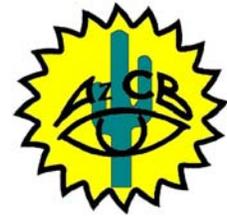


Fore~Sight



Newsletter of the Arizona Council of the Blind

Summer 2012

President's Message From Barbara McDonald

I still can't quite believe that I am once again the President of the Arizona Council of the Blind. Elections are held once a year at the AzCB State Convention Membership Meeting. Our 41st Annual Conference and Convention was held in Tucson this year.

First, I would like to introduce you to the current AzCB Officers and Directors.

President: Barbara McDonald, Phoenix

1st Vice-President: Daniel Martinez, Phoenix

2nd Vice President: Sharon Booker, Green Valley

Secretary: Jesse Tharin, Tucson

Treasurer: Timothy Connell, Phoenix

Director: Jessica Arnold, Phoenix

Director: Thom Booker, Green Valley

Director: Ted Chittenden, Phoenix

Director: Janet Kells, Tucson

It has been quite some time since we have had four residents from the Southern Arizona area on the board.

Second, I would like to thank the out going officers and directors: President Ron Brooks, Phoenix; 2nd Vice President Ruth Druding, Phoenix; Secretary Sharon Carpenter, Phoenix and Director David Steinmetz, Chandler.

President Continued

These volunteers gave hours of their time to make AzCB a successful state affiliate of the American Council of the Blind (ACB). I am grateful for their dedication.

I am also grateful to Tom Belsan, who recently retired as our webmaster. Tom is responsible for beginning our website and maintaining it for 15 years. He had a long list of responsibilities, and will be difficult to replace. His work probably adds up to thousands of unpaid hours. I am glad to say that he and his wife, Ruth, are not retiring as members.

Before I started this article, I looked at the membership list. There were names of members that I had known a long time. There were names of people that I did not know. I was sad to see some members had left for whatever reason. I was even sadder to see that three members had died. Dorothy Levinson was the treasurer of the Southern Arizona chapter. Margo Posso and Pearl Bailey were both members of the Maricopa County Club of the Blind. Pearl had been a member since the 1970's, and had met Richard Bailey, our former chaplain, at one of their dances.

ACB and AzCB are grass roots organizations. That means that blindness related issues start from the bottom and work up to the top. I will depend on all of you to help me learn about those issues to make AzCB a successful state affiliate for ACB.

There are many things we as a state affiliate need to work on. We need to be advocates for national and local issues related to all blind or visually impaired people. We need to advertise through public relations and increase our membership throughout the state. Of course we want to continue to help Arizona residents through our scholarship fund and help people get vision equipment that they may not be able to afford.

President Continued

We also need to keep all our members informed about what is happening. All of this will require raising money to accomplish these goals. As I said before, to be a successful president, I will need all of your help.

If you have suggestions to accomplish goals, you can email me at barbara.mcdonald@azcb.org, write me at 1727 West Osborn Road, Phoenix, AZ 85015, or call me at 602-273-1510 and leave a message. I will return your call.

I will be attending the ACB National Conference in Louisville, KY the second week in July. I will share some of the things I learn in our next newsletter.

Think and stay cool during the summer. See if it helps to listen to a book that takes place in an area with a cold climate.



Mark your calendar for

VRATE 2012

Arizona's **V**ision **R**ehabilitation and **A**ssistive **T**echnology
Expo is For You!

VRATE Is Free To The Public!

Friday, November 30th
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Shriners Auditorium
552 N. 40th St.
Phoenix, AZ 85008

Presentations and Exhibitors Focused on:

- vision loss and rehabilitation,
- life-changing Assistive Technology,
- resources for combined vision and hearing loss, and
- available community services

www.vrate.org

Turning Over A New Leash: Guide Dog Users of Arizona Update By Lisa Brooks

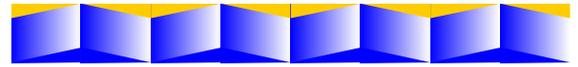
The 2012 convention in Tucson brought lots of changes to the Guide Dog Users of Arizona affiliate. We are building on the strong foundation created by our founding members, re-strengthening our core group, and building for our future to help new members get the best out of living in Arizona with their guide dogs. Here are all the details.

Our newly elected slate of officers is a mix of familiar faces. Our president is Connie Jacomini, vice-president Ron Brooks, secretary Lisa Brooks, Treasurer is Jacque Olsen, and our board member is Cindy Rogers.

Although our intentions are to work hard, we all agree that we also need a little levity and I think we have struck that balance by planning our next few events. By the time you read this, we will have had 2 working board meetings, 1 coffee social at the Starbucks in Mesa, and we will have finalized the details for the schedule for the rest of the year. This will include a pool party in August, a day of workshops/presentations in the fall, and a few more board meetings added in to the mix.

All of our events are open to members and their families, non-members, and to people who care about the professional and personal lives of our guide dog teams in Arizona.

To keep up to date on all that is going on with the GDUA, we have lots of communication avenues. If you've got email, we've got a mailman, and it can deliver 2 types of lists to your inbox. If you like your email short and sweet, we have an announce-only list which as it's name implies is pretty self explanatory. Designed to keep businesses, our members, and nonmembers informed of our events and meeting schedules, and it allows for only the moderator to send out messages.



GDUA Continued

However, if you prefer to chat about life with your dog, have questions, want to debate the best pet foods, or just would like a more interactive list, then the GDUA chat list may be a better fit, and if you don't want to choose, you can join both. If your style is more towards the web read and go, we've got you covered as well. Social media fans can find us on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/gduaz> and we encourage web visitors to check out our new internet home at <http://www.gduaz.org>. We'll post our events schedule, membership information, and instructions on joining those email lists mentioned in the previous paragraph.

As we move forward through the 2012 year both literally and figuratively, we encourage your participation, ask you to spread the word, and hope you will join us in making Arizona a better place for the two and four-legged among us.

Guide Dog Users of Arizona

www.gduaz.org

Follow us on Twitter <http://www.twitter.com/gduaz>

info@gduaz.org

AIB New Chapter Outreach From Carlos Paraskevas

I am interested in exploring the possibility of starting a local Industries chapter of the AzCB. As employees or past employees of Arizona Industries for the Blind, you know how much encouragement and support we share with one another. We need to share that positive energy and increase our influence as builders of our community. If you would like to explore this possibility with me, please contact me at 480-388-6395 or by email hicarlos@cox.net

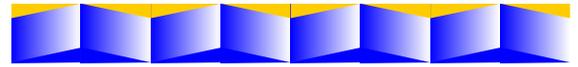


Descriptive Movies

Living with degenerative vision loss, in my case, rare and incurable, not only chips away at your sight but also chips away at your enjoyment of everyday activities. Over time, I've learned to find enjoyment in less visual activities while choosing not to participate in more visual ones such as motion pictures. Sitting in the theater's front row wasn't comfortable for my sighted companions and I often failed to have an emotional reaction with the audience. I was missing important scene details and the experience only added to my frustration. I began declining invitations to movies and eventually the invitations stopped. While my coworkers and friends discussed the latest blockbuster, I sat in silence, reaffirming their attitudes that the blind can't enjoy movies.

After the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that theaters must offer adaptive equipment to the blind and deaf, I attended one of Harkins promotional events with members from the Southern Arizona Council of the Blind to show my support.

Harkins chose "The Lorax," a cartoon with an environmental message. The story is a timeless tale of a young man's passions for the lovely maiden that takes him on a journey to save all creatures, big and small. The movie began with upbeat music, colorful scenery, and animated characters that were unpredictable and required a great deal of explanation to a low vision viewer. This seemed overwhelming when adding in the static noise coming from the headset provided by the theater. The static noise drowned out the audio unless the user faced directly forward. It took some doing but I was determined that this new technology would allow me to watch movies with my sighted friends again. After forcing myself to relax, I was able to focus on the movie and found it rather entertaining. While I think another movie for a more mature audience would have been a better choice for me, it is still unclear whether I will put in the effort to reintroduce myself to this culture I've lived without.



Movies Continued

Turnout for this event may have been low, however, this should not diminish the importance that reliable, accessible technology is to those living with a disability. It may take some effort from the motion picture industry and theaters to appeal to this portion of a population that has felt excluded from theaters for years. Anytime people, regardless of ability, are giving equal access and are accepted into their society they will respond positively and become more active, productive members of that society. I would like to thank all those involved in making descriptive movies available. And most of all, I would like to express my appreciation to those that understand the bigger picture; it is our passions that show us the true meaning of our happy endings.

Marlene Dekker, Southern Arizona Chapter

THE MARICOPA CLUB

The members of the Maricopa Club will have their pre-summer get together at the house of President Ruth Druding. It will be on June 13, 2012 from 2:00 to 3:30. Members are encouraged to bring refreshments to share. For further information, please call Ruth at 623-937-1211.

The MCCB will return to their regular meeting schedule in September. No activities are planned for July and August.

Check the Maricopa Club page on the website at www.azcb.org where the September meeting details will be posted as they become available.

Making Signalized Intersections Safer By Dan Martinez

On April 26th 2012, the Maricopa County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) hosted a demonstration of a state-of-the-art transportation technology system for vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-roadway communications.. MCDOT selected Daisy Mountain Drive in Anthem as a test site for this new technology aimed at making signalized intersections safer. Several people who are blind were invited to attend including David Steinmetz and I. We endured a heavy morning rain as the demonstration began.

Nearly 13 percent of firefighters and police officers that die in the line of duty are killed in vehicle-related incidents. The SMARTDrive technology will test the system's ability to communicate and give traffic signal priority to multiple emergency vehicles converging at the same time at the same intersection. This vehicle prioritization system can help prevent emergency responders from colliding with one another at strategic intersections. Additionally, as more and more automobiles are equipped with onboard devices that can communicate with traffic signals, other vehicles on the roadway, and "real-time" traffic control centers, this system will help prevent collisions between emergency vehicles and private automobiles.

You may be wondering what this demonstration has to do with blindness or low vision. The goal for the use of this equipment is to make signalized intersections safer for everyone. Along with its traffic control functions, the demonstration technology also featured a smartphone accessible pedestrian crosswalk application.

If you are like me, you may have difficulty crossing intersections due to a lack of information. When I approach an intersection, especially an intersection I am not familiar with, I have to stop and figure out traffic flow and traffic patterns as well as the geometry of the intersection.

Intersections Continued

Locating the crosswalk, determining when to cross and maintaining alignment with the crosswalk while crossing can be a problem for me. Current Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) system requires me to search for a vibrotactile pushbutton, if one even exists, requiring me to move away from my direction of travel.

Due to the high cost of the APS installation, most agencies do not install them at most signalized intersections. For me, the auditory guiding cues provided by the APS are often inaudible because of the traffic noise. To my knowledge, there is no standard for APS design. I have experienced coo coos, twitters, buzzers, beepers, chirpers and spoken word audio from various APS devices. I can and do get confused. There is room for improvement.

One of those potential improvements was part of the SMART-Drive demonstration. When a person who is blind is using an accessible smart phone approaches a traffic control center installed intersection, he or she has access to real time intersection information. Without searching for pushbuttons or moving out of one's path of travel, APS information comes directly and instantly to the smartphone. The application provides intersection signal sequence information, walk or wait, for the direction the pedestrian is facing.

While this was just a demonstration, the system test equipment included short-range communication devices, integrated WiFi Bluetooth connections, closed-circuit TV cameras, traffic detection and data collection software programs as well as fiber optic signal interconnect systems. This equipment will be project tested in a city in the Midwest. I predict that within ten years we will see widespread use of this kind of application.

THE PHOENIX CHAPTER

Trying a new location, the Phoenix Chapter Members met at Applebee's Restaurant located at 2 East Camelback Road on May 22, 2012.

A task force was appointed to search for a new meeting location. River Forest agreed to find some possible social events we could attend during the months of June and August.. Because some members are out of town, a July meeting is not usually held.

There was a discussion whether our purpose and goals had changed over the years since the chapter was started in 2007. This subject will be placed on the September agenda.

Since transportation is important to all of us, Barbara gave the most recent update about the Valley Metro increases for July 1, 2012. Dial-a-Ride's fare will go from \$3.50 to \$4.00 one way. The monthly pass will continue to be \$65.00. The fares will also increase both on the light rail and the bus service. Buying an all day pass before your light rail or bus trip, will save you money. At the same time, East Valley will be changing to a taxi vehicles option for paratransit transportation. Both East Valley and Scottsdale Dial-a-Ride offer a taxicab voucher program, which also can save you money.. Contact Valley Metro at 602-253-5000 for more details.

The next business meeting for the Phoenix Chapter will be held in September. Please check the website page at www.azcb.org. All social events and meeting information will be posted on this page. You can also call 602-273-1510.

Have a wonderful summer!

AzCB Presidents Since 1971: A legacy of Leadership

Part One By Robert L Williams

Thirteen members of the Arizona Council of the Blind have been elected to the presidency of the organization since empowerment of its first governing board on March 27, 1971 at the Phoenix Center for the Blind, now the Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired. This multi-part series provides a snapshot word-picture of those members who have borne the mantle of presidential leadership with bits of biographical and program-related data where available.

1971 to 1975

In 1971, John VanLandingham became the first person to serve as president of the Arizona Council of the Blind. John was a chief organizer and charter member of AzCB. He was an attorney, Superior Court Judge for Maricopa County, member of the Arizona State House of Representatives, legal counsel to Arizona Agricultural Relations Board and later he was in a private practice partnership with offices in Phoenix at 5800 N. 19th Avenue, Suite 206.

John attended Kansas State School for the Blind. He was licensed to practice law in Kansas and Arizona. The exact date that he, his wife Ruby and his family relocated from Kansas to Arizona is not known. We know however that he served in the Arizona Attorney General's Office in 1960 and was appointed by Gov. Sam Goddard to fill a Superior Court vacancy in 1965 or 66. He was unsuccessful in a bid for election to a full term. Later he served in the state legislature. In 1972, he established the AZCB Federal Credit Union with his wife Ruby as the first paid manager. In 1975, John VanLandingham wrote a grant proposal and with funding from that grant he organized a non-profit known as AzCB Social Service and Rehabilitation, Inc. to provide work for blind persons who could not travel to Arizona Industries for the Blind or other places of employment.

Legacy Continued

A building was purchased at 2620 North 37th Drive for the workshop. The project ran into financial difficulty and was taken over by Cactus Industries, another program of sheltered employment for people with all types of disabilities. From the beginning, John Vanlandingham encouraged members of AzCB to attend annual national conventions of ACB when possible.

1975 to 1977

Harlene Stone, later Anderson due to remarriage, was born legally blind in 1922 in Missouri. She started attending Montana residential school for the blind at age 6 and graduated at age 19. Later, she relocated to Arizona where she became one of the state's first rehabilitation teachers instructing students in Braille, typing and other adaptive skills.

Harlene was a multi-talented musician skilled in piano, organ and keyboard as well as a vocalist. She last appeared on the AzCB annual state convention program agenda in year 2000 and passed away of cancer on December 15, 2002. Reportedly, during her Presidency, she often felt frustrated in her attempt to provide leadership to the Council due to aggressive behind the scenes management by her predecessor John Vanlandingham.

1977 to undefined

Pete DaVault, an employee with the Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration, served as AzCB President in 1977. The exact nature of his employment or the activities of his AzCB presidency are unknown at the time of this writing. We believe his tenure was cut short due to health problems. We are engaged in on going research and will update you as information becomes available and time allows. If you have any information about Pete DaVault, please share it with us by calling the AzCB phone line 602-273-1510 and leave a message. We will return your call.

Legacy Continued

Indefinite to 1981

Richard "Dick" Bailey became the leader of the AzCB sometime in 1977 or 1978. Dick and his wife Pearl were Charter members of the Council. He attended Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind in Tucson where a plaque recognizing Dick for his accomplishments and commitment to the school is proudly displayed at the Tucson campus.

His tenure as AzCB president immediately preceded the 22nd annual national Convention of ACB in Phoenix in 1983. Dick also served several terms as President of Maricopa County Club for the Blind and served the Council as Chaplin from 1989 until his passing on July 3, 2008. As Chaplin, he coordinated annual state conventions worship services on Sunday mornings for a number of years. Married many years to Pearl, together they attended numerous ACB national conventions together.

Richard was employed with Good Samaritan Hospital many years and after his retirement he served there as a volunteer. He also served several terms on the Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment as well as the Glendale Commission on Persons with Disabilities. Over the years, Dick served in just about every position on the AzCB board.

1983 to 1987

Ruth Druding, an AzCB Charter member, was President during ACB annual National convention in Phoenix in 1983. She was president in 1986 when AzCB magic show at Hilton hotel in downtown Phoenix raised over \$14,000 for program operations and local blindness-related organizations. Her testimony in Maricopa County Superior Court proceedings in the early 1980's played a major role in having AzCB receive a bequest of approximately \$29,000.

Legacy Continued

The will donor-benefactor did not name a specific beneficiary other than “the blind and the handicapped”. Ruth’s presented compelling confirmation that the Arizona Council of the Blind would fulfill the donor’s requirements.

During her tenure as President, Ruth led efforts to expand the Council statewide by coordinating membership recruitment seminars in Flagstaff and held meeting in Tucson from time to time.

Ruth is a graduate of Arizona State University with a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree in Psychology. She was employed for some time as a Rehab Technician 2 with the Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration’s behavior modification training program for the severely mentally disabled.

Ruth and her husband, Edwin, now deceased, attended annual national conventions and conferences of ACB for about 26 consecutive years. Ruth also served several terms of office on the Governor’s Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment.

Ruth, a consummate organizer, chaired many state convention planning committees and other special projects. At the conclusion of her presidency, due to careful financial management the AzCB realized a financial balance on hand of approximately \$70,000.

Look for part two in next edition of Fore~Sight

Arizona Council of the Blind Membership

Your friends at AzCB want you to join us in making the world a better place for people who are blind or who have low vision. Become a member by visiting our website www.azcb.org and click on ("Become a Member of the Arizona Council of the Blind or Renew Here") If you are not a computer user, call us at (602) 273-1510 or if your out of the local calling area (888) 273-1510; leave a message and we will be happy assist you in completing a membership application.

Your \$10 one-year membership fee gives you the pride of belonging to both the AzCB and to the American Council of the Blind (ACB). You will also want to participate in one of our special interest or local affiliates (additional membership fees may apply.)

Guide Dog Users of Arizona: (GDUA) is a non-profit membership organization of guide dog users, puppy raisers, and sighted or visually impaired individuals committed to an enhanced quality of life for all Arizona's guide dog teams. www.gduaz.org

Maricopa Club: The Club's primary focus is as the social wing of the AzCB. For more information on how to join our club or any other question email us at: maricopa@azcb.org

Phoenix Chapter: The chapter provides opportunities for blind and visually impaired individuals along with their friends and family to come together to address important issues in our community and to provide social opportunities for chapter members and guests. www.phoenixazcb.org

Southern Arizona Chapter: Our chapter's primary focus is on issues of the blind in southern Arizona. We are growing and would like to invite you to join us. For more information on how to join our club or any other question visit: www.azcb.org/phoenix_chapter.html

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