



VISION ACCESS

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

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<https://cclvi.org>

December 2020

Fred Scheigert Scholarship Program

The Council of Citizens with Low Vision International (CCLVI) will award three scholarships in the amount of \$3,000 each to full-time entering freshmen, undergraduate and graduate college students who have low vision, maintain a strong GPA and are involved in their school and local community.

Application materials must be received by March 15. Scholarship monies will be awarded for the 2021 - 2022 academic year.

To read the scholarship guidelines and complete an online application, please visit <https://cclvi.org> and click on the 'CCLVI Scholarship Programs' link.

Applications will be available to submit online until March 15 at 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time. Questions may be directed to CCLVI at (844) 460-0625 or jim.jirak@cclvi.org

We look forward to receiving your application materials!

DID YOU KNOW

In the **United States of America**, **Christmas** was established as a federal holiday on June 26, 1870.

From the President

by Patti Cox

CCLVI has been very busy since our last newsletter. Most of our committees are in action. The Publications Committee has made changes to Vision Access and has added more issues. The Membership Committee has started our 2021 membership drive. The Legislative and Public Relations Committees have set forth goals and are working hard. The Scholarship Committee will soon be accepting applications for three different scholarships. And our Convention Committee will be putting together our program for the 2021 ACB Virtual Conference and Convention. There is much work to be done, and there is always room on our committees for you to get involved.

If you are feeling alone, if you have questions or need some tips or tricks on how to do a task with low vision, or if you like playing games and meeting new people, please join us for our chat calls and our game night. You will find a calendar of events near the end of this newsletter.

On a personal note, thanks so much to everyone for their thoughts, kind words and prayers during a difficult time in my family's life. As most of you know, my stepdaughter had a kidney/pancreas transplant. We had been waiting for over two years to get the call for the transplant. When I took on the role as president of CCLVI, I never thought that the call would come so soon. It was not easy being her support person and president of CCLVI; however, I got through it with the support of family, the Board and members of CCLVI. She is doing well and gaining strength every day.

Wishing you a Happy Holiday. Be safe and be well.

Publications Committee

by Tom Lealos

To bring you up to date, this committee is comprised of Christine Chaikin, Kathy Casey, Dr. Bill Takeshita, Patti Cox, Robert Spangler, Valerie Ries-Lerman, and chair, Tom Lealos.

Committee meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month starting at 7:00 PM Eastern time. We will also meet a few days after the 15th of the odd-numbered months to discuss the content of each issue of Vision Access. At our October, 2020 meeting we discussed our costs to date and our proposed budget projections for 2021. We will discuss our cost situation at our December Board meeting and our budget projection will be reported to the Treasurer for her 2021 budgeting work.

We have an ongoing discussion of how we can streamline our publishing process and improve the look and content of our newsletter. Editing and formatting has already improved Vision Access and minor errors are still being worked on. To this end, we have added one more set of eyes to the editing process so we can take one more look at the newsletter before it goes to print. Any and all ideas from members are welcome and will be considered.

We agreed to form two new sections for the newsletter; i.e. “Confronting Vision Loss” and “Looking Back.” The first will showcase articles on how to deal with vision loss, while the second will feature articles depicting the historical aspects of CCLVI.

We agreed to post each issue of Vision Access on our website the month it is published instead of waiting until the following month. This will keep our members more up-to-date and help give the website a fresh look and keep it current.

We are actively soliciting articles for Vision Access. To date we have sent out 1,650 email inquiries to organizations, affiliates, and individuals around the country from many researched lists. We have already received replies from some new contributors. We intend to enlarge our search for even more articles.

Remember, if you or anyone you know would like to submit an article on a subject that is relevant to the low vision discussion, please send it to vision.access@cclvi.org in a Word document as an email attachment. We will gladly review such articles and consider them for publication.

Legislative Committee Report

by Sara Conrad

The CCLVI Legislative Advocacy Committee is creating Goal Groups for the rest of the year. We are looking for CCLVI members who are interested in helping with small advocacy projects to join our project teams. Sara will be requesting support from members this week and Goal Groups will be announced prior to Thanksgiving.

The committee is meeting Thursday, November 19th to establish leaders for each subgroup and to create objectives to meet each goal.

Voting experience

by Carolyn Burley

In Ohio they have a special ballot for the disabled. I called the Board of Elections for Stark County and they emailed the application for the absentee ballot to me. I then filled it out and printed it. Since I have a label printer I was able to address the envelope to mail the application back to them. They then emailed me the actual ballot.

I found that I couldn't open this ballot, so they told me to try a different browser. I had a friend help me change my browser to Google Chrome and then was able to open the ballot.

It was very easy to vote for the candidates I wanted. I had to review before I could make my selections. I then was able to print the ballot out. I then scanned it to see if it was correct, but the scanner didn't read the check marks. I thought about how to check it and I decided that I didn't care if a stranger looked at my ballot since I had a Biden sign in my front yard anyway.

I used Be My Eyes to help me read my ballot and they said that the candidates that I voted for were marked correctly.

The Board of Elections had sent me two envelopes to mail the ballot back. I again used my labeler to print my name and address and included the last 4 digits from my SS number. I wrote my date of birth on the envelope. There were two holes at the bottom of the envelope, and I signed my name there and put in the date. I put the ballot in that envelope and then that envelope into the envelope addressed to the Board of Elections.

They called me and said that everything was correct, and my ballot would be counted. They told me that it had to be copied over to the actual ballot form and that both a Republican and a Democrat would watch the transfer of the information to avoid any errors.

Having and knowing how to use a computer and a printer made the whole process easy. I really like the way it is set up for independent voting for people with a disability.

CCLVI is the Place for You!

Zelda Gebhard, Membership Chairman

Do you find yourself living in the awkward position of being neither fully sighted nor totally blind? If so, you are not alone.

Whether you were born with low vision or your vision has decreased over the years, the Council of Citizens with Low Vision International is an organization who understands you and your unique needs.

CCLVI is a special interest affiliate of ACB. We are dedicated to providing information and tips to help you live well with vision loss. To meet your low vision needs, we sponsor the following regular calls addressing low vision information and fun:

- Coffee Break each Friday morning at 11:00am Eastern.
- Ham Chat: Learn about Amateur Radio each Thursday at 7:00 pm Eastern.
- CCLVI Game Night: Fun for all on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 8:00 PM Eastern.

- CCLVI Board of Directors Meeting, open to everyone, on the second Tuesday of each month at 8:30 PM Eastern.
- Let's Talk Low Vision with Dr. Bill Takeshita on the third Tuesday of each month at 8:30 PM Eastern.
- KCCLV Low Vision Support Calls: first and third Wednesdays of each month at 7:30 PM Eastern.
- CCLVI programming during the ACB Convention to include things like game night, low vision vendor showcase, informational sessions, social mixer and annual membership meeting.

To receive reminders and Zoom connection information, go to cclvi.org and join our Constant Contact list.

Our newsletter, Vision Access, is produced six times a year in your choice of large print, audio or email. To encourage career development, we facilitate the giving of three Fred Scheigert scholarships annually. We advocate for issues like low vision devices from Medicare and more.

For more details about CCLVI, call our CCLVI Information Line at (773) 572-6315, talk directly to a CCLVI member by calling toll free (844) 460-0625, or visit us at <https://cclvi.org>.

To renew your membership, go to <https://cclvi.org/join-CCLVI> or contact Zelda at (701) 493-2399 or zelda.gebhard@cclvi.org and she can help you with the process.

We are excited about our future and we are glad you are a part of it.

"Kopings"

by Zelda Gebhard/Tom Lealos

Once again, we have a wonderful submission to the "Kopings" column. Zelda's story, in her own words, exemplifies how one can find ways to overcome the obstacles encountered with a visual impairment. I think you will find it very uplifting, as it is certainly in keeping with the "Kopings" theme. Thanks for sharing, Zelda.

Greetings from Zelda Gebhard of Edgeley, North Dakota. It was by attending the CCLVI programming at ACB Conventions that I became aware of CCLVI and that led me to become involved. I became a member in 2015, was elected as a director on the board in 2016 and currently serve as the First Vice President and Chair of the Membership Committee. It has been my privilege to serve on the Convention Planning, Public Relations and Youth Outreach and Support Committees. I have done so because I would like everyone with low vision to have an opportunity to learn about our organization so they will then have access to valuable information and experience the benefits of membership as well.

Being thankful for my many blessings has kept me going even as I have encountered sorrow and loss. My life has been full of many blessings. I am thankful to have had the privilege of growing up in a Christian home with a mother and father who loved us and God. I grew up with the love and support of two sisters and a brother. I have been blessed with a marriage of 43 years to a man of integrity who supports, respects, and loves me. I gave birth to four healthy sons and I have been able to help them grow into independent, responsible adults who have loved into our family

four wonderful "daughters" by marriage and ten cherished grandchildren with another one arriving in March.

Down through the years, along with the blessings, I have experienced losses and challenges which have provided me with opportunities for growth. My father died in a farm accident when I was 15. Under the strong leadership of my mother, the family was successful in continuing to ranch in western North Dakota. That is where I learned firsthand about teamwork and responsibility. I discovered the rewards of working hard with persistence and dedication.

I chose to attend Northern State University in Aberdeen, SD and earned my degree in business administration. My career started as a medical transcriptionist in a local hospital. That evolved into being on the administrative team as Director of Outpatient Services. My duties included managing the clinic, doing the professional credentialing, overseeing the specialty outreach clinics, supervising the medical records department, and conducting the marketing program for our healthcare network.

After having continued difficulty with my vision, at age 34, I was diagnosed with Stargardt's, a genetic retinal disease. My vision gradually decreased over the following six years until my diagnosis of legal blindness 23 years ago. After my initial diagnosis, I continued to work with the use of low vision aids like handheld magnifiers and a CCTV. When I was unable to safely drive the 15-mile commute to my job, I gave it up and we moved from South Dakota to North Dakota where my husband continued employment as an ag loan officer. For two years I worked from my home as a contracted medical transcriptionist. Though this was work I

enjoyed and had the training and experience to perform, I discontinued it because of a difference in philosophy. The company I was contracted with was focused on quantity of lines completed and not on quality of the work. I knew after working directly with patients how important it was to strive to create error-free medical records and found I couldn't compromise my standards to create more output.

I am currently working part-time for an independent insurance agent. I enjoy my job because it gives me an opportunity to get out of the house, be around people and continue learning new things. I am able to continue to perform my clerical duties with the help of handheld magnifiers, screen magnification on the computer and my desktop video magnifier. Transportation is faithfully provided by my husband. I am thankful to have a boss who is understanding that my work schedule is dependent on my husband's schedule. Though he is a very patient and understanding man, he often is reluctant to give me new tasks to perform. I need to continually show him what I can do and look for ways to prove my abilities. I do have difficulties with our network phone and our printer/scanner/copier because of the inaccessible screens. I have needed to adapt and have memorized the menus because I cannot visualize them. To continue to learn, I recently took an online Excel course from Hadley. It was free and I could complete it at my own pace.

My vision loss has resulted in many changes in my life such as the loss of my career in healthcare administration, loss of my driver's license, and the subsequent loss of independence I experience living in a rural area with no public transportation.

My vision loss has presented me with many opportunities as well. I served two terms on the governor-appointed advisory committee for vocational rehabilitation, the ND State Rehabilitation Council, of which for a time I was the Chairman. I have been a member of the North Dakota Association of the Blind (NDAB), an affiliate of ACB, for 17 years. I was the editor of its newsletter for five years, served two terms as Vice President and Membership Chair, and I'm currently in my fifth year as President. This is my tenth year of being a Legislative Liaison for NDAB. This position has provided me with the opportunity to present blindness issues and to advocate on the state and national levels. I have been serving on both the ACB Auction Committee and the Durward K. McDaniel First Timer's Committee since 2014. I was elected to the ACB Board of Publications in 2019 where I proudly represent the low vision perspective on a board where all other members are blind.

In my community, I have enjoyed teaching children in Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Growth in Faith Time (G.I.F.T.) and AWANA. I treasure the time spent with my sisters in Christ at Care and Share, an interdenominational Bible study group that meets weekly.

With adaptive visual aids, I continue to sew with my church group, the Merry Monday Quilters at the Wesley United Methodist Church of Edgeley. We make quilts for missions near and far. The ladies also help me with my prayer quilt ministry. The quilts are made for those in the community who are dealing with a major illness or injury. They are a tangible symbol of our prayers and love. I am truly thankful for my blessings and for the Lord's faithfulness to help me endure, survive, and even thrive no matter what I have encountered in life.

If you would like to ask me any questions, you can reach me by emailing Zelda.gebhard@cclvi.org or by calling me at [\(701\) 493-2399](tel:(701)493-2399).

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

Ham Chat:

Want to know about amateur radio, or just want to meet others. Join us each Thursday evening at 7:00 PM Eastern.

Meeting ID: 883 1823 6600

Passcode: 360613

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.

A CHRISTMAS EVE SPECIAL

Join us as we hear the CBS Radio Mystery Theatre adaptation of "A Christmas Carol". Join as we play this classic program each hour beginning at 8:00pm Eastern and repeating every hour on the hour. Join us for a quick chat after each presentation.

Meeting ID: 883 1823 6600

Passcode: 360613

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VISION ACCESS is published six times a year in large print, audio and email.
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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.

**Council of Citizens with Low Vision International
2021 Membership**

Please print using dark ink or type

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone Number: _____

_____ **Landline** _____ **Cell Phone**

Email Address: _____

Preferred method of contact: _____ **Phone** _____ **Email**

Birthdate: _____

Vision Status:

_____ **Sighted (20/20 to 20/70)**

_____ **Vision Impaired (20/70 to 20/200)**

_____ **Legally Blind (20/200 and Geater)**

_____ **Blind (Totally Blind)**

Membership Status:

_____ **New Member**

_____ **Renewing Member**

_____ **New CCLVI Life Member**

_____ **CCLVI Life Member Updating my Information**

_____ **I am an ACB Life Member**

Publication Format:

Vision Access:

CCLVI Membership Newsletter.

Large Print

Email

I am Not Interested in Receiving this Product.

ACB Braille Forum:

ACB Membership Newsletter.

Large Print

Braille

NLS Cartridge

Email

I already Receive this Product.

Membership:

Annual At-Large CCLVI Membership \$15.00

CCLVI Life Membership \$300.00 (May be paid in three equal payments. Contact the CCLVI Treasurer for more information.)

PAYMENT.

\$ _____ Dues Payment

\$ _____ I would like to make a donation to CCLVI

\$ _____ TOTAL

Return this form along with your payment to:

Linda Allison, CCLVI Treasurer, 6010 Lilywood Ln.,
Knoxville, TN 37921. for assistance call Linda at (865) 254 - 3640