

THE BLIND CALIFORNIAN



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Recommended length is under three pages or 1800 words.

The deadline to submit material for the Fall 2016 issue of THE BLIND CALIFORNIAN is noon on August 15, 2016.

Please send all address changes to the Executive Office.

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From the Editor's Desk

by Judy Wilkinson

As recently as January, I had assumed I'd begin my column for this summer issue by intoning that I would be beginning my seventh year as BC editor. But the past few months have brought new beginnings as well as sad, inevitable endings. The loss of two of our CCB giants within two weeks of each other has put us all in a somber mood. In this issue Frank Welte, president of her home chapter, pays tribute to Winifred Downing who died on April 2. Our fall issue will feature a tribute to Al Gil who died on April

17. Recently Al told us he had been a CCB member since 1951. Our respectful condolences go to Win's and Al's families.

As to the new beginnings, in early February, I posted my intentions to run for CCB president. My initial reluctance has been replaced with optimism and enthusiasm, yes even excitement. I was gratified to be elected by acclamation at our recent CCB convention. I'll be sharing more about my plans when I write my first column as your president. Just in the last issue, I

stated that I would be continuing as editor for the foreseeable future. Well so much for foreseeing the future! It quickly became obvious that not only wouldn't I have the time to do justice to both positions, but in fact it wouldn't be appropriate for me to continue as editor. When I first became active again in CCB in 2009, I joined the Publications Committee, and when Mike Keithley asked to relinquish the BC editorship, I was delighted to step in. Of all the "hats" I've worn over the past six years, the editorship has remained dearest to my heart. My secret goal was

to break Win Downing's record of editing for 10 years! So much for records!

For my final column, I planned to review my favorite articles from the past six years, but (you may be glad to read) time (and space) do not permit. Suffice to say I'm proud that in some years, we welcomed several previously unpublished contributors. The addition of the associate editorship position so ably filled by Susan Glass, particularly with her incredible interviews, has enriched our publication. My own columns have presented a

wide variety of topics: some anguished, some thoughtful, some (I like to think) even funny. It was a pleasure to put together material in the historic year of CCB's 80th birthday and for this, the BC's 60th year. I have had the privilege of working with two fine presidents.

As CCB moves forward, I intend to seek funds to once again publish a longer version of our magazine. To keep the publication vital, vibrant and current, we seek your suggestions and especially your contributions. (Money would be great, but here I meant articles.)

I would like to conclude by thanking and acknowledging the amazing work of the Publications Committee so charmingly and ably presided over by Linda Porelle. This committee meets almost monthly; they are totally dedicated and work extremely hard. And we even have fun at our meetings. Their names appear at the end of each issue.

**Now: Drum Roll Please!
The name you will see in this space beginning with the fall issue is Mike Keithley, who has graciously agreed to serve**

once again as our editor. How lucky we are to have such a capable, conscientious helmsman. But remember, though I'm vacating this space, I won't

be far away; beginning with the fall issue, you'll find me just one column down in the table of contents.

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President's Message: The Three L's

by Jeff Thom

Before I launch into the theme of my final president's message, I want to take a moment to do two things. First, although they aren't going away, we owe a tremendous debt to those of our leaders leaving the board of directors. This is especially the case with Immediate Past President Donna Pomerantz and First Vice President, Eugene

Lozano, Jr. Their knowledge, selfless devotion to the organization, and high degree of integrity provide a model for future leaders. Secondly, July will begin a new era in CCB leadership, and we can be proud to have selected Judy Wilkinson as our president, Frank Welte as our first vice president and Gabe Griffith as our second vice

president. With their leadership and hard work from all of us, CCB's future can indeed be a bright one.

I have great admiration for those I consider as having philosophical minds or as being visionaries, as I am definitely not in that camp. Nonetheless, I thought that, for my last message in these pages, I'd share a bit of my personal creed that, if I could live up to, would certainly benefit me and those with whom I come into contact. As this article title indicates, I want to talk about the three L's that are important to me.

The first L is "Learn," not

only about the world around us, but about ourselves. For me anyway, learning isn't easy. It is hard not to reject lessons that take you out of your comfort zone or that violate long-held beliefs. It is also tough to take a hard look at oneself and try to apply life's lessons.

Learning is about looking back, reflecting and then moving forward. Applying a platitude from the world of football, when you give up a touchdown pass, you need to shrug it off and figure out how to do better next time: not burden yourself with your past failure. As an example, the realization that I could

have done a better job of transitioning from president to immediate past president of CCB the first time around will give me the opportunity to do a far better job this time. When we lose an advocacy battle or a fundraiser doesn't achieve everything we had hoped for, we need to use these incidents as building blocks to learn for the future.

The second L is simply "Live". How many times have we heard the aphorism "live life to the fullest," or something similar? I don't mean the old "eat, drink and be merry" view, although

enjoyment is part of living. To me "live" means spending your time in ways that are important to you. Being with family and friends, one's vocation, working for the betterment of the world as we do in CCB, or any other way in which you feel that spending your time is valuable. How often are we told that life is too short to waste, and the older I get, the more I value the truth of that statement.

The final L, as you might guess, is "Love". I don't intend to wax poetic about something that I know each of you can talk about just as well or maybe

better than I. I will say however, that far too often, I let emotions like ego, pride, anger and others carry the day when love would be a far better star to steer by. Every family, including the CCB family, goes through times of turmoil, and love for one another and for our mission will see us through the bad times and make the good times even better.

I can't thank you enough

for giving me not one chance, but two, to be the leader of our organization. I've learned a lot, including some hard lessons, lived through some tough times but far more that have been extremely rewarding, and am ending my tenure with a fierce love for the California Council of the Blind and our wonderful CCB family.

*** * ***

Governmental Affairs Report

by Mitch Pomerantz

It is just over a week since we returned from the 2016 California Council of the

Blind Conference and Convention, although you will not see this until early

summer. Nonetheless, the legislative beat goes on so this will serve as my update on bills sponsored or followed by CCB as of this writing.

Before proceeding however, I need to take a slight detour. During my final two years as President of the American Council of the Blind, I began thinking seriously about what I would do once my presidential duties were concluded. Having worked in the ADA field for the City of Los Angeles, I decided to move into ADA consulting and training. I also determined to see if there might be a

need for someone with direct expertise regarding blindness as an "expert witness" in legal matters. Beginning in 2014, things began breaking in a positive direction.

Donna, who is an integral part of this endeavor, and I have several consulting and expert witness contracts which are increasingly taking up our time. As a result, I am stepping away from chairing and serving on the Governmental Affairs Committee as well as from some other organizational responsibilities. In order to properly oversee and coordinate CCB's

advocacy efforts, the Governmental Affairs chair needs to almost constantly monitor activities in Sacramento, and that isn't possible for me at this time.

As you have doubtless figured out by now, CCB did not conduct Capitol Day in Sacramento this year as we'd hoped. Late in 2015, President Thom and I thought we had a commitment from a member of the committee to oversee logistics. This turned out not to be the member's understanding of things, and neither Jeff nor I were in a position to take over this activity. So Capitol Day did not

happen. It is my sincere hope that the next Governmental Affairs Committee chair will be able to schedule and hold Capitol Day in 2017.

As mentioned in this column previously, our efforts center on SB1331 (Pavley) and AB1824 (Chang), a pair of guide dog-related bills supported by Guide Dog Users of California. SB1331 addresses matters under the purview of the State Board of Guide Dogs for the Blind; (please refer to the Spring "Blind Californian" for specifics on this bill as well as AB1824.) Shortly after the CCB conference and

convention, 1331 went before the Senate Business and Professions Committee where, not surprisingly, the only opposition came from the Guide Dog Board itself.

[Editor's Note: On May 12, Jeff Thom sent the following email.] "SB1331, our Guide Dog Board bill, is on its way to the Senate floor. It was decided that the cost of the bill was insignificant, so that a hearing in Senate Appropriations was unnecessary. It is likely that the bill will have no major problem passing the Senate, but we can anticipate significant

opposition from the board in the Assembly and with the Governor's office.

This is likely to be a tough fight."

AB1824 (Chang) would do a number of things to strengthen criminal provisions relating to dog attacks on service dogs. In March, the bill came before the Assembly Public Safety Committee where it was placed on the "consent" calendar, meaning that there was no opposition.

[Editor's Note: The bill has passed in the Assembly and is awaiting Senate action.]

Other bills being followed by CCB include:

AB1584 (Brown and Thurmond) - Support - would establish the Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA) as a permanent component of the SSI/SSP Program, and would extend those increases over a four-year period, amounting to an overall increase of \$84. In March, the bill was referred to the Assembly Human Services Committee, but has yet to be scheduled for hearing.

AB1797 (Lackey) - Support with Amendment - would authorize an individual to apply for IHSS in person or

through electronic means, and would require the county, if an application is filed electronically, to provide the applicant a confirmation number. CCB is asking that the bill be amended with language to ensure that, in accordance with federal and state statutes, counties make any electronic means accessible to persons with disabilities and specifically to those with vision impairments. This bill was also referred to Assembly Human Services, but has yet to be scheduled for hearing.

AB2346 (Baker) - Support with Amendment - would

require - when an applicant for, or recipient of, public social services is involved in a fair hearing - a public or private agency to provide a copy of the agency's position statement to the applicant or recipient through electronic means and require the State Department of Health Care Services to make its position statement likewise available. As with AB1797, CCB is calling for an amendment to ensure accessibility for persons who are blind or have low vision. AB2346 was passed unanimously by Assembly Human Services and referred to the

Appropriations Committee for further action.

CCB opposed two bills: SB681 (Hill), which would have reduced the fine for drivers making illegal right turns on red lights; and AB61 (Allen), which would have legalized operation of private "tech shuttles" at certain San Francisco bus stops. Both SB681 and AB61 died in their respective committees; however the latter proposal was reintroduced by the author as AB1641 which (as of this date), was to have been heard in Assembly Transportation. It has not been heard and we believe that a

compromise has been worked out which will take these shuttles away from public bus stops.

CCB is also supporting Assembly Joint Resolution 35 (Brown) which would seek a change in federal policy in order to make SSI recipients eligible for food stamps, in lieu of giving them an additional few dollars per month. No action has been taken on this measure as of this writing.

At our conference and convention last fall, I reported on SB450 (Roth), a proposal to permit some counties to conduct

elections primarily via vote by mail and which CCB was supporting. I indicated then that the bill would be taken up in 2016. CCB has been part of a group of disability advocates involved in drafting language calling for those counties conducting vote by mail elections to offer ballots that blind and low vision voters could privately and independently read and mark before a county could conduct such an election. To date, very little has happened to move this bill along so SB450 appears to be in legislative limbo.

However CCB has recently

learned about a related piece of legislation: AB2252 (Ting) - Remote Accessible Vote by Mail (VBM) Systems - which CCB is supporting. This legislation would remove some of the barriers in California State law to making accessible absentee voting available by allowing a voter with a disability to electronically receive and mark his/her vote by mail ballot using a remote accessible VBM system which is defined as a mechanical, electromechanical, or electronic system and its

software that is used for the sole purpose of marking an electronic VBM ballot for a voter with a disability ... AB2252 was to have been heard on April 18 in the Assembly Committee on Elections and Redistricting, but we have no additional information at this writing.

That will more than do it for this Governmental Affairs Report. Donna and I hope to see many of you at the upcoming ACB conference and convention in Minneapolis. Take care.

*** * ***

2016 Resolutions Summaries

by Gabe Griffith, Chair Resolutions Committee

Resolution 2016 1 dealt with the rising cost and decreasing attendance of CCB conference and conventions. It called on the president of the organization to establish an ad hoc task force to investigate alternative ways of participating in conventions and report back no later than the 2017 convention.

Resolution 2016 2 dealt with funding for visually impaired teachers of visually impaired students to get driver services. It was withdrawn and will be referred to the ACB national convention

since it involves federal funding.

Resolution 2016 3 dealt with business enterprise consultants to the business enterprise program. It talked about the BECs' lack of familiarity with the BEP rules and regulations and calls on the Department of Rehabilitation to require its BECs' to spend time receiving occupational skills training with an experienced vendor in order to better advise the vendors they work with.

Resolution 2016 4 regarded

a PBS affiliate in southern California. The affiliate is not passing the audio description feed through to its viewers. The resolution calls on the PBS affiliate to pass through the audio description and also refers the issue to ACB asking it to urge PBS to require its affiliated stations to pass through the audio description feed to their viewers.

Resolution 2016 5 was the

hotel appreciation resolution. It affirmed how helpful the staff of the hotel was during the convention and expressed the organization's gratitude.

Resolution 2016 6 was the volunteer appreciation resolution. It stated how helpful the volunteers who helped during the convention were and expressed the organization's appreciation.

* * *

CCB Teleconference Board Meeting Minutes

Summary, January 25, 2016

by Ardis Bazyn, CCB Secretary

Jeff Thom brought the teleconference board meeting to order and Ardis

Bazyn called the roll:
President Jeff Thom, 1st
Vice-President Eugene

Lozano Jr., 2nd Vice-President Judy Wilkinson, Secretary Ardis Bazyn, Treasurer Peter Pardini, Immediate Past President Donna Pomerantz.

Directors: Leena Bandy, Vincent Calderon, Joe Lopez, Pam Metz, Charles Nabarrete, Paul Patche Jr., Frank Welte, and Robert Wendt. Steve Fort was absent.

Judy made a motion to accept the October 4th minutes as sent which was seconded and passed. Judy made a motion to accept the October 26 minutes. Leena seconded the motion and it passed. Judy made a motion

to accept the December 29 minutes. Donna seconded the motion and it passed.

Jeff spoke about our involvement in the Coalition on Long Term Care Services and Supports.

The Mutt Strut options were discussed. Judy made a motion to have no Mutt Strut in Sacramento in 2016. Gene seconded the motion and it passed. Donna made a motion to delay the acceptance of the L.A. Mutt Strut until March. Peter seconded the motion and it passed.

Gene gave an update on the upcoming CCB convention.

Peter made a motion to provide subsidies for meals at the convention. Ardis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Ardis made a motion stating the revocation of the AMC chapter should remain in place based on the subsequent actions taken by the AMC affiliate. Frank seconded the motion. In the course of discussion and before a vote could be taken, Charles brought another motion forward. Charles moved to refer this issue to a committee of the board to try to resolve the problem by March. Joe seconded the motion. Judy made an amendment to Charles'

motion which was accepted: that all records from AMC be released to this committee. The motion passed with Vince voting no and Gene abstaining.

Judy made a motion to sign a contract with San Diego Events. Frank seconded the motion and it passed. Judy said the Publications Committee will come with a recommendation on the BC cassette version at the next board meeting. More investigation is needed before any recommendation can be made on the Vehicle donation website. Peter mentioned needing to transfer from savings to cover expenses. Public

comments on items not on the agenda were taken. Ardis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Peter seconded the

motion and it passed at 9:54 PM.

* * *

Profile: The Silicon Valley Council of the Blind by Susan Glass

[Editor's Note: In the CCB family, the SVCB is by far the largest chapter (other than CCCLV, a statewide affiliate). We can all learn so much from this supremely successful chapter.]

Writing this profile of the Silicon Valley CCB chapter is the most daunting task that I've attempted as Associate Editor of the BC. I'm writing about my home chapter, which is like

describing members of my family: I feel shy and self conscious. I need to do it right or someone may ask for my head. The chapter has a rich history dating back to 1987, and several of its founding members are still here, mentoring and guiding us. I've enjoyed interviewing them, and I hope that in writing this piece, I honor the chapter's history, its present health, and its future.

Back in 1986, there was another blindness organization in the Santa Clara Valley. (That was the valley's original name before the Silicon nomenclature took over.) Called the Santa Clara County Club of the Adult Blind, this organization functioned primarily as a social and recreational outlet for blind adults. The Silicon Valley Council of the Blind was founded by Bernice Kandarian, Roger Petersen, and Chris Gray in the fall of 1987. Other founding members included Judy Barnes, who was responsible for launching the chapter's

newsletter, Richard Kendle and Chris Walter (both employees at Telesensory) Greg Fowler, and Julie Lovins, who produced the newsletter for many years. The chapter held its first meetings in Roger and Bernice's apartment, then moved on to a number of other locations including Coffee, Tea and Spice (which was a Mountain View coffee shop owned by a woman from India), a Chinese restaurant, The Mountain View Library, the Mercury Savings and loan at San Antonio shopping center, The Santa Clara Valley Blind Center, and finally its current location: the dining room of the

Monte Vista Terrace Apartments in Mountain View. Perhaps one advantage of this early roaming was the chapter's visibility in the surrounding community.

Some of SVCB's early members have migrated to other chapters: Margie Donovan now contributes her excellent advocacy skills to the Capitol Chapter, and Frank Welte enriches the San Francisco Chapter with his dynamic and diplomatic leadership strategies. Happily, the migration is multi directional, and Silicon Valley is fortunate in counting Rob Turner in its

ranks. We stole Rob from Southern California, and have benefited from his wisdom and quiet sense of humor ever since. An overriding fact that I have come to appreciate from writing these profile articles is how many talented people we have in our CCB family.

Currently, the Silicon Valley chapter has 84 members, and of those 84, an average of 30 regularly attend the monthly general membership meetings. The chapter meets from 10 AM to 1 PM on the third Saturday of every month except in August when we hold our annual picnic, and

in December when we have our annual holiday party. We typically have a program speaker for one hour, followed by our hour-long business meeting, followed by lunch, which we order from a nearby Eriks Deli. Although we've had a Program Chair for as long as I can remember, members often recruit our best speakers, or they give presentations themselves. Dawn Wilcox, who has been in our chapter since 1991, gave a fabulous talk about her 3 year sailing voyage around the world with her husband and children. Member Tamara Kearney, told us about the years that she spent in

Australia working as a braille transcriber and children's librarian. She also shared the differences between guide dog training in Australia, and guide dog training here in the US. Diane Harms, who was the first blind court reporter in California, told us about her career and the education that she undertook to prepare for it. We've had programs featuring local audio describers and theater directors, speakers from our local paratransit agency, and programs from our League of Women Voters that outline upcoming ballot measures.

I asked several of my colleagues in the chapter to comment on what they see as its strengths.

"We're an inclusive, welcoming group of people," says Bev Clifford, who joined the Silicon Valley chapter in July of 2002. "I was trying to get a low interest loan so that I could purchase my first Braille Note, and Roger Petersen told me who to call to get such a loan, and he also invited me to a monthly meeting. I soon discovered that people in the group would help you with all kinds of things like learning about paratransit outreach and Accessible

Prescriptions. I told my husband Victor, 'These people know about all of these things that we've never heard of.' I joined the chapter and so did he."

Both Dawn Wilcox and Greg Fowler cite SVCB's well-designed Constitution as a strength.

"Roger, Bernice and Chris gave us a good foundation when they wrote that constitution," says Dawn. "And from the very start, they modeled recruitment strategies and mentoring. The first time I attended a meeting in 1991, I felt like I was an impostor. I was just losing my sight, and in

denial. I didn't feel blind yet. But Roger saved me: without Roger, I'd still be stuck in Egypt somewhere in the Nile."

The chapter also benefits from a number of good writers: Mike Keithley, Roger Petersen, Bev Clifford, Michelle McGrew, which means that the monthly newsletter gets a variety of columns and voices, and its editor doesn't have to work so hard.

Fund-raising efforts that have either educational or community service value are integral to SVCB. One such fundraiser is the

Barbara Rhodes Adaptive Technology Grant, which was established in 2010 in honor of Barbara Rhodes, a long-time member who for years represented the chapter on committees concerned with transportation, technology, and accessible medications. The program annually awards a grant of up to \$1,000 to a blind or visually-impaired person living in Santa Clara, San Mateo, Santa Cruz or San Benito Counties who can best demonstrate the need for adaptive technology that will improve his/her quality of life or advance his/her educational and/or employment opportunities.

Our most recent fundraiser for the grant was an afternoon of Old Time Radio hosted by chapter member John Glass who has a collection of more than 5,000 radio series including such favorites as Gun Smoke, Drag Net, Suspense, Our Miss Brooks, and The Shadow. John polled chapter friends to see what their favorites were, and on a Saturday afternoon in April, we gathered in our local Blind Center's auditorium for three hours of radio. We charged a modest admission fee, and we also collected money for refreshments baked by chapter members. We

raised over \$400, so we're planning another such afternoon of radio, and this time we'll invite the general public.

In 2007, the chapter published the SVCB 20th anniversary cookbook called Silicon Valley: Twenty Years of Favorite Recipes. All included recipes had been enjoyed by chapter members at annual picnics and holiday parties, and each contributor included a story of the recipe's origin. These stories revealed details about the contributor's life and blindness. We formatted the book in braille, large

print, cassette and CD in order to reach the widest audience.

Like many other CCB chapters, SVCB has a history of championing braille literacy. Members volunteer as scorers and proctors for the Northern California Regional Braille Challenge. To honor Louis Braille, we donated print copies of A Touch of Genius to several local libraries. We've designed and sold braille print T-shirts extolling the virtues of braille and audio literacy: one T-shirt incorporated headphones as part of its design in honor of those who listen

to books.

I asked my colleagues to comment on the challenges our chapter faces. Roger Petersen would like us to increase our advocacy activities where state and federal legislation is concerned. He'd like our membership to be more familiar with the ADA and its updates. And he'd like us to be even more active than we are in ACB.

"We need more people to participate," says Bev Clifford. "It's good that 30 people attend meetings, but where are the other 50? Also, the same group of people tend to do most of

the work."

"We need more worker bees," says Dawn Wilcox, who along with Naomi Grubb, has been handling hospitality and coordination of volunteers at our meetings for more than a decade. "Moving tables, clearing surface space for refreshments, helping totally blind people find seats, and serving food. We need more physical help, and it would be great if we had more high partials, people with some sight to help us."

As chapter president, I echo Dawn's sentiments. I'd like to recruit more

visually-impaired members, and provide programs that meet their needs. Several in our chapter have disabilities in addition to blindness. Some of us are hearing-impaired, and others face cognitive, mobility, and mental health challenges. We've focused some of our monthly programs on addressing these additional disabilities as they intersect with blindness, but we can do more. When possible, we should try to support events sponsored by other chapters in our region: Bayview Chapter's annual fundraiser comes to mind, as well as the San

Francisco Chapter's Education Grant, and the Mutt Strut. We can and should help publicize one another's activities. As prohibitive costs make attending state conventions more

daunting, we may need regional mini conventions. I believe that some discussions of this possibility have already begun.

*** * ***

In Memoriam: Winifred Downing

by Frank Welte, President, San Francisco

Chapter CCB

Winifred Downing passed away peacefully on the morning of April 2, 2016. She was a leader in the blind community for many years, and she has been a mentor and an inspiration to many of us. As a teacher she transmitted her knowledge of and love for

Braille to her students. She was a tireless advocate for Braille.

I first made Win's acquaintance on a shuttle bus ride during a convention of the American Council of the Blind in 1991 or 1992. I had

numerous opportunities to interact with Winifred during the following two decades of our mutual involvement with the California Council of the Blind. On April 11, I shared in a moving and joyful funeral service with perhaps 200 family members and friends in her parish church in San Francisco where she was a beloved member.

As I now fill the position of president of the San Francisco Chapter of CCB where she lead and served for many years, I hope I can continue to preserve her legacy of advocacy, caring, leading and teaching into the future.

You can read her love-filled, life-filled obituary originally published in “The San Francisco Chronicle” at <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/sfgate/obituary.aspx?n=winifred-downing&pid=179534695>

The following is a sampling of the many tributes for Winifred shared in the days immediately preceding and following her passing.

“Winifred taught me about advocacy, just by her example. I wish her a peaceful passing. She has been so frail for so long. I hope our chapter or the LightHouse will do

something in her memory.

She is surrounded by her very loving family. She is in my thoughts. What an amazing life she has had and all the love she gave and was given.” Beth Berenson, San Francisco Chapter and GDUC.

“Thank you all for sharing your warm thoughts. I have compiled them and emailed them to Winifred's daughter, Eileen. I know it will be of comfort as it was of comfort to me. Charlie [Dorris] and I spent some time with Winifred and her eldest daughter who is a nurse today. Winifred was asleep our entire visit and her breathing was labored but she looked at peace.

Her daughter told us that Winifred said that ‘My children and grandchildren are well, I have lived a good life and ready to go.’ She is going as she wanted, with her mind intact and at home. I thanked Winifred for being an inspiration to me and to many students and for making a significant difference in my life. It is my hope she heard me. I've told her before, but she didn't seem to ever believe me but at least the family now knows what difference she has made.” Ellie Lee, Teacher of the Visually Impaired and Orientation and Mobility Instructor, San Francisco Unified School District; San

Francisco Chapter.

“Winifred Downing, one of the true giants of the California Council of the Blind and the American Council of the Blind passed away peacefully at 3:45 this morning.

Advocate, mentor, leader, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, and so much more are words that barely scratch the surface when it comes to Win. She worked so incredibly hard to improve the lives of persons who are blind or have low vision. She also cared deeply about her family, and the ACB and CCB families and showed it with her love for so many of us.” Jeff Thom, Vice-

President ACB; President CCB.

“She will be missed indeed. I truly will miss our chats that she and I have had throughout the years. May the Lord be with the family during this difficult time.” Sylvia Lopez, Fresno Chapter.

“This is truly a sad day for CCB and ACB with such a loss. She wouldn't want us to morn. Let's all show our respect and pitch in just a little more to keep the CCB and ACB as the great organizations she helped them to become. RIP Win.” Sharlene Ornelas, Director Elect, CCB Board; San Diego Chapter and GDUC.

“I first met Winifred when I joined the blindness movement in 1974 as a young person just learning about advocacy. I was in the same chapter as Winifred who was one of my strongest mentors for several years, teaching me why it was so important to advocate, how to calmly present topics of importance pertaining to blindness to others, and most important, the reason to continue always fighting for Braille.

On the home front, Winifred was extremely talented in her activities in her homemaker responsibilities, and was a

great Mom.

Winifred was also a super teacher as she worked for Hadley and had so much energy with everything she did. We must not forget that Winifred was also involved on the CCB Resolutions Committee for a long period of time.

I will personally miss Winifred so much and will always recall our times together and our many conversations.

Best to Winifred’s family with deepest sympathy. She is once again at peace as she was while working on all the projects she put herself into at 100 percent

without ever taking away from her family.” Ken Metz, President Greater Los Angeles Chapter CCB; President Guide Dog Users of California.

“The San Francisco Chapter has suffered a great loss with the passing of Winifred.

I will miss her tremendously. Among her other talents she was a great mentor to many people. On a personal note, Win was very encouraging and supportive of all my activities with the San Francisco Chapter and the CCB. She was especially proud of me when I was

hired with the City and County of San Francisco. I will never forget all the conversations that I had with Win.

Words can not express the loss that I am feeling right now.

My condolences go out to her family.

**Rest In Peace Winifred.”
Peter Pardini, Treasurer
CCB; San Francisco
Chapter.**

“We have been notified that our chapter member, Winifred Downing, passed away this morning at 3:45 AM. It is our understanding that she died peacefully at

her home in the company of her family.

Thank goodness she died peacefully. We will miss you awfully, Winifred. You were an inspiration for me throughout much of my life. I am grateful to have known and learned from you!” Daveed Mandell, Secretary San Francisco Chapter.

“Win was a tremendous person and if all of us could be as dedicated to the CCB as she was we would go a long way. Win was a mentor when I had my son. She told me my son was losing too much weight as an infant, and she was right! If it weren’t

for Win, my son might not be here today.

This world is a much better place because of Win's presence in it. She touched many people; she supported many people, and she was a role model for many of us. Win, RIP.” Margie Donovan, ACB Capitol Chapter and GDUC.

“Throughout all of the years in which I have known Winifred Downing as a colleague, she has been unceasingly a strong advocate of, and full supporter for promoting, and advancing braille literacy in the blindness community: not only here in San Francisco, but also

in California and nationwide. I have a lot of respect for the work which she did as a teacher of learning how to use the Optacon, as well as reading and writing braille. She did her best to educate, and reinforce that blind children and adults learn how to become literate in reading and writing braille. I have to say: she did indeed love her Library for the Blind and Visually Impaired in San Francisco, and beyond. Winifred please rest in peace where there is no sunset, or dawning. I extend my condolences to Winifred's family in this most difficult time of her passing.” Jim Blacksten,

San Francisco Chapter.

“My most sincere condolences to the friends and families of Winifred. The few interactions I've had with her have always been very pleasant. I have always enjoyed reading her submissions in the BC. She will definitely be missed.” Guillermo Robles, CCB.

“Win and I knew each other pretty well; when I announced I was going to run for president, she calls me up (I'm on my way home from work) and she says, ‘Are you really sure you can do this? You don't suffer fools gladly.’ And I said, ‘Well I guess the fools

will just have to get used to me!’ When I asked Win to become editor of the BC, she said, ‘Oh no I don’t know anything about technology I can’t do that.’ I think it took two or three conversations for me to convince her. One thing that Win and I had in common: we were sticklers for editing. Win never tolerated grammatical or spelling errors or poor sentence structure: anything. The BC with all due respects to former and current editors, Win was the best we ever had. She’ll be missed.” Mitch Pomerantz, former president ACB and CCB.

“Win made me laugh so

hard. She was not one for swearing; her strongest swearing would be she hated something ‘with a purple passion!’ She was such a special person. I miss her.” Leslie Thom, Capitol Chapter.

Obbie Schoeman shared that his late wife Connie and Win used to share braille books, mailing them back and forth.

“In Resolutions Committee, Win’s attention to detail was something I loved. We’re definitely kindred spirits in that way. You know how it is in resolutions when you’re wordsmithing and someone says, ‘No it

should be must,' and someone else says, 'No it should be shall.' 'No no it should be may!' Win would say, 'Just make a decision! Be quiet we've got to do this. I'm so tired.' She put up with us but she was just an awesome force!" . . .

Donna Pomerantz,
Immediate Past President
CCB.

"I was elected president of BRLC in the spring of 2010. Win was the editor of our newsletter The Braille Writer. When I wrote my first presidential statement, she was so patient with her corrections. I wasn't the most grammatical heavyweight around, but she knew I was trying to do

my best. Once my article came out, I was congratulated so warmly. It was so good to have her on my side and to have such complete support." Steve Fort, CCB Director; President Bay View Chapter.

"I was on the resolutions committee with Winifred and I thoroughly enjoyed her contributions to the committee. I remember one time about 2:00 in the morning, Winifred was still there. I'm thinking 'I want to go back to my room! But I'm not going to let this woman leave after me!' I know she will be missed by many. My wish would be to have met her sooner."

**Robert Wendt, Director
CCB; Greater Long Beach
Chapter.**

**“When I became chair of
the Resolutions
Committee, she did so
much to help me
understand the process of
editing a resolution. I’ve
got to say the quality for
meetings definitely went
down hill when Win
resigned.” Gabe Griffith,
Vice-President elect CCB;
Contra Costa Chapter.**

**“Her voice reminded me of
Angela Lansbury as
Jessica on Murder She
Wrote! I remember her
talking about how the
earthquake damaged her
house. She was one of the**

**cutest, sweetest wonderful
women in my life.” Christy
Crespin, Chair CCB
Scholarship Committee;
Inland Empire Chapter.**

**“I just want to say that I
believe that Win had a
beautiful and genuine soul.
I got to know her when she
was the editor of the Blind
Californian. She was very
committed and dedicated
to producing a quality
magazine for the
organization. I was writing
the Career Connections
column. I’d submit an
article, and I’d wait for her
call. And she’d call me and
say ‘Kathy, we have a few
things to talk about.’ I
learned a lot from her, and
I’m very appreciative of**

knowing Win. May she rest in peace.” Catherine Schmitt Whitaker, Publications Committee member.

“I met Winifred rather late in her life. I moved to San Francisco in 2005, and I decided to go to the San Francisco Chapter because I had read Win’s name in the Braille Forum. I was warmly welcomed by Win and quickly recruited for something she started, The Good Neighbor Fund which evolved into the grant we have now: The Student Education Access Grant. Eighteen months later she got me elected president of the chapter. She took me to CCB, got

me on The Nominations and Resolutions Committees, and when I ran for the board, she gave my nomination speech. So I feel truly mentored by her.

On a personal level, Winifred was a staunch liberal Catholic, in the very best sense of the word. She would say a naughty thing now and then. One of my favorites: ‘That Bill Clinton! I don’t care how many women he slept with, he still was a good president!’” I will be attending her funeral on Monday. Her family has hired a bus to transport many of us from the church to the site of the reception: that’s how much

they care about our community.

I love you so much Winifred. Rest in peace.”

Linda Porelle, Chair Publications Committee; President BRLC; San Francisco Chapter.

*** * ***

CCB Convention Report 2016

by Vivian Younger and Sharlene Ornelas

[Editor’s Note: For this year’s conference/convention report, we’re going to the dogs! We thank the delegates from The Gide Dog Users of California.]

Due to an accident on the freeway, I was not able to attend very much of the Board meeting. As a result of Charles Nabarrete disclosing the San Gabriel Chapter’s roster, the Board

determined that consequences resulting from this action should be presented to the CCB membership.

Women’s Breakfast: Susan Glass and Judy Wilkinson were presenters.

Participants were provided with guidance and tools for creating personal stories. Each participant shared which aspects of writing that have worked for them.

As a result of this workshop, everyone seemed to know that their writing may be perceived as a gift to the reader.

Technology: The following electronic devices were presented: The Braille Note Touch (KeySoft with Android operating system): This device is the first Braille tablet. The Braille Note Touch supports contracted, UEB and uncontracted Braille. The Humanware New Explore Hand-Held Magnifier comes in 3, 5, and 7 levels of magnification. Prodigy Connect 12 is a portable electronic magnifier that greatly improves a

student's ability to see what is written on the blackboard. The internal memory, WIFI connectivity, and the ability to take pictures, scan, and create videos make this product a great device for those who have limited vision.

Transportation (CAT) and California Council of Citizens with Low Vision (CCCLV) joint session: Attendees were informed about building code changes/updates. A building standard consists of many details in order to help builders comply with ADA requirements. Many changes in the building code are a direct result of

public comment and public submissions for code changes. Request forms are on line. California building codes change every 3 years. You can view code statuses on line. Elements that assist in wayfinding are: tactile warnings/truncated domes, wall signage/Braille and letters, color contrast stair stripes denoting play structure elevation, pool stairs, and bathrooms simple signage, etc. Signage must be within 18 inches of doors. ATM machines must be speech enabled, come with connector for phone handset, and speech must be able to be interrupted,

repeated and/or stopped. Wherever a receipt is provided, a speech output device must describe what is printed on the receipt. Tactile buttons must be raised. Button colors must be contrasted against the background of ATM machines.

Committee on Access and Transportation: Katrina Barso and Teresa Gabriel discussed the CalTrans ADA Program updates. CalTrans headquarters is in Sacramento. Elizabeth Dower is the headquarters ADA manager. This office provides financial support and provides policy guidance for the

development of local district projects. Districts must work in partnership with CalTrans headquarters. CalTrans has agreed to spend 1.1 billion dollars over the next 30 years in order to remove access barriers (installing curb ramps, repairing broken/uneven pavement on pedestrian facilities, correcting noncompliant cross slopes, protruding overhangs or obstructions, and installing Accessible Pedestrian Signal Devices.

The Grievance Process includes doing the following: Call headquarters at 866-810-634; be sure to provide

your contact information. You can go on line at dot.ca.gov in order to fill out an ADA Access Service Request form. CalTrans headquarters will determine whether it is their responsibility or whether the local district is responsible for the request. The district will ultimately provide headquarters with a proposed resolution. Within 180 days, the grievant is informed about the proposed resolution status.

Accessible Pedestrian Signals: There are many variables to consider prior to determining when and

where they should be installed. Traffic patterns, physical placement of the Pedestrian Accessible Signal equipment and decibel regulation specifications are examples of factors that affect where Accessible Pedestrian Signals will ultimately be installed. Wherever the pedestrian is going to need a detector, the new installation must include the Accessible Pedestrian Signal System. It should be located between 1 and a half feet from the edge of the curb up to a maximum of five feet. The height of an Accessible Pedestrian signal should be between

three and a half to four feet. The decibel level must be five decibels above the traffic noise and/or ambient environment. If there are two APS's placed together, they must be 10 feet apart. For someone who is mobility impaired, timing adjustments can be made. Examples of locations where Accessible Pedestrian Signals are typically installed are: blind centers, T intersections, senior centers, transit terminals, wide intersections etc. Once the APS has been installed, it must be activated (used). Disuse of an Accessible Pedestrian Signal will result in it being

removed.

General Session I: In the Indian culture, the elderly are greatly respected. Ral Christman, Viejas Band of Mission Indians tribal member guest speaker, informed us that his grandfather was the Google of the family. His wisdom, foresight and insight were revered. Although his grandfather was blind, he saw visions around his surroundings.

There are 120 students who are bused to public schools. The Southern Indian Counsel provides outreach to neighboring reservations. If a disabled

Native American attends public school, the school will receive three times the funding as compared to an average student who attends the same school.

National Highway Traffic Administration:

Christopher Murphy informed the audience about Automated Vehicle research activities. Ninety percent of crashes are caused by human error (driver distractions and fatigue). The ultimate goal of this agency is to ensure that automated vehicle technology will play a primary part in saving lives. A NHTA public meeting is planned to take

place in California soon.

Self Advocacy: Abigayil Tamara along with her attorney, Celia McGuinness successfully fought for Abigayil's right to have her service dog be with her during two hospital stays. Although Abby tried to educate hospital staff about the ADA Law and advocate for her rights, she ended up seeking legal counsel. Abigayil's attorney informed the audience that Abigayil's documentation, organization and communication skills help her law suit move along. Abigayil stated that her attorney's patience and

willingness to learn about the world of the disabled kept communication flowing. Celia McGuinness touched upon the framework of a lawsuit. The audience seemed impressed about Abigayil's advocacy success.

Victims of Crime: Linda Pena and Desmond Townsend informed the audience about the Victim Assistance Program. A victim is anyone that is emotionally, physically or financially affected by crime. Examples of services provided to victims are: food, clothing, shelter, financial aid, other resources and agency

referrals. The Victim Assistance Program helps victims keep track of the progress of their case; the victim is able to track whether restitution has been paid or not. Elder abuse and child abuse are handled by designated staff. Victims can be compensated as well.

Second General Session: Remembrances of those who have passed were shared. The Credentials, Legislation, ACB, and the CCB President's reports were presented. Sharlene Ornelas, Paul Patchi, Rob Turner and Gale Croissen were elected to the CCB Board. Judy Wilkinson was

elected CCB president, Frank Welte was elected 1st vice president and Gabe Griffith was elected 2nd vice president.

Future convention goals were discussed. Since there is an interest in conducting conventions online and since CCB agreed that after three years conventions concerns would be revisited, many suggestions about upcoming conventions were shared. Based on those who were present in the audience, it seemed that most of the CCB members would like to continue to have face-to-

face conventions. I along with several other people think that there should be a blend of telephonic, online and in-person conventions. A task force will be formed to investigate this topic further.

GDUC: During the business meeting, Pam Metz and Maile George were elected to board of directors. Alice McGrath was elected vice-president, Vita Zavoli was elected treasurer and Vivian Younger was elected secretary.

GDUC Program: Debbie Sands spoke about what challenges businesses

face with respect to fake service dogs. She discussed how business and guide handlers can recognize and proactively approach those with fake service dogs. I agree with Debbie about not allowing the public to pet my guide. By not doing so, Debbie indicated that this sets service dogs apart from fake service dogs. I was so impressed by Debbie Sands' presentation; I plan on embossing it for future reference.

Canine Companion for Independence: Pete, a CCI graduate, informed us about the types of service this school trains. There

are four categories of dogs that are trained. They include service, hearing, companion and therapy dogs. Service dogs learn about forty commands; these include retrieving and carrying commands. Pete enjoys educating the public about service dogs.

Track Sessions: Since I wanted to report what occurred in all three breakout Sessions, I spent equal proportional time at each session. **Leadership Track:** The purpose of this breakout session was to provide chapter leaders an opportunity to review the types of documents required by CCB and when

they should be submitted. Representatives from chapters discussed the challenges associated with personality conflicts and motivating people to complete tasks.

In order for chapters to be on the same page, Frank Welte is planning on providing CCB chapters with a toolbox containing information regarding forms, membership rosters, treasury reports and when said reports are due. Anyone who is thinking about running for office or taking part in a leadership role would benefit from attending this breakout track session.

Employment Breakout

Track: During the employment breakout session, Catherine Schmitt Whitaker and Vita Zavoli discussed the ideas about how to prepare for job growth. Networking, participating on Serve Lists, informing coworkers about your new goals and/or positions you are seeking within your company, and signing up for professional advancement courses can lead to job growth opportunities. Participants were encouraged to look into other employment resources as well.

Self Esteem Track: During the third breakout session, Lynda Johnson discussed how to improve self esteem. Tips were provided in order to help participants learn how to recognize and avoid potentially negative self talk behavior. Examples of Self Talk Traps were presented.

Third General Session: A constitutional amendment concerning delegate credential requirements, paid membership status and submittal of documents to the CCB office by February 15, was passed. The CCB membership voted to

remove Charles Nabarrete from the CCB Board. By acclamation, Vivian Younger was elected to fill this position.

**Respectfully Submitted
Vivian Younger**

Thursday afternoon was the Board Meeting. There was a concern about breach of confidentiality by a Board member and there was a discussion on this matter. The treasurer gave his report. There was a report about the L.A. Mutt Strut which is planned for November.

Thursday evening things got off to a great start by

having handlers, along with other women get pampered at the Viegas Spa. Some of the dogs got to have play time with Frank and friends. The women ate sub sandwiches, fruit and fresh vegetables. We dogs just got to lay there and smell the fragrances. The women also had wine and champagne, but didn't get too high because they still had to follow our lead. We returned to the hotel and resort area for Credentials and Nominating Committee. Off to bed because tomorrow will be a late night.

Friday I went to the CAT

(Committee on Access and Transportation) and CCCLV California Committee of Citizens with Low Vision) joint Committee meeting. There were presentations on Title 24 code changes and APS (Audible Pedestrian Signals) guidelines.

[Editor's Note:

Simultaneously with the CAT/CCCLV session, the Braille Revival League of California and California Chapter of the Library Users of America met separately and then held a joint meeting where they discussed the possible merger of the two statewide affiliates. A

committee was established to report back to the members later this year.]

I was at the GDUC table during lunch and the first part of the First General Session. I heard the presentation on Service Dog Denial. This might be a subject for a discussion as I have mixed feelings about "Go Everywhere" for service dogs. I also heard the presentation of services for victims of crimes in San Diego County including having an advocate accompany you to court.

Friday night I went to the Presidents' Dinner where

candidates were put on the hot seat, with questions and answers for the various offices. The second session of the Convention started with remembrances of members we have lost during the time between conventions. Among them were Tom Karnes, Richard Harmon, Robert Greenwald, and Winifred Downing. Many gave touching remembrances of that special pillar of the CCB. As conferences and conventions are getting so expensive, a discussion was started on what can be done to increase attendance and participation and keep the

personal connections and networking that occurs during an onsite event. There will be conference calls in the future and other attempts to get input from members.

Credentials, Legislation, ACB representative John McCann and Jeff Thom's President's ACB reports were given. We ended the night with elections.

Saturday started bright and early with the Membership Breakfast followed by the GDUC business meeting which Vivian discussed. We had an excellent presentation on handling access and dealing with

fake service dogs. Our luncheon speaker was from Canine Companions for Independence and talked about the training they and their dogs go through. I was not able to attend any tracks because I was needed at the GDUC table in the exhibit hall.

The banquet was fantastic, if I have to say so myself. We were entertained by Laurie Beebe Lewis singing and playing the keyboard, her husband Chuck on guitar and a friend on base, Jim. Laurie told stories about her career and some of the many groups she has played with. I may be

prejudice about Laurie. She was my idea and happens to be a good friend.

[Editor's Note: At the banquet, chapters made donations to the CCB and awards were given. The membership growth award went to Guide Dog Users of California for the largest percentage of growth and to the Greater L.A. chapter for the greatest number of new members. The Publications Committee gave writing awards for their BC contributions throughout the years to Bonnie Rennie and Jeff Thom who contributed the greatest number of articles

over the past decade.]

Sunday was the business part of the convention with low attendance. There was a notice given on Friday about a motion regarding a member of the board being presented on Sunday; a motion to remove Charles Nabarrete from his board seat was presented and seconded. There was a discussion with several members pointing out that Charles should have known better than to post a chapter roster in an email. The roster contained names, addresses, phone numbers and birthdates. Charles rebutted to

comments and the question was called for. The vote was overwhelming in favor of removing Charles from his board seat immediately. The vote was taken by secret ballot from members, roll call of chapter and affiliates and each board member was called and gave a voice vote. Vivian Younger was nominated and elected by acclamation for the now vacant board seat.

Respectfully Sharlene Ornelas, Alternate Delegate.

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California Council of the Blind
Officers and Board as of July 1, 2016

[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, Judy Wilkinson, San Leandro (16-18, 1st term)
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**1st Vice President, Frank Welte, San Leandro
(16-18, 1st term)
510 541-1442 c, frank.welte@ccbnet.org**

**2nd Vice President, Gabe Griffith, Concord (*16-17, partial
term)
925 768-8195 c, gabe.griffith@ccbnet.org**

**Secretary, Ardis Bazyn, Burbank (15-17, 1st term)
ardis.bazyn@ccbnet.org**

Treasurer, Peter Pardini, Mill Valley (16-18, 4th term)
415 990-9202 c, peter.pardini@ccbnet.org

Immediate Past President, Jeff Thom, Sacramento
(16-??)
916 995-3967 c, jeff.thom@ccbnet.org

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Gail Crossen, La Habra (16-18, 1st term)
562 691-3391 h, gail.crossen@ccbnet.org

Steve Fort, Alameda (15-17, 1st term)
510 604-5657 c, steve.fort@ccbnet.org

Joseph Lopez, Goleta (15-17, 1st term)
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Pamela Metz, Chatsworth (15-17, 1st term)
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Rob Turner, Sunnyvale (16-18, 1st term)

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Robert Wendt, Long Beach (15-17, 3rd term)

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Vivian Younger, Downey (*16-17, partial term)

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*** * ***

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Blind and Handicapped**

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"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.