

Vision Access

**A Magazine by, for and about People
with Low Vision**

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Vision Access welcomes submissions from people with low vision, from professionals such as ophthalmologists, optometrists, low vision specialists, and everyone with something substantive to contribute to the ongoing discussion of low vision and all of its

ramifications. Submissions are best made as attachments to email or may also be made in clear typescript. Vision Access cannot assume responsibility for lost manuscripts. Deadlines for submissions are March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1. Submissions may be mailed to Mike Keithley, Editor, 191 East El Camino Real #150, Mountain View, CA 94040; 650-386-6286, editor@cclvi.org.

Publications Committee:

Joyce Kleiber, Sarah Peterson, Valerie Ries-Lerman, and Mike Keithley

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CCLVI is now on Twitter at twitter.com/CCLVI_Intl and Facebook by searching for "Council of Citizens with Low Vision International." Questions? Email fb@cclvi.org.

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Please email membership@cclvi.org to change the format of your Vision Access magazine or update your postal address. Alternatively, you may also make such changes via telephone by calling our office at 800-733-2258.

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From the Editor's Desk

by Mike Keithley

Winter is here! As I write this in mid December, a major storm is working its way through the San Francisco Bay Area and it seems it will bring a lot of needed rain.

And everyone is busy with the holiday season, and articles are trickling in.

But we will have an article from Sarah Peterson, a profile of Grady Ebert. In addition, we have an

obituary for Dr. Natalie Carter Barraga, an important figure in the education of children with low vision plus an overview of Uber by Richard Rueda. Also be sure to check out CCLVI's new, enlivened website at ccbvi.org.

Let me also point you to the 2015 schedule of the Let's Talk Low Vision conferences published in this issue. All of these conferences showcase

**CCLVI's new book
Insights into Low
Vision. See the
President's Message in
this issue.**

**So enjoy your Vision
Access and luck to you
in 2015!**

Organization News

President's Message: Getting Ready for 2015

By Charles Glaser

**With the new year
upon us, it is time to
give thanks for all of
our good fortunes.
CCLVI has had a great
fall in 2014 and is
moving forward on**

**many fronts. There are
many changes to tell
you about.**

**Shortly after the July
convention, Annette
Carter informed us**

that she would be stepping down from her longtime role as CCLVI's Webmaster. Well, as you can imagine, this revelation sent CCLVI's new board of directors into high gear. Over the following months the search was on. As we narrowed our pool, another shoe dropped. Our website became compromised, and we were told it would have to be rebuilt from scratch. This was a huge setback. Now we needed to refine our search to include a

Webmaster that could not only maintain the website but also build it from scratch.

Oh my goodness, what could possibly go right? Well, imagine my surprise when a mock-up CCLVI website was sent to me in an email. When I opened it up it was fantastic. It had everything that could be expected in a contemporary website. It has buttons that even change colors to take surfers to the various pages, links to

all of our social media, a contact page, and it is all accessible.

I bet your next question is, "Where did this miracle come from?" As it turns out, it was right under our nose all the time. Our newly elected Secretary Robert Spangler had built a few websites for other organizations. Without telling anyone, he decided to sit down and see what he could do to help CCLVI. He sent his mock-up

CCLVI website to a friend to get some feedback and it was forwarded to me. I thought I was going to knock over my desk as I reached for the phone. In the immortal words of Hannibal Smith from A Team: "I love it when a plan comes together."

Please take a look at our new website at www.cclvi.org to see all of the improvements and innovations. Also, please join me in

thanking Robert for his untiring dedication to our organization. Contact him at secretary@cclvi.org.

One of our big projects from last year was getting our book *Insights into Low Vision* into the hands of our members. Now it is time to broaden our distribution. Since July we have made the book even more accessible by producing an audio version on CD. But we are not stopping there. We are currently in the

process of transcribing *Insights into Spanish* to reach more of our low vision community. We also added a new way for people to buy *Insights*. It is now available on Amazon.com. We will continue to work on innovative ways to make this informative book available to as many people as possible.

We have been adding members to our committees throughout the fall, and with many of our

committees fully staffed, we are looking forward to a productive 2015.

Best wishes to all of you in our community. Get ready for a happy and healthy New Year.

Updating Memberships

by Jim Jirak

In an effort to ensure that accurate information is submitted to ACB on behalf of CCLVI, I request to receive no later than 11:59 PM Eastern time on February 15, 2015, the following information:

The name of the member.

The correct postal address, including the nine-digit zip code.

The correct telephone number, specifying whether it is a landline or cell number.

The correct email address.

The visual status (i.e. legally blind or fully sighted).

The format in which the member desires his or her publications. Even if there is no change, please specify, and don't assume!

Whether or not the member wishes his or her phone number and email shared with ACB.

Things to consider:

Please confirm with the member and/or person submitting the membership list that the information is accurate.

If there is a discrepancy between the ACB database and what is submitted to me, I will consider the information in the ACB database to be accurate and correct. Any lists not received by 11:59 PM Eastern time on February 15 will not be considered

in the official count to
ACB.

Any additions received
after the submission
deadline will only be
entertained upon the
membership
certification of other
chapter lists.

Lastly, if there is
anyone on our

membership list that
cannot be verified after
receipt of all the lists
and all life members
have been identified,
he/she will be
removed.

If there are any
questions, please call
402-679-844 or email
membership@cclvi.org.
Thank you.

Fundraising Committee Formed for CCLVI

By Leslie Spooone

The CCLVI Board has
established a

fundraising committee.
Leslie Spooone has been

appointed by Charlie Glazier, CCLVI President, as Committee chair. Leslie has been a member of the ACB Resource Development Committee and the Chair of the ACB Auction committee for the past three years.

"We are excited about raising money for CCLVI," said Leslie.

"This will be a team effort and I know we will have a good time raising money at the convention."

The committee is pulling together ideas for a CCLVI fundraiser during the 2015 Conference and Convention in Dallas, Texas. Leslie will keep you posted about the event, and the committee is looking forward to your support and participation. You can contact Leslie Spooone at 407 678-4163 or email her at lesliespoone@cfl.rr.com.

Thank you.

Let's Talk Low Vision: 2015 Conference Schedule

By Dr. Bill Takeshita

Each month, Dr. Bill Takeshita brings members of CCLVI a free telephone lecture that discusses very important aspects of low vision. For 2015, he will share information from the book *Insights Into Low Vision* and feature its authors. Each telephone lecture is held on the third Tuesday of the month

at 5:30 Pacific (8:30 Eastern). To participate in the conversation, please call (712) 432-6100 and enter the participant passcode # 256613.

2015 Schedule

**January 20: From High School to Work
Richard Rueda talks about the steps**

required in helping students with low vision to transition to college and the work place.

February 17: Dating with Low Vision

Dr. Bill interviews a panel of couples who talk about their experiences while dating.

March 17: Navigating the Low Vision Examination

Dr. Paul Freeman and Dr. Bill Takeshita explain the low vision examination and what

you should expect during the process.

April 21: Money and Banking

Dr. Bill interviews Bette Homer who describes various techniques, tools, and strategies to assist you with your money and banking needs.

May 19: Orientation and Mobility for Individuals with Low Vision

Dr. Bill interviews Diane Fazzi who describes the importance of

receiving proper orientation and mobility training. Dr. Fazzi also will share some valuable tips for safe travel.

June 16:

Transportation Tips

Ken Stewart describes many of the tips he has used to help him travel and vacation with low vision.

July 21: Cooking with Low Vision

Bill Takeshita and Elsa Enriquez share valuable tips to help you cook delicious

meals safely with low vision.

August 18: Grooming

Kim Schooessow,

O.T.R. shares valuable

tips to help you to

groom, dress, and look

your best when you go

out.

September 15: Tips to Reduce Glare

Mark Takayama and

Dr. Bill Takeshita

describe current lenses

that reduce glare and

improve vision.

October 20: Driving with Low Vision
Rebecca Kammer, O.D. and Bill Takeshita talk about driving with low vision. This lecture will also describe driving with telescopic glasses.

November 17: Great Gift Items for the Holidays

December 15: Basic Lighting Tips
Jamie McAllister shares valuable information to help you use the proper lighting to maximize your vision.

Building Connections: Meet CCLVI Member Grady Ebert

by Sarah Peterson

If you ever want to chat with someone

who's enthusiastic about keeping in touch

with others, staying involved in the community, and advocating for those with low vision, just contact Grady Ebert.

A lifetime member of CCLVI, Ebert first joined the organization several years ago due to the suggestion of a good friend. Ebert serves on the board and enjoys connecting with others who have low vision. He particularly enjoys participating on advocacy projects such

as discussions about the talking pill bottle and the "Let's Talk Low Vision with Dr. Bill" program.

Originally from Natchitoches, Louisiana, Ebert was born with low vision. While claiming to have enough eyesight to move about easily and not use a white cane except for mainly identification purposes, Ebert remembers his eye doctor in Shreveport recommending he

begin to learn Braille as a child. Learning Braille has served Ebert well, as large print has never been quite large enough.

Ebert attended the Louisiana School for the Blind from 1954 to 1970. Although he never attended college, Ebert remained active in high school and enjoyed a variety of subjects such as history, science, and math. Outside of the classroom, Ebert heavily participated in

music, playing trumpet in the band followed by the flute, tuba, piano, and cornet. He also was a member of the chorus.

"We had a practice session each day and the instructor would read the music to us. We would need to memorize the songs, which included each note," Ebert recalled, crediting his participation in music to developing good memorization skills.

While valuing each of these musical activities, the piano was the instrument that played the most significant role in connecting with Ebert's future interests.

"If you're a good piano player, you'll more than likely be an excellent Handiham radio operator," Ebert said.

Possessing a variety of jobs over the years, Ebert's main passion is being involved through

the communication business as an active amateur radio operator through the Courage Kenny Handiham Program. The program provides opportunities for those with disabilities to obtain amateur radio operator licenses. Once passing the exams and earning the license (which must be renewed every ten years), operators can provide voluntary radio services to the public as well as enjoy developing friendships

with other Handiham participants.

"You're learning every single time you see that microphone.

That's probably one of my favorite things about amateur radio-- you never stop learning," Ebert said about his Handiham lifelong membership beginning in 1992.

Some of Ebert's communications involvements include working with citizens band radio and serving as a switchboard

operator. He highly recommends anyone curious about amateur radio to visit www.arri.org, www.handiham.org, and www.qrz.com.

"For me, amateur radio is not just a hobby-it's a passion!" Ebert said.

Ebert's love for communication doesn't end at amateur radio, as a desire to connect with others and stay involved permeates every aspect of his life. Aside from his lifetime membership with

CCLVI, ACB, ACB Alliance, ACB Diabetics in Action, and the Louisiana Council of the Blind, Ebert also possesses membership with the Lion's Club and the Calvary Baptist Church in Natchitoches.

"My advice to those with low vision is to get involved! Find a chapter of an organization in a state where you live or talk with a visually

impaired person you know," Ebert said.

Viewing others with low vision as his main motivators, Ebert seeks to become acquainted with as many people as he can and help them build connections. He invites people to contact him at his phone number 318-352-5012 or his address: 495 Highway 3191, Natchitoches, LA 71457.

Dr. Natalie Carter Barraga Passes

submitted by Bernice Kandarian

Dr. Natalie Carter

Barraga

Born: October 10, 1915

**Died: December 29,
2014**

Location: Austin, Texas

**Tribute & Message
from the Family**

**Dr. Natalie Carter
Barraga, Professor
Emerita of Special
Education at The
University of Texas at
Austin, died on
Monday, December 29,
2014. She was 99
years old.**

**Dr. Barraga is survived
by her daughter Karen;
her nephews Dalton
Carter of Austin and
Robert Lee Carter of
California; niece Don
Annie Smith of
Houston; two great
nieces, Charleen Carter
Adair and husband
Michael, Kayla and
Shawn of Austin;
Catherine Carter
Rodrique and husband
Patrick, Emma and
Jack of Austin; two
great nephews Nathan
Carter and wife**

Shannon and their four children and Chris Carter and family of Virginia. She is also survived by her special friends and extended family, Marcia and Mike Moore and their children David and Natalie of Oklahoma City and Marilyn and Spark Gregory of Austin.

Born in Troy, Texas on October 10, 1915 to Grovie and Bascom Carter, she was the fourth of five children. She earned a

Bachelor's Degree in Home Economics and Child Development from the University of North Texas (North Texas State Teacher's College) in 1938; a Master's Degree in Educational Psychology-Special Education from The University of Texas at Austin in 1957, and a Doctor of Education from George Peabody College of Vanderbilt University in 1963, where she was honored as a

**Distinguished Alumna
in 1988.**

**She joined the faculty
at The University of
Texas in 1963 where
she advanced to
Professor of Special
Education in 1971, and
retired as Professor
Emerita in 1984. In
addition to numerous
Who's Who in America
and the World, she
received national and
international awards
from all professional
organizations of which
she was an active
member: International
Association for**

**Education of the
Visually Impaired
(ICEVI), Association
for Education and
Rehabilitation of the
Blind and Visually
Impaired (AER),
American Foundation
for the Blind, American
Printing House for the
Blind, National
Association of Parents
of the Visually
Impaired, Council for
Exceptional Children,
Delta Kappa Gamma
Society International,
American Academy of
Optometry, and the
American Optometric
Association. Dr.**

Barraga was a member of the honor societies of Phi Kappa Phi, Kappa Delta Pi, and Pi Lambda Theta.

During her teaching career, she conducted pioneer research in the visually impaired, and developed low vision assessment instruments and instructional materials for students with low vision. She taught courses and held seminars and workshops for teachers in 22

different countries around the world. She was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to spend a semester doing research and lecturing at The University of Zagreb in Croatia in 1986. She was active in several international organizations, and her writings and materials are used all over the world. Her publications included books, monographs, book chapters, and numerous articles in professional journals.

Her autobiography, entitled "If Anyone Can, You Can" was published by the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired in 2007.

Dr. Barraga was a long time member of University Christian Church, where she served as a Deacon, Elder, Board President, and in 1997 was recognized as a Life Elder. She requested that thanks be expressed to all those friends who helped to make her life richer

and happier. Special gratitude goes to all her former students, who were her pride and joy as they have assumed leadership roles in their professional lives. She wanted to recognize her doctors who ministered to her for many years: Dr. Tom McHorse, Dr. David Pohl and Dr. James Marroquin.

Memorials may be made to the Scholarship Fund at University Christian Church in Austin, to

Learning Ally, or to The College of Education-- Special Education at The University of Texas at Austin.

**Selected Entries,
Condolence and
Memory Journal
[Editor's note: These
are edited for space.]
What a wonderful
legacy you've given us
- rest in peace,
knowing that you've
made a difference. May
the love you shared
surround you now and
forever. Thank you for
sharing yourself, your**

**family, and your life
achievements with us.
Karen Wolffe and Terry
Hirsh, Austin, TX,
lifelong friends**

**Dr. Barraga was my
teacher at UT and a
friend for many years.
Her works benefited
the visually-impaired
in more ways than we
can ever know. I'm
glad we had her for as
long as we did. I wish
her peace.**

**Tom Griffith, Austin,
TX, friend**

Dr. Barraga was a tremendous woman, mother, teacher, mentor, leader, colleague, and friend. Her knowledge, wisdom, caring spirit, and zest for life will go on living through those of us she touched and inspired. Dr. Barraga was one of the very best individuals I have been honored to know. I met and worked with her when I was still a newbie in APH's Educational Research Department when we were developing and field testing the

"Developing Visual Efficiency Program" (first one that was made available from APH around 1977). Natalie has been near and dear to me for nearly 40 years. May she continue to guide us in our lives and in our efforts to help students with visual impairments to lead happy, independent, productive lives. Debbie Willis, Director of Accessible Tests Department, American Printing House for the Blind (APH), Louisville,

KY, colleague and friend

Dr. Barraga never doubted that her students would make a difference in the world. She imbued her teaching with positive empowerment. It is a real testament to the passion she inspired that so many of those she mentored have stayed active and committed to the field of visual impairment for years and years.

Cyral Miller, Austin, TX, Former student and lifelong friend

I am saddened to learn of Dr. Barraga's passing! She has been such a presence, such a force in the field of visual impairments--educating educators, students at every level, developer of various instruments, researcher, mentor, gentle and wise soul--always gracious, approachable... I met her several times at conferences, was one

of the New Hampshire Teachers of the Visually Impaired who benefited from her training, and participated in the "norming" of the Developmentally Appropriate Practice. She is a treasure and left her mark--left this world a much better place. Thank you Natalie/Dr. Barraga. My deepest condolences to her family and friends. Terese Pawletko, Brunswick, ME, student

So much of my work was based on what I learned from you. You were a mentor to so many in the field. My favorite memory of you is when I met you. I was a lowly graduate student so nervous about meeting the lady who wrote all the books. But you were so personable, so kind and made me feel I had something to offer. The best part was that you took me to Kentucky Fried Chicken for lunch! Thank you Natalie for all you did!

**Armella Gates Parker,
colleague/friend**

I shall always be grateful for the personal and professional friendship and support Natalie extended to me and my work. Her concern and sensitivity to the needs of children and families in developing countries where access to education is often denied, led her to devote many hours of

Conferences

her time and energy to changing that reality. While that battle is not yet won, great progress is being made and Natalie has contributed much to that progress over the years. Her spirit lives on in the work of the countless teachers and parents she trained and inspired in all regions of the world.

**Larry
Campbell, Rockland,
ME, Friend**

Visions 2015 Conference

VISIONS 2015, the national member conference of the Foundation Fighting Blindness, is being held June 25-27 in downtown Baltimore, Maryland!

The only event of its kind, VISIONS is designed specifically for families living with retinal degenerative diseases.

Want to see what VISIONS is all about?

Visit

**www.blindness.org/visions/rewind.ph to download audio recordings of VISIONS 2014 sessions, browse the conference photo album, and more!
At VISIONS 2015, you'll...**

Gain a wealth of disease and research information from FFB-funded researchers.

Learn about the latest in technology,

resources, and living well with vision loss.

Connect with old friends from around the country and meet some new ones.

Discover the latest low vision products,

services, and resources in our Exhibit Hall.

To register, visit www.fightblindness.org/site/R?i=6SX-ZF1Pp96fch25sHkiug.

Quality of Life

11-year-old Blind Gymnast Inspires, Aims for Gold

by Nicole Kwan, Fox News, October 16, 2014



Adrianna receiving an award

**At 11 years old,
Adrianna Kenebrew
dreams of going to the**

**Olympics to win gold
as a gymnast and she
won't let the fact that**

she's legally blind stand in the way.

In early October, the Houston sixth grader competed in a gymnastics meet six days before undergoing laser surgery for her glaucoma, the twelfth surgery she's had in her young life.

Adrianna's passion for gymnastics began when she was just four, but really sparked when she

watched the 2012 Olympics.

"I just really want to be Gabby Douglas because she is really kind and she's a role model for everyone," she said. "It's just fun to move around and swing, flip and tumble. My favorite event would be floor or bars. I feel like I totally got it."

When Adrianna was four months old, her parents noticed her eyes would frequently water and that she

was uncomfortable in sunlight. Her pediatrician monitored her condition before sending her to Texas Children's Hospital where they found that the pressure in her eye was higher than an adult's, indicating glaucoma.

"It's a blessing we caught it early, because there was no damage to the nerve, but she's had several surgeries over the years to try to preserve the vision she does have and get the

glaucoma under control," her mother Asha told FoxNews.com.

Pediatric glaucoma occurs in about 1 in 10,000 live births, a relatively rare and uncommon condition that is diagnosed within the first year of life, typically between 4 and 8 months for about 80 percent of patients. Because it causes almost no symptoms, the condition causes a gradual, painless loss of vision that most

patients don't even realize is happening, Adrianna's doctor, Dr. Peter Chang, associate professor of ophthalmology at Texas Children's Hospital (TCH) and Baylor College of Medicine (BCM), told FoxNews.com.

For children younger than age 3, high pressure in the eye associated with glaucoma often causes enlargement of the eye, as well as clouding of the cornea,

causing a milky or glassy appearance, swelling and sensitivity to light.

"The problem is when it's in both eyes-- which most of the time it does occur--the symmetrical enlargement of both eyes," Chang said.

"Parents and unfortunately doctors don't recognize early signs of glaucoma, and in some cultures big eyes are considered cosmetically appealing."

Adrianna's glaucoma was very, very aggressive, Chang said, and she's had multiple surgeries-- including two glaucoma drainage implant surgeries in both eyes--because her pressure was so elevated.

"About 80 percent of the time, that's the last surgery they need for their glaucoma," Chang said. "It's highly unusual that glaucoma is so aggressive that we need to have two

implants put in each eye."

On October 10, Adrianna underwent a laser procedure that selectively targets tissues in the eye in order to reduce the amount of fluid production in each eye.

"It's almost like turning down the faucet if the sink is backing up," Chang said.

According to Chang, the surgery went well and it will take one to

two months to determine the effect it had on the tissues.

Adrianna also has cataracts, likely related to her glaucoma, and has undergone the surgical interventions required. She has a lens implant in her right eye to help her eye focus, and doctors are monitoring a small cataract in her left eye that so far has not affected her vision. Another side effect of glaucoma, in children, is that they can

become very nearsighted. Her left eye prescription is -15.5 and her right eye -7. The right eye is lower because the implant helps her focus.

"I'm so impressed that she can do gymnastics with that level of vision," Dr. Kimberly Yen, associate professor of ophthalmology at TCH and BCM, who monitors Adrianna's cataracts, told FoxNews.com, "and

that she's compensated and found ways to live with her visual disability."

Adrianna's school, church and gymnastics communities have been very supportive, Asha said. At the Charles Drew Intermediate School, she works with a visual impairment teacher who helps when work needs to be enlarged, and she has an Optron CCTV mounted on a rolling cart that projects images for her to see

better. Adrianna has an orientation and mobility instructor through school who is working with her to improve her cane skills, so when the need arises she can use them comfortably.

"The goal here is to have Adrianna live a successful life independently, teaching her the skills to be able to do that," Asha said.

When Adrianna was 4 she asked for a balance beam and

started attending the Texas Academy of Acrobatics and Gymnastics (TAAG). According to Asha, her coaches may not even have realized anything was wrong because Adrianna went out and did the same things as the other students.

"I never heard her say, 'I can't,'" she said.

"They believe in her and she just has a heart of gold and just gets out there and tries her hardest."

Her doctors haven't expressed any concern that gymnastics could affect her glaucoma, and Adrianna is in the gym five days a week. Fortunately her multiple surgeries have not taken her away from the gym for too long. At her meet on October 4, she stayed on the beam during her routine, a big accomplishment for her because it's so hard to see the beam, Asha said.

In 2013, the Texas Amateur Athletic Federation named her the TAAG Female Athlete of the Year. Now, she's setting her goals even higher.

"I think what I want to be is the first visually impaired gymnast to win gold at the Olympics," she said.

Listen to Podcasts On Your Cell Phone

By Bill Takeshita, O.D., F.A.A.O., F.C.O.V.D.

Have you ever wished that there was an easy way to listen to magazine articles, lectures on the latest treatments to cure blindness, or a tutorial on how to use your smart phone? Now you can listen to these

podcasts for free on your Apple iPhone or Android cell phones for free! Airsla.org is a non-profit organization that records current magazine articles, lectures, seminars, and conferences for people

with low vision.

Recently, Airsla has produced applications for use on the iPhone and Android cell phones that allow you to listen to your favorite magazines or lectures while you are waiting for your bus, relaxing during lunch, or anywhere you are.

The application for these cell phones is free and easy to use. They are available in your phone's app store. If you have any questions regarding the applications, please go to www.airsla.org.

Notice

By Christine Chaikin, President, Insightful Publications

I have created a screen reader-friendly Alabama Resource Handbook containing resources pertaining to people who are blind and visually impaired, for use by consumers and professionals. This handbook is for the residents of Alabama and includes the many organizations for people who are blind and visually impaired covering areas such as employment, housing,

transportation, and more. The handbook includes contact information on the local, regional, and national level. For more information on pricing and formats, please contact Insightful Publications by email at christine@insightful.com or by phone at (808) 747-1006.

Thank you.

Social Security Survey

from: Eric Bridges via the ACB Leadership Email List

Dear Colleague:
Social Security is developing a long-range vision and strategic plan, called Vision 2025, and we want to hear from you. Vision 2025 represents our efforts to ensure that we continue to provide excellent service to our customers today, tomorrow, 10 years from now, and beyond.

We would like you to participate in an online survey to tell us how we can best serve the American public in the future. The survey should only take a few minutes to complete. Please help us spread the word by letting your members, associates, and colleagues know about this exciting opportunity to help Social Security shape

its future of customer service.

Here's how you can help:

Complete our survey at www.surveymonkey.com/s/SSAVision2025 and tell us how you would prefer to conduct business with us in the next 10 to 15 years. We will also be promoting this survey through Facebook and Twitter, and we invite you to share or

retweet this post. We look forward to your opinions and ideas to help us serve the public in the coming years.

As always, thank you for your continued support!

**Sincerely,
Maria Artista-Cuchna
Acting Associate
Commissioner for the
Office of External
Affairs**

Taking It to the Street: A Low Vision User's Review of Uber

by Richard Rueda

[Editor's note: Richard was invited to review the Uber taxi service that is growing in popularity nationwide and throughout the disability community. Please note that while reviewing the Uber App and remaining an active user of the service (2 to 3 times a week), he uses an iPhone 6 plus with VoiceOver enabled and inverted colors

selected (traditionally white letters on a dark background). If you are interested in gaining more information on Uber and Lyft and want to speak with a frequent user of these platforms, Richard Rueda can be contacted by email at richr_@hotmail.com.]

An avid traveler for work and for pleasure,

I have always found more than one route to travel to and from my destination. Over the past year I've started to take to alternative transportation options available to me in the San Francisco Bay Area and San Antonio, Texas. Among those options is that of Uber and Lyft.

Uber is a modern version of a taxi. Unlike traditional taxi services, the Uber experience allows customers to arrange a ride without the need

to call dispatch. Employing my iPhone, I call up the App, and through its completely accessible interface, I enter the current address and my destination. Next, I select "request an UberX vehicle" and shortly my ride arrives. In cities where Uber actively operates, it offers a variety of vehicles ranging from the inexpensive "UberX", where rates are often 26 cents a minute and a rough rate of \$1.30 a mile. Compared to a taxi

where fares range from \$2.20 to over \$3 a mile, UberX does appeal to the masses and those of us on a frugal budget. Other Uber fleet options include UberXL (up to six passengers can be transported). "Black Car" and "SUV" options may also be available. Often the XL, Black Car and SUV fleets will have higher prices, yet remain very competitive with taxi rates. In recent months Uber in San Francisco has begun to

offer service to wheelchair users.

The Uber App interface (available in the iPhone App store) is the means by which a ride is summoned. The App provides the driver's name, license number of the car, and the estimated time of arrival. Visually there is a map so that you can track the driver's progress toward your destination once onboard. Additional trip actions allow customers to contact

the driver prior to arrival by text or by phone.

As a guide dog user, I frequently contact the driver explaining that I am with my guide dog. Of the two dozen or so times I've ridden with Uber and Lyft in southern and northern California as well as in Ohio and Texas, most all of the drivers are grateful for the call. Only in two instances did the driver say that they don't take dogs, saying it's at their discretion that they

can deny dogs. After explaining that I am working with a service animal, both drivers did cancel the call, meaning I lost those rides. This is where advocacy plays a great role.

Disability Rights Advocates

(dralegal.org/) has become involved in working with Uber on behalf of consumer groups and individuals who are blind or visually impaired. At the time of this publication, DRA

continues to actively seek feedback from Uber customers who feel that they are being discriminated against when arranging rides and use service animals.

Often where we don't have an accurate description for a taxi driver, it exists in Uber. Some matters can be resolved quickly by noting the vitals listed on the App about a driver, contacting Uber Customer service via the App, or through

the Twitter application on your phone. Now having taken taxis for several years, rides were hit and miss with greater frequency when a guide dog was involved. Currently Uber is involved in legal matters with individuals who are blind and disabled where rides were denied. Whereas Uber and similar taxi ride options are emerging as new alternatives to traditional cab services, I remain optimistic that such

rider discrimination against guide dogs will be more the exception than the norm. Until then people who are blind or have low vision and use Uber, Lyft, and other emerging taxi ride services need to be active and assertive in reporting such discriminatory actions.

Other perks of Uber include rating your overall riding experience. At the end of your trip, the App tells you how much your fare is and

encourages you to rate your driver and their car through a 5-star rating process.

Coupled with a comment section, this allows you to instantly provide tangible feedback to Uber headquarters on how well or not your ride was serviced. At the other end of this, drivers can also rate their individual customers; yet I have yet to know what my overall rating is.

The Uber rates I described earlier in

this article are based on current fares from Union City in Alameda County. While traveling for work and play in southern California, often mile and per minute rates are lower. The App allows you to also get a fare estimate prior to calling for an Uber ride. The only time where Uber can be as expensive as a taxi is when they have "surge pricing", when demand for service exceeds the number of available drivers. This rarely

occurs but when it does, it raises the rates up to 2 or 3 times the normal Uber service fare.

What I enjoy most about Uber and other similar services is that it allows me, a competitively employed adult who is blind, to move about with ease and autonomy. With frequent use of Uber's service, I can be as spontaneous as a sighted driver. I can do several errands in one

day, such as getting to and from my dentist appointment, to the dry cleaner's, and to CostCo and back home with the milk and eggs before they spoil.

Attempting this itinerary on Para or public transit will more than often result in nail-biting, stressful adventures.

Sight Enhancement Systems Launches New SciPlus Calculators

By Rob Hilkes

Sight Enhancement Systems, Ottawa, Canada, announced on December 4, 2014, that it has launched its next generation SciPlus scientific

calculators for the visually impaired. These new models improve on the popular SciPlus family, incorporating a larger, 4-line backlit graphical

LCD display with inverted white/black function and adjustable contrast.

The SciPlus-2200 version is the non-speaking model, and the SciPlus-2300 has English/Spanish (selectable) audio

output, with additional languages coming soon.

Contact Sight Enhancement Systems (www.sightenhancement.com) or an authorized dealer for more information.

Science and Health

National Panel Develops

Recommendations for Children's

Vision and Eye Health Systems

from nationalcenter.preventblindness.org

Today there is little consistency among stakeholders in children's vision and eye health in regards to frequency, referral criteria, or follow-up in regard to vision screening referral outcomes. Further contributing to the public health challenges of children's eye health is the fact that there are no standards for the public health surveillance of children's eye health in the United States. The development of a more

uniform approach to children's vision health systems is critically needed.

To address this public health issue, the National Expert Panel (NEP) of the National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health (NCCVEH) at Prevent Blindness has published recommendations providing an evidence-based approach to vision screening in children ages 3 through 5, as well as system-based public

health strategies to ensure improved surveillance and program accountability as it relates to children's vision in the United States. The recommendation papers are published online ahead of print, and open access in the *Journal of Optometry and Vision Science* and are further discussed on this special NCCVEH-hosted Vision Health Systems for Preschool Age-Children website.

In 2009, Prevent Blindness, the nation's oldest volunteer eye health and safety organization, was awarded a grant from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau at the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to establish the National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health. Its mission is to develop a coordinated public health infrastructure to

promote and ensure a comprehensive, multi-tiered continuum of vision care for young children. The NCCVEH convened the NEP, a panel of leading professionals in ophthalmology, optometry, pediatrics, public health, and related fields, to review the current scientific literature, explore best practices, and gain consensus on the best approach to children's vision and eye health.

The NEP has written three papers targeting children aged 36 to less than 72 months entitled:

- 1) Vision Screening for Children 36 to <72 Months: Recommended Practices**
- 2) Vision and Eye Health in Children 36 to <72 Months: Proposed Data System**
- 3) Vision and Eye Health in Children 36 to <72 Months: Proposed Data Definitions**

For a copy of the recommendations from the National Expert Panel of the National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health, or additional

information on general children's eye health, the NCCVEH, or Prevent Blindness, please visit visionsystems.preventblindness.org or call 800-331-2020.

Request for Contributions

CCLVI gratefully accepts contributions from readers and members to help pay for the costs of publishing Vision Access, the costs related to our 800 line and Project Insight, and for funding the Carl E. Foley and Fred Scheigert Scholarships. Please send contributions to CCLVI Treasurer, Linda Allison, 6010 Lilywood Lane, Knoxville, TN 37921

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