



VISION ACCESS

Council of Citizens with Low Vision International

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President's Message

Dear CCLVI members and friends,

If I have learned one thing from this pandemic, we need to be our own self advocate. So many things in our lives have put obstacles in our way of accomplishing the smallest of tasks. I will give you an example of how I advocated for myself to gain what I needed.

Just a couple of weeks ago my grandchildren were doing nontraditional instruction (NTI) at home instead of going to school. They sent a MacBook home with my five-year-old grandson. I was going to be his teacher for the next two weeks and I did not know how to use a MacBook and it was not touchscreen. How was I going to see the work that I needed to help him?

During the very first class I found out some children had touchscreen computers. I picked up the phone and called the school, explained I was visually impaired and did not know how to use a MacBook, and if I had a touchscreen, I would be able to help him with his work. The lady in the office told me that she would get back to me to see what they could do. I truly did not believe I would get an answer back from them.

She called me back within 15 minutes, asked a few more questions about my visual impairment, and said she would give me another call back. Within two hours of my first call, I was told to come to the school and switch out computers.

One more example is when going to the store and asking for a certain product and you are told “It’s over there,” in the land of over there. Just ask, “Can you show me where over there is so I might find that product?”

It is the small things we do every day to advocate for ourselves to educate others. If we do not educate others, we will all live in a small world, and this is a big world with many visually impaired people who with a little bit of self-advocacy can function as independently as anyone else.

Patti Cox
President, CCLVI

Membership Renewals 2022

By Zelda Gebhard

Membership renewal season is upon us. We look forward to a positive and productive year and hope you will continue to be a part of it.

At-large members can renew online or by mail.

Online: Submit the renewal form found at

<https://cclvi.org/join> and follow the instructions online to make your payment via PayPal, credit, or debit card.

Payment can also be made by phone or mailing a check.

Mail: Renewal forms have been mailed to all CCLVI

members. Complete and return the renewal form and your \$15.00 check in the return envelope provided.

If you are a member of a CCLVI Affiliate (DVCCLV, NYSCCLV, CCCLV, KCCLV), please contact your affiliate representative to complete the renewal process.

If you have any questions or would like assistance, contact Zelda Gebhard, Membership Chair, at 701 – 493 - 2399 or cclvimembership@cclvi.org. All dues must be received by March 5th. Thank you for choosing to be a part of CCLVI.

Scheigert Scholarship

Fred Scheigert Scholarship Program is now accepting applications

The Fred Scheigert Scholarship Program awards three students an individual prize of \$3,000. This competitive scholarship is available to full-time college students with

low vision, chosen from among those who meet the visual acuity and academic guidelines.

The scholarship guidelines and on-line application forms are available at cclvi.org. The application must be completed online by March 29, 2022, at 11:59 PM. Be prepared to attach supporting documents.

Completed applications and supporting documents include:

- A copy of transcript(s) from the school where you are currently enrolled or most recently attended
- Two (2) Professional/Academic Letters of Recommendation, to be completed by a current or past professor, adviser, or internship coordinator
- A letter of acceptance from your school, or the date you will be notified of acceptance if attending a new school in the next academic year

Finalists will participate in a telephone interview with committee members, and winners will be notified in late spring. Recipients are expected to attend our annual conference and convention, which is held in conjunction with the American Council of the Blind National Conference and Convention which takes place the first week in July. Recipients will be expected to attend CCLVI functions during this time.

Questions? Please call CCLVI at (844) 460 – 0625.

Genensky Award

CCLVI's Dr. Samuel Genensky Memorial Magnification Award Program

This annual award program offers persons with low vision an opportunity to receive a magnification device.

Applications are accepted each year and three to five qualified applicants are chosen to receive one of the donated magnification devices. This annual award program is in honor of Dr. Samuel Genensky, an innovator in low vision technology and founding president of CCLVI.

Applications are completed online and will be accepted between March 16 and May 15, 2022. An interview with the Genensky Award Program Committee is also part of the award decision-making process.

The Dr. Samuel Genensky Magnification Award device for 2022 has not been finalized. Five recipients were chosen in 2021 to receive that year's award, an Apple iPad Air 9.7" Retina Display 32 GB Wi-Fi Tablet.

2022 DKM First-Timer Award

Reach Higher, Pursue and Succeed: Apply to Become a 2022 Recipient of the Durward K. McDaniel First-Timers Award

Prepare to experience an array of opportunities to learn and grow personally as you connect with other like-minded individuals. We will meet in Omaha, Nebraska for the 61st annual ACB convention July 1-8, 2022, and become better familiar with ACB's wealth of inclusive convention activities.

To be a qualified applicant, you are required to meet specific criteria, including but not limited to the following:

- 18 years of age or older
- Blind or visually impaired
- An ACB member in good standing
- Never attended a previous in-person ACB national conference and convention

Learn more by reading the complete article here:

<https://www.acb.org/reach-higher-apply-2022-durward-k-mcdaniel-first-timers-award>

Applicants will submit a Letter of Application, have a Letter of Recommendation submitted by the president of their

State or Special Interest Affiliate by April 5, 2022, and complete an interview with the DKM Committee in early April. Questions? Contact Kenneth Semien Sr. at semien.k@att.net, or dial (409) 866 - 5838.

2022 JPMorgan Chase Leadership Fellow Award

Get on the Fast Track to Advanced Leadership!
Apply to Become a 2022 Leadership Fellow

Are you an ACB member who has been active in the organization on the local and/or state level and have a desire to learn more and explore opportunities at the national level? Have you served previously, attended a previous ACB convention, and wish to re-energize, learn more, and expand your horizons with greater involvement in the organization, while strengthening ACB with your skills and abilities? Answering “yes” to either of the above questions makes you a candidate for this award.

To be a qualified applicant, you are required to meet specific criteria, including but not limited to the following:

- 18 years of age or older
- Blind or visually impaired
- An ACB member in good standing

Look for more information in the February 2022 eForum to confirm your eligibility and necessary commitments.

Applicants will submit a Letter of Application, have a Letter of Recommendation submitted by the president of their State or Special Interest Affiliate by April 5, 2022, and complete an interview with the DKM Committee in early April. Questions? Contact Kenneth Semien Sr. at semien.k@att.net, or dial (409) 866 - 5838.

2022 D.C. Leadership Conference

The D.C. Leadership Conference will be held virtually March 12 to March 15, with the March ACB Board of Directors meeting taking place March 11.

Registration is \$20 for ACB members and \$30 for non-members. All ACB members were e-mailed a registration discount code on January 24th. If you are an ACB member and did not receive your code, please call the Minneapolis office at 612-332-3242 for help.

Registration at: <https://tinyurl.com/2022-DC-Leadership-Meetings>.

New Year Resolutions – Yay or Nay?

By Melanie Sinohui

Lose weight, eat better, go to the gym, no spend January. These are all resolutions many of us have had over the years, but how often do we get through the first two weeks of January, something happens, and we break our resolution? Well, I love the idea of making a change for the better, but the idea of failing at something has deterred me from making resolutions the last several years. Instead, I adopt a Word of the Year. After much reflection in December every year, come January 1st, I have a word that I will carry through the next year. And some of these words I have even carried year over year.

One of my favorite words was "Do". This is the word that helped me work on procrastination. It helped me make the effort to do something even when I did not want to. It also helped me realize it does not take exceptionally long to empty the dishwasher, fold the laundry, or get up and put that one thing away, just do. And I still find myself walking through the house saying "Mel, just do it."

This year's word is "purpose". I want to do with purpose, make time to reflect on that purpose, and decide whether I should continue. I want to act with purpose.

These are only two examples. You will see words like focus, balance, mindful, lead, leave, dream, pause, all with a specific connection to the individual choosing their word. So, what word will you carry with you through 2022?

Between Two Worlds

by Valerie Ries-Lerman

I would like to share my recent book release "Between Two Worlds". The title refers to being low vision, between the world of the sighted and the blind. It is a small book of my prose, poems, and paintings. Included is a preface with two humorous articles about low vision, and eight sections of poetry, each introduced with a painting related to its topic. The sections are Inspiration, Spirituality, Nature, Love Takes Many Forms, Employment, Legal Blindness, Covid, and Everyday Dreaming.

The aim of this book is to both inspire those with low vision and educate society as a whole. Being born premature, I was not given much chance of survival. Despite

challenges, sometimes daunting, I persevered and eventually prospered. I would like this book to remind us there is always light that follows the darkest of nights.

“Between Two Worlds” is \$15, \$10 for low income, and anyone can email book requests or questions to me at lifeartvrl@yahoo.com

Below is a sample poem I wrote. I hoped it might inspire and fortify you in your low vision life path.

Challenge And Triumph

What you're given
turn it around
take another look
what else can be found?

Create something new
don't cling to the past
you're born to create
intelligence your path.

What you're given
only a start
you can transcend
if you invite the spark.

Happy Hunting

by Melanie Sinohui

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

For many of us, that repetitive beep is the dreaded alarm clock, going off too early in the morning, rousing us from our slumber to start a new day. For blind and visually impaired children each spring, it is the exciting sound of a beeping Easter egg, allowing them to participate in the traditional Easter festivity of the egg hunt.

Instead of being filled with candy, these eggs are filled with electronics and have a switch. They are hidden in the grass and bushes or even, to help those with some vision, in an open space like a section of a parking lot cordoned off for this Easter ritual. Some will even put the eggs out with candy next to them so kids can still get their sugary fix of Easter treats.

When I was a kid, these did not exist. My mom and dad had an Easter present hunt around the house. They would hide gifts and candy in baskets, boxes, bags, and eggs, under chairs, behind curtains and in bowls on the coffee table because I could not compete with my sighted peers

to find the eggs outside. When I was 10, Cook Children's Hospital in Fort Worth along with others I am sure, sponsored a beep Easter Egg Hunt for blind and visually impaired kids around the DFW Metroplex. It was so fun to have a fighting chance at those adjacent eggs filled with candy. And luckily, these days, you do not have to modify your own easter hunt (although I loved mine as a child) or MacGyver your own eggs, they are available online and MaxiAids even sells five different colors of them at <https://www.maxiaids.com/beeping-easter-egg>

Happy Hunting!!!

Blinging Out My Cane

By Cheryl McNeil Fisher

I hated my first cane. I hated that I had to use it. I hated the way I felt when I walked down the street alone. I hated when I fumbled. However, if I wanted to apply for a guide dog, I had to be a proficient cane traveler. I had a goal.

Eight years ago, a friend introduced me to her lightweight aluminum cane with a rollerball. She convinced me that having a cane in the house is not about vanity, it is safety,

A few years later, I met my first ID cane. An identification cane is just that. It is approximately the diameter of a pencil, very lightweight and does not have a handle or regular cane tip. Its purpose is to let people know you cannot see and its good for those times when you need a little more assistance. I carry one in my purse or backpack. Yes, I have a fabulous guide dog, but if she stops and I need to figure out what she is trying to tell me, I can pull out the ID cane, poke around and figure out the situation. If something happened to her while out on a walk, I still have temporary mobility.

After almost tumbling down the back stairs, because of what I thought I could see, I made the decision to order a cane for around the yard and pool. I found I could order directly from <http://www.ambutech.com>. It is less expensive, and I get to choose the type of cane and tip, length and number of sections, and color of both the top and bottom portions. I ordered two red and white stripe canes with red roller ball tips. Candy hangs by the backdoor, Cane hangs by the front. And then there were four!

Three weeks ago, I decided to embrace the cane and once again visited the Ambutech web site. I purchased two ID canes; one pink, one gold, and both have the standard red bottom section. My cousin Tim referred to me

once in an email as a Goddess, so I named the gold cane, Goddess. I stand more confident thinking of my cousin. Do I love the cane? I love the idea that the gold cane is in my purse, as well as what it represents to me.

I am not disrespecting anyone or the white cane. I embrace the tools I have to keep me safe. Some may agree or disagree, some use a cane or refuse to, some have a guide dog and have no idea where their cane is, and some of us use both. Wherever you are in your journey, you are loved. But know this, if you are still walking in public without an ID cane, most of the public has no idea you cannot see. If you get hurt, or worse, put someone else in danger because you walk into them, knock them over or step off a curb you do not see and a driver runs off the road to avoid you, whose fault is that?

Have I gone from Hate to Love? No, I am not there yet, but I have found a way to embrace it. I sure do like Goddess and while there are years and miles between myself and my cousin Tim, our love is ever present, especially now that I have Goddess with me always. Blindness stinks, but if I had not lost my sight, I would not have met all of you. Be safe and be smart.

Calendar of Events

Everyone is welcome to attend these events by accessing the Zoom mobile app, visiting the Zoom Web site at <https://zoom.us> or calling (312) 626 - 6799, and entering the appropriate meeting ID and passcode.

Subscribe to our CCLVI-Chat email list to receive weekly meeting reminders and Zoom details by emailing our CCLVIWebmaster@gmail.com In addition, all CCLVI events, except our business meetings, are listed on the ACB Community Call schedule. Those without email can access that information by calling 1 - 800 – 424 - 8666 and following the prompts.

CCLVI Low Vision Discussion

Themed chats—First Monday at 8:00 PM ET

Speaker - Fifth Monday at 8:00 PM ET

Meeting ID: 851 0259 7284

Passcode: 225846

CCLVI Game Night

Second and fourth Mondays at 8:00 PM ET

Meeting ID: 851 0259 7284

Passcode: 225846

CCLVI Low Vision Peer Support Group

Third Monday at 8:00 PM ET

Meeting ID: 851 0259 7284

Passcode: 225846

CCLVI Board of Directors Meeting

Second Tuesday at 8:30 PM ET

Webinar Meeting ID: 832 0701 7136

Let's Talk Low Vision with Dr. Bill Takeshita

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

Third Tuesday at 8:30 PM ET

Meeting ID: 874 7608 2312

Passcode: 225845

CCLVI Special Event

Weekly calls on a variety of topics related to low vision

Thursdays at 8:00 PM ET

Meeting ID: 826 0270 2438

Passcode: 225848

CCLVI Low Vision Coffee Hour

Fridays at 11:00 AM ET

Meeting ID: 829 5076 8948

Passcode: 225843

KCCLV Low Vision Support Calls

Informative meetings for low vision individuals across the U.S.

First and third Wednesdays of each month at 7:30 PM ET

Meeting ID: 862 9889 697

Passcode: 975864

* Topics and speakers are subject to change. Please reference the weekly CCLVI emails and ACB Community Call schedule.

OFFICERS	DIRECTORS
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VISION ACCESS is published six times a year (February 15, April 15, June 15, August 15, October 15, and December 15) in large print, audio, and email.

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 CCLVIVisionAccess@gmail.com