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. Submissions 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 Joyce Kleiber, Editor, 6 Hillside Rd., Wayne, PA 19087, jmkkleiber@hotmail.com

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From the Editor
Welcome to the Fall 2011 issue of Vision Access. As I prepared the material for this magazine, I was amazed at the number of news items that are relevant to people who have low
vision. You will read about increased audio description on television, an app to help identify currency, a recap of our successful convention that will whet your appetite for next year’s event, our two new talented board members, CCLVI’s low vision book, our new document on standards for large print, and much more.

Because of our Large Print Committee’s recommendations, the font used in this publication has been increased from 16 to 18 point. We hope you’ll appreciate this change.

You may enjoy reading an essay by George Covington, who was the first editor of CCLV News. George uses humor to write about a serious topic, the drought in Texas. George makes his home in Alpine Texas.

Then take time to read Sarah Peterson’s article about Betty Pannell and discover how she realized her dreams.

Thanks to all who contributed articles and ideas to this magazine. Let us hear from you.

JMK, 9/2/2011.
I welcome new board members Reba Landry from Pittsburgh PA and Allan Casey from Graham North Carolina. At our July conference Reba and Allan were voted in as the two newest members of CCLVI’s board. Reba and Allan bring a wealth of knowledge and low vision experience to CCLVI. I look forward to them beginning to roll up their sleeves to help get the good work of CCLVI done. With similar sentiments, I thank outgoing board members Bernice Kandarian and Jim Jirak for their tireless dedication and service to CCLVI. For nearly two-decades Bernice worked daily and passionately on matters of CCLVI.

Bernice brought professionals and people who have low vision together to learn and to solve challenges. Bernice will certainly remain busy in our California affiliate, CCCLV. We also thank Jim Jirak for his work on the board and more recently on our Constitution and Bylaws and Nominations committees.

One year ago Dr. Bill Takeshita, CCLVI life member, longtime advocate and host of CCLVI's monthly "Let's Talk Low Vision" teleconference series, approached me with an idea to create a thoughtful modern resource booklet on the topic of low vision. After
several discussions and the assembling of a working committee to collect topical articles and resources, the booklet, which will be known as “Insights to Low Vision,” is in its final stages of being proofed and taken to press. This booklet will enable CCLVI to best acknowledge appropriate low vision resources to persons and future members with partial sight. By years end, the booklets will be available for CCLVI members. I am excited to have been a part of this work group and I truly believe that readers of Vision Access will take delight in having access to a proactive consumer driven resource. Additionally, the ad-hoc group that was formed in 2010 to address best practices in the creation, production of and dissemination of large print has finalized the “large print guidelines” document and soon this document will be available to the low vision community and the world. These guidelines address best practices and suggested methods when large print is used in documentation, books and other media. To that end, the Insights to Low Vision publication will have been created with these CCLVI member adopted guidelines. With the above mentioned projects and countless more, CCLVI is indeed making itself known and heard nationally and worldwide. I urge you, the readers of Vision Access, to continue to give of your time and support to the low vision movement. Together we can assure that the Council of Citizens with Low Vision can continue this quarterly publication, send delegates to the
national convention, send leaders to the annual Legislative Seminar, sponsor partially sighted scholarship winners, advocate on environmental access issues and more. Volunteerism, submitting articles and monetary donations will assure our stake and prosperity in the world.

CCLVI Convention 2011 Recap

Editor’s note: This recap of the CCLVI program at the ACB Conference and Convention is written and submitted by Richard Rueda and Lisa Drzewucki. Part I: CCLVI’s 2011 Convention Program in Review, By Richard Rueda

This past July, in conjunction with the American Council of the Blind’s 50th birthday celebration held at its Annual Conference and Convention, the Council of Citizens with Low Vision International (CCLVI) presented its annual program. This year the conference was held at John Asquaga’s Casino and Resort in Sparks Nevada, near Reno. In preparation for this event, planning for what we hoped would be our best convention to date began in late 2010. Under the direction of Lisa Drzewucki, our 1st Vice President and Convention Program Chair, and with the able assistance of Kathy Casey, Secretary, CCLVI charted new programming territory by offering fresh and
exciting activities and seminars that were informational as well as entertaining.

What follows is a recap of many of CCLVI’s sessions held this past July. After much planning and preparations for travel to Nevada, our first social gathering of the week was our annual CCLVI mixer on Sunday afternoon. Hosting a crowd that surpassed 40 individuals, CCLVI members, leaders and guests met to discuss the convention week ahead as well as networking and meeting our scholarship winners. The spread included fresh fruits and vegetables, pinwheel sandwiches, and an assortment of beverages.

Monday evening gave a crowd of close to 40 eager participants the opportunity to face off at our first-ever themed game night! This year’s twist, our “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” event included trivia from various sports to general modern day questions. Attendees included ACB President Mitch Pomerantz and wife Donna Pomerantz, also a member of CCLVI’s board. This was one of our most popular fundraisers as we included hot dogs, popcorn, soda, ice cream and candy with the entrance cost. Prizes included gift cards to Starbucks and various certificates to nationally recognized restaurants. Thanks to Lisa Drzewucki and Kathy Casey for the gathering of trivia questions and overall preparation of the event.

Throughout the week we peppered all our seminars, fundraisers and ACB’s general session with an assortment of door
prizes including passes to attend the premier showing of “Going Blind”.

Over the course of convention week, CCLVI members were spotted at the convention site mingling, gambling at night, participating in the ACB Auction, dancing, and learning and advocating together. This year’s conference in Nevada also brought a great influx of attendees to many of our programs. Staff from the Lighthouse for the Blind in San Francisco participated in our Sunday morning Vendor showcase as well as during Monday and Tuesday afternoon’s low vision programming. Along the way, we acquired nearly half a dozen new members.

Finally, thanks to the generosity of vendors, including Ai Squared, we were able to raffle off some great prized, including a new copy of ZoomText, a widely used screen magnification software for Windows PC users.

Part II: But Wait… There’s More! By Lisa Drzewucki

In addition to those events already described, CCLVI presented convention goers with an array of stimulating and thought-provoking seminars. These began on Sunday morning with a Low Vision Vendor Showcase. Representatives of HumanWare, HIMS, Lighthouse for the Blind of San Francisco, CA, and AiSquared, all made presentations showcasing their latest products. This gave attendees a chance to ask questions and compare notes, even before getting a chance
to browse in the exhibit hall.

On Monday, Leslie Burkhardt, a low vision rehabilitation specialist from Los Angeles, California discussed “How to Be a Wise Consumer When Purchasing Low Vision Aids.” This informative and interactive presentation encouraged participants to consider their personal style and needs when making the decision to purchase low vision aids. Many of us walked away with valuable knowledge that can help us avoid making those all too common, and costly, mistakes.

Following Ms. Burkhardt we offered current and prospective members to think and talk about CCLVI’s future by presenting an open forum entitled “What Can CCLVI Do for You?” There was a lively discourse on the past, present, and future of our organization. And suggestions were made on not only what CCLVI can do for its members, but ways in which members can get involved in doing the important work of the organization.

Tuesday brought a particularly enlightening presentation from CCLVI’s very own Dr. Bill Takeshita, who is the Director of Optometric Services at the Center for the Partially Sighted, in Los Angeles, California. He enthralled a packed room with the topic “Medical Developments and Technology for People with Low Vision.” As always, Dr. Bill shared his vast knowledge and offered attendees a look at what’s happening now, as well as what may be available in the future.

Our program on Wednesday saw us
trying something quite new for us, as we showed an audio described version of the film “Going Blind: Coming Out of the Dark About Vision Loss.” This documentary, which is being talked about across the country, is both educational and thought-provoking, and presents a view of vision loss as seen from a variety of diverse perspectives. Audience members joined us after the screening for a discussion that allowed everyone to share their reactions to the film. Also present was Joel Snyder, of ACB’s Audio Description Project, who gave us some insight into the description process.

And lastly, but certainly not least, was Thursday’s offering. Kerry Isham, who is a field services representative at the American Printing House for the Blind in Louisville, Kentucky, shared her expertise in speaking about “Lighting for Low Vision Individuals.” She gave us practical and useful information, covering the importance of understanding and implementing lighting solutions that are not only functional, but also help avoid unnecessary damage to our eyes.

A very heartfelt “thank you!” goes out to all of our presenters and attendees who helped to make this year’s convention such a smashing success. And thanks also to Richard Rueda and Kathy Casey for serving on the convention committee. I look forward to working with you both again next year.
Meet CCLVI’s New Board Members

Rebecca Landry. I prefer to be known as Reba. I received an ACB scholarship in 2010 and a CCLVI Fred Scheigert Scholarship in 2011. I am beginning my second year of studies for my master’s degree in community organization in the School of Social Work at the University of Pittsburgh. Community organization is the profession that reaches out to people to help them get involved in making their community stronger, that is, better able to meet the needs of people.

In my career I hope to focus on work that involves cross disability issues. My internship in graduate school with the Pittsburgh Chapter of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network and my volunteer summer work for the United Cerebral Palsy Community Living and Support Services are preparing me for this work as a community organizer. This year my internship will address barriers within the department of Social Work for students with disabilities.

I believe that cross disability work makes good sense in our current budgetary crisis. With this approach services will not be duplicated. Despite some specific needs of people with various disabilities, there are many common areas of concern.

From birth I have lived with low vision. I have glaucoma, cataracts, and corneal scaring due to surgeries. For my early elementary
education, I attended the Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind. Attending a camp for adolescents who had impaired sight was a positive experience. Later moving to Idaho and then to South Carolina, I experienced mainstream education in 11th and 12th grades.

I enjoy reading almost everything, especially mysteries. I use audio and digital books. I have a CCTV but my congenital hip dysplasia makes it hard to sit in one posture for long periods of time while reading. In my classes I often convert my professors’ power point presentations into Word documents.

As a member of CCLVI’s board I will work with Brian Petraits on the Legislative Committee.

Allen Casey: I’m an alumnus of Wake Forest, Duke, and the University of Pennsylvania. I’ve taught at the University of Maine, Christopher Newport University, and Virginia Community College System. I’ve taught history, international relations, and management. In India and England I’ve been a Fulbright Fellow.

Serving as CEO of military credit unions in Virginia and India has given me management experience.

Currently I’m President of the North Carolina Council of the Blind and Chair of ACB’s DKM First Timer Committee. I’m a member of ACB’s International Relations Committee. My term as Vice Chair of the North Carolina Commission for the Blind is almost completed.
As a result of complications from glaucoma surgery in 1999, I lost most of my vision. As luck would have it, one year later I became a member of ACB.

I am the father of two children and I have three grandchildren. Since childhood I have been an avid reader, until 1999 when I became an avid listener. What would any of us do without the Library for the Blind! I particularly enjoy biography, history, politics, economics, mystery novels, anything by Ernest Hemingway and a few of the works of Stephen King.

Allan will serve on our Constitution and Bylaws and on our Budget and Finance Committees.

Summary of Post-Convention Board Meeting, August 4, 2011

Kathy Casey’s minutes of the Pre-Convention Board meeting were accepted as corrected.

Lisa Drzewucki reported that sessions and events at the CCLVI convention were well attended, that we operated in “the black,” that we gained five new members and that others are considering becoming members.

Regarding the year ahead, Richard Rueda said that in this, his last year as CCLVI President, he hopes to identify qualified leaders for CCLVI’s future.

Dates were set for Open Forum sessions via telephone where members can ask
questions that can lead CCLVI to plan future initiatives based on feedback from members. Lindsey Tilden, Kathy Casey and Lisa Drzewucki offered to co-host these forums with Richard. One is planned for September and one for November, dates to be announced.

Ken Stewart offered to help develop a mission statement for CCLVI.

Donna Pomerantz and Richard Rueda have interviewed and recommended two candidates to replace Joel Isaac as CCLVI webmaster. They are Annette Carter and Mike Golfo.

Sam Chen is not able to serve with Jane Kardas on our International Committee.

The Low Vision Booklet is nearing completion. $1200 has been donated by vendors to cover printing expenses.

Newly elected board members introduced themselves. Allan Casey will serve on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee and on the Budget and Finance Committee. Rebecca Landry will serve on the Legislative Committee.

We are seeking someone to serve as Membership Chair whose duties will be to update our membership roster.

It was decided that CCLVI’s board will meet in October, December, February, April and June.

Tom Lealos, chair of our Large Print Committee, reported that after making minor word changes, his committee is ready to distribute hard and electronic copies of a White Paper on Large Print Standards. The board approved $250 to cover costs of copying and mailing.
Ken Stewart’s Resolution 2011-02 on Shared Use Path Marking was approved.

“Let’s Talk Low Vision” Teleconferences for this Fall

Here are the topics for the “Let’s Talk Low Vision” Teleconferences with Dr. Bill Takeshita for this fall.

Tuesday, October 18, 2011: How to Handle Uncomfortable Social Situations

Tuesday, November 22, 2011: Great Holiday Gifts for People with Low Vision

Tuesday, December 21, 2011: How to Travel and See the World with Low Vision, with Joel Isaac

To join these teleconferences call 218-339-2699, ID# 764516 at 5:30pm Pacific time, 8:30pm Eastern time. If you cannot attend a conference, you can listen to a podcast of that conference on www.cclvi.org or on www.AIRSLA.org.

Email your suggestions for future teleconferences to drbillfoundation@gmail.com.

News from the Metropolitan Council of Low Vision Individuals

At the end of June, two chapter members were invited to join a small focus group of people with vision impairments. This focus
group advised the New York City Transit Authority regarding the design of a new devise to be installed in some of the 468 stations in the huge subway system. The device known as "Help Point" is intended to offer subway travel information and to report emergencies. Help Point will take the place of ticket booth clerks who are being removed as a cost-saving measure.

The six-member focus group met in one of the stations at which an experimental model of Help Point has been installed in a column on the platform.

The surveyors took away from the session suggestions for using shape, appearance, and large raised letter labels in high visual contrast to distinguish the two activating buttons on this device. Our group also suggested that the walking surface immediately beneath each device be made conspicuous visually and tactually.

Several weeks later, Chapter President Ken Stewart had an opportunity to report to the Transit Riders Council, a gubernatorially appointed advisory body representing the transit using public, on the focus group experience. Ken was pleased that the Transit Authority reached out to the low vision community for design input, but disappointed that the Authority hired an outside marketing firm to do the survey rather than utilizing its own ADA staff. Not only was it therefore much more costly, but the recipients of the customer input were unfamiliar with the specialized knowledge...
being transmitted to them.

Readers Want to Know
By Valerie Ries-Lerman

One of our readers, Mike Vogl, asked: “When is it appropriate to seek the help of an ophthalmologist versus an optometrist?” Valerie’s response is based on her personal experience. Generally speaking an ophthalmologist is an eye doctor who specializes in medical treatment related to the eye and eye illnesses. An eye doctor of this kind is useful when there is surgery that is needed. Someone with cataracts for example would greatly benefit from such a medical evaluation. This type of M.D. also determines the degree of vision that one has and can write a prescription for corrective eye glasses.

An optometrist on the other hand generally only evaluates the degree of vision and then prescribes and provides corrective lenses.

It is sometimes possible to find either an ophthalmologist or optometrist that specialized in low vision. They have eye charts that can further refine the evaluation of someone's low vision. At such an office, sometimes located in a regional center for the blind, people can look at and try out available low vision devises such as
monoculars or magnifying lenses that will assist them with their vision needs.

Hope this is helpful!

Please keep your replies and questions coming in. Let us know what's on your mind at

"Reader's Want to Know". Email: sacramentovalerie@yahoo.com with the subject heading that notes "Vision Access".

Thank you, and be well!
Valerie Ries-Lerman

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**Science and Health**

**Five Simple Solutions for Managing Your Medication**

Editor’s Note: The National Eye Institute’s National Eye Health Education Program and the American Foundation for the Blind recommend the tips offered in this article.

It’s imperative that you develop a safe, effective system for organizing and identifying your prescription and over-the-counter medications—what they are, the prescribed or recommended dosage, and how often you need to take them.

The following tips are designed to help people with low vision manage their medications.

1. Ask your pharmacist to print a back-up label with larger print that you can easily see. Then mark your medication bottles with large-print labels, tactile dots, rubber bands, or braille.
2. Use talking medication identifiers if large print labels don’t work for you.
3. Use a tray with good contrast to help you see your pills and keep them from falling on the floor if dropped.
4. Place a light close to the labels you are trying to see.
5. Attach daily dosage trackers to medication bottles to help you remember if you have taken each dose of a particular medication each day.

Find more simple solutions for managing your medications at the American Foundation for the Blind Senior Site: http://www.AFB.org/seniorsite/knowyourmeds

New Series of Videos on Leading Eye Conditions and Diseases

Nearly 14 million Americans experience vision problems, ranging from nearsightedness to blindness. The National Eye Institute recently launched a new series of video resources on the leading eye conditions and diseases affecting many Americans.

Find vodcasts on:
Age Related Macular Degeneration
Cataracts

Comprehensive Dilated Eye Exams
Dry Eye
Diabetic Eye Diseases
Glaucoma

Visit NEI vodcast webpage.

The National Eye Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health, leads the federal government's research on the visual system and eye diseases. NEI supports basic and clinical science programs
that result in the development of sight-saving treatments. For more information visit www.nei.nih.gov

Optic Nerve Hypoplasia and Stem Cell Research, A Teleconference Featuring Dr. Mark Borchert
Summarized by Matt Kickbush

This summary is from the Braille Institute’s Monthly Telephone Lecture Series from June 14th, 2011, which is hosted by Dr. Bill Takeshita.

This teleconference featured Dr. Mark Borchert, who gave an overview of optic nerve hypoplasia (ONH). Dr. Borchert is a pediatric neuro-ophthalmologist at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles and also has a private practice. Dr. Borchert received his medical degree from Baylor University before performing his residency at the USC Dohene Eye Institute and, later, a fellowship in pediatric neuro-ophthalmology at Harvard. Dr. Borchert is a professor at the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California and is the director of pediatric ophthalmology at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles.

Dr. Borchert explained that ONH means having a small (hypoplasia) optic nerve in one or both eyes. Having this condition is not only associated with vision loss, but it can
also be connected with a myriad of other physical problems including learning disabilities, developmental delays, growth and hormone problems, sleeping disorders, temperature regulation, behavioral disabilities, and much more. Optic nerve hypoplasia is usually diagnosed in children by looking into the eye with a handheld instrument called the direct ophthalmoscope, which offers a great view and magnification of the optic nerve. Children who have ONH may also develop myopia (nearsightedness), so it is important that young individuals with ONH have frequent checks with an eye doctor for possible correction with glasses.

Dr. Bill asked Dr. Borchert what causes ONH in individuals. Dr. Borchert stated that initially it was believed that ONH was due only to exposures during pregnancy to alcohol, recreational drugs, tobacco, anti-epileptic medication, and diabetes. After large studies and surveys of mothers with children with ONH, such exposures are no longer viewed as the primary causes for ONH; only a small percent of ONH is caused by these early exposures to toxins and medications. Dr. Borchert stated that research shows that risks of ONH can be associated with first born children (first pregnancy), young maternal age, and weight loss during pregnancy. Dr. Borchert mentioned that these things are not the causative factors of ONH but somehow represent something else that is going on that puts the
mothers at risk. He also stated that often mothers feel guilt because of the diagnosis of ONH and wonder what they did wrong during their pregnancy. Dr. Borchert acknowledged that very likely it is nothing that these mothers could have prevented or nothing that they had done wrong; it is much more likely that something in the environment which is totally beyond their control that leads to ONH.

Dr. Bill asked Dr. Borchert why some people with ONH have a visual acuity of 20/30 and are able to drive a car, but there are also individuals who have ONH who have no light perception. Dr. Borchert explained that ONH simply means a small optic nerve; this means that there are fewer than normal fibers in the optic nerve. The optic nerve develops between the 7th and 16th week of pregnancy. By the 16th week of pregnancy, the eye has sent out fibers to the brain which total about 3.5 million. Many of these fibers do not make the connections to the brain, which causes these fibers to be kicked out, so that only the fibers making the right connection to the brain will remain. During the 16th week of pregnancy and birth, we will lose about seventy percent of the fibers, which leaves about only 1.2 million fibers. A normal optic nerve of a baby will have about 1.2 million optic nerve fibers. In ONH it is believed that the child has lost an extensive amount of fibers. More than seventy percent of the fibers are lost, which means that there may be only 500,000 fibers and sometimes as low as 0
fibers. This lack of fibers will cause the child to have poor vision. Depending upon how many fibers a person has, losing fifty percent of one’s fibers may still allow for normal vision; individuals who only have 800,000 fibers may also have ONH as this is only two thirds of the normal 1.2 million. When individuals begin to lose thirty percent or more fibers, their vision will greatly drop. Also, depending upon what part of the visual field or vision the fibers represent will determine what part of the visual field will be affected. For example, if the fibers are still intact in the center of the retina but are lost on the periphery, the individual will still have good central vision (detail vision), but will have poor peripheral vision.

Dr. Bill continued the teleconference by asking about the future of ONH and stem cells. Dr. Borchert stated that the retina contains stem cells that could have the potential to become optic nerve cells and regenerate into our optic nerves; these cells also presumably exist in the retinas of children who have ONH. Lower vertebrate animals, such as salamanders can totally regenerate their optic nerve and totally regenerate their eyeball if removed. We as humans have those same stem cells and the same genes that a salamander has that theoretically have the potential to turn on and reproduce the optic nerve. The trick is how to control these stem cells; how to turn on the genes to allow the stem cells to turn into optic nerve
cells and not into cancer cells or something else.

After birth, the optic nerve stops growing and will no longer produce fibers; however, children who have ONH can notice improvements in their functional vision. Dr. Borchert stated it is not fully known why, but that one possible reason is that the fibers in the early stages are very immature; and the speed of transmission is very slow. Over time, the fibers develop a coating called myelin. This occurs in the first three to four years of life. With myelination on the optic nerve fibers, the speed of electrical impulses along the optic nerve increases and this will improve vision. Another possibility is that as the brain matures, it will begin to rewire itself so that it becomes a more efficient processor of information. It will develop this ability by learning what things look like by improving the quality of images that are coming in.

Dr. Borchert warned that stem cells will help only the vision problems and not the other traits that are associated with ONH. He feels optimistic about the future of stem cell research and ONH.

New Educational Series on Vision and Aging

*See Well for a Lifetime: An Educational Series on Vision and Aging* was developed by the National Eye Health Education Program (NEHEP) of the National Eye Institute. This series is intended for professionals who work
with older adults in community settings. It is designed to help promote eye health as part of healthy aging.

Download the **See Well for a Lifetime Toolkit** to find science-based, easy-to-understand tools and resources that can be used to educate older adults about age-related eye diseases and conditions, the importance of comprehensive dilated eye exams, and low vision.

This online Toolkit contains three modules that can be used individually or as a series:

**Making Vision a Health Priority**: This module includes information about common vision changes that can occur with age, the importance of comprehensive dilated eye exams, a brief overview of age-related eye diseases and conditions, and things people can do to keep their eyes healthy.

**Age-Related Eye Diseases and Conditions**: This module includes information on age-related eye diseases and conditions that can cause permanent vision loss or blindness and what people can do to protect their vision.

**Low Vision**: This module includes information about what low vision is, vision rehabilitation, and questions to ask an eye care professional and/or a specialist in low vision.

Each module includes the following:
- PowerPoint presentation
- Speaker’s Guide
- Promotional Announcement (that you can customize
- Participants Handout
Participants Evaluation form

To learn more about the NEHEP Vision and Aging Program and to download the See Well for a Lifetime Toolkit, visit the NEHEP Vision and Aging website, www.nei.nih.gov/nehep.

**People**

**Introducing Betty Pannell**

*By Sarah Peterson*

**Editor’s Note:** Betty Pannell has been a member of the Delaware Valley Council of Citizens with Low Vision since 1990.

We all have dreams, and perhaps one of life’s biggest discouragements is hearing others claim that our dreams will never become our reality. With pessimists around every corner, however, certain heroes emerge to prove the skeptics wrong.

Enter Betty Pannell, one of the most amazing individuals I have ever met. Betty’s story confirms that anyone possessing a heart brimming with courage and love for others can overcome the most intimidating obstacles. Betty provides an excellent example of a successful business woman who utilizes her career to make a positive impact in the lives of children.

As long as she can remember, Betty has possessed a special fondness for young children. She began babysitting when she was thirteen. As a student at
Immaculata University, Betty obtained a degree in sociology and a certificate in early childhood education.

Upon graduation Betty found employment in the child daycare field and continued to provide private family childcare. Betty’s dream of a career in childcare had become a reality.

After deciding to move to Philadelphia and offer nanny services to her sister Ellen, an idea began to form. In 1999, Aunt Betty’s Nanny Service was born. After her nephews and niece outgrew her services, she began opening her home to three children or less at a time, acting upon her desire to give each child maximum attention.

Betty claims that her childcare business reflects the philosophies of “an old-fashioned mother.” Her home includes a small back yard where children can play. Betty takes her children on trips to the park, on walks, or on errands.

Betty strives to illustrate her childrearing beliefs through this business at every opportunity. “Give kids time,” she advises. “Don’t push them. Know what their interests are and use these interests for teachable moments, and encourage them to develop their strengths.”

Betty’s education in sociology enables her to understand the dynamics of the group, to observe different learning styles and levels, and to embrace diversity when it arises. As a highly-qualified individual, Betty serves as an advocate for diversity and a healthy child-rearing environment that enables children to develop at their own pace.
Because Betty has low vision, she brings her own diversity to nanny services. This specific challenge, having low vision, certainly has not impeded Betty’s success. Resulting from her premature birth, Betty has had her visual impairment her entire life. She was the only student with low vision in her elementary and high school settings. When she reached her junior year in college, Betty encountered a new freshman who was completely blind. Betty seized this valuable opportunity to serve as a mentor.

One of Betty’s most challenging moments occurred at age fifteen when she was told she would never drive. “The emotional part of having low vision is sometimes heart breaking,” Betty admits. Betty has learned to use mass transit to get to places in Philadelphia and its suburbs. Betty always enjoys access to numerous carpooling opportunities and never minds offering to contribute money towards gas.

Despite these obstacles, Betty consistently maintains a high level of optimism about her condition, especially since she has stable, high-functioning vision and her retinal detachment has been fixed. She also admits to having become very good at listening in order to understand what’s going on around her.

Betty uses several helpful devices. She uses her hand-held magnifier called the Pebble as well as a 2.5-power telescope for reading street signs and menus. Betty uses a stronger 8-power telescope for theatrical
productions and other presentations. Betty frequently uses her white cane. Although her parents received the idea of their daughter using a white cane with some discomfort, Betty advocated for its purpose in her life, as she quickly realized how much independence it offered her. Additionally, Betty finds a flashlight and tinted glasses helpful. These glasses increase the contrast in her vision and reduce glare. Before she began to use these glasses, Betty often suffered from headaches due to squinting. Although all of these things have never increased Betty’s vision, they enable her to use the vision she does have to its highest potential. Besides having her own childcare business despite her low vision, Betty also enjoys opportunities to express her vibrant passion for vocal music. “I’ve been singing as long as I can remember,” Betty shares. After performing as part of a trio at age four, her solo debut at age five, and participating in church musical events at six, Betty was well on her way to becoming an experienced singer. She sang in school choruses. This culminated in her being chosen for the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association District and Regional Choruses. She developed her skill with voice lessons throughout her school years, and she sang in a chorale with talented music majors during college. Other musical involvements include singing with The Norristown Chorale and in many musicals with the Methacton Community Theater. This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary
of Betty’s membership in Mastersingers, a major works chorus. Betty has been on five European tours with Mastersingers. “I couldn’t have had a better musical experience even if I’d been a music professional.” Other musical highlights include singing at Philadelphia’s Academy of Music with Mastersingers, and this past Christmas Season, singing with Peter Nero and the Philly Pops Festival Holiday Chorus.

These musical experiences have encouraged her to become creative in various ways to accommodate for her low vision. Because it takes a while for her musical scores to be enlarged, she simply has learned to memorize the music by listening to those around her. Bifocals have enabled her to successfully see both the conductor’s directions and read the musical score.

Betty also expresses her artistry through her love of photography and art. She is also fond of being active online, especially with Facebook and sites that promote early childhood education.

One of Betty’s most valuable treasures is her relationship with her twin sister Corry of whom she is very fond. Both women share some similar experiences, which include having cerebral palsy and persevering through some depression episodes over the years. (Betty also has two younger sisters, Katherine and Ellen.)

Each aspect of Betty’s life reflects her vibrant passion for communication, musical expression, and bonding through the human experience.
Betty Pannell’s life serves as an example to people with low vision everywhere. On her journey to reaching her dreams, she has gathered several valuable gems of wisdom. “Never be embarrassed to ask for help, even if it feels awkward at times.” We all can relate to swallowing our pride and reaching for a helping hand in order to succeed. Betty’s life also demonstrates that while she has sometimes humbly received help from others, she never hesitates to be the help that others may need, whether they are children requiring attentive, nurturing care or someone simply desiring music in their life.

“Don’t let people talk you out of your dreams. If you have the will, there is a way,” Betty reminds us. Perhaps this is the brightest gem of wisdom she has gathered. People had consistently attempted to talk her out of her dream of a career in Early Childhood Education, assuming that the quality of one’s vision correlates with the quality of childcare. However, Betty’s success completely demolishes the previous negative predictions and paves the way for others to achieve what some consider impossible.

In addition, her story reminds us that sometimes one must possess a different kind of vision that is far from the physical. Because Betty had a clear vision of how she could make a positive impact, she utilized her passion and creativity to achieve her dreams. Aunt Betty’s Nanny Service, http://home.earthlink.net/~aunt_betty
FCC Issues Ground Rules for Video Description
By Eric Bridges

Video described content will be required in 2012 with FCC’s announcement of ground rules for the implementation of the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act. WGBH contributed greatly to the development of this document. ACB's members and affiliates have worked tirelessly over the past several years to insure that video description would once again be required. ACB had a prominent leadership role throughout the legislative and regulatory process to make this a reality. We are now less than a year away from having meaningful access to some of our favorite television programming! Here is a summary of the critical components in FCC's final video description rules.

Commercial network affiliates of ABC, CBS, Fox, and NBC in the top 25 markets must provide 50 hours of described prime-time or children's programming per quarter, starting with the quarter beginning July 1, 2012. This requirement expands to the top 60 markets in July 2015. Cable networks are subject to the same rules. The top 5 are USA, the Disney Channel, TNT,
Nickelodeon, and TBS. These networks are broadcast via their carriers--cable and satellite systems that serve 50,000 or more subscribers (officially "multichannel video programming distributors" - MVPDs - which includes Verizon's FiOS-TV and AT&T's U-verse). This determination of the top 5 is based on Nielsen ratings. These requirements will be updated at three-year intervals.

All broadcast stations associated with any television network must pass through video description when the network provides it, if the broadcast station has the necessary technical capability. All MVPDs of any size must pass through video description of any broadcast station or nonbroadcast network.

Described programs can be counted twice toward this 50-hour requirement; that is, one original airing and one repeat are allowed. The second airing can be in the next quarter from the original airing.

Exemptions can be petitioned-for and granted by the FCC upon a finding that the requirements would be economically burdensome ("imposing significant difficulty or expense"), based on costs, resources, and the operations of the provider.

For such exemptions public notice and comment periods are required. Programs are to be considered exempt until an FCC decision issued.

Complaint procedures are detailed in Report & Order; no private right of action is allowed; that is, consumers cannot sue
Bureau of Engraving Launches EyeNote™ App to Help People Who Are Visually Impaired Denominate US Currency

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) has developed a free downloadable application (app) to assist people who are blind and visually impaired denominate US currency. The app is called EyeNote™. EyeNote™ is a mobile device app designed for Apple iPhone (3G, 3Gs, 4), and the 4th Generation iPod Touch and iPad2 platforms, and is available through the Apple iTunes App Store.

EyeNote™ uses image recognition technology to determine a note’s denomination. The mobile device’s camera requires 51 percent of a note’s scanned image, front or back, to process. In a matter of seconds, EyeNote™ can provide an audible or vibrating response, and can denominate all Federal Reserve notes issued since 1996. Free downloads will be available whenever new US currency designs are introduced. Research indicates that more than 100,000 blind and visually impaired individuals could currently own an Apple iPhone.
The EyeNote™ app is one of a variety of measures the government is working to deploy to assist the visually impaired community to denominate currency, as proposed in a recent Federal Register notice. These measures include implementing a Currency Reader Program whereby a United States resident, who is blind or visually impaired, may obtain a coupon that can be applied toward the purchase of a device to denominate United States currency; continuing to add large high contrast numerals and different background colors to redesigned currency; and, raised tactile features may be added to redesigned currency, which would provide users with a means of identifying each denomination via touch.

More information is available at http://www.eyenote.gov or through email at eyenote@bep.gov.

Rain Dancers Wanted
By George A. Covington

Editor’s Note: George Covington’s essay appeared in the Alpine Avalanche, July 28, 2011. George was the first editor of CCLVI News. Texas has just experienced the driest nine months in its long and storied history. Everything’s big in Texas, but we’re sure to heck not going to brag about the drought. More than half the lakes in Texas are either dry or below half their normal
water levels. Because of an early Texas policy mishap we lack the basic elements of weather control. How did the early frontier’s men and women know that their ancestors would pay dearly for them having shot all the Indians? No Indians, no rain dances, no rain. While this lack of foresight continues to manifest itself in today’s water policies, we can feel the impact now. Next door, in Pecos County, a rich rancher is attempting to sell millions of gallons of water a day to a city 150 miles north. He doesn’t seem to remember that in west Texas you drink the whiskey and fight over the water. The Alpine City Council allows tens of thousands of gallons of water to leak out of the municipal swimming pool even though they have recognized the pool’s problems for many years. Recently it was discovered that certain fire hydrants had no water and no one knows where the water is, or has gone.

I could suggest that we pray for rain, but I’m afraid that the lightening danger to many of my friends would be far too great. What’s left? As I see it, the only weapon we have is our timeless, and ever present, sense of humor.

Shortly after arriving in the Chihuahua Desert, I asked Real Estate tycoon, Johnny Carpenter, how much rain I could expect a year in Alpine. Johnny replied, “We get about 16 inches a year, which doesn’t sound like much, unless you’re here the day we get it.” About a month later, we got four inches of rain in only a few hours and the south side of town almost
floated away. While Johnny gave me my first rain jokes, I’ve collected a few more over the years. Everyone knows the old, “It’s so dry I saw two mesquite trees chasing a dog.” Another favorite is, “We got six inches of rain yesterday, that is six inches between the drops.”

It has been so dry and hot that I asked several friends if they had any new humor relating to both rain and heat. Dawn Lacy, of the 06 Ranch empire, sent the following two: “A visitor to Alpine Texas once asked, ‘Does it ever rain out here?’ A rancher answered, ‘Yes, it does. Do you remember that part in the Bible where it rained for 40 days and 40 nights?’ The visitor replied, ‘Yes, I'm familiar with Noah's flood.’ ‘Well,’ the rancher puffed up, ‘we got 'bout two and a half inches during that spell.’” She adds, “You learn that a seat belt makes a pretty good branding iron.” Jan Moeller, the talent, brains and heart of the Big Bend Arts Council, wrote, “I wish I could help, but I don’t know what rain is.” Susan Chisolm says, “I got these jokes from Tom Alex of the Big Bend National Park: It's so dry in Terlingua that the Baptists are starting to baptize by sprinkling, the Methodists are using wet-wipes, the Presbyterians are giving out rain-checks, and the Catholics are praying for the wine to turn back into water.” A friend of mine who was hiking out in the Solitario said he'd killed a mosquito that was carrying a canteen. “I have started giving my chickens crushed ice to keep them from laying hard-boiled eggs.”
Angel Rodriguez is certain it will never rain until his room-mate cleans up his side of the house.

Also there have been more, and larger, grass fires than ever recorded. Marfa’s Stone House fire took out more than 312,000 acres. A series of fires in the surrounding counties added another 300,000. If this keeps up, they’ll probably add fireflies to the no burn ban.

For the past two days, we have heard thunder from large, ominous clouds. Yesterday, I was actually hit by one drop on each of my arms and then it cleared up. I’m hoping that by writing this column, the rain gods will see this as the ultimate joke to let the clouds rip. None of this would have happened if Al Gore hadn’t invented Global Warming.

(Columnist’s Note: A few hours after completing this column last week, we received twenty-seven hundredths of an inch of rain. This represents the most rain we’ve had since last September.)

On-line Shopping Tips for Individuals with Low Vision.
Summarized by Matt Kickbush

This summary is from a Let’s Talk Low Vision Teleconference with Dr. Bill Takeshita on June 22, 2011. This conference featured Julian Vargas and Donna, a caller from St. Louis. Dr. Bill began this teleconference with this question: How secure is it to shop on-line and
provide your credit card numbers? Mr. Vargas stated that many web sites are secure, and it’s much safer providing your credit card numbers on-line rather than using your credit card for purchases over the telephone. When shopping on-line, it is recommended to check the address bar of the web site to see if the address begins with https in the left hand side of the address bar; the “s” in the https indicates that this web page is secure. All transmissions to and from this web site will be encrypted, which will make hacking of the web page difficult. Sometimes when supplying your credit card number via the telephone, the individual can intercept your personal information; however most individuals taking your orders over the telephone are honest and trustworthy. Making purchases over the phone can be more convenient for some individuals rather than using the internet.

Mr. Vargas recommends using a credit card when shopping on-line rather than using a debit card. He strongly urges the use of credit cards for the purpose of fraudulent charges. Unlike a normal credit card that sends you a bill every month, debit cards debit directly from your account instantly. If someone gets a hold of your card or there are wrongful charges, these charges can instantly empty out your account. With a credit card, you have protection, such as a monthly statement, which will show any type of fraudulent charge. When this occurs, you
then can file a fraud report with the credit card company, which will initiate an investigation. Usually, if fraud is proven, you will never have to pay these charges.

Another safe way of shopping on-line is using a Pay Pal account. Pay Pal is an on-line service that allows you to make payments on-line. This account will electronically connect to your specified banking account. You can either deposit money into your Pay Pal account or you can transfer a certain amount of money into this account when it comes time to make a specific payment, such as a bid on e-bay. Many merchants will accept Pay Pal accounts. You can set up a Pay Pal account by visiting their web page at www.paypal.com.

Dr. Bill discussed the challenges of opening or accessing accounts, due to what are known as captchas. Captchas are a series of letters and or numbers that are all scrambled together visually. These letters and numbers need to be retyped in order to gain access to certain accounts. Donna mentions that sometimes there is a link that will read or voice these captchas in audio. She stated that it is very challenging to read captchas visually because it is hard to distinguish between the letters and numbers. Mr. Vargas said that, for him, using the screen magnification software MAGic and a portable video magnifier called Pebble helps greatly; these two devices help to magnify the captchas. He mentioned that many times the audio links for
These captchas sound garbled and unclear. Many of these captchas cannot be inverted, which means that the contrast cannot be reversed, so that white letters appear on a black background. Both Donna and Julian both admit that it may take two or three tries to enter the correct captcha.

Mr. Vargas made some recommendations when shopping on-line using the screen reading software JAWS. Check to see if the on-line web page has a text only link or a screen reader friendly web page; Amazon.com is one on-line shopping source that offers this option. JAWS versions 11 and 12 have a “research it” tool that will connect you directly to Amazon, where you can begin searching for specific items within Amazon. The “research it” tool can be accessed within JAWS 11 or 12 using the key command insert + space + R.

Accessible Textbook Finder

Editor’s Note: This information was posted on the ACB leadership listserv by Donna Pomerantz.

The Accessible Textbook Finder (ATF) searches multiple sources of accessible books and provides the results in a combined format.

The ATF search includes six accessible media producers and libraries. Search results and materials are provided by the individual sources. Additional sources may be added during the beta.


Advocacy

Access Board Releases Rights-of-Way Guidelines for Public Comment

On July 26th the U.S. Access Board released for public comment proposed guidelines for accessible public rights-of-way. The guidelines provide design criteria for public streets and sidewalks, including pedestrian access routes, street crossings, curb ramps and blended transitions, on-street parking, street furniture, and other elements. The specifications comprehensively address access that accommodates all types of disabilities, including mobility and vision impairments, while taking into account conditions and constraints that may impact compliance, such as space limitations and terrain, as indicated in an overview of the rule.

"The Board's proposed guidelines are the first of their kind in detailing how public streets and sidewalks can be designed and built to serve all pedestrians, including those with disabilities," notes Nancy Starnes, Chair of the
Access Board. "A tremendous amount of work, research, outreach, and input from stakeholders and other interested groups have gone into the making of this proposal, and the Board welcomes and looks forward to additional feedback from the public in making the guidelines final."

The guidelines, once finalized and implemented as standards, will apply to newly constructed or altered portions of public rights-of-way covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). They will also apply to public rights-of-way built or altered with funding from the Federal government under the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) and the Rehabilitation Act. Existing pedestrian networks not undergoing alteration will not be required to meet these requirements. The rights-of-way guidelines complement, and in some areas reference, the Board's ADA and ABA Accessibility Guidelines for buildings and facilities.

The new proposal incorporates public comment the Board received on earlier drafts of the guidelines. While developing these guidelines, the Board has conducted an active outreach and training program to provide needed guidance on the subject in the interim. Under this program, the Board has provided training across the country to various audiences and has met with state and local transportation and public works departments on a regular basis to share information and best practices. In addition, the Board has developed
resources, including design guides and checklists, and has sponsored research on detectable warnings, accessible pedestrian signals, and traffic roundabouts.

The proposed guidelines can be accessed, and comments to them submitted or viewed, through the Federal government's rulemaking portal at www.regulations.gov. Instructions for submitting comments are included in the proposal. The deadline for comments is November 23, 2011. The Board will hold public hearings on the guidelines in Dallas on September 12 and in Washington, D.C. on November 9.


Further information on this rulemaking is available on the rights-of-way homepage or by contacting Scott Windley at row@access-board.gov, (202) 272-0025 (v), or (202) 272-0028 (TTY).

Assistive Technology

Serotek’s DocuScan Plus OCR Goes Multi-Platform with Support for the Mac

Serotek Corporation announces the availability of DocuScan Plus for the Apple (AAPL) Macintosh platform. DocuScan Plus, released for the
Microsoft Windows platform in November 2010, allows individuals with a computer and attached imaging device to scan and convert printed materials into text, and to store these documents in the cloud for easy retrieval on either Operating System from anywhere. The newly released Mac application contains the same compelling features as found in its very successful Windows counterpart, including easy conversion to daisy, Braille and MP3 formats, sending to Amazon Kindle, password protection options, and saving to a local computer in large print or Rich Text Format. DocuScan Plus represents the first fully accessible cloud-based OCR solution to be available in the Mac app store.

DocuScan Plus is designed with an easy and intuitive interface, and works seamlessly with Apple’s Voiceover screen reader and Zoom magnifier. The application can be used in conjunction with the wide variety of Braille displays which are supported with Voiceover. The $299 price for this service provides users the ability to utilize DocuScan Plus on both the Windows and Mac platforms without paying a premium. This unique approach continues Serotek’s philosophy of offering accessibility anywhere at an affordable price.

The app is now available through the Mac app store. Learn more about the DocuScan Plus by visiting www.docuscanplus.com

Serotek Corporation
Serotek Corporation is a leading technology company that develops software and manufactures accessibility solutions under the System Access brand. Committed to the mission of providing accessibility anywhere, Serotek began with the launch of the first online community specifically designed to meet the needs of people with visual impairment. Since then, Serotek has introduced several powerful, affordable solutions that require minimal training and investment. For more information, visit www.serotek.com.

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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, Mike Godino, 104 Tilrose Avenue, Malverne, NY 11565-2040. Our Tax ID number is 1317540.
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An Affiliate of the American Council of the Blind
2011 Membership Application

Name___________________________________________________
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