The Braille Forum

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**The American Council of the Blind strives to increase the independence, security, equality of opportunity, and to improve quality of life for all blind and visually impaired people.**

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**The Braille Forum™ is available in braille, large print, half-speed four-track cassette tape, and via e-mail. Subscription requests, address changes, and items intended for publication should be sent to Sharon Lovering at the address above, or via e-mail to slovering@acb.org. Submission deadlines are the first of the month.**

**The American Council of the Blind™ is a membership organization made up of more than 70 state and special-interest affiliates. To join, visit the ACB web site and complete an application form, or contact the national office at the number listed above.**

**Those much-needed contributions, which are tax-deductible, can be sent to Mike Godino at the above mailing address. If you wish to remember a relative or friend, the national office can make printed cards available for this purpose. To remember the American Council of the Blind in your Last Will and Testament, you may include a special paragraph for that purpose. If your wishes are complex, contact the ACB national office.**

**Join the MMS program and help improve tomorrow today in ACB. Contact Ron Milliman by e-mail, rmilliman@insightbb.com, or by phone at (270) 782-9325 and get started making tomorrow look brighter today!**

**To make a contribution to ACB via the Combined Federal Campaign, use this number: 11155.**

**For the latest in legislative and governmental news, call the “Washington Connection” toll-free at (800) 424-8666, 5 p.m. to midnight Eastern time, or visit the Washington Connection online at http://www.acb.org.**

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## Correction

**In the January issue, one of the CCLVI scholarship winners’ names was misspelled. The correct spelling is Lisa Drzewucki. We apologize for the error.**

## Forum Subscription Notes

**You can now get “The Braille Forum” by podcast! To subscribe, go to “The Braille Forum” page on www.acb.org. If you do not yet have a podcast client, you can download one from the Forum page.**

**To subscribe to “The Braille Forum” via e-mail, send a blank e-mail message to brailleforum-L-subscribe@acb.org.**

## Are You Moving? Do You Want to Change Your Subscription?

**Contact Sharon Lovering in the ACB national office, 1-800-424-8666, or via e-mail, slovering@acb.org. Give her the information, and she’ll take care of the changes for you.**

# President’s Message:

# Accessible Currency, Or Expensive Technology?

# by Mitch Pomerantz

**The inspiration for this month’s column came as the result of a post to ACB-L of an article concerning a cell phone being demonstrated by a staff member of the National Federation of the Blind. This cell phone was equipped with software which would allow a blind person to use it as a currency identifier by holding the phone over the bill in question for approximately 20 seconds. The phone would then announce the denomination of the bill. Naturally, this incredible new technological advancement was bally-hooed by the Federation spokesperson as the next great step in achieving full equality with the sighted by permitting blind people to identify currency without assistance. For around $2,100 (a mere $600 for the phone itself), blind folks could add one more tool to a growing arsenal of NFB-sponsored and marketed gadgets and gizmos.**

**OK, let me insert a disclaimer here. I am not one of those blind people who must have the latest and greatest piece of technology as soon as it hits the market. At the mid-Atlantic convention, I was the high bidder for the Victor Reader Stream that was being auctioned. Upon being declared the winner, I immediately handed it over to Donna for her use. I’m doing just fine with a three- or four-year-old Talkman for reading on my twice-daily commute between home and office. In Donna’s mind (and in the minds of many of our friends), I’m considered a dinosaur. So be it!**

**Having said that, I want you to imagine the following scenario: You are in line at your local supermarket or convenience store. You’ve just received a call from your spouse asking you to pick up a couple of items on your way home because you’re having unexpected company for dinner. At the head of an ever-lengthening line of harried shoppers is someone who is obviously blind and has just received a handful of bills from the equally harried clerk. The blind individual whips out a little device which he/she holds over each bill in turn for approximately 20 seconds before carefully folding and putting it in a wallet. Consider your blood pressure and stress level rising exponentially as this process is repeated five or six times before the individual abandons his/her place at the register. How’s that for promoting an image of full equality in society?**

**This obsession with the notion that technology will somehow foster equality with our sighted peers can be carried to absurd extremes, as in this instance. Yes, technology can make our lives easier, as it certainly has for the general public. However, technology does not typically impact negative public attitudes about blindness. To my mind, such negative attitudes are still the biggest barrier we must overcome in order to achieve that illusory ideal we call equality.**

**There is a far better and more rational approach to achieving this goal. Actually, it involves a two-pronged effort. The first is education, to address the myths and misconceptions surrounding blindness. The second encompasses both legislative and, when necessary, legal action in the courts to guarantee our civil rights.**

**The latter strategy is exemplified by ACB’s championing of accessible currency. Sometime this spring, the American Council of the Blind will learn whether the D.C. Appellate Court will uphold the decision in district court which supported our contention that the U.S. Treasury Department was in violation of the Rehabilitation Act by failing to provide meaningful access to currency for blind and visually impaired people. I believe that the court will uphold the original decision in ACB’s favor.**

**Those who advocate for a high-tech solution to all of our access problems ignore two fundamental truths. First, that most people who are blind or have low vision are in the lowest income brackets. It would be unthinkable to spend $2,000 on a cell phone even if they had that kind of money. For them, $2,000 represents two, three or perhaps four months’ rent, not to mention food, clothing and/or medicine. Second, that the vast majority of those comprising the “blind community” joined it after the age of 60 and, as such, are far less inclined to use technology than their children and grandchildren.**

**The inescapable conclusion one is forced to draw from the announcement of this magical money-identifying cell phone is that it is not really intended to aid the average blind or visually impaired person. Not at all! It is aimed at the elite blind: those people who are employed in jobs which pay sufficiently well to place them in the so-called middle class or higher and are either young enough or technologically savvy enough to be comfortable with such devices.**

**To my way of thinking, a technological approach to identifying currency is the wrong road to travel. Yes, some of our members will undoubtedly purchase this cell phone simply because they are enamored with new technology. If you can afford it and you’re into such things, great! Personally, I’d rather spend money on keeping up our home, going to a good restaurant from time to time, and traveling. As they say, “to each his [or her] own.” ACB’s members do not comprise an elite class of blind and visually impaired people. The organization is made up of a broad cross-section of this nation’s blind: poor and well-off; high-tech oriented and technological troglodytes; older and younger, and thousands of us in-between. The American Council of the Blind — in keeping with its broad-based membership — will fight and win the battle for the only appropriate solution which takes all of us equally into account: fully accessible currency.**

# Running Along the Rail:

# ACB Convention 2008

# by Carla Ruschival

**The race is on! We’re inviting speakers, selecting menus, organizing tours, assigning meeting rooms, and registering exhibitors and sponsors. We’re planning the 2008 ACB convention!**

**Convention dates are July 5-12; the place, Louisville, Ky. Read on for details and to see what’s new this month.**

**Often people ask if there are activities that can help them in their careers. They want to know about information available on important issues, and how they can learn more about new adaptive technology. Here’s a sampling of these outstanding opportunities.**

## Exhibits

**Compare and contrast the latest products for blind and visually impaired people. Discover which video magnifier, braille device or speech program best meets your needs. Examine tutorials, print/braille books, watches, and an endless variety of products for work, school and daily living. Collect materials to take home to others in your office or organization. You will want to spend hours and hours browsing the exhibit hall; it opens on Saturday, July 5, at 1:00 and closes on Thursday, July 10, at 1:00.**

## Workshops and Focus Groups

**Every convention features unique opportunities to learn new skills, tips and techniques on a wide range of topics. Seminars on diabetes, employment issues, and information access to off‑the‑shelf technology are some examples. There’s instruction on high‑tech products such as screen readers, braille notetakers, low‑vision products, and much more.**

## Programs and Discussions

**ACB general sessions (Sunday evening, Monday‑Thursday 8:30 a.m.‑noon, and all day Friday) address major issues such as education, rehabilitation, employment, access, health‑related issues and much more. The presentation by a Talking Book narrator and update on library services are always popular. While the 2008 program is not yet complete, you can be assured that it will be exciting and information‑packed.**

**ACB committees, special‑interest affiliates and others sponsor an endless variety of break‑out sessions and small‑group discussions. Look for informative programming for teachers, government employees, blind vendors and entrepreneurs, attorneys, and information technology specialists. Students can explore careers and meet people working in their areas of interest. Special programming targets issues related to low vision, guide dogs, deaf‑blind concerns, braille, etc.**

## Networking

**It is often said that networking with others with similar interests is as important as education and training, and that it greatly enhances the job‑seeking process. Whether you are a teacher or student, rehabilitation counselor or administrator, parent or caregiver, employer or job‑seeker, you will be able to network with others in your field.**

## What’s New?

**Commemorative Program: Every affiliate has special people who have played significant roles in the lives of blind and visually impaired people. Often these outstanding individuals go unheralded on the national scene.**

**Now you can share the accomplishments of these special people by participating in the new commemorative section of the 2008 ACB convention program. Commemorative pages will be printed on high‑quality paper; pages can include a color photograph of your special person and a short caption about his or her accomplishments. What a wonderful way to honor or memorialize that special person!**

**Commemorative pages must be reserved by May 15. For more information, contact Brenda Dillon at (615) 874‑1223, or visit www.acb.org/convention.**

### **Color** Pages

**Attention, program advertisers! You've been asking for it, and here it is! Full‑page ads and program covers are now available in color. See your exhibit and sponsorship packets for details, or visit www.acb.org/convention.**

## Exhibit Special for Blind Entrepreneurs

**Are you a blind small‑business owner? Do you have products such as CDs, books, crafts, or computer games to sell? Are you a representative for a company that sells jewelry, toys, home decor, etc.? Would your products be a popular addition to the ACB exhibit area?**

**If you have always wanted to give the exhibit area a try, but haven’t been sure that the hours and cost were right for you, now is your chance. Discounts on tabletop booths are available to blind small‑business owners during their first, second and third years of participation in the exhibit hall. For more information, contact Michael Smitherman at (601) 968‑4164, or visit www.acb.org/convention.**

## Convention Details

**Special‑interest groups, ACB committees, and others wishing to sponsor programs or activities at the convention should submit all information for the pre‑registration form by April 1. Program details need to be submitted by May 1. Make all arrangements related to convention events (reserving space, ordering food or AV equipment, etc.) with Carla Ruschival (phone (502) 897‑1472 or e-mail adamcarla@bellsouth.net).**

**Join the race to the winner’s circle at the 2008 ACB convention by making your hotel reservations at the luxurious Galt House hotel. Choose a standard room in the Rivue (west) tower for $85/night, or spend convention week in style in a newly renovated executive suite (fridge included) for $105/night. Rates are single/double, and do not include tax. Add $10 per night for each additional person in the room; limit four people per room, please.**

**Keep up with all the latest convention announcements. Join the acbconvention e-mail list by sending a blank message to acbconvention‑subscribe@acb.org.**

**For convention questions or special concerns, contact Carla Ruschival, ACB convention committee chair, at (502) 897‑1472 or by e-mail at adamcarla@bellsouth.net; or call the ACB national office at 1-800-424‑8666.**

# Damar Gives Notice of Intent to Cancel Agreement

# by Mitch Pomerantz

**On Jan. 15, Melanie Brunson and I were notified via e-mail that Damar Travel and Cruises was exercising its option giving ACB 90 days notice of intent to cancel the existing agreement between our two organizations. This notice was given subsequent to routine inquiries requested by the ACB board of directors at its teleconference meeting of January 2 and carried out by Brunson.**

**It is regrettable that Damar has unilaterally chosen this action since so many of us participated in and thoroughly enjoyed at least one of the cruises organized by them. Such cruises were made especially worthwhile by the always friendly and helpful David Kronk. Rest assured that this decision was made solely by Damar’s two principle partners, David and Marsha Schuman, without prior consultation with me or anyone else connected with ACB.**

**Those of you who have sent in deposits for one of the upcoming Damar cruises and wish a refund should contact Damar directly. Also, since cruising has become such a popular form of travel for our members, we would like to contract with another organization which conducts tours for blind and visually impaired people, or would be interested in doing so. Please forward any information you may have to me directly and off-line at either dmpomerantz@earthlink.net or mitch.pomerantz@lacity.org.**

# My Fathers

# by Michael McCarty

**January proved to be a difficult month for me and my family. I found myself reflecting on my childhood and my life as a person who is blind. The two most important men in my life, Bruce McCarty and Eugene Willis, were both in the hospital for heart-related illnesses. One would pass away; the other would eventually get another chance at life.**

**Eugene Willis did not survive his massive heart attack of Jan. 21. For me, what made his death even more difficult was the fact that my own father went into Norton’s Hospital on Jan. 22, with his own heart problems. Eugene passed away in the early morning of the 22nd, and the afternoon brought the news of my father’s surgery the next day.**

**On Jan. 23, my father had a triple bypass and work on his aorta. I’m grateful that he pulled through well and that things are looking good for him, but it sure did give me some things to think about.**

**As a student of the Kentucky School for the Blind, I traveled between Louisville and home to visit my family for the weekends. My dad picked me up on Friday afternoons, and we listened to Ed Philips on the radio and talked about the week's activities. I didn’t know it then, but Ed Philips was also blind and would later become a mentor to me as I pursued a career in broadcasting.**

**While home for the weekend, I would often work the farm with my dad. He tried to teach me how to use my hands to build things. Unfortunately, I never picked up on the building of barns or tables, but the conversations we had while stripping tobacco or clearing a fence row are precious. He never said that I couldn’t do something because I was blind. In those days I had some sight, and I was always expected to do my share of the work. If I couldn’t see something, a jig would be made so I could complete the task. I remember us working on all kinds of projects. We tried to build an AM transmitter from a Radio Shack kit; it never worked, but we had a good time trying. We assembled model cars, built Pinewood Derby cars for Cub Scouts and enjoyed playing video games on our Atari 2600 game system.**

**As a boy, I never thought of myself as being visually impaired until I came to KSB and met others with the same visual limitations. I think Dad’s plan was to insure that I knew I could do things like everyone else; I may just have to do them differently. My parents knew that KSB was the best place for me to receive an education. They believed that KSB could teach me how to adapt all the things in life that they didn’t know how to adapt; kind of a jig for life I guess.**

**I’ve often thought of Eugene Willis as a second father — maybe my Louisville father. He taught me many things about being an independent blind person. But, more than that, I could talk to Eugene man-to-man when I was having problems.**

**I went through a divorce while Eugene and I worked together at New Life Computers, part of the Kentucky Industries for the Blind, and he was always there for me. When my house was flooded in 1996, he came over with space heaters and he insured that my children, who had lost their clothes, toys and even bedrooms during the flood, had the things they needed. Jim Sparks, who was director of the Kentucky Industries at the time, also assisted me and I got to really know Jim through Eugene.**

**Now that I think about it, I got to know most of my KCB friends through Eugene. He told me about how Jim Shaw would help if I should ever need anything from Social Security, and he introduced me to political people on the local, state and national levels. He loved to talk about the American Council of the Blind, the Kentucky Council of the Blind and the Kentucky Industries for the Blind; he truly loved these organizations.**

**Eugene and I shared a love of KCB because of the help I received with my son, Jonathon; some busy-body nurses and Child Protective Services tried to take him from me, simply because my first wife and I were blind. Eugene, Carla Ruschival, Jim Shaw, and Deanna Scoggins were on the board of KCB when the battle for the Kentucky Baby was at its height. We also received help and support from Sandy Sanderson of Alaska, Allen Jenkins of California, and NELDS; I wouldn’t have my son today without all these folks.**

**Eugene served as KCB president from 1996 to 2000. The ACB national convention was in Louisville in 2000, and Eugene had a wonderful time giving out the door prizes and making Paul Edwards a Kentucky Colonel.**

**Eugene was the best man at my second wedding in 2001. He was the right person for the job. He was nervous, but rose to the occasion with plenty of jokes and lots of smiles.**

**I loved Eugene as any son would love a father. He will be missed and my life will not be the same without hearing his voice in times of difficulty and in times of happiness. We loved working together and loved the job we did. He loved to help others and that is what he will always be remembered for — helping people at the Industries, helping people with access issues around Louisville and across the state, and helping people get computers and other assistive technology.**

**I have been blessed to have more time with my father and I will continue to cherish the time I have with him. He will continue to preach at the Lebanon Correctional Center and to work the farm. He will continue to teach and influence my children and they will get to spend time with him. What more could I ask for? He’s my father. I love him and I’m proud to be his son.**

# Board of Publications Seeks Nominees for Awards

**Each year at the national convention of the American Council of the Blind, the board of publications (affectionately known as the BOP) presents awards. The first is the Ned E. Freeman Award, instituted in 1970 and named for the first president of the American Council of the Blind who, after completing his term of office, became editor of “The Braille Forum.”**

**The board of publications accepts submissions for the Freeman Award from any writer on a topic of interest to readers of “The Braille Forum.” Submissions may be published in the magazine if space allows. Articles appearing in the “Forum” between April 2007 and March 2008 are automatically eligible. Materials published by an ACB affiliate are also welcome. Send a print, braille or electronic copy of the published article accompanied by a letter of nomination.**

**Mastery of the craft of writing is a major consideration by BOP voters. Interesting subject matter, originality in recounting an experience, or novelty of approach are also considered. A Freeman Award winner will receive a plaque and $100.**

**The Vernon Henley Media Award was established in 1988 to honor the man who created and first produced ACB Reports, a radio presentation distributed to radio reading services around the country. At the time of his death, he was chair of the board of publications, having assisted editors by conducting writing workshops and by recording for them on audiocassette materials otherwise not available to them. The award is presented to a person, either sighted or blind, who has made a positive difference in the media — whether in radio, TV, magazines, or daily newspapers — which may change public attitudes to recognize the capabilities of people who are blind, rather than focusing on outdated stereotypes and misconceptions. Programs and/or articles written and produced specifically for a visually impaired audience, as well as those intended for the general public, are eligible. Multiple articles or programs submitted by one author or organization will be judged as separate entries. The Henley Award is intended to be a vehicle for publicizing ACB throughout the general media, and to encourage excellence and accuracy in electronic and print coverage of items relating to blindness.**

**Recipients of these awards for the last five years are ineligible to enter the contests. Nor are those who are members of the ACB national office staff, members of the board of directors or board of publications during the awarding period eligible for the Freeman or Henley awards. Freeman Award winners from 2003 through 2007 are: Mike Godino, Rebecca Shields, Carl Jarvis, Katie Sacca, and Ed and Toni Eames. Henley Award winners from 2003 to 2007 are: Pat Price; Mark Ashby and Potomac Talking Book Services; Lynn Manning, Ron Eldard, Steven Bochco Productions and GW Micro; and Michael Mellor.**

**Submissions for both awards must be postmarked no later than April 15, 2008. All submissions should be accompanied by a cover letter providing details about the submission, its origin, and any other pertinent information. Include your return address in the cover letter, and, if you want your manuscript returned, send a self‑addressed, stamped envelope. Send submissions to ACB Board of Publications Awards, 1155 15th St. NW, Suite 1004, Washington, DC 20005.**

# Spring Is Almost Here – Have You Written Your Nomination Letters Yet?

# by Nola McKinney

**Time’s flying; I can’t believe it’s almost spring already! I know you’ve all paid your dues, gone to all your chapter and state ACB meetings, and been busy helping with fund-raisers and advocacy projects. I also know that you think of yourself as a pretty good member of the greatest blindness organization in the world. But have you written your letter of nomination to the awards committee yet?**

**I reminded you with an article in the November issue. Do you recall it? I asked you to read the descriptions of all the awards carefully and find the person you admire to fit the description. I begged you to send that nominating letter to the awards committee, in care of the national office in Washington, D.C. This is your second reminder. Please read the descriptions below and write that letter of nomination today!**

**The Robert S. Bray Award is given to a person who has made a contribution for improving library technology or communication devices. It could also be given for expanding access for blind people, or making opportunities within the mainstream media.**

**The George Card Award is given to an individual who has dedicated his or her life to work with and for blind people, making a real difference and improving quality of life, for providing leadership and being a positive role model.**

**The Durward K. McDaniel Ambassador Award is one of our most popular awards. It is given in recognition of a blind person who may or may not be a member of a blindness organization but who has spent his or her life integrating with the community.**

**The James R. Olsen Distinguished Service Award is periodically given to individuals who have made important contributions which have advanced opportunities for the blind community. This award can be given to an individual or an organization.**

**The Affiliate Growth Award is based on the greatest increase in membership, as determined by the 2007-2008 membership reports.**

**The Affiliate Outreach Award is based on a recommendation by an affiliate president, which recognizes a local chapter for a new outreach program. This program must have a measurable outcome.**

**Letters must be in by May 1, 2008. Send them to: ACB Awards Committee, c/o American Council of the Blind, 1155 15th St. NW, Suite 1004, Washington, DC 20005. Please hurry; the awards committee needs those letters to do our jobs. See you in Louisville!**

# Durward K. McDaniel Committee Seeks Your Support

# by Carol Ewing

**Once again the DKM Committee seeks your assistance in support of the First-Timers’ Program in two areas. We need you to nominate a dynamic blind individual who has not attended an ACB convention. Two people will be selected, one representing each side of the Mississippi River.**

**Financial support will be secured with donations and/or a ticket drawing with $300, $150, and $75 as 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes, respectively.**

**Instructions on the application process are below. Further questions should be directed to one of the committee members, Carol Ewing, Cathy Skivers of California ((510) 357-1986), Mike Hoenig of Iowa, Carl McCoy of Florida, Stephanie Hall of Minnesota, Terry Pacheco of Maryland, Carol Edwards of Texas, and Mike Godino of New York.**

**Nominations must include a letter of request by the nominee and a letter of support by his/her affiliate president. These are due at the ACB office by April 1, 2008.**

**Financial donations are to be made payable to ACB-DKM and mailed to ACB in Minnesota (120 S. 6th St., Suite 1005, Minneapolis, MN 55402) or D.C. (see address on inside front cover of magazine), or given to a DKM committee member.**

**Tickets for the prizes are $1 each, or a book of 6 for $5. Tickets may be secured from Cathy Skivers or Carol Ewing. The drawing will be held during the DKM reception in Louisville. Winners do not need to be present for drawings.**

**Thanks in advance for your support for this magnificent program. See you in Louisville!**

# Leadership & Diversity:

# Accepting the Challenge and Creating Opportunities

# by Peggy R. Garrett

**The American Council of the Blind is one of the most diverse organizations in the United States, if not in the world. Members include men, women, and children of all ages and many different races, religions, education and economic levels. This diversity creates a vast pool of experience, talents and knowledge from which ACB can draw to train, mentor and develop future leaders to ensure a strong future ACB.**

**One of the most important features of any organization is its members. However, one of the most difficult problems for most organizations is retention and one of the biggest reasons why members are lost is because they are not made to feel that they are important to the organization. Inclusion is what keeps members interested and it is also what makes people want to contribute. When a person feels that his or her voice and opinions are important, they will work harder for that organization. When a member is encouraged to give of his or her time and specific talents, the person feels that he has an investment in that organization and is more likely to remain. These members are also more likely to encourage others to join.**

**However, when members, especially minorities, are not encouraged to participate or not included in leadership roles, the organization suffers not only the loss of members, but also more importantly, the loss of the wisdom, knowledge, talents and support those members possess. It is important that people who are already in leadership positions reach out to minority members and encourage and mentor them to take active roles at all levels of ACB. This inclusion opens the door to a more cohesive organization. Inclusion = retention = Growth = strength.**

**The theme for the Multicultural Affairs Committee’s luncheon and program for the upcoming convention is “Diversity & Leadership: Accepting the Challenge and Creating Opportunities.” In a recent Multicultural Affairs Committee subcommittee conference call, a discussion of the theme produced the following comments:**

* **“The ability of a culturally diverse group to work together as a cohesive body and come to positive, productive solutions no matter what the issue may be.”**
* **“Having the ability to accept change while learning from each other.”**
* **“Understanding that one can share similar experiences that transcend cultures.”**
* **“Open-mindedness starts from the leadership and runs full circle.”**
* **“How can we learn what our leaders do and how they do it? Mentoring is key to fostering learning from our leadership and our leadership learning from us.”**

**The culturally diverse membership of ACB presents opportunities for learning and new experiences for leaders and members alike. It is also an opportunity to dispel some myths about cultures to which some may have had little or no previous exposure. It is important that minorities are welcomed and encouraged to invest in ACB. When members are excluded based on their minority status, the organization suffers. Strength comes with numbers and numbers come with inclusion for all. Encouraging minority participation at all levels of ACB is a win‑win scenario for everyone.**

# A Great Way to Help ACB – And Your Affiliate Too!

# by Kathy Brockman

**We all want to help others and feel useful. Granted, with little or no vision, we sometimes depend on others for assistance. ACB is a great place for all of us to share ideas and promote issues that are important to people who are blind or visually impaired.**

**How can we help? Many of us already serve on committees or assist with a wide variety of tasks. This is very important. But we all know there is one thing needed to keep any organization running smoothly — and that is money. The high unemployment rate among blind people makes it difficult for many to stretch a monthly budget. But how about a little bit, say $10, each month? Maybe that’s one trip to the movies or a meal out with friends.**

**Giving a small amount is fairly painless. If you have Internet access, go to www.acb.org. The seventh link down the list is “Make a donation to the American Council of the Blind.” Select the link in the paragraph for the Monthly Monetary Support Program; the next page explains the program in more detail. A secure form is available to set up your monthly bank or credit card withdrawal. You can select either the 10th or 22nd of each month, depending upon which date best meets your needs.**

**You don’t have Internet access? No problem. Just call the Minneapolis office toll-free at 1-800‑866‑3242 or contact Dr. Ron Milliman, who is the chairman of the Monthly Monetary Support Program Committee. His e‑mail address is rmilliman@insightbb.com, and his phone number is (270) 782‑9325.**

**If you have signed up — great! However, there is one thing to keep in mind. Occasionally we close a bank account or change credit cards. When that happens, it is very important to contact the Minneapolis office to provide updated information so that monthly withholdings will continue. A number of situations come up each month when payments cannot be processed. This requires a great deal of staff time to resolve. So please keep the office updated.**

**How does this help your state affiliate? You can designate up to 50 percent of the monthly contribution to go toward an ACB affiliate of your choice. This will help your affiliate continue its programs, too.**

**Please join with me and others and help both ACB and your affiliate by signing up for the MMS program. Having a steady monthly source of income helps both ACB and the state affiliate plan for financial expenses.**

**ACB staff can also let people in the community know that our own members are supporting the organization; that is very important to many donors. We appreciate your contributions!**

# Affiliate News

## ACB of Nebraska 2008 State Convention

**The 2008 ACB of Nebraska state convention is scheduled for the weekend of April 18-20 at the New World Inn and Conference Center, 265 33rd Ave. in Columbus, Neb. Room reservations may be made by calling the hotel at 1-800-433-1492. Be sure to mention ACBN in order to receive the discounted room rate of $57 per night plus tax. For more information, call (402) 592-3462.**

## You Are Invited to Join ACBHSP!

**ACB Human Service Professionals has an exciting line-up of discussion topics on its conference calls which will, hopefully, get us started with convention plans. Whether you are an ACBHSP member presently, thinking about becoming one, need to be one or just interested in what we do or the topic at hand, feel free to join us.**

**The next call will be held on April 6, 2008 at 9 p.m. Eastern. Jessie Rayl will bring to you “I have a choice” from well-known theorist William Glaser. This will outline the concepts of choice therapy.**

**So, come join us. And join ACBHSP, too. How? To join the call, dial (218) 936-1200, code ACBHSP (222477). We meet on the first Sunday of each month at 9 p.m. Eastern.**

**To join ACBHSP, send your $10 annual dues to: Jessie L. Rayl, President, 305 S. Maple Ave., Martinsburg, WV 25401. Questions, contact Jessie at (304) 671-9780.**

# Sunday Dinner for the Boys

# by Keith Bundy

**Though my parents did many things that helped me in my quest to become a successful blind adult, they never emphasized the need for me to learn home management skills. Consequently, the duty of teaching me most of what I have learned about cooking and other household duties has fallen to my wonderful wife, Peggy, and to that greatest teacher of all — trial and error.**

**A few years ago Peggy worked as a registered nurse in a local nursing home. This meant that she had to leave for work around noon every other Sunday, leaving me the responsibility of preparing Sunday dinner for my four boys and myself. One Sunday as she was leaving church, she told me that there was ravioli in a bowl on the kitchen table. “Just microwave it for five minutes, Honey,” she said, “and dinner will be ready for you and the boys.”**

**Not long after we got home, the boys (ages 2, 4, 8, and 9) all made it clear that they were ready for dinner. So, with great confidence, I said, “Wash your hands, guys, and dinner will be ready in five minutes.”**

**Going to the kitchen table, I found a bowl covered by cellophane. Lifting the cellophane, I felt something sort of flabby inside and, not caring to investigate further, I put the cellophane back on the bowl and put it in the microwave for five minutes.**

**Five minutes later, the four hungry wolves were at the table, ready to pounce on the great meal I was about to serve. Paper plates were all in place, and they eagerly eyed the microwave as I opened the door and removed our dinner.**

**The first thing that caught my attention was the smell. It certainly didn’t resemble anything Italian! Instead, the odor that emanated from the bowl could best be described as fruity. Carefully, I lifted the cellophane and stuck my index finger ever so gently into the mixture. I noticed that, instead of being solid, it was now a rather hot liquid. As I lifted the finger to my mouth and tasted it, I learned a valuable lesson — you can microwave Jell‑O! I also learned that sticking the microwaved Jell‑O in the refrigerator for a few hours can harden it again.**

**I eventually found, and successfully microwaved, the ravioli. But I learned a valuable lesson that Sunday — sometimes we have no choice but to laugh about the lessons we learn. We have had many laughs about the microwaved Jell‑O incident over the years. And I still let trial and error give me home management lessons now and then. Maybe someday I’ll tell you about the chocolate macaroni and cheese!**

# Lost in Space

# by Carl Jarvis

# (Reprinted from the Washington Council of the Blind “Newsline.”)

**Have you ever wondered how it is that one blind person can be dropped off in the middle of a strange city and find his way home, while another blind person can’t find his way out of a broom closet if he has both hands on the doorknob? For more than 32 years I have been working with blind people of all ages, shapes, sizes and abilities. During those years I have compiled a pile of mostly unscientific, useless information. But one most puzzling question keeps recurring. Why is it that some blind people get lost in their own shoes, while others seem to have a built-in sonar system?**

**It appears to have nothing to do with when they became blind, their age or education or whether they are left-brain, right-brain or no-brain. So, for many years I concluded that it was a matter of developing the correct teaching technique. My early indoctrination was straightforward. The average blind person, with proper training and attitudes, could do just about anything.**

**So, when I applied my magic to my students and nothing happened, I considered that it was my failure, not theirs. I just had not found the right combination of teaching tools to successfully complete the training. Remember the old saying, “A doctor buries his/her mistakes?” Not so for the rehab teacher. Our mistakes/failures keep bumping into us at meetings, conventions, and knocking at our doors requesting more training. Since many of us rehab teachers are rescuers by nature, we roll up our sleeves and try, try again, invariably ending up with the same results. People were coming to us, lost in space and seeking help. And our inability to resolve this problem began to impact all phases of their rehabilitation training. Instead of aiming them toward success, we were pointing them to the door marked, “Destination: Failure.”**

**Over the years I was absolutely certain that somewhere, somehow, there existed the right approach for teaching spatial awareness to blind people. My wife, and fellow rehab teacher, had never shared my belief. Despite discussing and debating this issue many times, my mind was made up. I simply could not accept that there are some skills that cannot be taught. Finally the light clicked on when Cathy, trying to illustrate her point, said, “You know, Carl, you have no sense of rhythm. And despite all these years of trying, you still can’t follow the beat. You sing just fine but you’re totally lost in the song, which is better, and safer, than turning you loose on the dance floor.” This brought to mind my mother. She was tone-deaf. We always said that Mother sang the tune the old cow died on. She had about three notes, and yet she loved music. And I loved music, too. How was it that Mother and I could be serious music lovers but not be able to hum or dance to the tune?**

**Of course the answer is that humming and dancing are not central to music appreciation. And then it hit me: I was focused on the wrong goal. Regardless of whether it could be taught, spatial awareness is not central to leading a successful, independent life. Not only was I busy trying to teach people to develop a skill which they did not possess, but worse yet, I was implying that without this skill they could not be successful, independent people. Just because a kangaroo can hop doesn’t mean I can teach him to fly. Nor does he need to fly to reach his goal. And just because a blind person can get from point A to point B does not mean that I can teach him spatial awareness. Some of our brains are simply not set up to work that way.**

**This was a hard concept for me to wrap my mind around. Over the years I watched many blind people travel about and arrive at their destination. Some did it with ease, while others did it by trial and error. I figured that the trial and error folks just needed to practice harder and pay closer attention to what they were doing. It never occurred to me that just getting there was a major success for the spatially challenged. The truth is I had no clue as to what these folks were struggling with. Think of trying to teach a blind man to see. We could put him through the same drills that we use for all sighted folks. Over and over we could force him to peer and strain, finally giving up in frustration. We might feel that we had not pushed him hard enough. He would be left with the feeling that he was incompetent. In the end, we had programmed him for a life of failure.**

**But of course we know that a blind man cannot be taught to see. Even if his eyes move, and he blinks and sheds tears, he is missing something that cannot be taught. This absence must be accommodated if he is to function independently in life. This is exactly the same course of action needed for the spatially challenged. Trying to teach them techniques that work for the spatially aware will only frustrate them. What is needed is a set of alternative techniques that will assist them in accommodating their different approach to space.**

**Whether we are blind or sighted, I believe that there are great differences in how our brains process spatial information. Sighted people accommodate this difference, unaware that it even exists. But without sight, this difference becomes a major problem for the spatially challenged. It is essential that we develop positive alternative techniques which will enable people to function successfully in their environment, allowing them to fulfill their goals to live productive, independent lives.**

# Cold Weather

**Bundling up for a drive to some folks’**

**To play dominoes, checkers, swap lies, and tell jokes!**

**Boots taken off and left by the door.**

**There’s logs on the fire, thick rugs on the floor.**

**Hot chocolate and marshmallows in this chilly weather —**

**Or a mug of spiced tea brings friends close together!**

**Each one brings a dish — maybe soup, maybe stew,**

**Maybe napkins or cups — what each one can do!**

**We straighten clothes hangers for wiener kabobs —**

**Add other chunk food, and roast corn on the cob!**

**Dig out a movie — something funny or light —**

**Shake up some popcorn, and snuggle up tight!**

**The talk starts unwinding — kids sprawled everywhere —**

**A few hours of blessings when we haven’t a care.**

**The feast is near over. The yawning begins.**

**We hug our goodbyes as the good party ends.**

**Wearing parkas and caps, we brace for the drive**

**Back to our home. We are blessed! We’re alive!**

**It’s frosty outside, and maybe will snow,**

**But the warmth of good friends keeps our hearts all aglow.**

**It’s good to shake off worldly cares for awhile.**

**The best things are not things, but are friends with a smile.**

**Make time for friends. Thank God for them, too.**

**They’re there when you’re happy. They’ll help when you’re blue.**

**Tonight’s party is over and so we go home,**

**But with God, and with friends, we are never alone!**

**— Netagene Kirkpatrick**

# Here and There

# by Sue Lichtenfels

**The announcement of products and services in this column is not an endorsement by the American Council of the Blind, its staff, or elected officials. Products and services are listed free of charge for the benefit of our readers. “The Braille Forum” cannot be held responsible for the reliability of products and services mentioned.**

**To submit items for this column, send a message to info@acb.org, or call ACB at 1-800-424-8666 and leave a message in mailbox 26. Please remember that postal regulations prohibit us from including advertisements, and that we need information two months ahead of actual publication dates.**

## New $5 Bill Enters Circulation

**The newly redesigned $5 bill entered circulation on March 13. Have you received one yet? The bill has two new watermarks, plus a security thread, and a large, purple number five in the lower right-hand corner on the back of the bill. Watch for them in your change!**

## 2008 Scholarship Program

**AFB is currently accepting applications for its 2008 scholarship program. Numerous scholarships are available for students majoring in a variety of fields. For the application, descriptions of each scholarship, and a list of the necessary supporting documents, visit www.afb.org/scholarships.asp. All applications and accompanying documentation are due March 31, 2008. For additional information, contact the AFB Information Center at (212) 502‑7661 or 1-800‑232‑5463.**

## APH Essay Contest

**In celebration of 150 years of building independence for people who are blind and visually impaired, the American Printing House for the Blind is conducting an essay contest. APH invites blind and visually impaired children, adults, and the professionals who serve them, to describe how APH products have made an impact on their lives. The deadline for entry is April 1, 2008. The entry form, including the official topic, number of words, and all guidelines for preparing and submitting an essay, is posted on the APH web site at www.aph.org/essay.html. For print or braille copies of the entry form, contact Becky Snider at 1-800‑223‑1839 or rsnider@aph.org.**

## VSA Arts Call for Scripts

**The VSA Arts Playwright Discovery Program invites middle- and high-school students to examine the ways in which disability affects their lives and the lives of others, and to express their views through the art of playwriting. Playwrights may write from their own experience or about an experience in the life of another person or fictional character. Young playwrights with and without disabilities are encouraged to submit a script. Entries may be the work of an individual student or a collaboration by a group or class of students. The winning play will be professionally produced at the JFK Center for the Performing Arts. The winner receives $2,000 and a trip to Washington, D.C., to see his/her play performed. Authors must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. and be students in grades 6 to 12. Complete program guidelines and application materials are available at www.vsarts.org. Deadline for entries is April 11, 2008.**

## Call for Artists

**The Eye Care Center at the Southern California College of Optometry seeks participants for Shared Visions 2008‑2009, the fourth annual juried art exhibit by artists who are blind or legally blind. Works selected will be exhibited in the Eye Care Center for a period of one year. The deadline for entries is May 14, 2008. To obtain an application, visit www.scco.edu/Shared%20Visions/Call%20for%20Artists%2008.pdf. For more information, contact Rebecca Kammer at (714) 449‑7473 or rkammer@scco.edu.**

## NY School Reunion

**The Alumni Association of the New York State School for the Blind will hold its annual reunion at the Holiday Inn in Batavia, N.Y., June 6‑8, 2008. Rooms will be available on Thursday, June 5, and an extra excursion on Sunday afternoon may be run if there is sufficient interest. Room rates are $70 per night for regular rooms, and $90 per night for suites. If you make your reservations before May 1, you will not have to pay taxes. A grant of $200 is available to one person who has never attended the reunion, or who has not attended in many years, and who has economic need. Grant applications are due by April 1, 2008. For more information about activities and meals, phone Tim Hendel at (256) 650‑5212. To pay your dues or make other payments, phone Sukosh Fearon at (315) 363‑4460.**

## Nominations for Disability Rights Award

**The American Bar Association Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law is now accepting nominations for the eighth annual Paul G. Hearne Award for Disability Rights. Each year, the award is presented to an individual or an organization that has performed exemplary service in furthering the rights, dignity, and access to justice for people with disabilities. The 2007 award went to Laura Cooper Fenimore, a private practitioner who specializes in long‑term planning and insurance matters for people with chronic illnesses. The next recipient will be honored at the 2008 ABA annual meeting in New York City in early August. Starbucks, the sponsor of the Hearne Award, will give the recipient a $1,000 honorarium and pay for the recipient’s travel expenses to New York. Further information about the award, selection criteria, and an online nomination form can be found at www.abanet.org/disability/award/form.shtml. Nominations must be received either electronically or postmarked by April 1, 2008. For additional information, or a hard copy of the form, contact William Phelan at phelanw@staff.abanet.org or (202) 662‑1576.**

## Camp Siloam 2008

**The Gospel Association for the Blind will host the 2008 Siloam Camp for Blind Teenagers and Adults May 17‑24, 2008 at the Golden Cross Ranch in New Caney, Tex. The cost for the week of camp is $200, which includes lodging, meals, and activities. Activities will include: a shopping trip to Wal-Mart; experiencing various animals from the Houston Zoo; two talent nights; swimming; horseback riding; games; Christian videos; a road trip; a hayride and campfire; and more. The theme for the 2008 camp is “How’s Your Prayer Life?” A $25 non-refundable registration fee is required of all campers to receive the camp application and medical form. Make money orders or checks payable to the Gospel Association for the Blind, and send it along with a 3 x 5 index card containing your name, address, phone number, cell phone number and e-mail to: The Gospel Association for the Blind, PO Box 1162, Bunnell, FL 32110. First‑time campers stay the week for free except for the $25 registration fee. Applications and medical forms are due by April 18, 2008. For more information, call 1-866‑251‑5165, mailbox 7128#; visit www.circle‑of‑love.net, or e‑mail geogray@sbcglobal.net.**

## Summer Braille Music Institute

**The National Resource Center for Blind Musicians is accepting applications for its seminar for blind college‑bound musicians, which will be held July 14‑20 at the Overbrook School for the Blind in Philadelphia. Designed for serious braille‑reading music students preparing for or already in college (ages average 17‑21), the program tailors instruction to each person’s need to develop braille music and theory skills, and to learn to use technology to submit music assignments in print notation. Applicants must have already studied some music theory, have had several years of music lessons, and be able to present a polished and pleasing performance. Contact the Resource Center regarding tuition, scholarship criteria, and the application and audition procedure. Deadline for requesting applications is April 12; all application materials must be in the Resource Center office by May 8. Also contact the Resource Center if you are a sighted teacher and would like to gain experience as an intern helping out during the program, or are a parent and would like to bring a younger student for an evaluation. The Resource Center now works with colleges and state agencies to provide phone and online tutoring to students studying music at the college level. For more information, visit www.blindmusicstudent.org; call David Goldstein at (203) 366‑3300, ext. 229; or e‑mail info@blindmusicstudent.org.**

## Call for Submissions

**“Dialogue Magazine” is seeking article submissions for 2008. Topics for articles might include descriptions of workable solutions for operating appliances and other visually oriented devices; experiences with conducting business online; reviews of new or improved accessible software and hardware; explanations of innovative communication strategies utilized by people who are deaf‑blind; safety tips for blind and visually impaired travelers; inspirational accounts of educational pursuits such as study abroad, internships and mentoring programs; and stories of blind and deaf‑blind people engaged in challenging, intriguing or unusual careers. Other articles of interest include people who are blind or visually impaired involved in adapted sports, fitness programs, and crafts. Articles on topics related to dating, relationships and family; daily living, cooking and household management; and examples of people with vision loss developing a positive attitude, setting goals and planning for the future are also being sought. Writer’s guidelines are online at www.blindskills.com/submit.html. To request the guidelines, column descriptions and a sample issue of the magazine, call 1-800‑860‑4224 or e‑mail magazine@blindskills.com.**

## Disability Employment Award

**The New Freedom Initiative Awards recognize public‑private partnerships and programs that have had a positive impact on the employment of people with disabilities through access to assistive technologies, the use of innovative training, and hiring and retention techniques. The honor also recognizes organizations, businesses and individuals that develop comprehensive strategies to enhance the ability of Americans with disabilities to enter and advance within the workforce of the 21st century. Nominations for this award are being accepted through May 30, 2008. Details regarding the nomination process are available at www.dol.gov/odep. For questions, call (202) 693‑7880.**

## Tactile Cosmos Book

**“Touch the Invisible Sky” is a new book sponsored by NASA that uses braille, large type, and tactile diagrams of celestial images observed by the space telescopes Hubble, Chandra, and Spitzer to reveal the cosmos to people who are blind or visually impaired. The tactile diagrams feature raised outlines and textures superimposed on the images themselves to indicate how the objects appear differently according to wavelength viewed in — for example, radio, infrared, visible, ultra‑violet, or x‑ray. The text explains what each image shows, and even describes how the different types of telescopes capture the images. NASA is making this book a national resource by distributing copies at no cost to schools for the blind around the U.S., the Library of Congress, several blind technology and training centers, and state libraries that have astronomy collections. NASA has funded two other astronomy‑related braille books: “Touch the Universe” and “Touch the Sun.”**

## Digital Magazines Available

**There’s great news for current and new subscribers of “Harvard Business Review” on special format cassette from the MAB Recording Studio. Harvard Business School Publishing is now subsidizing the costs of producing Harvard Business Review on tape for blind and visually impaired people. The price for a one-year subscription is $49. Each of the 10 monthly issues includes two cassettes with 8 hours of material. Additionally, yearly subscriptions to “Cat Fancy” and “Dog Fancy” magazines on tape are available at $84 each for 12 issues. MAB also offers custom recordings of any submitted publications onto special format digital cassette. To discuss any of these offerings, contact Robert Pierson at (617) 972‑9117 or rpierson@mabcommunity.org.**

# High Tech Swap Shop

## For Sale:

**Victor Talking Book player, model 800CP. Plays MP3 CDs as well as DAISY and traditional audio CDs. Asking $100 plus shipping. Contact Hal at (727) 735-0797, or by e-mail, w1lob@tampabay.rr.com.**

## For Sale:

**SmallTalk Ultra II from GW Micro. It is only 2 months old; rarely used. Asking $2,200 (negotiable). Contact Jonathan Milam by phone at (336) 462-4179, or via e-mail at milamj2@wfu.edu.**

## For Sale:

**Clearview Plus CCTV with 17-inch monitor. Two years old. Asking $700. Contact Judy Greeley at (914) 588-5988 or via e-mail, greeleypt@aol.com.**

## For Sale:

**BrailleNote mPOWER 32 with braille keyboard running Keysoft version 7.5 and Sendero GPS version 4.22. Comes with network card, two compact flash cards, PCIA card, two chargers, Sendero Holix receiver charger, and USB cable, plus the original 3.5 information that came with the unit. Asking $2,500 for the entire package. Shipping and handling and insurance are included. Will accept money orders, certified checks, and personal checks. Personal check must clear before I ship the unit. Also selling a Bookport for $225. Contact Denise Avant via e-mail, dravant@ameritech.net, or by phone, (773) 325-1117 after 7 p.m. Central time Monday through Friday.**

## For Sale:

**Victor Reader Vibe. Plays DAISY books. Asking $250. Contact Melody at (609) 441-2088.**

## For Sale:

**Juliet Classic interpoint embosser by Enabling Technologies. Rarely used; in excellent condition. Comes with factory-installed single-sheet feed feature, allows brailling on light metal for signs, as well as braille and print manuals, connecting cords, and driver. Asking $1,750 or best offer. Buyer pays for shipping and insurance. I accept money orders, cashier’s checks, or credit card payment through PayPal only. Contact Alex at (714) 672‑0007 or by e-mail, eljefe@ciego.net. Include the word “embosser” in the subject line.**

## For Sale:

**DAISY Player, three years old, never used. Comes with carrying case and instructions. Asking $150 or best offer. Call Cait at (517) 227-1122 for more information.**

## For Sale:

**Voyager CCTV reading machine model VR3A. Features 12-inch tilting monitor with white on black and black on white display. Magnification 3 to 45 times. Includes manual and dust cover. Asking $350, including UPS shipping/insurance within continental U.S. Call Bill at (847) 342-7155 between 1 and 8 p.m. Central time or e-mail 052338@comcast.net.**

## For Sale:

**Two textbooks in Nemeth code that we would like to resell. The textbooks are “Precalculus: Study and Solutions Guide” by Dianna Zook, copyright 2007, Houghton Mifflin, ISBN: 978-0-618-64347-9, and “Precalculus” by Ron Larson, et al, 5th edition, copyright 2001, ISBN: 618052852. Contact Linda Brooks Williams at (317) 940-9308, or via e-mail, lwilliam@butler.edu.**

## Seeking Donation:

**I am looking for an Optacon (any model), an older computer with two floppy drives and speech that can connect to the Internet, Handi-Cassette 2, a portable TV set, talking glucometer, talking blood pressure machine, talking color identifier, talking money identifier, a double-cassette karaoke machine with two microphones, and a number of other items. Contact Melody at (609) 441-2088.**

## Seeking Donation:

**I am looking for a used drum set and a portable TV set. Contact Dwain at (609) 441-2088.**

## Wanted:

**I am looking for a deep-cup headset with a straight cord, quarter-inch plug, with two volume controls and a switch. Call Walter Chavira at (661) 833-3663.**

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