

VISION ACCESS

Issue 27 Volume 3

August 2020

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

Copyright © 2020
by the
Council of Citizens with Low Vision
International,
a not-for-profit organization affiliated with the
American Council of the Blind.

Views expressed in Vision Access by contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or of CCLVI. All rights revert to individual contributors upon publication.

IN THIS ISSUE

ORGANIZATION:

From the President
Fundraising News July 2020
In the Beginning

HEALTH:

Life Doesn't Have to be Complicated Does It?

MEMBERS:

"Kopings"
ADA Celebration
I'm Positive

MEMBERS FORUM:

Constitutionally Speaking: Or Maybe Not!

ORGANIZATION

From the President

Welcome to Vision Access, CCLVI's publication that will now be coming to you more often with news and information you can use. I am Patti Cox, and I am excited to be the new interim President of CCLVI.

I would like to welcome the new officers and directors of CCLVI. It is an honor to be working with Zelda Gebhard, First Vice President; Steve Fiksdal, Second Vice President; Robert Spangler, Secretary; Linda Allison, Treasurer; Sara Conrad, Immediate Past President; and Directors John Hammill, Angelo Lanier, Tom Lealos, Valerie Ries-Lerman, Tom Frank, and Renee Zelickson.

Thanks to Sara Conrad for her leadership as President for the past two years and for her willingness to continue to serve CCLVI as our Immediate Past President. Thanks also to the other board members who have served this organization for at least the past two years.

Let me introduce myself. I live in Louisville, Kentucky. I have been part of ACB for as long as I can remember. My parents and grandparents were very involved on the local, state and national levels, and I attended my first ACB convention when I was six years old. I was the first president of the Greater Louisville Council of the Blind when it was organized in 2005, and I am currently a director on that Board. Since January, 2015 and until COVID-19, I cooked dinner each week for GLCB's Friday-night event (about 20 to 25

people). I have served on the Kentucky Council of the Blind board and on the KCB convention and Crossroads Leadership Conference planning committees, and I prepare meals for the state conventions and leadership conferences as well. On the ACB level, I have helped with the ACB Radio holiday auction from its beginning in 2012 through 2019, and I have worked with the ACB Mini Mall from 2012 to the present. I have served on the CCLVI board for the past four years.

By the time everyone receives this issue, I will have already appointed committee chairs. We have many committees in CCLVI, and would love to get everyone involved with at least one committee. If you would like to explore opportunities to serve on a committee, feel free to contact me.

Now, more than ever, we need to stay connected. We have many events by phone on the Zoom platform. We will be posting a calendar of events on our website, and you can also get the latest news and events by joining our email list and following our Facebook and Twitter pages.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to serve CCLVI.

Best regards,

Patti Cox
patti.cox@cclvi.org

Fundraising News July 2020

Planning fundraising activities for this year's virtual convention was a challenge. Folks stepped up to that challenge, and here's what we accomplished.

The CCLVI Firecrackers team participated in the ACB Brenda Dillon Memorial walk. We raised \$934.00. CCLVI will receive \$467.00, while the other half of the funds goes to ACB. Thank you to everyone who participated in the walk.

There was a 50/50 drawing. We raised \$1080.00. The winning ticket was drawn at our July 14 board meeting. The lucky winner was our own Fred Scheigert. He won \$540.00. Congratulations Fred!

The Tee Spot is still up and running. You can purchase items with the CCLVI logo, including, polo shirts, mugs (11 ounce or 15 ounce), hats and visors. Go to <https://cclvi.webstoreorder.com/> to order, or call (865)539-8220.

I would like to thank my fundraising committee: Linda Allison, Leslie Spooone, Angelo Lanier and Patti Cox for all their hard work.

Kathy Farina,

Chair, Fundraising Committee

In the Beginning

by Bernice M. Kandarian

During the ACB National Convention July, 1977 held in Miami Beach, Florida, Durward K. McDaniel, National Representative of ACB, referred to as the father of ACB and Loyal Eugene Apple, called Gene, President and CEO of the American Foundation for the Blind in New York City, who were colleagues and good friends, Scheduled a meeting with several attendees with low vision, including Dr. Sam Genensky, who worked at the Rand Corporation in Santa Monica, California and Dr. Elizabeth Lennon, a professor at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Durward and Gene, both totally blind, were interested in a special interest affiliate made up of people diagnosed as legally blind who had some useful vision but were often discourage from using their vision, referred to as sight savers.

Natalie Barraga from Austin, Texas, was working on her doctorate in 1963 when she came up with the concept of teaching children to use their vision in the educational system, and thereby created the field of low vision education.

Dr. Genensky drafted a constitution and arranged meetings to take place during the 1978 ACB National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah. Approximately 45 individuals were in the sessions as we went through the sections, sometimes making changes, additions or deletions. Sam asked me to assist him by reading some Convention

in Salt Lake City, Utah. Approximately 45 individuals were in the sessions as we went through the sections, sometimes making changes, additions or deletions. Sam asked me to assist him by reading some of the sections. The constitution was ratified, dues were collected and the membership roster created for submission to ACB. The ACB Board approved our application for affiliation as a special interest affiliate and ACB President, Oral O. Miller, presented the charter of affiliation to the Council of Citizens with Low Vision. Elizabeth Lennon accepted the CCLV charter on our behalf during the general session of the ACB convention July 1979 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

(Secretary's Note) the records indicate that the following individuals were the original officers and directors of CCLV; Dr. Sam Genensky, Santa Monica, CA; Marvin Brotman, Newton, MA; Howard Nunn, Honolulu, HI; Robert Engel, Flint, MI; Elizabeth Lennon, Kalamazoo, MI; Evelyn Meyer, Marion, IN; Leroy Saunders, Oklahoma City, OK; Sue Illingworth, Redford, MI; Terry Pacheco, Braintree, MA; George Covington, Washington DC; Carl Foley, Kettering, OH; Joseph Sims, Denver, CO; Wally Jagow, Richfield, MN; Frank McNulty, Washington DC.)

CCLVI INFORMATION LINE

Listen to information and selected programs on our CCLVI Information line at (773) 572 - 6315.

EVENTS

For information on how to join any of the following events visit our website at <https://cclvi.org/events>, or watch your inbox for reminders and meeting *information*.

CCLVI Coffee Break:

Each Friday morning at 11AM Eastern, 10 Central and 8 Pacific.

Let's Talk Low Vision with Dr. Bill Takeshita:

August 18, September 15, October 20.

8:30PM Eastern, 7:30PM Central and 5:30PM Pacific.

CCLVI Chat:

A monthly informational meeting open to anyone interested in learning more about low vision and a conversation with others.

August 31, September 28, October 26.

8:30PM Eastern, 7:30PM Central and 5:30PM Pacific

KCCLV Low Vision Support Calls:

Scheduled for the first and third Wednesdays of each month these meetings are informative for all low vision individuals across the United States.

Join our Constant Contact list to receive information on joining these meetings. Meeting reminders are sent the week of each event.

HEALTH

Life doesn't have to be complicated does it?

by Mike Breck

I have seen the need for a bottle that offers a simple, safe and effective way to dispense pills and tablets. I saw it from two perspectives. One, I observed the need as a provider of direct services to older individuals who are blind or have low vision. I worked in the field for over three decades. Second as someone with Multiple Sclerosis who for a brief period of time years ago lost the full function of my hands. The need is there. We are all trying to be compliant in taking medication and supplements. Everything from reading a label to manipulating a bottle to get it open and pouring out a pill can be an issue for those who are visually impaired or blind or have physical impairments. Findings from the 2017 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) data release established that an estimated 26.9 million adult Americans (or about 10% of all adult Americans) reported they either "have trouble" seeing, even when wearing glasses or contact lenses, or that they are blind or unable to see at all. The need for Simplicity exists.

Main points about the bottle include the following.

- The surfaces of the Simplicity are flat (four sides, bottom and top) upon which large print labeling may be placed. It is rectangular 3 inches wide, 3 ½ inches tall and 1 ¼ inches deep.

- Flat surfaces are much easier to read with a magnifier than a curved surface. The cap is easy to open and close. It opens with a $\frac{1}{4}$ turn and snaps back in to place. This is helpful for those who might have limited use of their hands.
- Given the rectangular shape, the Simplicity will not roll away if tipped or dropped.
- The rectangular shape also allows the Simplicity to be easily stacked and grasped (again, positive points for those who may have restricted hand use).
- The opening of the Simplicity is big enough for a manufacturer or pharmacist to fill either by hand or mechanical means.
- A “flow restriction” ring sized to the pill or supplement to be dispensed minimizes spillage should the bottle tip over or be dropped.
- The flow restriction ring also inhibits the number of pills which come out of the Simplicity at one time diminishing uncontrolled spilling.
- The simple design of the Simplicity bottle easily accommodates the integration of audio devices, RFID devices, and other technology of the future.

Much has been written about variables affecting medication compliance however little has been done in response to a number of these needs. In an article recently published in the Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness the authors stated, “Little attention has been placed on the effect of container shape on the readability of prescription drug labels or tasks of medication management”. I believe less has been written about or done to address spillage when taking medication or over the counter supplements. The Simplicity attempts to address these issues. Again, we are all just trying to be compliant in taking medication and supplements.

The Simplicity is not on the market. I have prototypes and numerous drawings. My goal is to find a strategic partner to take the Simplicity (patent pending) to the next level. I invite you to check out the website simplicitybottle.com or contact me at mikebeck701@gmail.com to share your thoughts.

INFORMATION

Join our Constant Contact list to keep up to date on Event and Meeting schedules. You will also receive the information on how to join our zoom meetings in the reminders we send at least two days prior to any scheduled meeting or event. Visit <https://cclvi.org> and join our list by subscribing using the Constant Contact form on the site.

MEMBERS

“Kopings”

by Tom Lealos

At age six, while in the first grade, I was diagnosed with Uveitis. Uveitis is a retinal disease that slowly takes your vision over time. By the time I was in high school it had rendered my left eye pretty much useless. I was able to get by with ever stronger glasses until age thirty-two, at which time the Uveitis flared up in my only good eye, and I became legally blind. With the use of a very strong bubble lens on that seemingly useless left eye, I was able to flounder around in what I call “visual limbo land” until about four years ago, at which time I finally became totally blind.

I described this chronology of my vision loss to serve as a time line for what my visual condition was during the various phases of my life. It was a long journey. Thinking back along memory lane I seem to remember lots of ways I adapted to my vision loss, some were relatively minor adjustments and others, towards my later years, were more significant. Hopefully, you will be able to glean a few useful ideas from my experiences.

Way back in the fifties, my brother and I, along with our best friend, grew up in the country. One summer, while in grade school, we decided to try out for baseball in town. During batting practice I couldn't see the pitched ball good enough to even get one hit. I always struck out. My brother and friend both popped up a bunch

and got out a lot too. This game didn't seem to be much fun to us so we went back to the country and got along just fine without that silly town game. This was my first recollection of really having a vision problem. Being so young, I simply moved on to other pastimes.

Growing up in Minnesota, I played ice hockey in high school. I didn't realize it at the time, but depth perception kept me from developing a good slap shot. I unwittingly overcame this problem by mastering a very good wrist shot, which allows for better control of the puck any way, when shooting.

While studying Forestry in college during the late sixties I was required to learn about the mapping process. Good map making and interpretation involves the use of aerial photos and being able to see in stereo. Here is where two good eyes would have come in pretty handy. I was able to persevere by seeing cross-eyed. I can't really explain how I did this, but it worked. Phew!

After graduating, as a fledgling Forest Engineer, I did all of the company's surveying. Transit work went okay because this instrument has some magnification. Line running with a staff compass was a bit difficult though. In order to read the markings on the compass I had to use a hand magnifier. I had to use a higher-powered magnifier to see the Vernier scales for fine tuning. This got a bit frustrating at times, but I was able to get the work done.

About mid-way thru my career the retina in my only good eye became detached. The subsequent surgery was unsuccessful. WHAM! I instantly became legally blind and joined the ranks of the visually impaired. I was very fortunate in that the company I worked for wanted me to stay on. I hired an assistant to train. He also did the driving. Since I no longer required a vehicle, they graciously agreed to purchase one of the first CCTVs, an Apollo, for my use. These events happened in a relatively short period of time. But for the grace of God, my life and career did not come to an end, and now it was all up to me to forge ahead and deal with my sudden vision loss.

As was expected, I would go thru a period of mental adjustment and here it was for me. I had a lot of things to sort out as I moved ahead with my new life. I found out by helping a friend of mine get past losing an eye in an accident, that I was able to help myself by helping him. I soon started a low vision support group which gave me a real good feeling and a sense of purpose beyond my family and career. I never looked back.

Our company purchased and harvested timber for our two local sawmills, in part, from US Forest Service Timber Sales. As our Forest Engineer, I was responsible for the construction and maintenance of the logging roads on each of these sales. This involved working with detailed plans and drawings. With the aid of the Apollo CCTV and a variety of hand held magnifiers I was able to continue my work. A real break thru came one day when a Forest Service Engineer saw me using one of the hand magnifiers and

asked if I could use a copy of the unreduced set of plans which were much larger than the one we all used on the job. YES!! I guess this was my introduction to “large print documents.” These larger plans certainly reduced my eye strain.

Prior to losing my vision I used a cell phone sized calculator for my work. It was a Texas Instrument device with numerous small buttons and a small display screen. Since I could no longer see good enough to continue using this calculator, our office manager found me a battery powered calculator with large buttons and a well-lit display. I believe this was a Monroe model. The bright yellow, one-inch numbers on the display allowed me to crunch a lot of numbers back in “the day.”

As my responsibilities and workload increased, I found myself spending more and more time in the office. My reading load increased to the point that the Apollo CCTV no longer worked for me. I found and later purchased a Xerox/Kurzweil Personal reader with which I was able to pretty much keep up with my office work. It’s ability to scan and save numerous pages of printed matter really came in handy when reading long reports, technical papers, and the like. I gave the Apollo to a young man in our support group.

As the years flew by my vision continued to decline. The acre we retired to in Wyoming was pretty much a clean slate, except for the new house and old building which needed to be turned into a usable shop. The place also needed landscaping, trees to be planted,

fences, and other improvements. This shop and all of the necessary tools became the hub for all of the rest of the projects.

With my failing vision came the need to adapt my tools and shop accordingly. Color contrast seemed to be the ticket. I started to collect tools that were yellow and black, Stanley hand tools and power tools by DeWalt. I marked things with yellow electrician tape and even painted the top of my worktable green. The yellow duct tape edges contrasted well with this top. I painted the tub of my wheel-borrow green and the handles yellow for easy location. I found some DeWalt tape measures that had larger than normal black numbers on a yellow blade. When I could no longer read any tape measure with a hand magnifier I eventually started using a “click rule.” I have enough 12-inch extensions to measure out to nine feet with this nifty device.

The drop-in plate around the blade on my table saw was red, which contrasted nicely with the yellow teeth on the DeWalt blades I switched to. Also, on this saw I taped the ends of the rip fence guide bar with bright yellow tape to keep from banging into it with my hip. I also began using the DeWalt blades with yellow teeth on my compound miter saw.

I removed the safety guards from both saws, because the guards did not allow me to see or touch the blades when measuring to rip fences and temporary stops. In this case, the factory safety features were not safe. In fact, they were a hazard. Choices?

Since measuring was always difficult and time consuming, I would measure and cut the first piece and then use it as a jig pattern when making repetitive cuts. I kept a plastic jug full of small blocks of various sizes up to six inches for quick measurements.

I changed all of the black cover plates on the electrical outlets and light switches in the shop to white, which provided good contrast against the actual black plug-ins and toggle switches. Over time I changed out all of my extension cords and air hoses to yellow. To help locate and keep from burning my hands, I painted the door handle and the air intake knob on the woodstove with yellow automotive high-temp header paint.

The big, large print calendar hanging on the wall was also yellow with black letters and numbers. Needless to say, there was plenty of contrast in my shop. The final touch was the little bell I hung over the walk door which warned me when some of my, so called friends, tried to sneak into the shop to surprise me.

For better visibility, I painted the roller nose on the bar of my chainsaw, you guessed it, yellow. This kept me from running it into the ground or rocks, thus dulling the chain. The top handlebar on the saw was already black so I simply touched it up with yellow tape for safety. I did the same to the rear trigger handle. I purchased only yellow and bright orange plastic bucking wedges and kept my metal splitting wedges painted black for good contrast. Instead of measuring every cut when bucking up logs for firewood segments, I

used pre-measured yellow bucking sticks to avoid cutting up my tape measures.

i still have ten full-length fingers!

Besides the store bought segmented white cane I use when going out in public, I made a few other rigid canes to use for different applications. One is made from a 60-inch length of half-inch white PVC pipe with the handle and roller tip from an old cane glued into the ends. I used red electrician tape to apply the color towards the tip. Another cane is made out of an old aluminum, hollow push broom handle. It is black with a yellow taped grip. It's a good beater. For walking in the mountains, I made a combination walking stick/cane out of a straight wooden hoe handle. Into the hole in the bottom end I screwed a half-inch lag bolt, which I sharpened to a point with a grinder after cutting off the head. After painting the entire stick white, I painted the bottom 16 inches red and used blue electrician tape to make the upper handle grip. Yes, it really is red, white, and blue with a bright white lanyard attached to the top. It can serve as a weapon, if necessary. I use any long-handled yard tool I have in my hand when these canes are not handy.

Our mailbox was out by the highway. We petitioned the Post Master to allow us to move it to our side of the road, thus eliminating the need to cross the lanes of traffic. ("reasonable accommodations" per ADA Guidelines). To guide me from our front fence to the mail box, a distance of about thirty feet, I strung a bright white nylon rope

between the driveway fence post and the mail box stand. My trips to the mail box quickly became much safer.

I painted the pins in our horseshoe pit a fluorescent white, so as to be more visible toward twilight. Jamming an empty beer or soda can onto the top of the pins helped also. I kept the dozen or so deciduous trees in the yard pruned up high enough to prevent accidental head injuries.

As time marched on, so did my sight loss. I have been blind now for a few years. We decided to move to a smaller place in town. I can turn our little garage into a wood shop when I need to build something. I can handle all of the yard work here except the mowing, which my wife has become very good at.

I now seem to have more time to devote to helping out with my low vision support group here in town, our state affiliate, the Wyoming council of the Blind (WyCB), and CCLVI. Technology has allowed me to stay in the game. I use a screen reading program called "System Access" (SA) to run my computer. SA is a Serotek product, as is "DocuScan Plus," which allows me to scan documents on the printer and once saved, onto my computer, I can then read them at any time. Raised dots on the F, J, Enter, and F4 keys allow me to easily navigate the keyboard.

Since I no longer can use pen and paper to write I use a small digital recorder to take notes and assist me when I am away from my desktop computer. Additionally, I would be lost without my talking

watch, and the “Pen Friend” which I have and still need to learn how to use, will allow me to identify my clothing, as well as other items in the house.

After not reading a book for about fifty years, for various reasons, I am making up for lost time with the NLS “Talking Book” service. I acquire books via digital cartridges, from our regional NLS library in Salt Lake City, as well as downloading them directly from Bard Express onto the computer and then transferring them onto a thumb drive. The amazing digital reader can, of course, play either format. Since television doesn’t do much for me anymore, I find myself listening to a book every time I have a minute to spare.

I have become very familiar with the concept of “spacial orientation” of objects, both in the yard and inside the house as my vision has declined. They say that when you lose one of your senses the others take over. I have found this to be very true. Now that I am blind, my fingers are my eyes. If I can feel something, I can usually figure out what it is and do something with it, except for identifying its color.

I have learned to always trust my fingers and ears in each and every situation. During my long journey of vision loss, I have become increasingly aware of my “aura,” that wonderful invisible magnetic field which has protected me when I moved slow enough to register the signals it sends out.

So, whether you call it “coping” or “adapting,” I seemed to have been able to figure out ways to overcome the hurdles I encountered during forty plus years of low vision and subsequent blindness. I think you can too. If you can make even one of my mind-over-matter victories work for you, I consider my ramblings here to be a success, thus fulfilling the purpose of this column.

ADA Celebration

by Bernice M. Kandarian

This year, the disability community is celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which was signed into law July 26, 1990, by then President George H. W. Bush.

Radio and TV interviews, and lots of "zoom calls" are happening throughout July, involving our old friends who were around at that time. and the George and Barbara Bush Foundation at Texas A and M University in College Station, Texas is having a major celebration.

One of my fondest memories was the actual signing of the Act on the Whitehouse lawn by President Bush.

Most notably I remember Representative Tony Coelho from California and Senator Tom Harkin from Iowa who had sponsored the ADA in their respective houses of congress. Tony has epilepsy and was barred from becoming a Roman Catholic priest. Tom's brother was deaf. Such amazing congressmen!

I knew three of those on the podium to one degree or another.

Justin Dart, known as "Godfather" of the ADA, used a wheelchair as a result of polio. Justin always had on a suit and tie with cowboy boots and cowboy hat with an American flag pin on the headband of the hat. One day when Roger and I were boarding a United Airlines plane, we saw the name Justin Dart in big letters between the door and cockpit. We commented to Justin who said his father was on the board. His mother's maiden name was Walgreen. Her family owned some drug stores. Justin mentioned he started a business in Japan selling Tupperware which allowed him some financial independence, so he and his wife Yoshiko traveled >in all fifty of the United States assessing the need for what became the ADA.

When ACB created our life membership, Justin Dart was at that general session calling for someone to take his check, making him the first ACB Life member.

Evan Kemp started feeling muscular discomfort at age twelve. He was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy and told he would only survive two more years. Evan continued his education, graduating from the University of Virginia law school. He sought employment from thirty-nine law firms but was not accepted. He got a federal government job and was given the accommodation of using the garage elevator, but not the accommodation of parking in the garage, so he had to struggle to walk into the garage to the elevator. One

day the garage door came down on him, injuring him badly. Evan sued the federal government successfully.

President Ronald Reagan appointed Evan to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and President George H W Bush appointed him chair of the EEOC.

Evan's condo was three blocks from my apartment building I learned when he had a party inviting friends to come and bring more friends, that is how we met.

Reverend Harold Wilke was born without arms. He introduced himself to Roger at a luncheon by way of apologizing in advance should he knee Roger while eating with his feet. Reverend Wilke accepted one of the pens from President Bush, adroitly reaching for it with his foot. His organization, The Healing Community, played a major role in making churches part of the ADA's effectiveness.

These individuals stand out in my memory when someone mentions the ADA.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU.

We are striving to make this newsletter the best it can be for the majority of our members. If you see anything in this newsletter that you think needs to be changed or have an idea that you think may improve it. please contact us at vision.access@cclvi.org or call us at (844) 460 – 0625.

I'm Positive

by Donna Williams

(This article was published in the April Issue of "The Blind Post". It was originally to be published in "Vision Access" Spring Edition but was withdrawn to make space for additional convention updates.)

When Lori mentioned writing uplifting articles for this issue of the Blind Post I began to think about what to say during these strange times of endless corona casts, dire warnings, and what the media like to refer to as social distancing. First about that, if we were truly social distancing people wouldn't be talking to one another. As usual the media have it wrong. It's physical distance people need to observe. I think if this were reported correctly it might help us all feel better. The daily corona casts and dire warnings are enough to make anyone feel as though they are going crazy at times. So how am I coping? First off despite the title of this article I'm very happy to report that I'm healthy. No corona virus for me or any members of my family so far. Thank God. We're doing our best to follow the directives put in place by officials but sometimes it's daunting.

I hate the term "new normal." It implies that society won't return to what we once knew. I can't imagine a world in which people are afraid to be around each other so they stay in isolation and don't speak to their family members, friends, or neighbors unless their is a computer, microphone, phone or smart phone involved. That would be very depressing indeed. So how am I staying positive during this time? I'm focusing my attention on things I love to do. I limit my

corona cast viewing to once a day and do it at a time when I believe all the updates are done so I can get the latest info without having to be overloaded. I miss my choir family and singing with them is one thing I've been unable to do since March 12th. Sue our director has been sending out emails every Thursday night which is helping us to remain connected. Her emails are fun and upbeat and she always asks how we are all doing. Although I really long to see everyone in person I am satisfied with the way we are connecting for now. Going to church is another thing I enjoy. The last time I was there was March 8th. I knew it would be my last because despite the recommendations by officials our current minister still wanted everyone to greet one another with handshakes and hugs. I had no desire to do that but instead hoped I could just greet people verbally without touching. I have great concern about getting this virus since some people end up on respirators. Good luck getting the tube down my throat. When I had my thyroid removed, they couldn't tube me then and at that time I was under anesthesia. My surgeon said I gagged so bad they all thought I was going to choke myself even when the tube was removed. Apparently, it took my body a few minutes to realize there was nothing being put down my throat anymore. I also know of an acquaintance who has the virus and she has to take steroids to help with breathing issues. Those would cause another problem because steroids can cause Glaucoma to become worse. So with this in mind I attempted to indicate I wanted a wide perimeter around me. Unfortunately, one woman decided she really wanted a hug. After she took what she wanted from me I took out hand sanitizer and used it liberally on my hands. As she was

walking away, she began to hack uncontrollably. That's the only way I can describe it. It was no cough. I thought she was going to lose a lung. It was at that point I knew, I wouldn't, be attending services anymore until this whole thing is over. For the next few days, I was worried that woman might have had the virus and that I'd get it. However, I did not want to stop going to my regularly scheduled activities. As I did, I was careful to put distance between those I interacted with. I also told them I didn't want hugs.

Before the new normal set in I was able to celebrate 2 birthdays. On March 8th I took my Mom to dinner at a Diner we both like and on Friday the 13th I celebrated my friend Drew's birthday with him. That's the last time I had a hug from anyone. I wasn't going to do it but since his health isn't the best and we don't know how many birthdays or holidays he has left I didn't want to lose that moment. I'm glad I did because shortly afterward he ended up in the hospital with more mini-strokes. Thankfully, he's back home now but I realize that one of these times that won't happen.

So what is there to be thankful for during these times? I have my health. I can connect with family and friends and still hear their voices. I have plenty of food to eat. I have hobbies I can entertain myself with. These include reading, playing computer games, watching my favorite shows and finding some new ones along the way just to name a few. I'm also making new connections through conference calls. Our minister has set up services via Zoom so now I am able to connect with my church family once again.

The new normal means we need to find new ways to challenge ourselves and I've come up with a few. First of all, I intend to get better with my new windows 10 computer. In the past month I've been lazy preferring to relax and play on my old machine but now it's time to tackle this project. I also intend to learn how to use Zoom and all its features via computer.

I know these are difficult times but here are some suggestions that I hope will help you get through. When you are feeling sad or worried connect with someone you are close to. Try not to watch too many corona casts. Ask family and friends who love to absorb every last detail to call you if something comes up that they think is important. Think of hobbies you love doing that don't require others and spend time doing them.

We're all in this together and it's important for me to help where I can so if any of you need to find a connection during these unusual circumstances please don't hesitate to email me at: livingwithlowvision@gmail.com and we can have a conversation. In the meantime stay well, stay safe, and stay positive.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

We have several committees that are looking for members. If you would like to be part of a committee contact the committee chair or the CCLVI President. For a complete list of CCLVI committees visit <https://cclvi.org/committees>

MEMBERS FORUM

Constitutionally Speaking: Or Maybe Not!

by Jim Jirak

Let me preface these remarks by suggesting the statements expressed are not in any way a reflection on any one person's leadership abilities or that in the role of friendship. Let me also preface these remarks by suggesting what took place at CCLVI's July Board of Directors meeting was a perceptual assault on not only fundamental democracy, but also a complete disregard for constitutional and Roberts Rules norms as well as outlined order of succession specifications in governing documents.

With the recent conclusion of the ACB/CCLVI Virtual Conference & Convention, I was asked for guidance and clarification on what may be perceived as a violation of the newly adopted CCLVI Constitution & Bylaws by the Board of Directors. And prior to posing the query and describing recent undertaken events, let me preface my remarks by suggesting I have no vested interest, other than perceptual organizational transparency that is in the best interest of CCLVI.

When the ACB Board of Directors met on March 30 to consider cancelling the in-person convention in Schaumburg, IL, which eventually occurred, CCLVI was left to consider whether to hold officer and board elections since the newly revised constitution and bylaws permitted this to occur, reference articles 7.0, 7.5 and 7.6 of the constitution.

On April 25, the CCLVI Board of Directors held a special board meeting to discuss the feasibility of holding an annual business meeting along with conducting an election to fill vacancies that would be occurring in July in Schaumburg. As per article 8.4 of the constitution which references voting by a secret ballot, the belief existed that, although there are several platforms available to conduct virtual meetings, a true secret ballot did not exist, never mind California successfully conducted elections at their recently concluded virtual business meeting. And if CCLVI does not have a meeting that allows for elections, what implemented procedures could be undertaken to remedy the situation. Section 5.5 of the constitution addresses this by stating that all incumbents shall continue serving in the offices to which they have been elected or appointed until their successors are elected and take office. Additionally, 5.7 of the constitution specifically describes order of succession. And it should also be pointed out that several members of the board questioned whether CCLVI could conduct a meeting since the constitution states that elections are a part of the annual membership meeting. Should a member raise a matter for a vote at such a meeting it would be difficult to assure only CCLVI members are voting. Also, those attending a virtual meeting may not understand how to vote using their preferred method of attending the meeting, (IE: phone, smart phone or computer.) Any action taken would have to be accessible to all.

With that background, the CCLVI Board of Directors, in executive session June 10, given the desires of the president, first vice-president, second vice-president and two board seats, deciding not to continue in their capacity , voted to solicit interested persons to fill those positions until the next in-person annual membership meeting in Phoenix in 2021. Interested persons were to contact the Immediate Past President by 5pm eastern July 10 and make their wishes known for which they were wanting to serve. The positions were then to be filled July 14 with the president suggesting, from the submitted names, replacements for each position with unanimous consent from the board.

Let me again intimate that I pose the following questions for your consideration not because I have a perceived vested interest or because I want to share private decisions from the board in executive session, but mainly what is in the best interest perceptually of CCLVI:

- Does a Board of Directors have the authority to disregard constitutionally outlined procedures? The expressed thought process is that since the Board of Directors voted to fill vacancies in this regard, changing course now in the process would completely undermine board credibility. It is also my understanding that Roberts Rules indicates that any action taken by the board going against constitutional procedures is null and void. As a simple propositional statement, articles of incorporation, constitutions, and bylaws are "governing instruments", and, as such, boards cannot act contrary to their

terms or requirements. That having been said, sometimes situations often arise which require that a particular paragraph or clause be interpreted. Could this be the rationale for the actions taken at the July 14 board meeting?

- How does it look for a board to name its own successors? It doesn't look especially good, but recourse to "emergency powers" would serve to mitigate the "bad optics" of such action. Suffice it to say, at best, that would only be a cover for constitutionally questionable action in a circumstance where constitutional interpretation made such action plausible and the membership deferred to that interpretation based on the exigencies of the circumstance. There was nothing emerging that necessitated the board handpicking successors.
- If resignations are submitted as per 6.7.3 of the constitution, does the acceptance of the resignation need to be communicated not only to the resigning party in addition to informing the entire board? If so, what time frame is generally accepted practice? Who accepts the resignation? Since the secretary is defined as the organizational record holder, does the secretary need to have record of all resignation acceptances prior to the filling of vacancies? Prior to the July 10 deadline for putting names forward for appointment, one director withdrew their resignation prior to the effective date given. The withdrawal was denied. Perhaps it was because Section 6.7.3 of the constitution states:

6.7.3: An officer or director may resign at any time upon written notice to both the president and secretary. Such resignation shall take effect on the date the notice was delivered to the president and Secretary, unless the notice specifies a later effective date. This language says nothing about acceptance by the board collectively, the president, or any other individual board member. Robert's Rules states the obvious proposition that no one can be compelled to retain an office against his or her will.

- If one member of the board revokes a resignation prior to the requested date for interested persons to submit their interest in serving on the board until the next in-person election, does the board need to accept the revocation? This question erroneously presupposes the existence of a resignation "acceptance" requirement" involving the board. Again, per the language of section 6.7.3 quoted above, a resignation becomes effective when delivered to both the president and secretary unless a different time is specified in the letter or communication tendering the resignation. If no action has been taken to fill a position vacated by resignation, either by election or appointment, then the person resigning could indicate his/her desire to revoke such resignation, but that forces consideration of the question of who would then be entitled to "accept" it.

It is generally common practice, though not a requirement, that persons seeking a board position be present at the time of filling a vacancy. While there is nothing in the CCLVI constitution addressing

this issue, candidates seeking elected office at in-person conventions have been allowed to be considered while being absent.

What this suggests is that the actions taken at the July 14 board meeting by those members serving as officers and directors allowed our constitution to be ignored to allow the appointment of those to positions who were hand selected to fill vacated positions for one year. And when one board member tried to nominate someone not being considered, their nomination was dismissed with the current nominating process being resumed.

Ladies and gentleman, while the displayed tactics fundamentally calls into question organizational integrity and perhaps personal bias toward certain individuals, actions as were taken should not be allowed to continue. It is our duty as members to question the undertaken methodology used to fill board vacancies in the manner in which it happened. Both previous and current board members owe each of us an explanation as to why constitutional officer successions were not followed. When the president, first-vice president and second vice-president all step aside, the constitution specifies that the secretary becomes president followed by the immediate past president. And as a previous board member having had my withdrawn resignation dismissed, I can honestly suggest that I am clueless as to why events happened as they did. But what I do know is that no member should pick and choose when the constitution and bylaws are followed. The constitution and bylaws cannot or should not be suspended for personal or political gain.

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:

Linda Allison,
CCLVI Treasurer
6010 Lilywood Lane
Knoxville, TN 37921
Phone: (844) 460-0625.

Or you may donate using PayPal by visiting our website at <https://cclvi.org>

CCLVI Local Affiliates

- California Council of Citizens with Low Vision CCLV@cclvi.org
- Delaware Valley Council of Citizens with Low Vision dvccclv@cclvi.org
- Kentucky Council of Citizens with Low Vision kcclv@cclvi.org
- New York State Council of Citizens with Low Vision NYSCCLV@cclvi.org

OFFICERS

Interim President:
Patti Cox

Interim First Vice President:
Zelda Gebhard

Interim Second Vice President:
Steve Fiksdal

Secretary:
Robert Spangler

Treasurer:
Linda Allison

Immediate Past President:
Sara Conrad

DIRECTORS

Director:
Angelo Lanier

Director:
John Hammill

Interim Director:
Renee Zelickson

Interim Director:
Tom Frank

Interim Director:
Valerie Ries-Lerman

Interim Director:
Tom Lealos

Council of Citizens with Low Vision International

**Attn. Linda Allison
6010 Lilywood Lane
Knoxville, TN. 37921**

**(844) 460-0625
<https://cclvi.org>
business.office@cclvi.org**