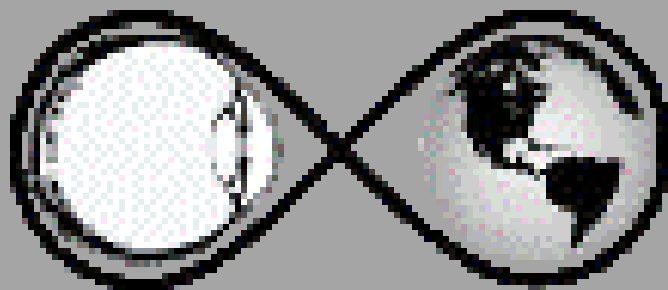


# **Council of Citizens with Low Vision International**



**C . C . L . V . I .**

## **Vision Access**

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## **Logo Description from Front Cover**

The CCLVI logo - A pair of glasses. One eye which has been replaced with a globe and the other depicting a cross section of an eye pointed at the globe. The glasses themselves depict an image of an infinity symbol.

# **President's Message**

by Patti Cox

With the 2025 ACB Conference and Convention around the corner, there are upcoming events about which you need to be informed. When it is time to vote, your voice can be heard. Before the convention in June and July (virtually and in-person in Dallas), ACB will be hosting many meetings about resolutions and Constitution and Bylaw Amendments. Please take the time to listen and participate in those meetings either by Zoom or on ACB Media.

CCLVI submitted a resolution to ACB for consideration and vote. The resolution concerns the name badges that people at the in-person ACB events wear around their necks. The name badges have small print that is not large enough for those of us who have some usable vision to read. The resolution gives specific guidelines on how the badges should be printed so that at least the first name is in a very large and bold font. It is important for those of us who have enough vision to be able to read the first name, just as a sighted person can read the names. An update on this can be found later in this issue of Vision Access.

ACB will undoubtedly have several other resolutions and proposed Constitution and Bylaw changes up for vote this year. To ensure you are completely informed before you vote, watch your email for more information on how you can take part.

CCLVI will also have some Constitution and Bylaw changes this year at our virtual annual business meeting on June 28, 2025. Information will be circulated via email or snail mail regarding these amendments.

We will also conduct CCLVI Board elections this year. There will be a Candidate Forum prior to the election. Notice will be provided along with the Constitution and Bylaw amendments. Please attend the forum so you can make an informed choice for each position.

Grab your popcorn and your snacks and get ready to stay informed.

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# **CCLVI's 2025 ACB Convention Programs**

by Dianna Leonard, Chair, Convention Committee

## **Thursday, June 26, 5:30pm CDT (Virtual)**

### **CCLVI Presents Low Vision Research with Dr. Soltau**

Join us during the virtual week in welcoming Dr. Joern Soltau, Professor and Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences at the University of Louisville, as he shares the latest findings and insights on low vision research.

## **Saturday, June 28, 2:30pm CDT (Virtual)**

### **CCLVI Annual Business Meeting**

CCLVI will conduct its Annual Meeting including Board elections and committee updates with membership input and Q&A

## **Sunday, July 6, 8:00pm CDT (In-Person)**

### **CCLVI Jamboree Dance**

Get down with CCLVI! In addition to all the fun our dance normally brings, we will have games such as a lasso contest, opportunities for line dancing and square dancing, and fun photo ops! Whether you dress like a cowboy, cowgirl, or come as you are, you are bound to have a great time at our Dallas Jamboree Dance.

**Monday, July 7, 2:30pm CDT (Hybrid)**

**CCLVI Presents Low Vision Tips and Tech with Sandi Owens**

CCLVI is proud to welcome Sandi Owens, Founder of Making It Visible, LLC, to lead a discussion on tips, technologies, and techniques for people with low vision. Sandi has a wealth of knowledge from her experiences as a Licensed Teacher of the Visually Impaired and Assistive Technology Instructional Specialist and Consultant.

**Wednesday, July 9, 2:30pm CDT (In-Person)**

**Get Crafty with CCLVI**

Come learn how to make bracelets and cane keychains with us. We can't wait to see your creativity shine, and who doesn't love getting hands-on and making something that you get to take home? Bracelets are bound to look fashionable, and keychains are versatile on any object! Space is limited, so please be sure to register early.

**Wednesday, July 9, 8:00pm CDT (In-Person)**

**CCLVI Family Feud Game Night**

CCLVI's annual game night is all about Family Feud! Our 2024 event was a resounding success so we're bringing it back for a second round. If you know a group of people you'd like to team up with, please call or text Patti Cox at (502) 905 - 0869 as soon as possible to list your team's name and members for a smooth game night. Also, we'll

be hosting a 50/50 drawing to benefit CCLVI during Family Feud! Tickets are \$5 each.

See y'all in Dallas!

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## **2025 CCLVI Election Announcement**

by Leslie Spoone, Chair, Nominating Committee

The Council of Citizens with Low Vision will be holding its Annual Business Meeting on June 28, 2025. The Nominating Committee presented the candidates slate at the May 13 Board of Directors meeting.

Those currently serving are listed next to the position:

- First Vice President: Zelda Gebhard
- Treasurer: Debbie Persons
- Directors: Joyce Fienberg, Cynthia Hawkins, and Dianna Leonard

CCLVI will be holding a Candidate Forum on Tuesday, June 10 at 8:30pm ET, as well as a first reading of any CCLVI Constitution and Bylaw amendments. We look forward to an informative candidate discussion of the issues impacting our low vision community. If you are interested in running for a position on the CCLVI Board as

a Director or Officer, please send your information to Leslie Spooone at [lesliespooone@cfl.rr.com](mailto:lesliespooone@cfl.rr.com) or you can call Leslie at 407 678-4163 to participate in the Candidate Forum.

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## **CCLVI Resolution to ACB: ACB Event Name Badges**

This Spring, the CCLVI Board of Directors approved a resolution written by our Constitution, Bylaws, and Resolutions Committee, giving specific guidelines on how the name badges for should be printed to accommodate those with low vision. This topic was brought up at the April 2025 ACB Board of Publications meeting as an addition to the existing Large Print Guidelines. The BOP approved the addition as outlined below:

- Applicable to the 3” x 4” name badges regularly issued for the ACB Conference and Convention and other in-person ACB Events.
  - First name in bold Arial 35-point (or the largest point the longest name in the attendee list will accommodate)
  - Last name in regular Arial 24-point font
  - 10-point space between each line
-

## **Fundraising Committee News**

by Kathy Farina, Chair, Fundraising Committee

CCLVI held our Spring Fling Auction on April 4 and 5, 2025, where items such as spring decorations, yummy baked goods, and gift cards were auctioned off. All of the proceeds will be donated to the Kids Explorers Club at the ACB National Conference and Convention in Dallas, Texas this July. This donation is in memory of Fred and Alexa Scheigert, benefactors of our Fred Scheigert Scholarships. The Kids Explorers Club was especially dear to Alexa Scheigert's heart.

I would like to thank everyone who helped run the auction and who donated items. Special thanks to the Auction Committee: Patti Cox, Terry Pacheco, Debbie Persons, Dianna Leonard, Zelda Gebhard, Leslie Spoone, and Joyce Feinberg. We couldn't have succeeded without you. Thanks to everyone who donated, bid and bought.

Our Fundraising Committee is looking for enthusiastic CCLVI members. The committee meets on the third Sunday of each month at 7:00 PM eastern time. Contact Kathy Farina, by email at [lowvisionoutreach@gmail.com](mailto:lowvisionoutreach@gmail.com) or come to a committee meeting.

# **CCLVI 2025 Membership Survey Results**

by Cynthia G. Hawkins with Zelda Gebhard, Chair,  
Membership Committee

In 2024, CCLVI asked our members to help us by taking a membership survey to better understand the wishes and interests of the membership: namely, what members currently want from CCLVI and what they would like to gain in the future. The 19-question survey was well-received by the membership with a response rate of approximately 30% (61 respondents). The Board has already started to utilize these results to implement new programming and content to meet members' needs from the organization.

Further, the CCLVI Committee Chairs would appreciate being able to communicate directly with members who responded to the survey. To-that-end, there will be follow-up communications from the Board to facilitate that two-way conversation.

## **Responses / Input from the Members (highlights from the survey)**

The Majority of Respondents:

- Are members who facilitate being supportive of others with low vision with a focus on low vision information and advocacy
- Want CCLVI to focus on sharing information, educating members, and public awareness
- Want to become more active in CCLVI to connect with other members one-on-one (via a membership directory) and promote CCLVI to the public
- In their spare time, read books and listen to or play music
- Are Satisfied / Very Satisfied with CCLVI.org
- Want CCLVI to be more involved in Advocacy & Legislative Issues
- Occasionally attend CCLVI's Programming (via Zoom) with the timing of the various Zoom Programs is the greatest deterrent to attendance
- Enjoy "Let's Talk Low Vision" Programming the most
- Read the Vision Access newsletter (especially articles providing Low Vision Tips & Tricks)
- Shared that the most desired topics for Programming are Low Vision Tips & Tricks, Technology, and Leisure Activities

## **NEXT STEPS: Action Items / Output to Committee Chairs**

### Advocacy

- Members to be supportive of others with low vision and the focus on low vision information and advocacy
- Want CCLVI to focus on sharing information, educating members, and public awareness
- Want CCLVI to be more Involved in Advocacy and Legislative Issues

### E-Communications

- Members to be supportive of others with low vision and the focus on low vision information and advocacy •  
Want CCLVI to focus on sharing information, educating members and public awareness
- In their spare time they read books and listen to or play music
- Are Satisfied / Very Satisfied with CCLVI.org
- The timing of the various Zoom Programs is the greatest deterrent to attendance
- Enjoy “Let’s Talk Low Vision” Programming the most
- The most desired topics for Programming are Low Vision Tips & Tricks, Technology, and Leisure Activities

## Membership

- Want to become more active in CCLVI to connect with other members one-on-one (via a membership directory)

## Public Relations

- Want CCLVI to focus on sharing information, educating members, and public awareness
- Want to become more active in CCLVI to promote CCLVI to the public

## Publications

- Want to become more active in CCLVI to promote CCLVI to the public
- Members to be supportive of others with low vision and the focus on low vision information and advocacy

## **Future Implementation via Membership**

With help and input from the membership, the Committee Chairs are working to implement the above-listed directives into programming and benefits offered to CCLVI Members. Thank you for taking the time to give us your input and feedback. It only makes us better!

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# **First Time Leadership Experience**

by Debby Green

I attended the ACB Legislative Leadership Seminar for the first time this past March. It was an amazing experience and I am so grateful that I was able to go. I am relatively new to ACB and had attended virtually for the past couple of years, but 2025 was my first time attending in person.

First, I learned a lot about the legislative process. After making congressional appointments in advance, we were able to meet with staff members in person to express our concerns. They were quite receptive and seemed genuinely interested. I now have information about our legislators and will be able to connect with them in the future. This process takes time but is quite important. It came home to me this weekend when I went to the theater with my family. I was able to step up to the desk and ask for audio description. Thank you, ACB.

I learned a lot about ACB's behind-the-scene organizational processes. I sat in on the quarterly board meeting and gained a lot of information from the various leaders in the organization. The leadership training was fabulous and I gained a new respect for this great organization.

Another highlight was getting to connect with many new friends. We often connect by Zoom and email but there is nothing like sitting across the table at lunch with friends, old and new.

Last, but not least, I was able to experience some new things I had never done before. We traveled to and from our meetings using the subway system. One of our team members, CCLVI and Kentucky Council of the Blind President Patti Cox, had been to this event many times and knew her way around the Washington, D.C. area like the palm of her hand. It was fun getting on and off of the Metro, making those multiple connections, and finding fun places to eat. And yes, there was a lot of walking.

So here is the question: would I do it again? Absolutely, in a heartbeat! Sign me up for 2026!

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## **Affiliates' Corner**

### **New York Council of Citizens with Low Vision**

American Council of the Blind of New York, Inc. (ACBNY):  
ACBNY Legislative Agenda

Here is a list of current legislation under consideration in New York state.

**ACBNY strongly supports A4039 (McDonald) and S1740 (Martinez) requiring pharmacies to provide prescription drug electronic readers**

By mandating greater access to digital services, this legislation will open doors for individuals with a print disability to access essential information and services, thereby increasing their independence and overall health safety.

Having access to an accessible digital prescription label reader will allow the blind and low vision community to correctly manage their medication intake. Ensuring accurate medication management is crucial and will reduce strain on the healthcare system. This technology exists and can be easily made available.

**ACBNY strongly supports A574 (Steck) as well as S3144 (Cooney) requiring counties to expand paratransit beyond ADA minimums**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), mandates all counties that have a fixed-route bus system to provide paratransit services to people with disabilities unable to

take the fixed route bus. Service must be provided to locations within  $\frac{3}{4}$  (three quarters) of a mile to the closest fixed-route bus stop. While this is a minimum service, counties can and should provide transportation services to people with disabilities throughout their service area.

**ACBNY strongly supports The Infant Vision Information, Education and Wellness Act S7235 (Sanders) and A1562 (Taylor)**

ACBNY supports calling for the State to establish a mandatory infant/early childhood vision screening program so that vision-related deficits that can result in significant developmental delays can be detected and prompt referral for vision-related early intervention services can be made. New York State mandates such screening with respect to hearing, but astonishingly, there is no such mandate for vision screening. Tools exist, whether medical or educational, to mitigate the potentially devastating effects of untreated vision loss on the infant, their family, and their community.

**ACBNY strongly supports A2190 (Lupardo) and S247 (Persaud) establishing licensing requirements for two categories of vision rehabilitation professionals-- licensed orientation and mobility specialists, and licensed vision rehabilitation therapists**

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) specialists provide people of all ages who are blind or visually impaired with instruction in the use of their remaining senses along with a prescribed white and red cane to enable safe navigation and independent travel in their environment. O&M specialists prepare people who are blind or visually impaired to attain mobility skills necessary to qualify for a guide dog.

Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (VRTs) provide training in the reading and writing of braille, safe cooking techniques, childcare, medication management, keyboarding, and the use of adaptive technologies and skills that enable people who are blind to manage independently at home, at work, and in the community.

Licensure increases the number of qualified professionals who are specifically trained to meet the unique needs of people who are blind or visually impaired. Licensure assures the provision of quality services through regulation and examination of these professionals. Licensure promotes consumer safety and ensures that individuals who are blind have access to trained professionals who have received specialized supervised training in working with people who are blind or visually impaired.

Questions? Contact the ACBNY Legislative Chair, Martin Cahill, [mcboltonst@gmail.com](mailto:mcboltonst@gmail.com) or phone (914) 573-6987

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## **CCCLVI Book Club**

May 2025: The Girls of Ennismore

- Author: Falvey, Patricia
- Book Number: DB 88491
- Reading Time: 13 hours, 47 minutes
- Narrated by: Jennifer Hubbard

BARD Description: Ireland, 1900. Eight-year-old Rosie Killeen joins her family as they help prepare the local manor house for a visit from Queen Victoria. While there, she is befriended by the daughter of the house, Victoria Bell. Their lives intertwine, and Rosie balances living in two worlds.

June 2025: The Beantown Girls

- Book Number: DBC 11621
- Author: Healey, Jane

BARD Description: Determined to discover what happened to her fiancé after he was shot down by the Nazis, Fiona volunteers to work on a Red Cross

Clubmobile (a social club on wheels) and recruits two friends from Boston to join her in Europe. (Note: There is an error in the audio narration.)

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## **Health and Wellness**

by Leslie Spoone, Certified Aerobic Instructor and Certified Personal Trainer

Hello CCLVI Family,

Enjoy some easy tips for working out! You can do these either with some weights or a resistance band if you have this equipment. Don't forget the buddy system is always a great way to stay on track with your fitness journey!

### **Easy Tips for Your Fitness Journey**

- You can squat when you take your laundry over to the washer. Please make sure that you are not putting your knees forward when you squat and that you have your chest lifted high and proud.
- When you are brushing your teeth, you can stand on one leg with it bent and the other leg straight. Hold onto the counter if you need to for balance.

- When you empty your dishwasher, you can squat down to take out the dishes. When you put them away, you can use your shoulder and arm to open the cabinet.
- When you take your clothes out of the dryer, you can use both hands and pull the clothes towards you. Keep your elbows close to your body and you will feel your back muscles.
- When you are watching a program on TV or your computer, you can point and flex your foot to work your shins and calves.
- While you are sitting in a chair, you can rotate your foot in a circle and strengthen your ankles.
- When you are sitting in a chair, you can take a straight leg out in front of you, then take your whole leg out to the side which would be at the 3 o'clock position and then bring it back to the 12 o'clock position. Then, switch legs.
- While sitting in the chair, you can do some sitting jumping jacks. Take your legs out to 9 and 3 o'clock and take your arms out to 9 and 3 while you are doing the legs.
- While sitting in the chair, you can either use some hand weights or a resistance band, or no equipment. You will

have your palms up and horizontal and take your arms out to 12 o'clock then bring them back to your sides. This is called serving a tray. You can think about your favorite food that you don't want to drop.

- While sitting in the chair, you can either take your weights or a resistance band, or no equipment, take your hands by your ribs vertically and you will extend your arms behind you at 6 o'clock and then bring your hands back to your ribs.

Happy exercising!

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## **Statewide Accessibility Directory**

### **Connecting the Blind and Visually Impaired to Vital Resources Across the United States**

By Christine Chaikin

Insightful Publications is a Hawaii-based company committed to supporting the blind and visually impaired communities throughout the United States. Founded by Christine Chaikin, who lives with low vision herself, the company was born out of a deep understanding of the daily challenges faced by individuals navigating vision loss. Our mission is simple, yet powerful: to provide clear,

helpful, and accessible information that empowers individuals to live more independently and with confidence.

At the heart of Insightful Publications is a series of state-specific resource handbooks. These handbooks are carefully curated for both individuals and professionals seeking trusted information on services and support available for those with vision loss. Each edition is customized to reflect local resources while also including vital contact information on the local, regional, and national level. The Statewide Accessibility Directory covers a wide range of essential topics, including employment, housing, transportation and more. Whether someone is newly adjusting to low vision or has been living with blindness for years, these guides are designed to be easy-to-use, practical, and empowering. Each handbook provides the tools needed to make informed decisions, find support networks, and access the services that can improve everyday life.

To learn more about pricing, available formats, or to request a handbook, contact Insightful Publications at [insightfulpub@gmail.com](mailto:insightfulpub@gmail.com)

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# **My Experience with Fourthwall; An Accessible Website Solution**

by Cheryl McNeil Fisher

Here's a secret -- technology and coding make me want to share the emojis with upside-down faces, exploding heads, screaming, you get the idea. While many of you are computer wizards who can set-up websites in your sleep, I need solutions that work with my VoiceOver screen reader on my iPad and iPhone. Finding platforms that are truly accessible, especially on mobile devices, has always been my priority. My goal has been to find a way to make my books accessible so that customers can download the following formats directly from my site: e-pub, PDF (MSWord if needed), audio, and video. Signed print copies are available directly through me and I wanted to make it easy to share a limited time offer of a free download within our community since my books are still not on BARD.

I'm excited to share my discovery: Fourthwall.com is surprisingly easy to set-up and is screen reader accessible! But I must be up front about something that disappointed me when ordering merchandise with color options - the color pallet selections are not accessible with a screen reader. I've brought this up with them twice

(quoting the law, too), and while they say it's "on their radar," it's not a priority for them. So, keep this in mind if you plan to sell items with color choices, i.e., t-shirts. If your customers are screen reader users like me, they might get frustrated and not return.

## **Setting Up Your Fourthwall Website**

### **Step 1: Register Your Domain**

First things first - secure your business name and domain. Fourthwall offers free custom domains, which is a huge money-saver for small business owners!

### **Step 2: Enjoy the No-Code Experience**

I have spent thousands of dollars on two different website platforms, one of which I liked. The problem was that I could not make changes to the site without hiring someone again! So, when I discovered that Fourthwall's no-code builder lets you design a custom site without technical skills, (their all-in-one platform includes e-commerce and marketing tools that grow with your business), I was thrilled.

### **Step 3: Design That Reflects You**

This is where your personality shines! Use their customizable templates and drag and drop features to create a site that feels like you. Their mobile-optimized

templates ensure your site looks great on all devices. This is a must for our on-the-go world.

#### **Step 4: Create Your Essential Pages**

Your Homepage welcomes visitors and shows them around. Your About page tells your story and builds trust. Your Services or Products pages showcase what you offer with descriptions that convert browsers to buyers.

#### **Step 5: Connect with Your Social Media**

Link your site to Instagram, TikTok, and other platforms to keep your audience engaged. Fourthwall also makes managing memberships and selling products directly through your site easy.

#### **Step 6: Get Found Online**

Fourthwall helps you incorporate SEO best practices like keyword integration and meta tag optimization. This helps more people find you when they're searching online.

#### **Step 7: Build Excitement Before Launch**

I love that you can set up a "Coming Soon" page with an enticing paragraph and countdown clock to excite your followers, friends, and family about your upcoming site!

## **Step 8: Track What Works**

Their analytics tools help you understand visitor behavior so you can make smart updates that keep people coming back.

## **Step 9: Connect with Your Community**

Use Fourthwall's tools to engage with your audience through newsletters and exclusive content. Creating that sense of community has been crucial for my business.

I've found Fourthwall straightforward and empowering -- perfect for those of us who want a professional, online presence without the technical complexities. While it's not perfect (remember that color selection issue), it's been a game changer for me as a screen reader user.

Oh, and since I published my first book 10 years ago, I have wanted a fluffy Sammy the Guide Dog to accompany my books. Fourthwall, through Printful, charges \$135 for the prototype and \$19.99 for my customers.

I'm not promoting or endorsing Fourthwall - I'm just sharing my personal experience. I'd love to hear if any of you try Fourthwall or any other sites with print-on-demand drop shipping that is fully accessible, especially the color palette that allows the customer a color choice.

# **Guidelines for the Detection and Care of Macular Degeneration**

by Tom Perski, Low Vision Services Director, People Who Care

Eye care professionals recommend that individuals undergo regular comprehensive eye examinations, with annual dilation, by an ophthalmologist or optometrist. If signs or symptoms suggest the early stages of macular degeneration, it may be essential to seek a referral to a retina specialist. Retina specialists are ophthalmologists who have received specialized training in diagnosing and treating conditions that affect the retina, and macula, including macular degeneration. Getting the appropriate care and expertise from a retina specialist can help manage and preserve vision in retinal conditions. Retina specialists possess specialized training and advanced imaging tools that enable accurate diagnosis of conditions like macular degeneration. Their expertise centers on managing diseases affecting the retina. When a patient is diagnosed with a retina condition, the specialist will provide an accurate diagnosis, recommend appropriate treatment, and monitor the patient's vision at suitable intervals.

In the early stages of macular degeneration, visits may be necessary every six months or annually. Many times, macular degeneration progresses very slowly. As the disease progresses, however, the retina specialist will determine the frequency of appointments to manage the condition best and preserve vision. Regular monitoring and individualized care from a retina specialist are crucial in effectively addressing and treating macular degeneration.

Creating and maintaining an organized medical file containing detailed reports from eye examinations is essential for individuals undergoing assessments for macular degeneration. These records can help you and your family better understand your eye health status and track any changes over time. This documentation can also be valuable for family members with a genetic predisposition to certain eye conditions, enabling them to understand your diagnosis, treatment plans, and potential future needs.

Moreover, keeping a well-documented medical history can prove advantageous if you seek a second or third opinion from different eye care specialists. It ensures that all relevant information is available for review, ultimately aiding in making informed decisions about your eye health and treatment options. Regularly updating and organizing

your medical records can streamline communication with healthcare providers and support continuity of care for conditions like macular degeneration. A comprehensive medical file is especially crucial if a referral for low vision rehabilitation becomes necessary. See the description of “What is Low Vision Rehabilitation” later in this guide.

A common practice is receiving a summary of each appointment in a patient's medical portal. Still, individuals with challenges reading or accessing this information should request a complete printout for each appointment. It is essential to insist on obtaining these detailed records to clearly understand your eye health status, diagnosis, treatment plan, the pharmaceutical agents you may be receiving by injection, and any recommendations provided by the eye doctor and staff.

A physical copy of your appointment details allows you to review the information at your convenience and to share it with family members. Again, ensuring access to comprehensive records empowers you to actively engage in your eye care and make informed decisions about managing conditions like macular degeneration.

After each eye appointment, requesting a summary letter (or summary report) that includes detailed information

about your diagnosis is recommended. The summary letter should include the following:

### **A. Diagnosis**

The summary report should specify the primary diagnosis, such as age-related macular degeneration (AMD), and indicate whether it is the dry or wet form for each eye.

The report should identify the stage of macular degeneration for the dry form of AMD, which could be the early, moderate, or late stage of the disease. An alternative term for the dry form may be listed as atrophic macular degeneration. The late-stage, or end-stage, of dry macular degeneration is also known as geographic atrophy (GA). Descriptions of the wet form of macular degeneration may include neovascularization (new vessels), which indicates the growth of new vessels under the retina. Terms like "exudative" may be used to describe wet AMD. Also ensure that any secondary diagnoses, such as glaucoma or cataracts, are documented in the report to understand the status of your eye health fully.

### **B. Visual Acuity Measurement**

A visual acuity measurement for each eye is a crucial aspect of the eye health evaluation. A visual acuity measurement is typically conducted for each eye using an eye chart with the patient's current prescription glasses or

contact lenses, referred to as Best Corrected Visual Acuity (BCVA). In the appointment report, the results may be represented using abbreviations such as OD for the right eye and OS for the left eye, with measurements presented in the form of BCVA OD: 20/70 and OS: 20/50 (for example).

The standard for normal vision is 20/20, with the second number indicating the clarity of vision; the higher the number, the poorer the vision measurement. By comparing the BCVA measurements of each visit, you can monitor any changes in your vision over time. For example, if your current BCVA measurement is 20/50 and the previous measurement was 20/40, this may suggest a slight deterioration in vision.

Knowing and monitoring your visual acuity measurement provides valuable insights into changes in your vision health. By understanding your acuity measurements and tracking them at every visit, you can better grasp your eye health status and discuss any changes with your healthcare provider. Feel free to request this information at each appointment to stay informed about your vision progress.

### **C. Appearance of the Retina**

When requesting a description of the retina's appearance in the summary letter of your eye appointment, it is essential to include details such as the presence of drusen. Drusen can look like very tiny yellow spots around the retina, which may indicate that the retina is beginning to have difficulty metabolizing waste products effectively. Drusen themselves do not cause vision loss but may suggest changes over time. Ask if there are any changes in the size or quantity of the drusen, as well as the overall health of the retina and underlying tissues.

The report may include descriptions of the retina's appearance, such as the presence of small or large drusen and whether there has been an increase in the number of drusen since the last visit. Observations regarding whether small drusen are enlarging can also provide valuable information about the condition's progression. Assessing the overall health of the retina and underlying tissues is crucial, noting any signs of abnormalities or changes that may impact vision.

For cases of the wet form of macular degeneration, the report may describe the presence of neovascularization, which refers to the growth of abnormal vessels beneath the retina. These new vessels are different from healthy vessels and can lead to issues such as fluid leakage or

bleeding, requiring treatment with injections to inhibit their growth. If injections are recommended to treat these vessels, it is essential that the pharmaceutical agent's name is included.

To track the condition's progression and determine the appropriate treatment plan, it is crucial to monitor the appearance of the retina and any changes observed during eye appointments. Understanding the descriptions provided in the summary letter can help you stay informed about the health of your retina and the steps needed to manage any abnormalities effectively.

#### **D. Appearance of the Macula**

The macula and the stages of degeneration should be described, including terms such as geographic atrophy, which doctors use to classify advanced cases of macular degeneration. Observations about any changes in the macula can provide insights into the condition's progression and potential impact on vision.

#### **E. Treatment Recommendations**

Documentation must be provided for any treatments administered during each visit. For example, the summary should include information about the name of the medication injected and any recommendations for future treatments and follow-up visits.

It is essential to inquire about newly-approved treatments available for both the dry and wet forms of macular degeneration and discuss with your retina specialist whether you are a candidate for these treatments. Understanding the potential risk factors associated with any new treatment is essential for informed decision-making regarding your eye health.

By including information about the appearance of the macula and treatment details in the summary letter of your eye appointment, you can have a comprehensive understanding of the condition, the treatments received, and the recommendations for managing macular degeneration effectively. Be proactive in discussing treatment options and potential risks with your ophthalmologist to make informed decisions about your eye care.

#### **F. Prognosis:**

Request an assessment of the severity of the damage, expectations regarding the progression of macular degeneration, and the anticipated timeframes for each eye. Understanding the prognosis can help you and your family prepare for the condition's progression and make informed decisions about future treatments or management strategies.

Having comprehensive information about the treatments, prognosis, and potential outcomes of macular degeneration in your medical records can empower you to participate actively in eye care management. This knowledge can assist you in understanding the condition, its implications, and the treatment options available. This will facilitate better decision-making and the exploration of additional opinions or treatments as necessary. Stay informed, ask questions, and work closely with your healthcare team to optimize your eye health and overall well-being.

A summary letter clearly outlines your diagnosis, and its specific details can be beneficial for understanding the condition's progression, discussing treatment options, and keeping track of important information related to your eye health.

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## **The Kitchen Corner**

### **Cutting Safety: The Claw Method**

by Debra Erickson

The Claw Method is helpful when you are cutting large pieces of food into smaller pieces or cylindrical food such as carrots, celery or parsnips into slices. Part of its attractiveness is that you can examine where you intend to

make the cut before you cut it (as described in Step 7). It is a very safe method as your fingers holding the food are drawn outside of the knife's path. As with all new skills, start slowly and deliberately, but as you practice, you will see that your accuracy increases and will eventually – as your confidence and control increase – step 7 will become unnecessary.

The hand holding of the food will be the focus of this article. The position of the fingers and the thumb are key to the Claw Method. The objective is to draw the fingers and thumb safely out of the way of the blade of the knife as it cuts the food.

Let's start with a piece of celery. This is a good food to practice with because it has a curved side and also a flat side (thus, the food is not likely to roll out from under the hand holding it).

### **Step 1:**

Place the celery with the curved side facing the ceiling and the U-shaped side facing downward on your cutting surface. We recommend you wear a cut glove on your non-dominant hand. The hand that will be holding the knife is safe. However, the hand holding the food to be cut will be the focus of this article.

## **Step 2:**

Place your non-dominant hand on top of the celery near the end where you want to start cutting. Draw your fingers back tightly so they appear to be touching the top of the inside palm of your hand. Then curl the thumb back against itself, with the tip of the thumb now curled toward the base of the thumb. When your fingers and thumb are in the correct position your hand will resemble the claw of a bird, or the paw of a bear.



Photo Above: Chef Debra demonstrates the Claw Method of cutting. Her fingers of the non-dominant hand are drawn back and holding the celery.

**Step 3:**

Bring your “claw” down onto the food and place it so that the celery is positioned with the end to be cut resting between the curved thumb and curved index finger. The downward pressure of the hand is what will be holding the food firmly in place under the weight of your palm. The end of the celery should extend outside of the clawed hand, at least as far as you want the cut to be.

**Step 4:**

With your finger and thumb holding the knife in your dominant hand, pinch the back of the blade that is closest to the knife handle. The base of the blade, nearest the handle, is where you want the cut to happen. It is the spot where both of your hands will be closest to the action and where you will have the most control and tactile information about what is happening at the very place the cut will be made.



Photo Above: Chef Debra demonstrates the Claw Method of cutting. She is holding the knife close to the base of the blade nearest the handle, in her dominant hand.

**Step 5:**

Place the knife with the blade facing downward on your cutting surface and lightly drag the blade toward the celery keeping the blade in constant contact with the cutting surface. Drag the blade lightly to the exposed end of the celery. The part of the blade, closest to the handle, should be resting against the end of the celery.

### **Step 6:**

Slowly lift the knife blade while keeping it in constant contact with the celery end. NEVER will you bring a knife straight down onto the food without being in contact with the food first in this method. Raise the blade, trace the end of the celery and slowly guide the knife up the celery until you feel the knife losing contact with the celery. This means your knife can now move to the place on top of the celery where you want the cut to happen.



Photo Above: The blade is tracing the end of the celery.

### **Step 7:**

Slide your clawed hand across the top of the celery until the side of your curved index finger makes contact with the side of the blade of the knife (which should be close to the handle). If you want to check to see where the cut is going to happen, you can place the knife on the cutting surface and use the fingers of the now knifeless hand to check and see if the size is correct. If you want it a bit thinner or a bit thicker, adjust the curved index finger claw hand to be at the exact spot you would like the cut to happen. Then, pick up the knife, drag it across the surface and guide it up the end of the celery until it clears the top, and then slide the side of the blade to the curved index knuckle of your clawed hand and make the cut using the method described in the next step.

### **Step 8:**

Your fingers and thumb should still retain their claw-like shape. Make sure your thumb is drawn toward your body and out of the way of the pending cut. The part of the knife blade that is closest to the handle, being pinched by your thumb and forefinger, will be where the cut happens.

Gently push the blade downward and forward in a rolling forward motion so the blade moves slowly forward as you push downward. Do not push straight down on the blade - instead, move it slowly forward in a gentle motion. You will

feel the knife gently scrape the cutting surface when you have completed that cut.

### **Step 9:**

Check your work. If the slice is the correct width, repeat the steps until you produce the amount of food you desire.

If learning this is of interest to you, email me at [info@theblindkitchen.com](mailto:info@theblindkitchen.com) and let me know what you would like for me to make a video about or write about in the future.

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## **Message from Scout: Do You Have an Escape Artist?**

by Cheryl McNeil Fisher



Photo Left: The image shows a close-up of a fluffy, light reddish brown (called Fox red) dog with a wavy coat. The puppy has a sweet expression with dark eyes and a black nose.

Hi Friends!

I'm here with a tip from Cheryl. Did you know that I am nine months old? I know, right? It has gone fast, though the cold weather sure did drag its paws. I weigh 40 pounds and am just as handsome as ever. People mistake me for a Golden Retriever puppy because of the length and style of my coat. My coat is called Fox Red, which is a reddish brown and I have the perfect white edging around the tips of my ears and my paws. I also have a white patch on my chest, completing my dapper look. My best friend's mom is a Standard Poodle, and his dad is a handsome Golden Retriever, which makes him a Goldendoodle. My Standard Poodle father and fox-red Labrador mother make me a proud Labradoodle. Though our pedigrees differ, it doesn't matter one bit. We're both handsome pups and the best of friends.

Are you wondering about Cheryl's tip mentioned in the headline? Well, I've mastered the art of opening the bottom lever of my crate. Slick, right?

If you could have seen their stunned faces the first time I met them at the door. Ha! They were speechless, well, speechless for just a second. But really, how could they possibly be upset when I greeted them at the door,

bouncing excitedly on all four paws? "Look, I'm out! I am an escape Labradoodle extraordinaire!"

Ed was sure he'd secured the bottom latch. He did, but I outsmarted him. They were relieved that I hadn't destroyed anything during my freedom. Cheryl knelt to give me pets and love. "Yes, Scout. We're proud of you and can see you're maturing, but not enough to leave you unsupervised yet." I tilted my head, looked at her lovingly, and thought, "That's what you think."

Thanks to my Poodle heritage, the third time I escaped, I used my superpowers and balanced on my hind legs to survey the kitchen. I can turn around without touching the counters in search of something that's not mine. I spotted my favorite treat. I strutted over, dipped my nose at the basket, and, easy-peasy, "Well, they're on the floor now, so game on!" I was so caught up being the escape artist extraordinaire that when Cheryl and Ed came home, I jumped and danced excitedly, forgetting that I had a stem with two bananas dangling from my teeth.

The solution: Cheryl puts a padlock on the bottom latch. She doesn't have to lock it, but it is secure enough for me not to escape. This is an excellent tip for pet owners with a clever dog like me.

Want to know a secret? I can unlatch the upper latch, too. I know how to climb up my crate, wiggle and push myself out to freedom. Maybe!

Happy Spring and Happy Wags from me, Scout!

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## Calendar of Events

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

Subscribe to our CCLVI-Info email list to receive weekly meeting reminders and Zoom details by emailing [CCLVIWebmaster@gmail.com](mailto: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 or visiting [acb.community](http://acb.community)

All Monday and Thursday Zoom Events have the same Zoom link, Meeting ID, and Passcode.

### CCLVI Low Vision Discussion

First Monday at 8:00 PM ET

Themed chats

### CCLVI Game Night

Second and fourth Mondays at 8:00 PM ET

CCLVI Low Vision Peer Support Group

Third Monday at 8:00 PM ET

CCLVI Speaker or Themed chat - Fifth Monday at 8:00 PM ET

CCLVI Board of Directors Meeting

Second Tuesday at 8:30 PM ET

Meeting ID: 829 0433 3824

Passcode: 784688

CCLVI Let's Talk Low Vision

First Thursday at 8:00 PM ET

Join our guests for this monthly informative program

Also broadcasted on ACB Media 1

The podcast of the episodes can be found at:

<https://www.cclvi.com/LetsTalkLowVision>

CCLVI Table Talk Thursday

Second, fourth, and fifth Thursdays at 8:00 PM ET

Weekly calls on a variety of topics related to low vision

CCLVI Monthly Book Chat

Third Thursday at 8:00 PM ET

## **CCLVI Affiliate Zoom Calls**

### California Council of Citizens with Low Vision (CCCLV) – A Sunday Chat

First and Third Sunday at 7:00 PM ET

Spend part of your Sunday with members of CCCLV and enjoy “A Sunday Chat”. This is a call for those of us who are blind or with low vision and any family and friends, be they near or far. Topics will range from all things low vision to life in general as a person who is blind or low vision.

### Low Vision Now (formerly Delaware Valley Council of Citizens with Low Vision)

First Saturday at 12:45 PM ET (Second in July and Sept.)

The monthly Zoom meeting Low Vision Now is open to all who have an interest in the issues of low vision.

Webinar Meeting ID: 440 465 3663

Passcode: 2121

Saturday, June 7, 2025

Topic: Metta Ray Ban glasses, how they can help someone who has low or no vision.

Presenter: Arron Kramer, Ph. D., Bucks County

Associated Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Saturday, July 12, 2025,

Topic: Potentials of visual problems or blindness on friendships and relationships.

Presenter: Joanne Perilstein, Ph. D.

Kentucky Council of Citizens with Low Vision (KCCLV) -  
Low Vision Support Calls

First Wednesday at 8:00 PM ET: Business Meeting

Third Wednesday at 8:00 PM ET: Informative meetings for low vision individuals across the US

Meeting ID: 862 9889 6972

Passcode: 975864

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

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## **Join CCLVI's Email Lists**

### **CCLVI-Info Email List:**

This is a two-way list for members and non-members of CCLVI. Its purpose is to publish the weekly schedule of CCLVI events, and to provide a place where subscribers can ask questions about low vision. To Join: Send a blank email to [cclvi-info+subscribe@acblists.org](mailto:cclvi-info+subscribe@acblists.org)

### **CCLVI-Members-Only Email List:**

This is a one-way list that contains information and announcements of the annual business meeting, monthly board meetings, minutes of these meetings, constitutional amendments, resolutions, and other items that members need to vote on. To Join: You will be added to this list when your annual membership dues are received. If you unsubscribe, you will not receive information CCLVI information.

### **CCLVI-Vision-Access Email List:**

This is a one-way list where members receive our newsletter, Vision Access. If you unsubscribe, you will no longer receive our publication and you will miss out on some interesting and informative articles. To Join: You will be added to this list when your annual membership dues are received.

**VISION ACCESS** is published four times a year (February 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15) in large print 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, April 15, July 15, and October 15. Send contributions to [CCLVIVisionAccess@gmail.com](mailto:CCLVIVisionAccess@gmail.com)

## **Accessing Vision Access**

Vision Access is available to CCLVI members via email and large print. Archived and podcasted issues are available at [www.cclvi.org/VisionAccess](http://www.cclvi.org/VisionAccess).

## **Contact CCLVI**

### **Council of Citizens with Low Vision International**

Address: 5401 Southern Parkway Louisville, KY 40214

CCLVI Toll-free Information Line: 844-460-0625

Email: [lowvisionoutreach@gmail.com](mailto:lowvisionoutreach@gmail.com)

Web site: [www.cclvi.org](http://www.cclvi.org)

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