

CCLVI SPECIAL NEWS

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Sara Conrad

Hello CCLVI!

I am writing this brief address to you from my parents' home in the beautiful southwestern Michigan. I am listening to the spring rains fall as I imagine the growth of nature outside the guest room window. It is healing for me to think of growth during this season of darkness felt around the world. I have been working remotely from this room since early March, as I came "home" during the pandemic. Like many of you, my visual disability is just one issue I experience. I also have a compromised immune system from cancer treatments. Like most of you, I am hunkering down to stay as healthy and safe as possible. I miss my home and of course my fiancé back in Wisconsin, but we are all doing the best we can during these strange times!

I usually write president addresses about past and present happenings in our organization. However, you heard from me just a month ago in the April newsletter. Our board is still working very hard to serve our great organization. Today, however, I want to write an address of empathy and connection, something we all need desperately right now.

Over the past several weeks, ACB and CCLVI have hosted conference calls on all kinds of topics. I have heard calls about art, leisure, remote work, technology, illness, and so much more. I am so impressed by our community's response to connect even more during this difficult time. Many of us face feelings of isolation when life is going well, so this virus exacerbates these feelings for many of us. I am proud of CCLVI's inclusion in many ways to connect, and I am excited for more ways to connect as we move forward.

In the coming months, CCLVI will plan and work towards our 2020-2021 year. I will continue as president of our great organization. I am excited to lead us through this transition with the help of our board. I have many ideas for the future, but I also want to hear from you. What are you interested in? What needs do you have that CCLVI could fill in the future? How do you see our organization flourishing in the future? I want to hear from you! Please consider sending me an email with your thoughts or questions. I am always open to your feedback. This is YOUR organization! Help us lead in a way that supports you best.

In closing, I want to encourage you to remain strong. I am a huge Brené Brown fan. If you have not heard of Brené, she is a psychology professor and researcher who has written several inspiring books and who presents all

around the world about bravery, vulnerability, integrity, and empathy. I want to leave you with one of the many Brené Brown quotes that inspires me during this hard time:

“Our job is not to deny the story, but to defy the ending—to rise strong, recognize our story, and rumble with the truth until we get to a place where we think, Yes. This is what happened. And I will choose how the story ends.”

Be encouraged,
Sara Conrad
CCLVI President
president@CCLVI.org

CCLVI Note to Membership Regarding April 2020 Special Board Meeting

Dear CCLVI Members,

First, I want to thank all of you for your support through these challenging times. COVID-19 is proving to create many challenges for many people, and our organization is not immune to the struggles presented in our world today. The participation and positive energy our members continue to show is truly amazing. So thank you!

Second, I want to update you regarding CCLVI's annual business meeting and elections. When we meet in person at the ACB convention each year, we hold an in-person business meeting with elections for the CCLVI board. As you know, ACB is opting for a virtual convention this year. ACB will not conduct business or voting during the virtual convention for several reasons, including its constitution and the lack of virtual voting processes.

As the COVID-19 response unfolded for CCLVI, I announced that we would likely continue with the same slate of board members through the next year because of the virtual nature of convention. This process was (and is) consistent with ACB's process for this year. The CCLVI Board of Directors met on Saturday, April 25 in a special meeting to determine our approach for a business meeting this summer. Thank you to all the members who attended as guests at our meeting.

Before I address the board's decision, I want to share how impressed I was with my fellow leaders on the board call. While some had different perspectives, we conducted business in such a positive way. Everyone's voice was heard. Even more impressive was that every board member seemed to focus on what was best for our members. We did not make decisions lightly or about the best path for us as individuals but rather in a deep,

thoughtful approach to protect integrity, privacy, and inclusion. No matter what we go through, I am confident in this organization's leadership to work together for good.

Moving on, I want to share the board's decision and process at the April 25th meeting. Our constitution requires several elements to ensure voting integrity. For example, we must allow for secret ballots. We discussed several technological options for virtual voting. CCLVI and ACB as a whole pride themselves on promoting independent and private voting options. While no voting option is perfect, we strive to include all people in a secret ballot format.

Part of the board's discussion included deep considerations of our members. We are privileged to have a very diverse membership, from those who use smart devices for everything to those who do not have Internet access. We were unable to confidently choose a virtual format for elections that would allow all virtual meeting attendees the opportunity for privacy while voting. While there are some possible technological services that may offer secret voting in the future, the board concluded that we need more time to explore, practice, and design a process for virtual voting if we are ever in this situation again.

Our constitution also requires that if we have an annual business meeting, we must also have elections. With such a diverse membership, the board carefully considered ways to make virtual business meetings inclusive for everyone. However, since we agreed that elections could not be conducted this year in an appropriately transparent manner, the board agreed not to have a CCLVI business meeting this year.

In summary, CCLVI will not have an annual business meeting and will not conduct elections this year. The current slate of board members and officers will remain for this coming year. Any board member or officer who would otherwise term out this summer may choose to resign from the board if necessary, although I hope all our leaders will stay with us during this transitional time. If a vacancy occurs in a director position, the board will appoint someone to fill any open position. If a vacancy occurs in an officer position, the officers will move up according to the constitution.

Instead of a business meeting, our wonderful convention committee is including a brainstorming meeting for CCLVI members to discuss goals and ideas for the future. I am very excited to facilitate that meeting and help us move forward. I hope and pray we never have a pandemic like this in the future, but I also recognize the unique opportunity to learn and grow from this struggle. I encourage all

of you to attend this event as well as other exciting programs during the virtual convention.

I also want to encourage you to participate fully in our great organization. Our leadership is not an island. We want to connect with you and help you find your place in CCLVI! As I do each year, I will appoint committee chairs in consultation with the board this summer. I will also help committee chairs find new committee members. I encourage you to watch for emails about involvement in our organization. We want to include everyone!

I recognize that this is a lengthy message and that you may be experiencing complex emotions or questions at this time. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. This is a time of uncomfortable change and exciting opportunity, so I am available to support you as we move ahead together.

Best,
Sara Conrad
CCLVI President
president@CCLVI.org

CCLVI — A Vision for the Future:

by Jim Jirak, Convention Chair

As you read this article, we are only a matter of weeks away from CCLVI's 2020 convention program. But as you might expect, the global pandemic has altered the manner in which the programming will take place.

As background information, at a special meeting of the American Council of the Blind's Board of Directors March 30, the board, putting the safety and health concerns of the membership first, unanimously voted to cancel the in-person convention scheduled for Schaumburg, IL instead making it virtual in nature. Simply put, all general and special interest affiliate convention presentations will be conducted via the Zoom Meeting platform and broadcast over ACB Radio, either live or on a tape delay basis with replays continuing throughout the day.

What does this mean for me? In order to partake of any events as they are happening live, and to be eligible for door prizes, you will still be required to register either online at <https://acbconvention.org/account/login.php> or via telephone by calling the Minneapolis area office. Pre-registration for CCLVI members begins May 21. Registration for non-members opens May 27 and closes June 21 for both members and non-members alike.

For your planning purposes, CCLVI programming begins Sunday, July 5 and concludes Wednesday, July 8. Your convention committee consisting of Madison Allen of Rosman NC; Patti Cox of Louisville KY; Kathy Farina of Albany NY and Zelda Gebhard of Edgely ND are to be congratulated on the time and effort spent to make CCLVI programming informative and uniquely virtually fun.

So you can plan accordingly, please note the program schedule as shown below. Please also note that all times shown are eastern.

CCLVI: A Vision for the Future
Sara Conrad, Madison WI

Registration \$20 \$20

Sunday, July 5

Low Vision Vender Showcase 2:30pm to 3:45pm:

Come see what your favorite vender has in the latest in technological low vision advances. And some new vendors not usually in convention attendance may also be featured.

Monday, July 6:

My Retina Tracker

1:30pm to 2:45pm:

Ben Shaberman will provide an overview of the no-cost resources available from the Foundation Fighting Blindness for people with inherited retinal diseases such as retinitis pigmentosa, Stargardt disease, and Usher syndrome. The resources include: no-cost genetic testing, no-cost genetic counseling, and a patient registry. The resources help the patient get a clearer diagnosis for their condition and notification of clinical trials for emerging therapies.

CCLVI Game Night

7:30pm to 10:30pm:

After a busy day of information and virtual networking, grab your favorite cocktails and hors d'oeuvres and play a virtual game of Outburst. Perhaps win a prize or two in the process.

Tuesday, July 7

CCLVI Board Meeting

1:30pm to 2:45pm:

Members and those interested in becoming a member should be a part of this meeting. No business, no elections. Instead we will use our time together to evaluate where we are as an organization, where we want to be and how we can get there. You and your ideas are welcome at this planning session. Come and help us map out our future!

Wednesday, July 8

Hadley 2.0

1:30pm to 2:45pm:

In 1920, William Hadley decided to teach braille by mail to reach adults wanting to learn a new way to continue reading. Nearly 100 years later, after an extensive process of research and rediscovery, we are on the cusp of launching a cutting-edge learning destination we're calling Hadley rediscovered presented by Marc Arneson, Director of Brand Development.

Opening general session for the American Council of the Blind takes place Sunday, July 5 at 7pm eastern. Daily general sessions will be held from 10am eastern to 1pm eastern Mon-Fri with the banquet speaker's presentation Friday evening at 7pm eastern.

Finally, I want to express a sincere thank you to this, and past, boards and the membership for allowing me to serve as convention chair for the past 6 years and for 1 year prior to my presidency in 2012 & 2013. With the conclusion of this upcoming convention, I will be stepping aside from the plenary process in all aspects in order to prepare to host CCLVI in Omaha NE in 2022. And I hope to see many of you virtually involved this July. I also look forward to reconnecting with many of you in Phoenix AZ in July of 2021.

Request for Contributions

CCLVI gratefully accepts contributions from readers and members to help pay for the costs of publishing Vision Access and other programs of CCLVI.

Please send contributions to:

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Phone: (844) 460-0625.

Or you may donate using PayPal by visiting our website at cclvi.org

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**Free Matter for the Blind
& Physically Handicapped
DMM PT 135**

TO:

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.