do not have any interest, by all means just delete those emails! My commitment to you is that we will do our due diligence on the organizations we present to you to ensure they are providing accessible formats for engaging, as well as being professional operations.

This Accessibility & Training Services is a great opportunity for us to provide more support to our members and gain a new source of revenue for ACB while also giving our members ways to obtain compensation. We have valuable knowledge as individuals living the experience of blindness or low vision and it is time we demonstrate that value by receiving compensation for the information we have gained.

All my best,

Scott Thornhill Executive Director

American Council of the Blind

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# Access Aira at Walmart!

## From the tech-vi email list

<https://aira.io/aira-at-walmart/>

Aira Available at Walmart Nation-Wide + On Walmart.com!

[Photo: The front exterior of a Walmart location on a cloudy day. A woman in a blue shirt pushes a shopping cart, heading into the parking lot.]

Aira’s on-demand visual interpreting service is now available for free at all Walmart locations across the US! This is your chance to use Aira at your local Walmart for a more engaging and independent shopping experience, or while online shopping on Walmart.com. Following a successful pilot in California, Florida, and New York, Aira is thrilled to be expanding access to our on-demand visual interpreting services at Walmart locations across the country.

The service is available 24/7/365 through the Aira app, which can be downloaded for free in the Google Play and iOS App Stores. With the tap of a button, connect with one of Aira’s professional visual interpreters who can enhance your experience at Walmart by describing products, looking for sales, assisting with checking out, placing an online order, and helping with in-store pickup. Whether you’re looking for a unique gift, a specific holiday item, daily essentials, or simply browsing online, Aira has you covered.

In addition to Aira access inside stores, you can also use the service on surrounding sidewalks, buses on the same block, and in the Walmart parking lot, helping shoppers navigate to and from their local store.

Here’s what customers are saying about using Aira at Walmart!

“I just used Aira at the Jacksonville Florida Walmart and was able to navigate the entire store very well. I think that’s the first time in 20 years I have walked through a Walmart completely independently.”

“Christmas shopping just got easier thanks to Walmart and Aira’s new partnership!”

“So excited and proud of the strides that are being made in accessibility!”

“For the first time ever, I was able to go to my local Walmart and pick up an order I had placed independently. Excellent service.”

“The Agent did an excellent job guiding me through Walmart to the prescription counter and back. Thank you for your exceptional navigation skills!”

“The Agent helped me navigate through the entrance of a Walmart to the customer service counter. He was very efficient and professional. He was an excellent navigator. Please let him know I appreciate his help very much. Great job!”

How does Aira work? It’s simple:

1. Download the Aira app for free in the Google Play or Apple App Stores or call:

1-800-835-1934

2. Connect with a visual interpreter via video call at the tap of a button.

3. Get real-time assistance and accomplish tasks at Walmart or Walmart.com on your own terms.

4. Need to call back again? No problem. There is no limit to Aira calls at Walmart.

How do I find the closest Walmart pilot location near me using Aira?

Ensure location services are enabled for Aira on your mobile device.

Choose the “Call Using a Free Offer” button.

Select the location button.

You’ll see the nearest Access locations on your screen with a search bar at the top. You can search for any city or state, or type a zip code for a more precise search.

Is there a limit to how long someone can use Aira at Walmart?

Aira can be used for as long as needed while shopping at Walmart.

What can Aira be used for while at Walmart?

You can use Aira for many tasks while at a Walmart or using Walmart.com, including:

* Navigating to and from the store entrance or to the restrooms
* Shopping for holiday gifts
* Selecting specific sale items from shelves
* Locating carts or baskets
* Navigating Walmart.com, placing online orders, and checking out
* Finding the shortest check-out line
* Picking out the perfect card to go with your gift
* Finding the right coat for colder weather
* Reading numbers from gift cards
* Selecting the ideal wine to pair with holiday meals
* Placing an in-store order
* And much more!

For more detailed store information, including hours, services offered, and phone numbers, visit:

[www.walmart.com](http://www.walmart.com)

or use the Walmart app.

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# CCB Officers and Board Members

# July 1, 2024

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* Susan Glass and Andrea DeKlotz co-chairs
* Lynne Nishihara
* Daveed Mandell
* Steve Bauer

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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.