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**Please send all address changes to Executive Office.**

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**From the Editor's Desk****by Judy Wilkinson**

**Kiora BC readers!**

**That greeting like “Aloha” for Hawaiians signifies everything from “Hello,” “Good-bye,” to “How are you,” to the Maori, the first people of New Zealand where my husband Steven Mendelsohn and I spent a month earlier this winter (well summer actually) since the seasons are reversed. In fact, I edited the Spring issue of the BC as we journeyed through this wonderful country, with its can-do attitude and pioneer spirit so reminiscent of our own**

**early history. We had traveled first for a few days to Sydney, Australia, where we had the privilege of attending the opera Tosca in that city’s iconic opera house.**

**We traveled with our good friend Marg Munyard who acted as travel agent, driver and tour guide, all in one. Marg took nearly 700 pictures, we made numerous audio recordings, and I kept a journal: all to remind us of this trip of a lifetime.**

**Meeting wonderful blind**

people and learning about their lives were among the highpoints of the trip. In Wellington we spent a fascinating late afternoon with Tomas Bryan, a technology instructor at the Royal National Foundation of the Blind and his partner Rose Wilkinson, the Executive Director of The Associated Blind Citizens of New Zealand. (And did I mention the fabulous Indian meal we shared?)

On our final weekend in Auckland, we met with a dozen or so blind folks gathered by Clive Lansink (the president of ABCNZ)

and his partner Mary Schnackenberg whom I had met several years previously at Ski For Light. They run their own technology consulting business now, but formerly Mary was head of their library service for the visually-impaired.

We learned that the Royal National Institute is the umbrella organization which provides all services to the country's visually-impaired (rather like our Department of Rehabilitation but including all services in a single agency).

**The Associated Blind Citizens of New Zealand, though it shares a building in Wellington (the capitol) with the Foundation, is rather like our ACB in that it represents and advocates for consumers. Tomas and Rose told us they never discuss their jobs at home as they are sometimes on opposite sides of the fence (the agency and the consumer). ACBNZ, like CCB and ACB, is concerned about fundraising. The organization is lucky to have a modest nestegg upon which to draw, but like most nonprofits, they must look to the future and**

**try new fundraising tactics. They are embarking on a massive donation mailing campaign.**

**The next morning we visited AbleNet, where audio description is produced for some 30 hours a week of television programming. Director Wendy Yens gave us lots of information, and we were pleased to learn that ACB's Joel Snyder head of the Audio Description Project, had visited last year. Audio description is done differently there. Instead of someone writing a script which someone else reads and another**

mixes and edits, one person does it all. We met Paul Harrok, a describer who walked us through the entire process which he controls with a single computer and its software. He treated us to part of his description of the TV series "Once Upon A Time".

I had forgotten how rewarding, inspirational and educational traveling to another country can be.

Several from the group we met are looking forward to attending the World Blind Union meeting which will be held next summer in Florida. I look forward to renewing acquaintanceships with them there and meeting and learning about so many blind people from all over the world.

Kiora until the fall issue.

\* \* \*

### **President's Message:**

## **The Important Things In Life**

**by Jeff Thom**

The day prior to the one on which this article was

begun, I learned that my closest friend from college

died of an unexpected heart attack prior to reaching his 62<sup>nd</sup> birthday. I began writing this article immediately after returning home from a memorial service for an amazing 21-year-old cancer victim, Austin Young. Our families met when Andi my youngest, and Austin were around six months of age at UCSF Medical Center, after we learned that both had been diagnosed with retinoblastoma. Austin, a person with low vision, was a straight A student and an excellent swimmer. He was an even better person. He was deprived of the chance to attend

college due to the severe recurrence of his cancer near the end of his high school years. However, it never stopped him from forming his own charity, Gaming For A Cause, where video gamers raised money for children with cancer.

As many readers of this magazine can personally attest, I could very easily write an article about Austin. But this article is not written as a memorial to Austin or about memories of people I came to respect and admire. It is written to underscore something we hear often

enough, but don't always take to heart, the fleeting nature of our time on earth and what that should mean to all of us.

Our waking hours are often consumed by our everyday struggles, work, domestic concerns, efforts to make ends meet, and all the daily crises that pop up in our lives. We live with the uncertainty of our time on this planet, but it often takes events such as a friend dying at the age of 61 or a talented young man's having his life abruptly ended by cancer, to bring that uncertainty to the forefront.

As president of CCB, I feel the fleeting nature of our time on earth has a special meaning. The primary purpose of this organization is to improve the lives of our fellow persons with visual impairments. There is so much to do, and we never know how much time we will be granted to perform our work on behalf of CCB. Does this mean that CCB should somehow take over our lives at the expense of health, family and other important things? Quite obviously not. Does it mean that we need to remember the importance

of our work and make sure that we are doing what we can to further the goals of CCB? Yes it does.

One of the most pervasive elements that takes us away from accomplishing more in CCB is our own negativity, egos, feelings that we know more and are better than others, feelings that we aren't being treated like we deserve, and on and on. I am sad to say, I'm just as guilty as anyone. As a personal example, (and I could cite more), several years ago I remember when someone was publicly recognized for doing something that I

actually felt I had even a larger role in accomplishing. Instead of feeling glad that we had accomplished something, I failed to check my own ego at the door and felt slighted.

We need to concentrate on the job at hand, to focus on the positives that each one of us brings to the organization, and emphasize the fact that, each of us in our own way is here to help those persons who are blind or have low vision that need that help now or in the future.

**Austin Young's battle with cancer never let him lose his focus on helping others. Similarly, let's**

**rededicate ourselves to the purpose of CCB and to the CCB family.**

**\* \* \***

## **Governmental Affairs**

**by Mitch Pomerantz**

**In my previous column I mentioned preparations for the American Council of the Blind Legislative Seminar in Washington, DC. I indicated that nine of us would be attending and that we'd be making visits to Capitol Hill to meet with aides representing California's 53 members of Congress and our two Senators.**

**Not surprisingly given that it was mid-February,**

**Mother Nature intervened and instead of nine CCB participants, our delegation was reduced to seven. Unfortunately, both Richard Rueda and Vincent Calderon were stranded: Richard in Denver and Vince at the Ontario Airport. A third participant, Charles Nabarrete, arrived late Monday evening, but was with us Tuesday when we made our rounds.**

**Despite our reduced**

numbers, the seven of us managed to meet personally with aides from 43 of the 53 congressional offices and both senators. Packets were left at the 10 offices with whom we were unable to make appointments. I want to personally and sincerely commend and thank my fellow attendees for a tremendous effort and your dedication to our cause.

Very briefly, here are the three legislative imperatives about which we were meeting.

**Low Vision Device Exclusion – Urging prompt**

passage of HR 729, the Medicare Demonstration of Coverage for Low Vision Devices Act of 2015; which would evaluate, through a five-year national demonstration project, the fiscal impact of a permanent change to the Social Security Act allowing reimbursement for certain low-vision devices which would be classified as durable medical equipment.

**Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act – Encouraging House members to sign on to a letter to gain support in advance of introduction of**

legislation which would, among a number of provisions, ensure that every student with vision loss is properly identified regardless of formal disability category or classification; expand knowledge about the scope and quality of special education and related services through refined data collection that tracks all students with vision loss; and ramps up US Department of Education responsibilities to monitor and report states' compliance with their obligations to serve students with vision loss.

Ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty – Urging the Senate to ratify, without raising extraneous issues, the document developed jointly by international representatives of the blindness community and publishers to provide increased access to printed materials for people with print-reading disabilities.

Now for a whirlwind tour of what's going on legislatively at home. Unfortunately, President Thom and I were only able to find an author for one of CCB's legislative

**initiatives: SB 199 (Hall-D), our proposal to add reading and document completion to the list of covered services under the IHSS program. In March, the bill passed out of the Senate Human Services Committee on a unanimous 5-0 vote. Not unexpectedly, the bill went to Senate Appropriations and landed in the “suspense file”. Luck was on our side, however, as the committee’s analysis was favorable. On May 28, SB 199 passed out of Appropriations on a unanimous vote and was referred to the Senate floor. CCB is cautiously**

**optimistic that this important piece of legislation will reach the Governor’s desk later this year.**

**CCB is standing in solidarity with California’s blind vendors by actively supporting AB 1353 (Patterson-D), which would prohibit Caltrans from being reimbursed for utility costs incurred by vendors operating under the Business Enterprises Program (BEP). In April it passed out of the Assembly Transportation Committee 11-0, and was referred to Appropriations. Not unexpectedly, it has**

gone to the “suspense file” where its fate is uncertain at this writing.

[Editor’s Note: As we finalized this issue, The Presidents List received an update from Ardis Bazyn:

On May 28, [the bill] passed the Assembly Committee on Appropriations 17-0. On June 1, it passed the entire Assembly Floor 78-0. The Assembly and its committees showed unanimous support for this legislative bill. There are two committees in the senate as well as the senate floor for this bill to

pass before AB 1353 can be submitted to the governor.]

**AB 8: Gatto (Support),** authorizing the use of the state’s existing network of changeable message signs to help apprehend a hit-and-run suspect when the accident has resulted in a fatality or serious injury. Our support is based on the number of blind/low vision persons who have been involved in such accidents over the years.

**AB 61: Allen (Oppose),** would permit transit agencies to permit private shuttles to use public bus

stops. Our opposition is based on concerns expressed that such shuttles will block or otherwise make it impossible for blind/low vision persons to locate and board public buses at stops where such shuttles are permitted to wait for riders.

**AB 474: Brown and Thurmond (Support)**, pegs the level of individual SSI benefits at 112% of the federal poverty level.

**AB 683: Lowe (Oppose)**, while this proposal would make additional recommendations to

improve the accessibility of election materials on-line, a threatened amendment would eliminate the Visually Impaired Voter Assistance Board and subsume its role under a generic Voter Accessibility Advisory Committee. If this amendment is not included, CCB is likely to change our position to support AB 683.

**SB 492: Liu (Support)**, would establish the Coordinated Care Initiative Consumer Bill of Rights setting forth rights to which an individual receiving care under the

CCI would be entitled. CCB is part of a statewide collaborative which has drafted this proposal.

SB 624: Anderson (Support), would establish the Office of Accessible Technology to monitor and facilitate compliance of state electronic and

information technology with the requirements of state and federal accessibility laws.

That is definitely more than enough for now! See you in October at the CCB Conference and Convention.

\* \* \*

**Honoring CCB's Nonagenarians and Octogenarians**  
**by Judy Wilkinson**

In this issue we continue what we hope will be an ongoing feature: honoring our CCB members over the age of 90 (nonagenarians) and 80 octogenarians). The Spring BC featured articles

from former CCB President Catherine Skivers who celebrated her 90th birthday on May 2.

In this issue Susan Glass interviews Teddie-Joy

**Remhild and former BC Editor Maria Lopez presents a loving portrait of her husband, former CCB President John Lopez.**

**Please send us names, ages and birthdates of your members in this category. And if you could write a profile, that would be wonderful. Remember Susan and I will gladly assist you to help polish your gems.**

**Here are other names we've gleaned. We have done our very best to make sure names are spelled correctly, birthdates, ages,**

**and affiliate information are accurate, but errors are bound to creep in. Please accept our apologies for inadvertent mistakes and be sure to send corrections.**

**In addition to Cathie Skivers from my own Bay View Chapter:**

**George (Chris) Christian  
90, July 31;**

**Alfred (Al) Gil 82; (Al is recovering from a recent, serious heart attack. He is now home and improving daily.)**

**Mel Kahn, 94 December 20, 1920; (Mel provided the impetus for the article, "Revitalize That Old**

**Perkins Braille” BC Spring 2014.)**

**Lynne Laird, 80; (For many years, Lynne formatted the large-print version of the BC.)**

**Glendale-Burbank:**

**John Mavis, 82; Frank Tucker, 82, March 8.**

**San Francisco Chapter**

**Winifred Downing, 90; (I profiled Win in the article “CCB ‘Treasure’, Winifred Downing” BC, Spring, 2011 and we also reprinted one of her columns as BC editor).**

**Silicon Valley Council of the Blind**

**Elmer Chapson, 90.**

**\* \* \***

## **Teddie-Joy Remhild: Writer and Activist**

**by Susan Glass**

**To speak with Teddie-joy is to know a voice that sparkles with creativity and spunk. She was born in Los Angeles in 1933, and according to her memoir that she's currently writing,**

**her beginnings were anything but auspicious.**

**“First I had to survive my childhood.” This is the opening sentence of Teddie-joy's book. She and**

her baby sister were left alone by their mother in an apartment for 3 days before Teddie-joy was 3 years old. By the time Teddie-joy was 4, she'd gotten rickets from malnutrition. At one point she was nearly killed in a car accident. Finally she was rescued by her grandmother and life started improving. She's spent much of her life in Southern California, including two years in San Diego and two in Fresno. She'd always had a visual impairment, but at the age of 35, she completely lost her central vision.

Encouraged by a rehab counselor who was also a friend, Teddie-Joy attended an NFB convention in Chicago.

“I walked in, and there were all these blind people, everywhere! Canes! Braille! I burst into tears. I thought, this isn't me; this can't be my life now; I don't belong here.”

Her friend comforted her, and she stayed for the duration of the convention, and even joined NFB, but quit after two years "due to its controlling, only one way to be blind philosophy.”

**At around this same time in her life, Teddie-Joy met Mitch Pomerantz who told her about CCB. She joined the organization in 1991, and has never left.**

**Her life's accomplishments are many: At age 54, she earned a degree in Gerontology from USC. In addition to working full-time, she served on the CCB board, started the ACB Alliance on Aging, and co-founded the ACB Multicultural Concerns Affiliate. She regularly attends ACB conventions, and for a number of years, hosted the Friends In Art**

**Annual Prose and Poetry Reading. She's currently legislative chair for the Glendale Burbank chapter as well as its Vice President, and she also works on the Governmental Affairs Committee. Just recently, she was appointed as a board member to the Public Authority For In Home Supportive Services for Los Angeles County. Years earlier, she'd worked for this same organization as a paid employee. An acronym for the organization is PASC, standing for Personal Assistance Services Council.**

**“I don't know what people mean when they say they've retired,” she quips. “I can't imagine not working.”**

**I ask her to talk more about her memoir. “Because of my life span, 1933 to now, it's about a lot more than me. In the sixties when women's lib evolved and Betty Friedan wrote her Feminine Mystique, I said ‘She's talking to me’.”**

**Teddie-Joy participates in a writing workshop that meets regularly in Pasadena. It's taught by a woman from Serbia who**

**has published 39 books.**

**“If I wanted to, I could enroll in writing workshops taught at the Braille Institute. But for some people there, well, the Braille Institute is their whole life. I sometimes feel that I don't fit into any one niche. I have some peripheral vision now, albeit marginal. I'm not sighted; I'm not blind. I shouldn't have to be either of these things; I'm me; I'm both. That in and of itself is an experience worth articulating, worth writing about.”**

**Since all good writers read,**

I ask what books and topics intrigue her. "I'm a big fan of American history and American biographies. Just now I'm in the middle of reading *The Fitzgeralds* and *The Kennedys* by Doris Kearns Goodwin. I like her writing. She lets you get to know her biographical subjects as human beings. Her writing is never dry. I like mysteries also. Just now I'm reading the latest John Grisham book which is about coal miners, set in Appalachia."

I ask Teddie-Joy what advice she'd give to other writers.

"Write what matters to you in life. Be personal. Don't gloss over life's realities."

And what advice does she offer young women, both blind and sighted? "Get in touch with your real self and be who you are. Don't be who you think other people want you to be."

CCB and ACB mean a lot to Teddie-Joy. "I came to these communities after enduring many losses. I like the work I can do here. I like my friends here. And when I go to conventions, I attend as many mixers as I can. I want to get to know people."

Teddie-Joy is planning to be in Dallas this year, and I for one, am looking

forward to hanging out with her.

\* \* \*

## **Profile of John Lopez**

### **by Maria Lopez**

[Editor's Note: In our call-out for information about our members over the age of 80, what a nugget this is! John Lopez served as president of the CCB from 1992-1994, an important two years in CCB history, and we are privileged to print this profile by the person most able to write it, his wife of 55 years and a former editor of this publication.]

John was born in 1930 in Loving, New Mexico. He became totally blind at the age of nine. He attended the New Mexico school for the blind and became an accomplished pianist. The highlight of his graduation day was his piano performance of Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue. During his time in school, he also participated in the school's Olympic wrestling team, winning the championship

against New Mexico State's military wrestling team.

Throughout his adult life he taught music to blind and sighted students alike, and at the same time performed with several orchestras in many different environments, while attending university to obtain his bachelor's degree. John came to California in 1950 to receive a guide dog and decided to stay here. He and I met in November, 1959, while he was teaching at Braille Institute and I became a student there. We married in June, 1960. This year we will be

celebrating our 55th anniversary. We enjoy our family of 4 children, 6 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

We became involved in the East Los Angeles community and in the California Council of the Blind in 1963 as cofounders of the East Los Angeles Chapter CCB under the guidance of Tony Mannino. For many years John was president of this chapter while I was secretary or treasurer. At present, we still attend our beloved chapter's monthly meetings and are happy to see that we have very able

younger leaders that have taken over.

In the early 80's, John traveled to Puerto Rico, together with Durward McDaniels, on behalf of the ACB, to help blind people get organized; they both also visited the industries for the blind workshops to improve the work environment for blind workers. For a long time, he was also involved in helping the youth in the community, speaking and counseling inmates in different detainment centers. One project that he never forgot was to donate blood to the Red

Cross every year.

In 1987, John became the first blind president of the Boyle Heights Lions Club, and in 1992, he was elected president of the CCB.

Some of the accomplishments of his two-year presidency of the CCB are known.

While John was working, I was in charge of taking care of the children. When the kids became adults, I learned to play drums and accompanied him in some of his gigs, also went back to college to finish my education. In 1992 I became the editor of The

**Blind Californian, a position that I kept for about 4 years; I also helped with the California Connection in Spanish for some time. Meanwhile, I had a full-time job in a printing company; until my retirement, I was in charge of a bindery group where I was the only blind person.**

**In 1983, I traveled to Mexico to represent the CCB and help blind people to start an organization there. During this trip, I learned that blind people in many countries are in great need of help because they do not have the materials and the support they need**

**to get an education. For this reason, I decided to start the International Friendly Circle of the Blind, IFBC, the purpose of which was collecting materials for the blind here in the United States and distributing them to needy blind students in developing countries. Some time after, I had to abandon this project because the demands of my job.**

**During our years together, John and I have accomplished some things that we can be proud about, but our biggest satisfaction comes from**

knowing that we brought up four responsible, honest and wonderful children. John is now close to 85 years old but in good

health, and we are enjoying our retirement after many years of an active life.

\* \* \*

## **Diabetics Affiliate**

**by Charles Nabarrete**

The Goal Three Committee of the Strategic Planning Group for CCB voted to explore the possibility of forming a new affiliate for diabetics. The American Council of the Blind has an affiliate named Diabetics in Action; Pat LaFrance Wolf was one of the founding members. Although some of you may be members of DIA, many would benefit from having a state diabetic group. First, the

CCB affiliate could have meetings at the state convention which could provide valuable information, especially if you cannot attend a national convention. Also an email list could be set up so that diabetics can exchange information and have responses to their queries.

If you are interested in

forming such an affiliate,  
please contact either David  
Jackson,  
[d4jackson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:d4jackson@sbcglobal.net)  
415-239-1873; or Charles  
Nabarrete  
[chasnab45@gmail.com](mailto:chasnab45@gmail.com)

626-338-8106. If there is  
sufficient interest, work  
will begin on forming the  
California Diabetics  
Affiliate for CCB.

\* \* \*

## **Glendale Burbank Chapter Celebrates Its Active and Growing Membership**

**by Susan Glass**

What do you get when you  
combine a CCB chapter  
president with a talent for  
recruiting dynamic  
speakers, a legislative  
chair with wisdom and  
advocacy skill, and a  
warm, open-hearted  
membership chair who  
believes that everyone in  
the chapter has talent and

accountability? What you  
get is the creative, and oh  
so alive Glendale-Burbank  
chapter. It's a diverse  
group, boasting an age  
range of 30 to 82, with  
occupations as varied as a  
former Broadway actor, a  
teacher, a social worker, a  
therapist, an attorney, an  
employee at The Braille

Institute, parents, grandparents: the list continues. Congenial, hospitable, welcoming, and homey, are the words members use to describe their chapter. One member has made others aware of gay pride, another of the challenges inherent in alcoholism recovery. All of course, come together to grapple with the challenges of limited vision and blindness.

The Glendale-Burbank Chapter of CCB has a core membership of around 25, but it's climbed as high as 38, and is currently on the

rise. According to chapter president Ardis Bazyn, this growth is due in large part to the efforts of membership chair Vickie Parker. Ardis, who has been a member of CCB since 1999, says that Vickie is the most active membership chair she's ever encountered.

"There's a lot of expertise in our chapter," says Vickie, who has retinopathy of prematurity, and who joined CCB in 2007. "A lot of people have lived a long time with blindness. They have all this wisdom that they can

share. We are more than a social club. We have a purpose. If we format our meeting a little differently, we can share information that might be more interesting to new members.”

And that's just what the chapter has done. At the end of each meeting, they allot a 5 minute spot to a discussion of technology. They might discuss Amazon echo, or they might talk about household products, such as a new blind-friendly washing machine. The important thing about these

discussions is that members drive them; they bring their discoveries to the chapter to share. “The second thing that we're going to add to our meetings,” continues Vickie, “is a consumer advocacy segment, where for about 15 or 20 minutes, a member shares a problem that she or he is having, perhaps something to do with accessing social security information, or maybe how to make airline reservations using websites that seem less than accessible. Other members share strategies they've tried that have

worked in such situations.”

”We're all in charge of membership," says Vickie, "but we need someone to coordinate it, someone to keep it positive.” To that end, the chapter has formed a membership committee consisting of 9 people. They hold breakfast meetings in Vickie’s home. At these meetings, each person checks in with what he or she has done that month toward growing membership. Currently this group is planning a membership drive that looks something like this:

At the kick-off meeting, they'll review the history of CCB as an organization, and they'll talk about what CCB has meant to each of them personally. If a chapter member brings someone new to the membership kick-off, then that chapter member gets a ticket in a drawing for a free prize. If the new recruit joins, then he or she gets a ticket for the drawing too.

Vickie also hopes to organize leadership seminars that focus on helping members assess their personal strengths and abilities, and then

apply those strengths and abilities in service to the chapter.

One challenge faced by all affiliates is the balancing of members' local needs with the overarching needs of CCB. President Ardis Bazyn says that one way the chapter tries for this balance is by devoting meeting time to discussing items of interest that have been published in the California Connection during any given month. The chapter also sponsors at least two attendees at every CCB convention. Indeed, this in large part is

where the proceeds of the chapter's fund-raisers go. They hold 3 fund-raisers per year, usually in restaurants. "You need restaurants that allow blind people to travel from table to table or have a reserved area like the back area," says Ardis. "We tell people that the fund-raiser hours are between 4 and 10, and invite the majority of people to come between 6 and 8. In this way they can socialize." As a number of chapter members are hard of hearing, Ardis says they're also raising money for a new PA system.

**So what challenges face  
Glendale-Burbank?**

**"Certainly one challenge,"  
says Ardis, "is in  
persuading people to run  
for office. I'm on my 4th  
two-year term as  
president." It isn't that she  
minds the work.**

**Throughout her tenure in  
CCB, she has served on  
the board for both the  
Greater Los Angeles  
Chapter and the Burbank  
chapter. She's also been  
treasurer for the LA  
chapter and corresponding  
secretary as well. But like  
Vickie, she wants all  
chapter members to have  
an active stake in CCB. "I**

**ask my colleagues for  
suggestions on who they'd  
like as program speakers.  
This past March, at Teddie-  
Joy Remhild's prompting,  
Jeff Thom came and  
addressed our chapter on  
legislative matters."**

**It's no surprise that Teddie-  
Joy Remhild suggested  
Jeff Thom as a program  
speaker: she serves with  
Jeff on CCB'S  
Governmental Affairs  
Committee and is  
legislative chair for the  
chapter as well as its vice-  
president. She loves  
helping out with Capitol  
Day, and playfully refers to**

herself as a "political junkie."

"When you have an aging membership," she says, "or when members move or join other chapters, well that all creates holes that new people need to fill."

Both Teddie-Joy and Vickie

say that they joined the Glendale-Burbank chapter at points in their lives when everything was in flux, and both drew strength from the welcoming community they found there. So keep up the excellent community building, Glendale-Burbank. CCB is lucky to have you. \* \* \*

**Summary: Preconvention Board Meeting of  
The California Council of the Blind  
April 10, 2014  
by Judy Wilkinson, Secretary**

[Note: Remember, if you want to read any of the reports in full, the office can supply them upon request.]

President Donna Pomerantz called the preconvention board meeting to order at 12 noon sharp!

**Absent: Directors David Hanlon and Robert Wendt.**

**President Donna Pomerantz welcomed everyone to the 80th birthday celebration for the California Council of the Blind. A motion to adopt the agenda as amended to insert a Membership Report as number 14 following the Ellen Murphy Report was unanimous.**

### **Public Comment**

**Mike Keithley The Board Lunch is a great idea. Thank you.**

**Patricia Nash Bay View**

**Chapter: If the Board is considering cutting the braille version of the BC, that's not a good idea. More than 30% of our membership read braille, and we say we want people to be literate. Lots of people don't have access to computers or the money for them.**

**Steve Fort, Bay View President seconded Patty Nash's remarks. Braille is our heritage, our language, our shorthand. Thank you.**

**Vivian Younger: If Wednesday is Capitol Day, we might have an alternative activity. Also for**

**Thursday morning, a workshop or something.**

**Approval of Minutes**

**Leena moved and Ardis second a motion to table the undistributed minutes until the next Board meeting. Vita asked for clarification: the minutes in question were those minutes from Sunday, April 6. Vote unanimous.**

**Mutt Strut Tangibles: Peter.**

**Donna reported Peter is substituting for Gita Jackson the Mutt Strut co-**

**ordinator as she needs to be with her family at this time.**

**Peter read Gita Jackson's Mutt Strut report.**

**David Jackson moved and Ardis seconded the motion to accept Gita's report.**

**Vote unanimous.**

**Final Mutt Strut Financial Report: January 1 through December 31, 2013**

**Donna asked Peter to read the final report as the one given in October didn't have all the final numbers.**

**Peter read that report.**

	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Income Less Expenses</b>
<b>Los Angeles</b>	<b>\$13,453</b>	<b>\$8,114</b>	<b>\$5,339</b>
<b>Sacramento</b>	<b>\$7,329</b>	<b>\$11,164</b>	<b>-\$3,835</b>
<b>San Diego</b>		<b>\$98</b>	<b>-\$98</b>
<b>San Francisco</b>	<b>\$8,712</b>	<b>\$11,339</b>	<b>-\$2,627</b>
<b>Sweepstakes</b>	<b>\$3,418</b>		<b>-\$2,627</b>
<b>Convention Sales /Auction</b>	<b>\$834</b>		<b>\$834</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$33,746</b>	<b>\$30,715</b>	<b>\$3,031</b>

**John moved and Ardis seconded a motion to accept the Mutt Strut financial report.**

**Discussion: Judy asked whether the final number for income in San Diego should be 0. Peter agreed. Another point regarding how final numbers were presented was clarified.**

**Vote unanimous.**

### **Treasurer's Report**

**Linda moved and Gene seconded a request for a full reading of this report and Vita asked for the title of each report as it's read.**

**Report on CD's Brokerage and Checking Accounts as of February 28, 2014**

**Ardis moved and Leena seconded acceptance of the report.**

### **Discussion**

**Judy asked if the dates 2013 should be 2014 and Peter agreed. Also she noted there's no amount for the life membership; Peter acknowledges he needs to get that figure.**

**Jeff gave a rough estimate of what we have for general operating expenses (not scholarships or trusts) somewhere around \$350-**

**400 thousand. Five-six years ago perhaps \$700 thousand to put things in perspective.**

**Donna reminded us that some accounts are down because we need to draw upon our reserves for current operating expenses but we can't keep doing that. Vote unanimous.**

**Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2013 See Appendix 4.**

**Ardis moved and Vince/Leena seconded a motion to accept this report.**

**Judy asked for clarification of difference between**

**restricted and unrestricted. Peter gave the example of the scholarship funds. Judy followed up by asking why in some places the Perry and Murphy funds have both restricted and unrestricted designations. Donna once again reviewed definitions of restricted/unrestricted. Peter clarified that often the principal is restricted whereas accumulated assets beyond the initial principal may be temporarily restricted.**

**Jeff used the Newel Perry Fund as an example. The principal is restricted but the Constitution gives us guidelines as to how the remainder of the fund can be spent. Vote unanimous.**

**Balance Sheet as of March 15, 2014 See Appendix 5.**

**Linda moved and Ardis seconded accepting the report. Vote unanimous.**

**Treasurer's Report, January 1-December 31, 2013 See Appendix 6.**

**Ardis moved and Leena seconded to accept this report.**

**Discussion**

**Judy: This report always confuses me. Peter agreed that it contains what we budgeted, what came in and the difference. Things that I think should have a minus often don't, and**

**things I think should have a plus often have a minus. So when do you show a minus in the third column and when do you show a plus? Example: San Diego County Special Events: we budgeted \$10,500; we brought in \$10,733; now I would have seen that as a plus \$233, but it's listed here as a minus \$233. Peter acknowledged that was a typo on his part. Judy pointed out there were lots of similar reversals, but that some were in fact correct. Judy suggested we ask Peter to reissue this entire report. Vita so moved.**

**Further discussion followed. And Donna announced that in fact we**

are going to have open phone conference Board meetings in the future. In light of the confusion Peter moved and John seconded to table the report until a future board meeting.

There were three abstentions.

Jeff asked just for the net income and expenses for the year. Donna asked for a ruling from Roger given the motion to table. Roger felt a brief report would be fine.

Total budgeted income for the year ending December 31, 2013 \$194,000; we had income of \$178,659, making a difference of \$15,341.

Our budgeted expenses were \$303,970; our actual expenses were \$268,159; the difference is \$35,811. If you take the difference between income received and our expenses, we have a difference in the budgeted amount of \$109,970. The expenses were greater than our revenue in the amount of \$89,500, and the difference between those two numbers is \$20,470.

Our other income for the period was \$82,661 and other expenses were \$245; our net other income was \$82,416. The difference in the amount is \$7,084.

Donna reiterated that

**future board conference call meetings will be open and you can attend in your favorite slippers and coffee!**

**Income Statement January 1 through March 31, 2014  
See Appendix 7.**

**Ardis moved and Vince seconded to accept this report.**

**Vita who didn't get the mic in time asked for clarification about the designation "vehicle donation processing" and was told that was not the amount for processing but the actual name. Donna reiterated that we can ask any and all questions when the financials are reissued**

**at a future meeting.**

**2014 Proposed Budget,  
Vincent Calderon, Chair,  
Finance And Budget  
Committee**

**Vince began by stating that this year's numbers are based on last year's which will be clarified in the revised Treasurer's report which we will receive.**

**He thanked his committee including Kevin Berkery who missed the meeting because of his recent accident. Other members include Rex Ransome, Jeff Thom, Charles Doris and Charles Nabarrete, and Donna Pomerantz.**

**Judy asked for an**

explanation of the "alphabet soup" initials which Peter duly gave. Gene suggested for a key to symbols in the future.

While we were taking questions, Vita asked about a web budgeted \$4,000.

Donna explained that we are researching some projects and financing. The Budget and Finance Committee will need to reconvene this summer to deal with questions outstanding.

Total income proposed for this year is \$160,000.

Total expenses: \$237,083.  
The difference is \$77,430.

Our proposed deficit this year is less than last year. Our deficits are coming down. The committee will meet later this summer to discuss other matters. We are also proposing beginning the budget process before the end of the year rather than waiting until March.

Ardis moved and John seconded a motion to accept the report.

### Discussion

Jeff pointed out that while the expense for funds from Active Blind were in the report, income wasn't. So Vince amended the deficit to \$67,430.

Judy asked about random numbers without attribution such as \$6,293. Peter said these shouldn't be in the report. Judy asked that this report also be reissued.

Donna suggested we discuss this item as well when we discuss the other reissued financials. We voted because the bottom line was clear to us. Vote unanimous.

Judy moved and David J seconded a motion to have a reissued clean copy and to discuss this at the same call when we discuss the reissued budget document. Vote unanimous.

Donna reminded folks to

bring up their concerns during the public comment period.

**Publications Committee Report, Chair Linda Porelle**

Ardis moved and David J seconded a motion to accept Linda's report. Vote unanimous.

**Release dates for the Blind Californian**

Ardis moved and Judy seconded a motion to release formats of the Blind Californian as they become available.

Jeff asked for clarification which Linda provided.

**Because National Braille Press ships only on certain**

days, we are linked to their schedule even though other formats are ready much earlier. Email can be released as soon as the BC is officially proofread. Other formats take different processing times. And even if all formats are mailed on the same day, the post office being what it is, there is no guarantee as to when folks receive the magazine.

Jeff proposed a friendly amendment to do our best to get them released on the same day. There was no second and the makers of the motion viewed the suggestion as "unfriendly".

**Vote unanimous.**

**Technical Operations  
Group Report, Chair Vita  
Zavoli**

**Donna reminded everyone that any report is available upon request from the office.**

**Ardis moved and David J seconded the motion to accept the report. See Appendix 10.**

**Discussion**

**Ardis asked if the TOG had considered Linked-in. Vita said this is part of social networking. She stated it would be possible but someone would need to be responsible for monitoring.**

**Roger remarked that on**

**ccb-l when you reply it still goes to the list. Vita stated it will be changed so the reply goes back to the sender.**

**Roger asked about donations: where folks could just text a phone number to make an automatic donation. Peter thought it is expensive. Vita will look into it. Vote unanimous.**

**Report on Newel Perry Trust Fund, Chair Mitch Pomerantz**

**Mitch reported that in addition to his report, he wanted us to know the three current trustees had filled out the necessary paperwork required by**

**Morgan Stanley.**

**He intends to engage the Secretary of State's office to find the original trust documents establishing the trust. We don't have them. For instance, Mitch isn't aware of the \$70,000 versus other money in the fund. As far as he knows the fund has \$235,000 (an increase from the February Morgan Stanley amount). Jeff moved and Ardis seconded the motion to accept the report. Vote unanimous. See Appendix 11.**

**Ellen Murphy Trust Fund Report, Chair Cathie Skivers**

**John moved and Peter**

**seconded the motion to accept the report. See Appendix 12.**

### **Strategic Plan Update**

**Donna Pomerantz**

**Donna reported that the Board still needs to attach dates to the items of the Strategic Plan which it hopes to do by the end of June. Both retiring and incoming Board members plus others to be identified will participate in executing the plan. Once the dates are attached, we will make the plan public and begin its implementation.**

### **Membership Committee Update: Chair Ardis Bazyn**

**Ardis reported that she'd**

**been asked to report to the Board about various chapters. Antelope Valley was contacted and reiterated they in fact were no longer interested in meeting. They will be taken off the chapter list. She has been contacted by Alameda Chapter which wishes to dissolve. When that process is completed they will also be removed from the list. Someone from the El Dorado chapter expressed interested in beginning again but no others have come forward.**

**Roger asked about San Mateo and Ardis said they have not requested to dissolve. We have not received responses so we need to keep trying to**

**contact them.**

**Vita asked about total CCB membership.**

**Donna said approximately a thousand members.**

**Conference And  
Convention Report Update:  
Chair Gene Lozano**

**(Added when Gene noticed that in this version of the agenda, his report was omitted; none caught this omission when the agenda was approved.)**

**Two parts: Margie Donovan has been appointed by GDUC as their representative on the committee. She has worked with this hotel.**

**Gene then described dog relief areas. He and Peter made other convention-specific announcements.**

**Part 2: The committee is not yet ready with a recommendation for a hotel for 2015 or 2016. We'll probably have our best results in the first quarter. We've sent out 34 RFP's; Our unofficial boundary between north and south is Bakersfield-Fresno. We have six bids so far. We have a lot of factors to consider: room costs; minimum number of nights; food/beverage minimum. We have a lot of variables to consider. We are locked into a Thursday-Sunday schedule because of our RFP's. Until now**

we've kept to \$100 per night with a \$15,000 food/beverage minimum. It is becoming increasingly difficult to remain within those guidelines. Gene gave a list of various room rates and food/beverage minimums.

Gene moved and Judy seconded a motion to raise the room rate to a maximum \$120 all-inclusive and a food/beverage maximum of \$15,000.

### **Discussion**

Linda asked to rethink the Thursday-Sunday scenario. Gene reminded us the board said we would keep this schedule for at

least three years for contract negotiation purposes. We might consider changes in 2017. Hotels aren't interested in longer timeframes. We get better rates for shorter time periods.

**Vita: Clarification.** We can't revisit the issue within the 3 years? Donna says of course we can but we're tied to contracts.

Vita asked if staying in the same place multiple years helps in terms of cost.

Gene said we have done that. But it's getting more difficult because even within the same chain, hotels are increasingly independent. Donna reminded us that if we do

future multiples we would thereby be keeping to Thursday-Sunday.

Roger asked about conference centers as opposed to hotels. Gene reminded us of logistic issues of getting around such areas. Gene reiterated that the committee is always looking for possible leads and ideas.

John asked if we might consider the Washington State model of bundling a package of rooms and meals. Gene said we might look at something like that (changes to exhibitor issues, etc.) but it's not related to this motion. Donna reminded us that

Washington subsidizes its convention package.

Linda encouraged us looking at taking better advantage of Wednesday evening since that is included in hotel negotiations and better use of Thursday morning.

Vote unanimous.

Gene reminded folks to fill out the post-convention survey. We're interested in feedback on the separate tracks format.

**New Business**

Jeff congratulated Donna on herding a bunch of hard personalities on her Board!

Vita raised the issue that the current agenda doesn't give times items will take. It would be helpful to have estimates. Donna said, "Guess what! The new president gets to deal with this!" The issue has come up and will again and has its pros and cons.

### **Public Comment**

**Mitch Pomerantz ACB** learned long ago that the days of cheap hotels in California are gone! John's idea of bundling rooms/food could help with minimums. Also something like the Kellogg Center Cal-Poly Pomona but transportation could be a problem of adjustment for our folks.

The second item has to do with the CEA line item: I'm not sure where Peter's figure came from at least the expense side. I haven't seen figures and we want to avoid a budget amendment.

**Steven Mendelsohn**

Make sure you have proper Intellectual Property protection for the name "Mutt Strut".

Second and far more important, from the standpoint of overall stewardship and management, I fear our financial affairs are in considerable disarray. I counted 18 accounts:

securities, cash, checking and so on. But when one of our reports says they "feel the manager is doing a very good job." I don't want feelings! I want to know the rate of return! I want to know what benchmark or index they're using! I need to know if we have subrogation. All the management of our accounts: the level of inconsistent information; it's literally in light of our current finances, terrifying.

**Charles Nabarrete:** When will TOG update the officer and affiliate information. Is there any thought to publishing the strategic plan and asking for input from the general

membership?

**Steve Fort:** I've been asked to pass on from Catherine Skivers: when you push option 5 for governmental affairs, it should be updated or have some kind of message about updates. Now the 2012 report is there. I also recommend thinking about other Marriott Hotels which might be cheaper.

**Donna** reminded the audience that the minutes reflect public comment. We don't comment now but are taking note.

**Al Gil:** CCB Board isn't cold: it's the room!

I've been a member of CCB

for 63 years. I first joined after high school in 1951. I think it's an organization all of us should be very proud of. The main thing I want to say is that despite the fact there has been a money problem, we can't just ignore that, but the committees of CCB work hard many times in the minus territory, but CCB has always come through. People have donated to CCB for what I call a rainy day fund, and we've been using that opportunity to continue our work. We must continue to work and be proud of our organization. And continue not to be discouraged. Let's stick together and work hard. CCB has done a lot of things over the years

and the odds were greater than those we face now. People donate not so we can have money in a bank account but so we can do our work.

**Connie Gil:** I was going to speak to Judy about an article, but I'll just say what I was going to say right now. I've been a member for about 50 years, and in the BC there's always this little invite to pay the \$10 a year to help out. So I think it's time that I pay up. So I have a check for \$500.

**Frank Welte:** I want to commend the efforts of the convention committee, the board and others involved in working hard in the transition to a single

conference/convention. I staunchly supported that and I'm pleased at how it's going forward.

I have a suggestion, not urgent, but consider as we move forward. Because of our contracts our even-years are in the north. I suggest we might reverse this for two reasons. A one-time two-years in a row in the South would take advantage of our larger population there. Odd numbered years would be better in Sacramento as they coincide with year one of the legislative cycle where we could have greater influence early in the legislative process.

**Mike Keithley:** I think there is confusion over the financial reports. The Board might consider classes to educate those with no experience in finances. If we're going to have these reports, let's get them professional.

**Pam Polagi** President  
San Gabriel Valley Chapter  
and Credentials Chair

Thanks to the board for some credential issues we had. (Pam got the answer that one person cannot represent two chapters at Nominating Committee.)

**Pam Metz**

Two things: I heard Donna

mention open board meetings from now on?  
Thanks. I really appreciate that. We really, really want to know what you guys are talking about and are working on throughout the year.

Second, because we only have one convention a year, is there any way we could have a membership call of the entire membership some time in the year?

The presidents dinner. My problem with the presidents dinner is that it has taken away from the presidents. Candidates forums are nice but it's also taking away from what

the presidents can do as far as getting information from each other on how we work and deal with our affiliates. I'd like to see some time so we can talk to each other as presidents.

Donna: Remember to fill out those convention surveys.

It's on the Connection.

Alice McGrath from the Silicon Valley Chapter: A suggestion (which I will add to my survey) one way to drum up attendance is to put out information sooner rather than later about content of our workshops. I didn't find out

what the two tracks were until late.

**Patty Nash:** I'm really proud of the members that work so hard and I'm really glad to be here and see how dedicated you all are. Thank you.

**Donna:** I wish to take this opportunity for a little personal privilege. I'll be sharing more in my President's Report, but I'm heartened by these public comments. And we will track them. Having sat in the seat of president as long as I'm supposed to but not as long as I would have liked: we need each and every one of you to help us make all of these

comments and ideas a reality. Some people think I'm not as knowledgeable, I don't have much to contribute—they know what they're doing. They don't need me. Well guess what: we all need you. Please take note and remember what you shared with us. Anything that comes to you, share with us. Share what you see as a way to make this happen. I am proud of our CCB: CCB is us and we are CCB. There have been some challenges and I'm pleased we're sharing them. We can definitely work together to move CCB forward to be a stronger, viable CCB, but it takes each and every one of us.

I want to take this time to thank each and every board member; we have had our agreements and disagreements. I hope I have worked to bring each and every one of you into everything that goes on within the organization. Each of us needs to know everything that's going on. I hope you have benefited from that. [Here we all break out laughing because Donna inadvertently confused "predecessor" with "successor" and of course: both are the same in this case.]

**"My predecessor/  
successor: same**

**difference!"**

**On that note I want to thank all of you. I want to thank my husband. I really do! Today was a good example; if you'd been on this board you would have agreed with me when you did and disagree when you didn't. You've been a support and a curmudgeon as Roger says.**

**We ended with another question with info from 1934.**

**Ardis moved and Peter seconded the motion to adjourn.**

**Vote unanimous.**

**\* \* \***

**California Council of the Blind  
2014 Officers and Board**

**[Editor's note: We are indebted to Bernice Kandarian who updates and corrects the list of CCB officers and board members, including the number of the term each is presently serving, the year elected to that term and the year next up for election. Terms begin on July 1 following election. The presence of an asterisk means that the individual served a partial term before the first full term.]**

**President, Jeff Thom, Sacramento (14-16 1st term)  
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**Treasurer, Peter Pardini, Mill Valley (14-16 3rd term)  
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**Immediate Past President, Donna Pomerantz, Pasadena  
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**Roger Petersen**

**Bonnie Rennie**

**Donna Sanchez**

**Dr. Catherine Schmitt Whitaker**

**If you or a friend would like to remember the California Council of the Blind in your Will, you can do so by employing the following language:**

**"I give, devise, and bequeath unto the California Council of the Blind, a nonprofit charitable organization in California, the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ (or \_\_\_\_\_) to be used for its worthy purposes on behalf of blind persons."**

**If your wishes are more complex, you may have your attorney communicate with the Executive Office for other suggested forms. Thank you.**