



VISION ACCESS

Council of Citizens with Low Vision International
6010 Lilywood Ln., Knoxville, TN 37921

Volume 28 | Number 2 |

<https://cclvi.org>

April 2021

From the President

by Patti Cox

The ACB virtual convention is coming soon. Convention dates are July 16 - July 23, and you can participate from any phone or computer by Zoom; many convention events will also be on ACB Radio.

There will be so many exciting events, and CCLVI is right in the thick of it. We will have our vendor showcase on Sunday and our business meeting on Tuesday. The convention committee is also working on sessions for Saturday and Wednesday.

How smart is your home? On Monday afternoon of the convention, we will be teaming up with ACB Next Generation to talk about all of the smart home products that you can use to make your life much easier. From your kitchen to security to cleaning and much more - we've got it covered in this information-packed session.

Don't miss any of the action. Watch for a special mailing of convention information in May. And remember that convention pre-registration opens May 20 and closes June 28.



ORGANIZATION

Publications Committee

by Tom Lealos

Our committee is continually tweaking its publishing process to optimize our time and talents. Since we are publishing Vision Access by committee, without a named editor, it is important that we all stay on the same page and work together. We hope this is being exhibited by the improved quality of the newsletter you receive.

During our January meeting we floated the idea of listing the included articles on the first page with links from this list to the articles within the body of the newsletter. We had to eliminate the idea because it took up too much space. As a compromise, the articles are arranged by named categories for ease of reading.

We are still experimenting with breaks between articles to assist those of you who read the newsletter using a screen reader program.

A special convention edition will be published in May. It will contain all of the necessary information you will need to participate in the virtual event being held in July.

We learned at our February meeting that our printing costs for the large print formats have recently increased by approximately ten percent. We did have some cushion built into our budget to absorb an unforeseen increase. Additionally, we are asking those of you who receive Vision Access in large print to kindly consider

switching to the electronic format. Generally speaking, the fewer copies we have to print and mail, the less it costs us. If you are so inclined, please let us know via email at vision.access@cclvi.org.

We are always on the hunt for articles for the newsletter that will keep our members abreast of interesting anecdotes and informative developments pertinent to the low vision experience. We welcome your submittals. To kick start your creative juices, we are providing the following list of article categories: organization news, convention conference, chapter news - just to name a few.

Please send your articles in a Word document as an email attachment to vision.access@cclvi.org. Please keep your word count to less than 1,000. Remember, Vision Access is published by us and for us, so if you have any constructive comments or creative ideas regarding this newsletter, please feel free to let us know at the above email address or by calling (844) 460-0625.

Fundraising Committee Report

by Kathy Farina

The winner of the Valentine's Day ring was David Smith from the Kentucky Council of Citizens with Low Vision. Congratulations, David! We will have two 50 50 drawings between now and the end of the year. The committee is also working on some other fundraising activities. Stay tuned for more details in the coming weeks!

What's up with Membership?

by Zelda Gebhard, Membership Chairman

Representatives from the four CCLVI affiliates attended our February CCLVI Membership Committee meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to develop connections and share ideas.

Each affiliate was represented. All shared the “best activities” that occurred either in their affiliate or in CCLVI during the past year. Some of the responses were:

- Positive changes to Vision Access in frequency and layout;
- KCCLV's new board works well together. Affiliate has regular calls with good participation and interesting topics;
- CCLVI has gained some good exposure with the community calls offered;
- Membership in Delaware Valley Council of Citizens with Low Vision is up 40% because of their Zoom calls on topics such as disaster readiness. Recordings are available for relistening. Low vision centers are now referring to them;
- Plans to start a Midwest affiliate;
- Discovering and embracing all the calls offered by CCLVI like Coffee Chats and Game Nights. Getting to know each other and finding out about CCLVI.

- CCCLV will be meeting in April during the CCB Convention and will have several speakers. They were able to contact all their members;

The March ACB Braille Forum focused on low vision. Several great articles were submitted by CCLVI members.

During Q & A, concern was raised that some are not receiving our newsletter. Also, some do not receive e-mail notices of calls. Everyone is to make a list of those who are not receiving the newsletter or e-mails and report them to Zelda. Some may not recognize that the large print newsletter is now mailed in a 6 X 9 manilla envelope. The formats for Vision Access are e-mail and large print. It is available at cclvi.org and in audio on the CCLVI Information Line by dialing 773-572-6315.

As members may not know everything that is available, we decided to plan a Zoom call to provide information about benefits of membership, and the relationship between our affiliates and CCLVI and between CCLVI and ACB.

Thanks to all who renewed memberships despite the inability of the postal service to deliver your renewal form. It's not too late to pay your 2021 dues or report changes in your information. Call me at 701-493-2399 and I will assist you in the process. You may also mail your \$15 dues directly to Linda Alison, CCLVI Treasurer, 6010 Lilywood Lane, Knoxville, TN 37911 or pay online at: <https://cclvi.org/membership-form-rm>.



Public Relations Committee Report

by Tom Frank

The PR Committee continues to meet every month on the third Monday at 8:30 PM EST, via Zoom. Last year we developed a brochure to be distributed at the 2020 Convention in Illinois. Since the 2020 and 2021 Conventions went virtual, we decided to convert the brochure into a flyer to be distributed via e-mail to regional special services, libraries, area agencies on aging, and other organizations and agencies that are most likely to serve individuals with low vision.

We are specifically directing interested persons to CCLVI's toll-free number and website. The PR Committee is also keeping the resources page updated with an emphasis on low vision products, programs, and services.

Samuel Genensky Memorial Magnification Award

The Samuel Genensky Memorial Magnification Award Program is now open. Each year CCLVI offers a variety of magnification devices in honor of our founder and the developer of the CCTV. This year's application process opened March 16th and will close May 15th. Applications are available for submission online and are available to all interested persons. For complete details and information for registering your account to take part in this award program visit <https://cclvi.org/video-magnifier-award-program>.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

AN OPTICIAN'S PERSPECTIVE

by Katie Friedman

As an optician, I've observed how fear grips families as their eye doctor says, "I'm sorry, but there is no correction for glasses that will help you see better." These people came to the optical dispensary and asked if I can help them. Traditionally, I presented assorted magnifiers and listened to their concerns. Now, I can offer much more than that.

Opticians are not doctors; they are technicians that fill vision prescriptions.

My opticianry background includes technical trade school, a Bachelor's degree in vocational education, plus multiple certifications, advanced certifications, and fellowships within the ophthalmic industry. I'm an experienced educator, speaker and author. I now specialize in low vision to no vision training on assistive technology devices. This is unique for most opticians.

Please know that glasses have their limitations, and we can do magic working with prisms. For example:

- Making image sizes look balanced when the lens prescription makes one eye small and the other eye significantly smaller.

- Regarding low vision magnifiers, text to speech (tts) and speech to text (stt) is available on one's phone. Digital magnifying devices, such as the Zoomax Snow 12, the Freedom Scientific family of Topaz CCTV's, and the Pearl (that combines scanning and reading software) also have tts &/or stt.
- Eyewear such as the OrCam identifies people and objects, then speaks them to the frame wearer.
- Vision aids include GPS devices, like the Victor Reader Trek and the haptic SUNU band. Pulses prevent one from walking into low hanging branches or tape barriers at hip level. It's a great assistant to the white cane or dog guide.

This short list of technology and help is available from a low vision specialist such as myself. I can be reached at katie@5stareyecare.com for assistance.

.Audio Format

Vision Access can be accessed in audio format by calling the CCLVI Information Line at (773) 572-6315. When prompted, select option #2 from the menu to get connected. While listening, press "7" to rewind, "8" to pause, and "9" to fast forward. To leave a voice mail, press "#", speak your message, and then just hang up.

MEMBERS

“Kopings”

by Tom Lealos

In this edition, our “Kopings” column will shine a spotlight on Richard Rueda, one of CCLVI’s Past Presidents. He is a California native and is now a middle-aged professional currently living and working in Sacramento, California. Richard was born with Congenital Glaucoma and has been legally blind for his entire life. He has a Bachelor’s degree in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling from California State University in Los Angeles. Richard’s present position is the Program Coordinator for Society for the Blind in Sacramento, where he oversees CareersPLUS, a program which focuses on career opportunities and development for teens and young adults. Richard also contracts with the American Printing House for the Blind’s ConnectCenter where he works on content development including blogs and interviews of successful blind professionals.

Richard’s training and passion for career counseling and development with low vision and blind teens and young adults has afforded him opportunities at the community, state, national, and international (in Taiwan) levels to write, speak, and work in his chosen profession.

The most important motivating factor in his life long struggle with low vision has been his “glass half full,” positive attitude. He learned at a young age that low vision was a very personal experience and that the solutions to many of the hurdles he would encounter could be overcome by reaching out and asking for help. It worked!

Since it was very evident to him at an early age that he would never be able to drive, he did not have to endure that mental jolt of losing his driver's license, like many of us have. Growing up in southern California, it was very natural and convenient for him to get around navigating among trains, buses, paratransit, and in later years, Uber and the like. In addition, he is a cane traveler and is now on his second dog guide from the Seeing Eye in Morristown, New Jersey.

In school, he was able to use a stand alone video magnifier, which allowed him to do his required reading. As technology evolved, he was introduced to the many smaller and more portable video magnifiers that came onto the market in the 90s and are still available to those with low vision today.

As his vision continued to change, he found it necessary to become familiar with a few of the screen reading programs, such as "JAWS", (Job Access with Speech) NVDA, and Narrator to assist in the operation of his computer. Like most experienced adult professionals, he relies heavily on his smart phone. The "voice over" option is his window to the many apps and programs that dominate this technology.

Richard is a strong proponent within the low vision community. His involvement with local low vision support groups and other outreach efforts, as well as, his contributions at the national level within CCLVI have made him a fine example to emulate for those who struggle with low vision. Thank you, Richard!

Did You Know

The “Braille Forum” is not just for Braille Readers?

by Kathy Farina

The “Braille Forum” is not just for braille readers. It has come to our attention that some folks with low vision don’t read the “Braille Forum”. They think that, because the name has braille in it, it is not for them. Time to set the record straight.

The “Braille Forum” is the official publication of the American Council of the Blind (our parent organization). It contains information about what’s happening in ACB, as well as interesting and informative articles written by ACB members and others who have something to share about topics of interest to all blind and visually impaired persons.

The “Braille Forum” is published in January, March, May, July, September and November. It is published in braille, large print, digital cartridge and email. In February, April, June, August, October and December, the “E-Forum” is published in email only. All issues of the “Braille Forum” and the “E-Forum” are available in a podcast at <https://acb-braille-forum-and-e-forum.pinecast.co/> and on acb.org. As a member of CCLVI, you are automatically a member of the American Council of the Blind, and you are entitled to receive the “Braille Forum” and Vision Access. So, next time these publications come to your doorstep or your email box, read them and enjoy!

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EVENTS

Events held on Zoom now require a passcode along with the meeting ID. To join our meetings, visit <https://zoom.us>, click on join meeting and enter the appropriate meeting ID and passcode. Or call (312) 626-6799 and enter the appropriate codes. Signup to get all the meetings and their information by subscribing to our Constant Contact list; visit <https://cclvi.org>. Meeting reminders are sent the week of each event..

CCLVI Coffee Break:

Join Kathy Farina and Tom Lealos for a morning chat. Each Friday morning at 11:00 AM Eastern.

Meeting ID: 838 9349 7160

Passcode: 432483

Thursday Night Chat:

Want to meet others. Join us each Thursday evening at 7:00 PM Eastern. We have great conversations covering many topics.

Meeting ID: 883 1823 6600

Passcode: 360613

Tech Talk:

Have questions about today's technology? What to learn how different programs can help you to better access your projects? Join us each Sunday evening at 8:00 PM Eastern.

Meeting ID: 879 5949 4614

Passcode: 123321

CCLVI Game Night:

Come join the fun the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 8:00 PM Eastern.

Meeting ID: 857 3352 6427

Passcode: 257307

CCLVI Chat:

First and third Mondays of each month (also on the fifth Monday should there be one) at 8:00 PM Eastern.

Meeting ID: 950 2360 8739

Passcode: 655392

CCLVI Board of Directors Meeting:

held the second Tuesday of each month at 8:30 PM Eastern.

Meeting ID: 896 397 845

Passcode: 225841

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

Join Dr. Bill and his guest for this monthly informative program.

The third Tuesday of each month at 8:30 PM Eastern.

Meeting ID: 793 242 226

Passcode: 270147

KCCLV Low Vision Support Calls:

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

Meeting ID: 86298896972

Passcode: 975864

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VISION ACCESS is published six times a year in large print, audio and email.
Published in February, April, June, August, October and December.

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. Submission deadlines are January 15, March 15, May 15, July 15, September 15 and November 15. Send Contributions to vision.access@cclvi.org.