

Vision Access

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

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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.

Submissions are best made as attachments to email or may also be made in clear typescript. Vision Access cannot assume responsibility for lost manuscripts. Deadlines for submissions are: April 1, August 1 and December 1.

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Editor's Page

By Mike Keithley

Welcome to the fall issue of Vision Access.

I'm sure you lived an adventurous summer, with trips to and from the ACB conference and convention with its myriad events, and interesting happenings at home. So now comes Vision Access with more things to share.

For starters, CCLVI has a new President, Sara Conrad, and she introduces herself in her own column. And the Fred Scheigert scholarships were awarded at the convention's

second general session. You'll want to check out the photos after Sara's address.

We have an excellent self-advocacy article that, although the author is not low vision, demonstrates how she patiently change prescription medication information for the better. And if you're trying to decide if the guide dog life style if for you, GDUI has produced a new publication that will help.

Enjoy!

August 2018 President's Address

By Sara J Conrad

Dear CCLVI Members:

It is my honor and privilege to address you for the first time as CCLVI President in this publication. In this note, I will share some of the newest updates in CCLVI. But I want to begin by introducing myself to you as your new CCLVI president.

I have my law degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School in Madison. I am currently on the job search for my first legal job and am excited for new opportunities. I just completed my sixth of eight years on the ACB Board of Directors. My work in law, policy, and advocacy led me to CCLVI and its leadership.

I want to publicly thank Leslie Spooone and Charlie Glaser for their previous officer position roles with CCLVI. Leslie is now serving as the Immediate Past President, and I am grateful for her heart and compassion towards this organization as we transition. Charlie just completed his time as Immediate Past President, and I, along with the Board of Directors, wish to thank him for his service. I also want to congratulate Jim Jirak and Rick Morin, two new board members on our leadership team.

I am very pleased to begin leading this great organization with our wonderful officers and board members. However, we cannot succeed without members like you.

I want to thank those members who have stepped up to join and lead CCLVI committees. I also want to thank all those who participated in our great convention activities. Thank you to Jim Jirak and the rest of the Convention Committee for a fun convention.

I have had the pleasure, per our constitution, to appoint committee chairs and co-chairs for this year. I am pleased to have appointed the following:

**Book Committee:
Dr. Bill Takeshita**

**Convention Committee:
Jim Jirak**

**Constitution and Bylaws Committee:
Robert Spangler**

**e-Communications:
Robert Spangler**

**Finance Committee:
Linda Allison**

**Fundraising Committee:
Kathy Ferina**

**Genensky Award:
Dr. Cathy Schmidt Whitaker
and Richard Rueda**

**Legislative and Advocacy:
Patti Cox**

**Membership:
Jim Jirak
and Lorise Diamond**

**Public Relations:
Patti Cox**

**Scholarship Committee:
Allen Casey and Jim Jirak**

**Resolutions:
Ken Stewart**

**Publications:
Mike Keithley**

In addition, I worked with the committee chairs to determine members of these committees. It was great to offer recommendations to the chairs and support them in deciding their committee memberships. I am happy to see new people, including some young adults, join committees. If you want to step up in leadership with CCLVI, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or a committee chair regarding your interest to serve.

As we embark on a new year in CCLVI, I want to encourage all of you to reconnect. We lose touch too easily in our geographically large organization. I hope you will get involved by joining our Let's Talk Low Vision and other conference calls. I hope that if you are interested, you will call in to our board meetings, which are open to members. I hope that you will feel the leadership is approachable and here to serve all of you.

Board meetings in 2018 take place on the second Tuesday of each month, and Meetings start at 8:30 PM eastern.

In an effort to increase transparency and to give you an opportunity to connect with me about any questions, concerns, or recommendations you have for the organization, I am making myself available for your calls, texts and emails. Please call or text me at 269-470-0996 or email me a president@cclvi.org. Please do not use my personal Gmail email account for CCLVI matters, as I do not check that account as regularly. I am generally available in the evenings,

but please do not call or text after 10 PM Eastern.

As President of CCLVI, I am here to serve you and to help this organization thrive. Thank you for your support. Together we will continue to make CCLVI's mission a reality.

Sincerely,

Sara J. Conrad

Meet the 2018 Scheigert Scholars

By John Casey

Continuing a tradition of providing educational opportunities for low vision students, CCLVI awarded three Scheigert Scholarships for the 2018-19 academic year at the 57th annual ACB national conference and convention in St. Louis, MO. The recipients--an incoming freshman, an undergraduate and a graduate student--were introduced in the convention's general session on Monday, July 2. The scholarships are funded by longtime ACB and CCLVI member Fred Scheigert of Saratoga Springs, NY.

The freshman recipient is Madison Allen of Rosman, NC, and a recent honors graduate of Brevard (NC) High School. Madison will study Nuclear Engineering at the University of Tennessee (Knoxville) with a minor in Applied Music. She served as a volunteer for the American Cancer Society and at the STEM camp for VIP/blind students sponsored by the North Carolina

School of Science. In addition, Madison was a member of the Brevard HS National Honor Society and a saxophonist in the high school band.

The recipient of her second Scheigert award, the undergraduate scholarship, is Samantha Mayberry of Elizabeth, IN. Samantha, or "Sam" as she is popularly known, is a rising junior at Columbia College (Chicago) where she majors in acting with a special interest in writing and music. As an aspiring actress, she has filled a number of theatrical roles in the Chicago area. Sam participated in the Louisville (KY) Vision Walk and is an animal protection advocate. She hopes to inspire others to do as she is doing and "reach for the stars."

Receiving the graduate scholarship is Maureen Hayden of College Station, TX, a doctoral student at Texas A&M University, majoring in

Marine Biology. Maureen holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Rhode Island and a graduate degree from Walla Walla University. Her research focuses on the behavior, physiology and ecological role of terrestrial amphipods. She has published several research articles and presented her research findings to professional conferences. Maureen is a trombonist in the university concert band and the St. Mary's Symphony Orchestra.

Welcome Madison, Samantha and Maureen to the Scheigert Scholarship family. We wish you success as you continue to build your educational careers.

2019 Scheigert Scholarships

As we move toward the end of 2018, we draw closer to the beginning of a

new Scheigert Scholarship season. The 2019 application window opens January 1 and closes March 15

The scholarships are awarded annually to low vision students- -one each to an incoming freshman, an undergraduate and a graduate student. The award for the academic year is valued at \$3,000. Recipients are expected to attend the 2019 ACB national conference and convention in Rochester, NY, as guests of CCLVI. Scholarships are funded by the generous support of CCLVI member Fred Scheigert.

Eligibility requirements, financial details and other relevant information are available on the CCLVI website, www.cclvi.org. Click on "Scheigert Scholarship" to gain access to program guidelines and reimbursement policy.

CCLVI and Vendors Partner to Award Video Magnifiers In Honor of Dr. Samuel Genensky **By Dr. Catherine Schmitt Whitaker, Chair, Genensky Award Committee**

The Council of Citizens with Low Vision International (CCLVI), Enhanced Vision, Eye Tech Low Vision, and NU Eyes are proud to announce recipients for the annual Dr. Samuel Genensky Video Magnifier Memorial Award. The partnership recognizes and celebrates Dr. Genensky's achievements and thirst for knowledge. From a competitive pool of applicants, a total of 3 video magnifiers have been awarded to

individuals who are low vision with demonstrated need and potential to significantly improve their daily living with the use of a video magnifier.

Brooklyn Peterson, from Iowa, graduated from high school and is headed off to college this fall with the Merlin video magnifier from Enhanced Vision. She looks forward to being able to use the video magnifier for her dietician studies

and daily living activities. Brooklyn likes the smooth motion of the platform tray. Additionally, she likes the option to change the color to white on black, which improves the contrast for certain things. Low vision since birth, Brooklyn, and her 2 brothers, have the hereditary condition Stargardt's that limits central eye sight but not their goals in life.

A senior living in Kentucky, Debbie Persons has not slowed down with community and personal activities. The NU Eyes glasses provide Debbie with a sense of independence and confidence as she is able to read the text material at church, thread a sewing needle and see her granddaughter perform in a school play. Having been born with congenital Albinism, which includes high Hyperopia or farsightedness, high Astigmatism, Nystagmus with horizontal movement of both eyes, and Strabismus where the eyes don't work together, Debbie was use to carrying around a monocular and hand-held magnifiers daily. She use to dream of a pair of glasses with magnification. Today, the dream is a reality for Debbie with NU Eyes glasses.

Born with Oculocutaneous Albinism, Hesler Cardenas finds it difficult reading small print, and after a while the letters start to look like they are dancing on the page. As a child growing up in Honduras, Hesler did

not know video magnification technology existed. Access to a school loaned Visio Book and iPad, the technology has opened access to a new world and changed Hesler's life. Hesler begins college in Georgia this fall as an art education major with an Optelec from EyeTech Low Vision and the opportunity to explore his creative potential.

CCLVI is grateful for vendor partner contributions and the meaningful difference these awards are making in the lives of individuals who are low vision.

A video magnifier is a machine that enlarges print material on a monitor to a font size from 2 to 10 times larger. The magnifier also allows the user to change the background and text color to maximize color contrast and eyesight usability. A video magnifier is often referred to as a CCTV.

Dr. Samuel M. Genensky, inventor of the first closed-circuit TV (CCTV) reading device for individuals with low vision, founder of the Center for the Partially Sighted in Los Angeles, California, and the founding president of CCLVI, passed away on June 26, 2009. Dr. Genensky inspired and mentored many within the low vision community. For more information about the video magnifier award, visit www.cclvi.org and click on "Dr. Samuel Genensky."

Joan Black: CCCLV Founding Member Passes By Bernice Kandarian, President, CCCLV

On May 23, 2018, Joan Black passed away after a long illness. I had met Joan while living in Los Angeles in the late 1970s and found out she was visually impaired and worked at the Rand Corp. with Dr. Sam Genensky, the inventor of the CCTV.

After leaving the state and returning in 1986, I encountered her again at the first CCB convention I attended in November, 1986. At that convention, Joan, along with Etta Burge and Coletta Davis was hold a luncheon, under Durward MacDaniel's mentorship, to form the California Council of Citizens with Low Vision.

Joan served as part of the leadership of CCCLV throughout its early years, including as president for a time and drafting the Constitution. She also served CCB in other roles, notably as chair of the Publications Committee and writing a good bit for the Blind Californian. Under her leadership,

the famous pictorial CCB brochure was produced.

Joan is part of a well known and well loved family. Her husband, Keith, is a retired rehabilitation counselor for the state of California. Their son, Ralph, is an attorney who has been involved in the creation and administration of legislation and regulations concerning services for and rights of the disabled community. And Ralph's wife is Catherine Campisi, former director of the Department of Rehabilitation. Furthermore, Keith's parents, Dan and Leone, operated the vending stand in the Statehouse in Boise, Idaho in the early 1950s.

Joan Black is another example of the talented and committed people who made the California Council of the Blind the critically important organization it is today in the blind community.

Guide Dog Users, Inc. Publishes Handbook to Help People Who Are Blind Decide if the Guide Dog Lifestyle is Right for Them Edited press release

Guide Dog Users, Inc. (GDUI), the largest membership and advocacy organization representing guide dog handlers in the United States, is pleased to announce the recent publication of a revised handbook for perspective guide dog users that

shares comprehensive information about acquiring and using a guide dog for safe and independent travel.

The guide, 90 pages in length, and available in e-book and print formats, and called "A Handbook for the

Prospective Guide Dog Handler," 4th Edition, updates a GDUI publication, called "Making Impressions," which GDUI members wrote and published a quarter of a century ago. The original manual assisted countless guide dog users with applying for training with and adjusting to working with guide dogs. Many of those original readers are now working successfully with a third or fourth or even an eighth, or tenth guide dog. Realizing how well their original publication had served guide dog users all over the country and beyond, GDUI has spent the past several years updating the manual to reflect changes in guide dog training methodologies, growth in the community of guide dog users, changes in the number of schools now available to provide training and dogs, and evolving attitudes among the public concerning acceptance of guide dogs as reliable and respected aids for blind and visually impaired people who choose dogs for independent travel.

The informative handbook answers questions not only for the prospective guide dog team, but also for families of people who are blind, blindness rehabilitation professionals and educators, and the general public.

Part One, Section One sets the stage with heartfelt accounts from many guide dog users who can speak with authority about the guide dog lifestyle which pairs humans and canines in a relationship, unlike few others, that involves a 24-hour daily bond between dogs and their owners.

Then the handbook covers the whole process of deciding whether a guide dog is the right choice for mobility and safety, choosing and applying to a training program, learning to become a guide dog handler, returning home, and spending the next several years bonding with a dog who is likely to become an indispensable assistant and treasured companion.

The manual outlines the indispensable support that an organization like GDUI can provide to guide dog users during times when their partnership can pose uniquely stressful challenges, for example when a guide dog team experiences denial of transit in a taxicab, or exclusion from a restaurant or other public venue, when a treasured guide dog becomes ill or passes away, or when family or friends don't understand how the team functions safely and independently.

GDUI encourages readers and members to share the handbook with family, friends, colleagues, blindness and disability advocacy organizations, and other guide and service dog handlers.

"A Handbook for the Prospective Guide Dog Handler" is available as an E-book and in print from at Amazon.com Smashwords and other online sellers. Visit this link for further information and to explore options for purchase: www.dldbbooks.com/GDUIHandbook/.

Good News From Kaiser Permanente in San Jose

By Bev Clifford

Before I begin this narrative, I want to pay tribute to the woman who started it all: the late Barbara Rhodes, long-time and treasured member of our Silicon Valley Council of the Blind chapter. Due to her tireless effort and New York chutzpah, Kaiser began offering Talking Pill Bottles to its patients in our area sometime in the early 2000's. We miss her, and our chapter has since created our Barbara Rhodes Technology Grant in her honor. I was one of the patients who benefited from her work, and her example inspired me to take action.

I was also inspired by a company called EnVision America, which for several years had been struggling to convince Kaiser Permanente that their product, ScripTalk (a playback unit that audibly reads to a person all the information on their prescription labels) would be beneficial to its blind and visually impaired patients. Near the beginning of 2017, not long after Vic and I had signed up for the Kaiser Senior Advantage program, I determinedly began a phone campaign to encourage Kaiser to seriously consider ScripTalk--and that's making a long story short: there were many calls to many departments before finally, in April 2017, I reached someone who was willing to listen to and take notes on what I had to say. And whether because of their ongoing communication with EnVision

America, or possibly spurred on by my insistent nagging, I received a call two months later informing me that my next prescriptions would arrive with a ScripTalk unit that would read the information that a mail-order pharmacist would record on a little label on the bottom of each prescription bottle or box. I was thrilled! And I made a special call to their Pharmacy Department that very day thanking Kaiser fervently for finally seeing the light.

In January of 2018, I became a member of Kaiser San Jose's Member Patient Advisory Council (MPAC), which meets once a month to glean important input from and listen to the concerns of patients on any and all issues, whether trivial or serious, surrounding their Kaiser facility here, so that patients and Kaiser staff can work together to address them. During my intake interview, I made it clear that my major reason for joining this committee was to advocate for people with disabilities, particularly (of course) those of us who are blind and visually impaired, and that I was especially interested in speaking with pharmacy representatives. For although I was extremely grateful for Kaiser's adoption of ScripTalk, I knew they could do more. I was aware that EnVision America also offers braille labeling on prescription containers (a fact that would be vital to the deaf-blind community), plus they have developed an iPhone app called ScripView that enables

VoiceOver to read a specific kind of label affixed to the little instruction booklet that comes with each prescription, therefore allowing visually impaired patients with large print capability to read the information on prescription containers as well.

Just last month, when I received the agenda for our upcoming MPAC meeting, I saw that people from Pharmacy would be attending. And fortunately for me, I was in a position to demonstrate not only the ScripTalk unit, but also the braille labeling and the iPhone app, reason being that before I returned to Kaiser I was under AETNA's medical insurance, and AETNA had agreed to implement all three of EnVision America's options, whereas at that time Kaiser hadn't agreed to any of them. When I was asked which option I wanted, I requested them all, so that when the time came I could show somebody at Kaiser how they all worked. And now, at last, that time had arrived.

So I happily packed up my ScripTalk unit, an old AETNA prescription bottle with the braille label, the little instruction booklet to be used with the ScripView iPhone app (that I had just downloaded that morning), and off I went to the meeting. The other MPAC members and the assembled staff seemed impressed with the products--most of them had never heard about or seen them--and after the meeting one of the pharmacists

came to my table to get a better look at the bottle with the braille label. I was pleased with my demonstration except for the iPhone app, which had worked (although slowly) that morning, but which I couldn't guarantee would work properly at the meeting. But at least I was able to explain the concept, showing them the app, and then turning up the iPhone volume to the max so they could listen to how VoiceOver can read the prescription information from the history of the labels it had previously scanned. Then I went home and forgot about it all.

That meeting was about two weeks ago. And just two days ago, I received a call from one of the Volunteer Coordinators we work with, who was delighted to spread the news that Kaiser San Jose's mail-order pharmacy has just ordered the braille printer they need to emboss braille labels for prescription bottles, and that when I refill my next prescriptions, the bottles/boxes will have braille on them! And if they'll do this for me, that means that any other San Jose Kaiser patient who wants braille on their bottles can get it, too. Hallelujah! I'm not sure if every walk-in pharmacy will have a braille printer quite yet, and I have no idea whether Kaiser will implement the large-print option in the future, but this is a good start. Hooray for advocacy!

George Covington: A Man Who Assumed He Could

By Bonnie Rennie

[Editor's note: Part of this article was published in the winter, 2018 issue. However it got truncated, so it's being republished to give Bonnie the credit she deserves.]

What an exhilarating way to spend an hour! I interviewed Mr. George Covington for this article. If you don't know this charter member of the Council of Citizens with Low Vision, you should! His story and accomplishments have much to teach us.

George's careers and skills have included journalism, satire writing, photography as a legally blind person, accessible design, and disability advocacy at the highest levels of government in Washington, DC. He was a federal employee who refused to become a bureaucrat, and instead, got his projects done! Mr. Covington used his knowledge of how things work in Washington and superb networking talents to help him intervene on behalf of people with disabilities.

During our phone conversation, George's clever witticisms came thick and fast! His observations on politics, the perpetual state of Washington, and of human foibles were priceless. sadly they could not make it to these pages. Suffice to say, he would make a fabulous dinner guest!

George grew up in East Texas, and is now semi-retired in the West Texas

High Desert area called the Big Bend, of the Rio /grande river, that is. He says his low vision became apparent at around age 13, but was not diagnosed until mid adulthood, due to its rare presentation. "A lot of your tax dollars were spent on trying to diagnose me," he quipped. "Now they would call it age-related macular degeneration." He says he did not use a cane until around 1988, just before going to work for then vice President dan Quayle's office in 1989. More on his adaptations to his low vision will appear later.

George was working as a journalism professor in austin, TX. in 1978, when he got a consulting contract with the American Association of Flight Attendants to help them set up a communications system. He had written a curriculum on developing a nonprofit corporation.

It happened at the time, that the Flight attendants group was embroiled in a confrontation over stowing or allowing the long white canes, promoted by another blindness organization. He got involved in mediating a solution, to allow safe and accessible cane storage on planes. But he says that other airlines did not follow up adequately with training new staff, and so, some problems continued.

I will briefly mention here, that George did not know that there were two different consumer organizations of the blind. He became involved with the council of

Citizens with Low vision then, and produced its first newsletters. The American Council of the blind in Dc allowed him to use its facilities and supplies to produce and disseminate those early newsletters. He served on the Low vision council's first board.

Also around that same time, he learned of an opening in the department of Labor's Equal Opportunity Commission. The job was to work on amendments to the well-known Rehab Act of 1973, so important to the employment of people with disabilities. He was to work on amendments to Section 504. His advocacy began when he had to file a complaint against the department. It had reportedly changed his job designation. But his great networking skills and ability to cultivate friends in high places saved the day! An old friend from grad school had become a Congressman. A timely call to the Congressman suddenly got things straightened out.

A President's Committee and the National Institute on Disability Rehab Research called, asking for some kind of eye-catching project for the National Mall. The plans they asked for were unrealistic, so George had to use many skills, to present them with a worthwhile, doable project, on budget. Not an easy task! He advised them, this can't get done, if you appoint a committee. I will do it, he said to paraphrase, and if I fail, you will know who to blame! George knew who could do the physical work and how to get it done, and the result was a 3-D map on the Mall of the Mall and capitol building, with

braille, large print, and colored shapes. He also had made a diorama between the House and senate Buildings.

The most impressive things about Mr. Covington are his abilities to reach out to people effectively, figure out a way to accomplish challenging tasks as a manager, and his determination not to let his low vision get in his way. His outgoing personality and fine sense of humor have served him well, as well as his efforts to develop a sound knowledge base of whatever a job may be.

In reality, if all of his work on behalf of people with disabilities and in other areas were presented, these articles would be a long book! So I will content myself with highlighting just a few, and again reminding us of why we should look to George as a role model. As people with vision impairments, our gifts and circumstances may be quite different from his. Yet, the underlying attitudes and ability to network and size up a situation for how to get things done, these we can all learn from.

Here are just some things that George has done, and is doing now. They include journalist, visually impaired photographer, exhibitor of some of his work, and currently a regular columnist for a regional newspaper. He's given many interviews for NPR and Public Television. He wrote a fantasy novel, "Photo Hero," available on amazon.

we can glean from his example several things. George believes in

active networking, the give and take, planting and harvest. He has approached injustice, in his own life and that of others, with advocacy when possible, and with a sense of humor rather than hostility. He compensates for his visual disability even now by hiring students from his small college town to help with historical research for his columns. Regarding assistive technology, George is a strong Mac user. He

says of his frustration with touch screens: "I don't like them because they don't touch you back!"

Mr. covington's work can be found in the big Bend Sentinel at www.bigbendnow.com. It is encouraging to note that George has accomplished all of this as a person with low vision. If he ever chooses to write a book about himself, do be sure to read it!

Request for Contributions

CCLVI gratefully accepts contributions from readers and members to help pay for the costs of publishing Vision Access, the costs related to our 844 line and Project Insight, and for funding the Carl E. Foley and Fred Scheigert Scholarships.

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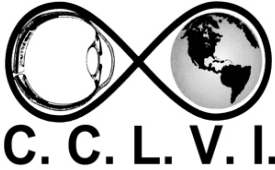
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