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**Non-members are requested and members are invited to pay a yearly subscription fee of \$10 toward the production of THE BLIND CALIFORNIAN.**

**In accepting material for THE BLIND CALIFORNIAN, priority will be given to articles concerning the activities and policies of the California Council of the Blind and to the experiences and concerns of blind persons.**

**Recommended length is 1800 words.**

**The deadline to submit material for the Summer 2019 issue of THE BLIND CALIFORNIAN is noon, May 15, 2019.**

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## **Editor's Corner**

**By Mike Keithley**

**Welcome to the spring Blind Californian. You'll want to read President Wilkinson's column. It's upbeat, just what we need to bring on spring. We're not out of the financial woods yet, but we're sure working on it!**

**But before running on further, let me update you about Mitch Pomerantz. On February 8, 2019, Donna wrote:**

**"Very late last night or early this morning, Mitch had emergency brain surgery to remove blood that was putting pressure on his brain. The surgery went well and it was successful, thank God!"**

**Many days of updates and "get well" emails followed on various lists, and last I heard, Mitch is home and recovering nicely and is back in action for ACB and CCB. We wish him good barks!**

**We hear a bit from Associate Editor Susan Glass as she tells us about the Magical Playground Project and describes a visit to Fort Point National Park. We can tell from the Governmental Affairs Committee Report that CCB is in the thick of it in the upcoming legislation cycle, and you'll want to be involved. And there's a poem by Bonnie Rennie**

and many timely announcements.

So enjoy the spring BC, and be sure to attend the

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CCB Conference and Convention this June!

## **CCB's Phoenix Committee**

**By Judy Wilkinson**

Once we realized our Major Gifts Ramp Up campaign would not succeed, I asked the Board to sanction a committee which Gabe Griffith promptly christened the "Phoenix" Committee, in honor of the bird that famously dies and then rises, reborn, from its ashes. The charge to the committee is to chart the road ahead for CCB in light of our current financial situation. That financial situation is rather bleak: with the meanest and leanest budget, with

no additional income, perhaps a year.

The committee consists of nine members: five Board members and four other CCB members. The five Board members, by happenstance, all come from Northern/Central California, so the remaining four all come from Southern California to create representation throughout the state. The five Board members include, in addition to myself, 1st Vice President Gabe Griffith, Immediate

**Past President Jeff Thom, Treasurer Lisa Thomas, and Rob Turner (a long-time member who has been a member of chapters in both Southern and Northern California). Our other four members are all long-time CCB activists: Steve Bauer, President of our Greater Los Angeles Chapter; Christy Crespin, current Chair of our Scholarship Committee; Andrea deKlotz, President of the Orange County Chapter; and Catherine Schmidt Whitaker, Chair of our Personnel Committee and long-time member of our Publications Committee. The committee is cochaired by Jeff and Gabe. While the meetings are recorded, they remain confidential so that we can**

**speak frankly among ourselves. Informal minutes are distributed to members, and a final report will be issued at some point.**

**In four short meetings beginning on November 13, the committee has accomplished a great deal. A subcommittee of Steve, Cathy and Andrea have drafted a document for volunteers, designed for those answering phone calls, which includes tips on phone etiquette, as well as an extensive resource guide to goods and services people are always asking about when they call the office.**

**Two more subcommittees have been created: one to discuss ways to streamline office expenses and the other to discuss**



**milestones that require action so that we don't just wake up one morning finding ourselves needing to close CCB's doors.**

**Other recommendations have been, or will be implemented. Membership dues to CCB will increase if appropriate Constitution and Bylaws sections are passed at our conference/convention in June. We will hold a combination online telephonic auction (something auctions on ACBRadio) in late September or early October. Such a fundraising effort involves little or no upfront costs as the Board has decided we don't have the resources to move forward with Dining in the Dark this year.**

**To streamline office expenses, we are investigating the option of subletting office space as we still have nearly four years on our lease. We will further investigate other possibilities if necessary. The Council just increased Nicole's salary and the office is now open five days a week. Nicole sounds even better with her new Bluetooth headset!**

**The other subcommittee is in fact moving ahead with the underlying charge of the committee: to determine important milestones. How and when do we bring on volunteers? What advice do we extend to chapters and affiliates? How can the Council move forward with the four imperatives**

**we adopted in 2018? What are future recommendations for conventions? Just to name a few areas of consideration.**

**The first question asked when the possibility of closing the doors was mentioned was for any one of the nine committee members to speak up if they in fact recommended that option. I, who introduced the subject, said that on some days I had that thought, but having been a member since I was 18, (others like Christy chimed in) I ultimately couldn't even consider it. We have work to do at the legislature; we still have generous donors such as funds from the Mannino family to grant scholarships. We can**

**implement our four imperatives laid out in our most recent Case For Support at the chapter level with little or no additional funds.**

**We plan to celebrate many birthdays beyond this, our 85th. Please make your plans to attend our 85th birthday convention in Fresno from Thursday, June 6, (though some will arrive for possible fundraising events on Wednesday June 5) through Sunday June 9.**

**As part of strategizing for the organization, our leadership will be evolving. Let me end this column by announcing that I will not seek a third term in 2020. I have thought long and hard about this decision. I want to act responsibly**

moving forward, but the difference to the organization of whether I end my term as president in 2020 or 2022 (assuming I would be re-elected) may not mean much in terms of the organization, but those two years are huge in my life, having just celebrated my 75th birthday. When I ran for office, until a month before our convention when I declared my candidacy, we were not sure who would lead the organization after Jeff, having served so many years as president, stated he would not run again. We are in a totally different position today concerning future leadership since we have a number of younger members positioned to

lead us forward. My fervent hope is that others will consider running for positions on the Board. During this next year, every effort will be made for a smooth transition, and of course, I'm not going anywhere! After all, I will just move over one seat and plan to support the organization in any way I can in my new office as Immediate Past President.

But in the meantime, I plan to work even harder as your president. I have announced to the Board that all my expenses this year will be donated to CCB. And the Phoenix Committee is well on its way to helping the California Council of the Blind chart our future.

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## **Governmental Affairs Report: The Issues Keep Coming and We Keep Working**

**By Jeff Thom**

**This report will definitely be an exciting one, but before I begin discussing plans for 2019 and 2020, I want to commend Sylvia Reese on her continued work. Smart, energetic, a quick learner, she is far more than just an assistant to yours truly, and her tenacity will pay big dividends in the years to come for CCB and the entire blindness community. Secondly, let me pay tremendous tribute to outgoing Department of Rehabilitation, Blindness Advisory Committee (BAC) Chair, Mitch Pomerantz. As all of you likely know by now, Mitch**

**is recovering from very serious surgery. We were amazed, but not surprised that within a week after that surgery and only a few days after being taken off a ventilator, he called into the BAC conference call and participated. It is that kind of dedication that has made Mitch the incredible leader that he has been for more than 40 years. Moreover I am pleased to congratulate new BAC chair Chris Sedrick of our Bakersfield Chapter and vice-chair Deborah Thompson from the ACB Capitol Chapter. They will both represent us extremely well.**

Now to our legislative news! First, with the help of Doug Rose from our Humboldt County Chapter, we have secured a promise from Senator Mike McGuire to introduce prescription drug labeling legislation next year. The more stories I can collect concerning dosage errors due to the inability to read labels, the better it will be, so be sure to send them to me.

This year we have at least three pieces of legislation that we are sponsoring. AB169, which is being introduced by Assemblyman Tom Lackey for the second time, is being tried for the third time. This bill concerns extension of crimes and penalties against owners of pet dogs who attack

service animals. Governor Brown vetoed the bill twice over very broad bipartisan support, but hopefully the new Governor will look favorably upon the bill if we can pass it again. Let me express my appreciation to the Golden State Guide Dog Handlers for taking on the primary Burden of securing passage of this extremely important bill.

We don't have a resolution number yet, but Assemblymember Cansen Chu from Milpitas will be authoring our measure to establish a taskforce on seniors with vision loss. We are trying to emulate the great work that Texas has done in bringing the issues of seniors who are blind or low vision to the

forefront in discussions with the broader aging community.

Finally Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk-Silva, a teacher from Orange County, is introducing our major bill on special education. The bill will have a number long before you read this article, and we will be calling upon you to send letters of support to the appropriate committees. The bill, which has broad support by educators in the blindness community, does two major things. First it ensures that school districts and county offices of education cannot impose various types of restrictions that, essentially, preclude our blind and low vision children from receiving

sufficient or sometimes any orientation and mobility instruction. One of the major restrictions is that a district will prohibit an instructor from using his/her own vehicle to transport the student and will not provide the instructor with a vehicle to accomplish this goal. The second item that this bill covers is that it provides an entitlement, to the extent needed by each student, to all of the services contained in the "expanded core curriculum," which is a group of skills that sighted children usually obtain through observing others (such as siblings, peers or adults) but which our kids cannot do so in the same manner. These services include orientation and

mobility; compensatory academic skills, such as braille, large print, etcetera; instruction in the use of technology; socialization; sensory efficiency; concept development; and others.

Again, Texas is the pioneer in this area of legislation, and it is high time that California become a trendsetter rather than a place where education for children with vision impairments is sometimes good and

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sometimes very poor. I have already participated in presentations on this bill and will certainly do more. We will definitely need your support to face what I am certain will be opposition for various reasons, including very likely for cost reasons.

So, get on board the CCB legislative train as we work with the entire blindness community to improve the lives of all persons with vision loss.

## **Anything Can Be Overcome**

**By Sugar Lopez and Madison Taylor**

Dear Fellow CCB friends,  
With so much going on with in our organization these days, I felt this was appropriate to share.

It's up to us to do something to help ourselves and to make something happen in a positive way! My dear

friend Maddie said this perfectly.

Just a reminder that each of us have something unique and special to bring to our organization.

### **Anything Can Be Overcome**

by Madison Taylor

Even when it seems like you have nowhere left to turn, there is a solution waiting for you. Always.

The journey that each human being makes through earthly existence can have hardship as often as it is touched by joy.

When we encounter adversity, the stress we feel can erode our optimism, eventually convincing us that the issues we face cannot be overcome. In truth, there

is no situation so dire, no challenge so great, and no choice so bewildering that it cannot be overcome.

Though we may believe that all avenues have been closed to us or that our most conscientious efforts will come to naught, we are never without feasible options. The best course of action may be veiled in doubt, but it is there.

When we are honest with ourselves with regard to this simple fact, we can overcome anything because we will never stop looking for a solution to the challenges before us.

Self-trust coupled with a sturdy plan is the ultimate antidote to adversity's tendency to inspire disillusionment in the



human mind. As difficult as the obstacle plaguing you seems, it is no match for the love of a supportive universe that has been a part of your life since the day of your birth and will be with you forever more.

Try not to be misguided by your fear as this gives rise to the notion that there are problems without solutions. If you believe in your capabilities and dedicate yourself to the creation of some form of resolution, you will be surprised to discover that paths that were once closed to you miraculously open. Even if all you can do is change your perspective to turn an impediment into an opportunity to grow, you will have found the hope

that is an inherent element of all hardship.

Remember that your destiny is a product of your own creation. Even when it seems you have nowhere left to turn, there is a solution waiting for you.

The only insurmountable obstacles are the ones you create in your own mind--and these can only exert power over you if you let them.

Uncertainty will always be a part of your existence, but perseverance and mindfulness will never fail to see you through to the other side of hardship where joy can thrive. Try and remember that no matter what life places at your feet, there is absolutely no situation

that cannot be resolved  
with time, love, and

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friendship.

## **Magical Bridge Accessible Playgrounds**

**By Susan Glass and Jay Gluckman**

**A note from Susan Glass:**  
Although this accessible park project is currently confined to the San Francisco Bay Area, we feature it in the BC in hopes that other communities will be inspired to create similar local parks.

If you're in the mood for some outdoor recreation this fall, and you either play with kids or are a big kid yourself, there's a playground in Palo Alto that is designed especially for you. It's called the Magical Bridge Playground, and it's nestled in the southwest

corner of Mitchell Park (the official address is 600 E Meadow Road, Palo Alto, CA 94306, but if you use paratransit the best address is 3864 Middlefield Rd, Palo Alto, CA 94303). Magical Bridge Playground was designed to be highly accessible (their word is inclusive) to people of all abilities and ages. More Magical Bridge parks are being planned for Redwood City, Mountain View, Sunnyvale, and Morgan Hill.

Magical Bridge Playground is divided into play zones, and the equipment found in each

one has been specially created with children of varying abilities in mind, and a focus on autistic children in particular. The equipment helps these children develop their proprioceptive or spatial awareness, as well as their sense of balance. It comes as no surprise that developing proprioceptive awareness is also crucial for blind children. The grouping of the equipment into play zones is helpful for those with visual impairments. If you are in the Spin Zone, you know that all the equipment will spin. If you are in the Swing and Sway Zone, you know that this is the only place in the playground that the equipment swings and sways. The summit of

Slide Mound is the only place to enter the slides at the playground.

Navigating the park with a white cane is easy. You walk on an aggregate pathway that parallels the play areas, the surfaces of which are a springy textured rubber. It's easy to detect surfacing differences with your cane tip, and as long as you stay on the aggregate path, you're safe from exuberant swingers, swayers, sliders, spinners, and climbers.

I especially enjoyed the play equipment in the Spin Zone. One piece called the Net Spinner is like a jungle gym with a ladder that you climb to a platform where you rest your hands. You hang on while standing, and someone on the

ground spins you round and round. Another delight is Disk Spinner, which is a saucer where you spin around while lying on your back. I also enjoyed a piece of equipment called the Roller Table, which is a narrow bed of metal cylinders that can rotate. I enjoyed lying on my back and pulling myself along the rollers using overhead metal bars.

Other attractions in the park include a wheelchair-accessible playhouse with a pretend hardware store complete with hammers and screwdrivers carved out of wood, plus a cafe with a toy cash register. There are boat swings, bucket swings, and slides. Three of the play zones have a Cozy Cocoon, a metal nest particularly for

those with autism and other folks prone to sensory overload, to hang out in when active play feels overwhelming. The cocoon is a large sphere with openings, and provides a calming place to sit and regroup before emerging to re-engage in active play.

On Friday, August 17, 2018, I had the pleasure of being invited by Mr. Jay Gluckman, who is Director of Education at Magical Bridge Foundation, to a personal preview of some prototypes for a Magical Bridge Foundation project called Visual Magic. These prototypes are part of a plan in the works to make the new Magical Bridge Playground under construction in Redwood City friendly to people with

visual impairments.

### **Magical Bridge**

**Foundation was awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Bernard Newcomb Foundation to support the work of the Visual Magic Project's installations at the forthcoming Redwood City Playground. (Bernard Newcomb was one of the co-founders of EininTRADE, and is currently a philanthropist. Newcomb himself happens to be visually impaired.)**

**For the personalized preview, I had the pleasure of meeting the entire Visual Magic Project team that worked over the summer to refine the prototypes that I was shown. The team included: Rachel Wallstrom, a design and**

**engineering intern from Stanford University; Cathy Tran, a volunteer for Magical Bridge Foundation and a design researcher by profession; and Nikki Dadlani, a blind high school student who has provided invaluable input to Magical Bridge Foundation to create a roadmap for how to make public playgrounds accessible to blind and visually impaired people. Also present at the playground that evening were several members of the Mid-Peninsula Guide Dog Puppy Foundation who were invited there to give playground visitors an opportunity to learn about guide dogs, and for the puppies to have an opportunity to acclimate**

to a busy playground environment.

So for the Visual Magic preview, I was shown two prototypes of what the team calls Zone Entry Monuments. The idea is to greet visitors to each playground zone with a place that provides information about the equipment found in that play zone. So that the design is universal, the prototypes of zone monuments had text for those with low vision, a brailled map, and two- and three-dimensional models of the equipment found there. In addition, detailed information about the playground equipment will be available online. I was sent some of the drafts of the online information about the equipment, and

it gave a good idea of what I could expect for my visit to the playground.

The Visual Magic team had the two- and three-dimensional models ready to show Nikki and me on August 17, and the team was eager to learn which models (the two-dimensional or three-dimensional) we thought would suit the needs of blind people. Hands down, we both preferred the three-dimensional models. Each model is a scaled miniature of a piece of the playground equipment, the purpose of which would allow us as blind people to experience the entire shape of the play equipment that we are about to encounter, and recognize the real thing immediately when we

**touch it. Two- dimensional models cannot deliver this immediate recognition.**

**Jay Gluckman and the Visual Magic Team at Magical Bridge would love more input and feedback from members of the visually impaired community. If you want to learn more, schedule a presentation of the Visual Magic prototypes, or arrange a personalized tour of the Magical Bridge Playground in Palo Alto, contact Jay Gluckman by email at**

**[jay@magicalbridge.org](mailto:jay@magicalbridge.org), or call him at 650-793-5009.**

**In closing, I would like to thank SVCB chapter Member Abby Tamara for putting me in touch with Jay Gluckman, for letting me know about the Magical Bridge Foundation Playgrounds, and for the opportunity for all of us with visual impairments to visit them and enjoy them as well as to give feedback to their designers to make their future playground more inclusive and fun for people in our community.**

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## **CCB Membership Committee Convention Activities**

**By Vivian Younger, Membership Committee Co-chair**

Friday, June 7, 2019, the CCB Membership Committee invites first time attendees, along with anyone who may have missed a few CCB Conventions, to attend the First Timers Seminar. This seminar is an opportunity for you to learn about the CCB organization, to ask questions about convention activities, to learn about membership, and to form supportive connections by engaging with others in the CCB network. Come join the fun!

Then on Saturday, June 8, the Membership Committee is hosting a

Membership Breakfast. The Breakfast Theme is "How to Strive to Thrive in a Sighted World." During the breakfast, members are encouraged to share one experience that highlights an accomplishment achieved despite the challenges of blindness or low vision, which includes just about anything! Prepare to share one of your memorable moments in the sun, using the 30 second elevator pitch model.

Finally, during the Saturday evening CCB Banquet, the Membership Committee will present the COTY Award to the



**Chapter or Affiliate that made a significant group**

**\*\*\***

**effort to make a positive impact in the community.**

## **A Third California Park Visit Dispatch**

**By Susan Glass**

**On Friday of Labor Day weekend 2018, my husband John, my sister Jo Lynn, her friend Jim, and I visited and toured the Fort Point National Monument, which is situated just at the southern end of the Golden Gate Bridge. Fort Point is one of 15 California national parks that now features an audio-described park brochure and mp3 tour. You can download both on a Victor Stream or other audio player, and you can also download the brochure on your iPhone. This will sound familiar to**

**those of you who visited Muir Woods in late April, or Yosemite last November. Originally Fort Point was a military base active during the Civil War. Its purpose was to defend San Francisco and the West Coast from attacks by foreign powers who either sympathized with the Confederacy, or still had hopes of claiming West Coast territories for themselves. As things turned out, Fort Point never fired an offensive shot, but it was, and remains in its restored form, an impressive establishment. In addition**

to listening to the Mp3 brochure, John and I and our companions were treated to a one and a half-hour tour--usually tours are only 20 minutes--given by an enthusiastic and well-informed ranger named Nate. Nate had never conducted a tour for blind people before, but he proved himself a natural, marking off distances for us by talking to us as he walked them, and always facing in whatever direction he was pointing. He also encouraged us to touch everything: the iron-fortified oak doors of the building, the exquisite brick and stone masonry, the casks or barrels where gunpowder was stored, the muzzles of two different types of canons, as well as two different

kinds of cannonballs. We climbed a winding and precipitous staircase to the top of the building (fourth floor) where guards on watch during the 19th century would have paced the parapet. We toured the living quarters for military officers and for privates. The poor privates slept 24 men to a room, two men lying in each bunk and positioned head to toe so they'd be less likely to give one another head lice.

The weather on the day we visited was sunny, cold, and windy, pretty typical for the Golden Gate area except that usually its foggy, cold, and windy. We had a great time, and relayed our enthusiasm to the Park Service, the

University of Hawaii, and Google, who are the entities responsible for bringing audio-described brochures to all of California's national parks. There are several more parks in California that need visits and feedback from the blind and visually impaired community, and the Google grant will pay \$500 for every park visit by a CCB chapter. John and I did not collect any funds because we were visiting Fort Point as private citizens, not as

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representatives of SVCB. You'll recall that when SVCB and the San Francisco chapter visited Muir Woods together, we split the \$500 between our two chapters, each receiving \$250. Please consider planning a chapter visit to a national park in your area. Let's enjoy our state's national parks together, provide feedback that benefits all blind and visually impaired park visitors, and earn a little bit for our chapter's treasury.

## **Good for Us Primo Preemies!**

**By Bonnie Rennie**

Maybe there should be a National Premature babies Day! The poem below was inspired by two recent events.

First were stories in the news, concerning newborns with severe disabilities. Second was an interview I heard. A

blind woman related her many experiences and accomplishments as an employee, wife, and mother. Like me, she was one of that crop of premature babies with Retinopathy of Prematurity.

This may seem silly to some. But whenever I encounter a blind person around my age, who has ROP, I feel a bond, and a validation of my existence. see what you think of what I'm going to relate.

## **Good for Us Primo Preemies!**

We stand, a bit of a period piece.  
Most in the forties and the fifties,  
Born too early,  
Too stubborn and tenacious not to survive.  
Beneficiaries of then state-of-the-art medical machines.  
Which made us blind,  
but probably kept us alive.

Some of us even have additional disabilities,  
Physical, intellectual,  
Not just the messed-up eyes.

I've heard it questioned,  
By others, not by us,  
Was all that trouble worth it?  
Was the expense wise?

We're not all einsteins,  
Olympic skaters, football stars.  
Much like other so-called normals you may know.  
Costly drain on society, at times, aren't we all?  
Regardless of our achievements,  
We all can contribute,  
Have something to show.

The being blind part is my expertise.  
Many more like me, eager to learn,  
Our numbers,  
Starting special education in the regular school.  
By far, the biggest burden blindness presents,  
Not being accepted, despite our efforts,  
That's the most cruel!

On the positive,

**We realize we must look out for ourselves.**

**We love to work, play, and help, active in the places we live.**

**I'm proud of being a preemie who made it!**

**My life is worthwhile.**

**And like my cohorts,**

**I have a lot to give.**

**\*\*\***

## **Memories of Camp Bloomfield**

**By Larry Gassman**

**[Camp Bloomfield was destroyed by the Woolsey Fire in Early November, 2018.]**

**I was 7 years of age when I first went to Camp Bloomfield in 1962. I spent many glorious summers there with my twin brother John. We met so many wonderful people who still are a part of our lives. Norman Kaplan was the director. He taught so**

**many of us so many core values that have stayed with me these many decades later.**

**Built in 1958 in the Malibu Mountains, it served as a place where we could go yearly to learn and grow as young people. Norm kept up with all of us long after we left camp. In 1988 he asked John and me how the radio show was going. I am not even sure**

how he knew we were doing one.

Ken Morgan was a longtime friend of the Kaplan family. He wrote:

"Camp Bloomfield as we know it is no more. It's been ravaged by the fires."

When you stop and think about it, Camp Bloomfield as we know it hasn't been there since Norm left.

Someone said to me that it's a shame Norman and Nadia Kaplan's legacy doesn't live on. I strongly disagree. Values like the concept of "it's nice to be nice," "the kids come first," we don't say shut up, we say be quiet please." The love in the values we learned were all inspired and no fire can ever destroy them. The

love and respect we show to others makes those legacies live on. The fire came through and destroyed some buildings. Those are just things. Let Norm and Nadia Kaplan's legacy live on through you and the people you touch. If you meet someone who has no smile, give them one of yours.

The camp will not be rebuilt. It was in the process of being sold. I am sad that it is gone but, primarily because of my physical memories of the buildings. I will always have the memories of those who were there every summer with me when I was a camper and later a counselor. I will always have those memories until I go to be with God. Nothing can

take those memories from me or the many values I learned and had reinforced while at camp. And so, its legacy also lives on. Michael Bloomfield and his family lived at Camp Bloomfield for over 20 years. They lost everything in the fire. Michael was the managing director of the camp.

My friend Peggy Campbell wrote: "Love in your heart wasn't put there to stay, love isn't love 'til you give it away. I remember this saying and so many others we were fortunate to hear from Norm at camp and at the Foundation of the Junior Blind. Let us live these mottos and spread the love and fellowship we learned on a daily basis. I know that I became a better person

because of my affiliation with camp, the Kaplan's and all who attended FJB functions over the years. Olivia Ostergaard wrote: "In '88, we attended the 35th-year reunion. I still have a picture of Jim and I with Norm. He never forgot any of us. I can still see those buildings, and remember in '64 or '65 the CBs digging sewers, and how it stunk. Ugh! I remember those camp dances, "Coketail" parties, and our trip to the Greek Theater to see Harry Bellafonte. Man, what wonderful times. I guess I could say we all came of age while there. I developed my love of music and writing with the tutoring they gave us in '69. Remember songs like 'Dona, Dona'; and 'Black,



**White, Red, and Yellow?'  
Oh, all those Peter, Paul,  
and Mary songs, and 'Me  
and Bobby McGee.' I sang  
my first solo there, had my  
first kiss, and hated those  
green figs we were served  
at breakfast. I even met  
David Hartman and David  
McCallum, big stars in that  
day. I think we all came of  
age, and now, a part of our  
childhood is no more. I  
didn't know Nadia, but we**

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**all loved Norm. I agree that  
when he passed,  
Bloomfield did as well. RIP  
old friend, we will always  
treasure you in our  
hearts."**

**Most will never have the  
incredible opportunity to  
be with people and with an  
organization like Camp  
Bloomfield. We were so  
lucky, we were so blessed.  
Those memories will live  
forever in our hearts.**

## **Vista Center and the Santa Clara Valley Blind Center Merge Edited Press Release**

**Vista Center expands to  
San Jose: Vista Center for  
the Blind and Visually  
Impaired—a leading  
nonprofit in evaluation,  
counseling, education and  
training services for the**

**blind and visually  
impaired announced the  
merger/acquisition of the  
Santa Clara Valley Blind  
Center (SCVBC) located at  
101 North Bascom  
Avenue.**

**SCVBC has provided critical social/recreation services and life skills programs to the blind and visually impaired community in the San Jose area since the 1950s. To continue to innovate and expand services, Pam Brandin, the driving force behind the union, states that "a merger [with Vista Center] is synergistic and timely." The move will allow the incorporation of additional clinical services into San Jose such as a low vision clinic, instructional services (orientation and mobility, daily living skills training), and youth services.**

**John Glass, former member of the SCVBC Board of Directors who worked tirelessly to**

**complete the merger, says, "With Vista Center's highly trained staff and expertise to provide much needed rehabilitation services, Vista Center will leverage the San Jose facility to a much greater advantage by serving more clients, and building partnerships and support with tech companies and their employees."**

**This merger provides Vista Center its third branch office in California, expanding services within the counties of Santa Clara, San Mateo, Santa Cruz and San Benito. The San Jose branch will soon offer an expanded range of vision loss rehabilitation services to an increasing number of people in the area.**

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## **New ACB Director of Advocacy**

**By Eric Bridges**

**I am pleased to announce the hiring of Clark Rachfal to be ACB's Director of Advocacy and Governmental Affairs.**

**Since 2017 Clark has served as the Program Manager, Public Policy at National Industries for the Blind. In his role at NIB he was responsible for researching and promoting legislative and regulatory policies that support the NIB mission. He cultivated relationships and collaborated with policymakers, national blindness organizations, and the cross-disability community on public policy priorities. He managed the NIB**

**Advocates for Leadership and Employment Program, directly mentoring and training more than 50 grassroots employee advocates.**

**I got to know him during his 9 years with Verizon, where he served as a legislative analyst. Our paths crossed during the negotiations for the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA).**

**In addition to his policy background, it is also important to mention that Clark is a competitive cyclist. He competed as**

recently as 2012 in the Paralympics.

Clark holds bachelor of science degrees from Towson University in political science and economics, and currently lives in Alexandria, VA.

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with his wife, Greta. His first day will be February 11th, and his email address will be [crachfal@acb.org](mailto:crachfal@acb.org).

Please join me in welcoming Clark to the ACB team!

## **Announcing the GSGDHI First Annual Silent Auction!**

**By Robert Acosta**

The GSGDHI Fundraising Committee has developed a fantastic silent auction to benefit GSGDHI. Under the coordination of Bob Acosta, and generous donations, there are five unbelievable prizes to bid upon. Noted below is a description of the silent auction.

GSGDHI welcomes you to participate in our First

Annual Silent Auction to be concluded at the CCB Convention during our GSGDHI luncheon on June 8, 2019. The bidding begins on April 1, 2019 and will be terminated at 4:00 PM PST on Friday, June 7.

We are raising funds in order to support our advocacy efforts, provide honorariums for major

program speakers at our Convention and throughout the year, and potentially, to provide funding for a GSGDHI member to attend a CCB Convention in 2020.

We are proud to present five great prizes for this Auction donated by Helping Hands for the Blind:

1. A VR TREK Stream valued at approximately \$700.00 (minimum bid is \$200.00). Description: The Victor Reader TREK includes GPS and has a large internal memory holding over 30 BARD books. (Obtained from Sweetman Systems, California)
2. The Galaxy Barcode Reader from Envision America: Valued at

\$1,200.00 (Minimum bid is \$400.00). Description: Galaxy Barcode Reader includes a huge database of items on barcodes. You can record special instructions and it has a great Help Section within the unit.

3. The Orbit Braille 20 Reader from The American Printing House for the Blind, valued at approximately \$500.00 (Minimum bid is \$200.00). Description: This unique notetaker allows you to read BARD and Bookshare books in Braille. You can create your own files and it is a handy tool for taking notes at meetings.

4. Doggie Playtime Gift Basket: Valued at approximately \$150.00 (minimum bid is \$50.00). Description: Surprise your

canine friend with this wonderful Empire Toy Bin filled with fun. The light blue Toy Bin by Harry Barker has many different dogs printed on it. In the Toy Bin you will find a large red Outward Hound Triple Treater Totter dog toy; one Grip Soft Slicker brush for sensitive skin by JW; a large bottle-shaped orange hard rubber Kong Genius toy (hide treats on the side or bottom of this toy); a blue and white Outback Jack Fonzies Zebra toy with several squeakers inside; a Simply Fido pink squeaky dog toy; 1 medium 100% natural elk antler bone; and 1 25-count package of Genie dog wipes. (Obtained from Guide Dog Users, Inc.)

**5. Magic Chef Talking Microwave Oven: Valued at \$373.00 (Minimum bid is \$150.00). Description: Big 1.0 cubic foot 1000-watt microwave is modified so functions speak. Clear male voice has 8 adjustable volume levels. Enhanced keypad: buttons speak their functions and are raised to make them easy to locate. High, medium and low power levels plus defrost. "Attend food" timer allows you to set the microwave to stop periodically for stirring or turning food. Removable glass turntable. Includes audio CD and written instructions on how to use the talking features. Note: oven does not include a digital display. Dimensions 15-3/8 by 20 by 12 inches.**

**(Obtained from Blind Mice Mega Mall.)**

### **How to Bid**

**To place a bid please contact Bob Acosta, starting April 1, 2019 at boacosta@pacbell.net or call (818) 998-0044. In your email or phone message please include:**

- 1. Your full name**
- 2. The prize(s) you are bidding on for the auction**
- 3. The amount of your bid**
- 4. Your full contact information, phone and email**
- 5. The date and time of your phone message or email**

**We plan to have a Silent Auction Table at the State Convention of the**

**California Council of the Blind. All bids need to be placed in person at the GSGDHI table or by phone via Bob Acosta's contact info no later than 4:00 pm on Friday, June 7, 2019.**

### **Auction Rules**

**All prizes will be shipped to the winners free of charge. Please give us 30 days to ship the prizes, although we hope to get them out much sooner.**

**All proceeds from this event will go to GSGDHI.**

**Our prizes are new, but we present them "as is." If you have a concern please contact the merchants.**

**For our winners, we will contact you to obtain your credit card information. When approved we will ship your prize.**

We hope you all join us in the bidding of our first silent auction, and if you have any questions, please contact Bob Acosta at the contact info noted below. Thank you for your

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willingness to participate in our Silent Auction.

**Bob Acosta Contact info**

**Email:**

**boacosta@pacbell.net**

**Phone: 818-998-0044**

## **United States of America Joins WIPO's Marrakesh Treaty as 50th Member**

The World Intellectual Property Organization issued a statement on February 8, 2019 from its headquarters in Geneva announcing that the United States has become the 50th member of the Marrakesh Treaty. Because the European Union comprises 28 states, the number of countries now adhering to the treaty comes to 78. The official notification ratification document from

Washington signed by Donald Trump has been accepted by World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Director Francis Gurry, with Mark Cassayre, the Chargé d'Affaires for the American mission to the United Nations' installation in Geneva.

And with that, as many as 550,000 accessible texts have become immediately available to visually impaired people in the



**countries that have signed the treaty. A full list of those countries is at [https://www.wipo.int/treaties/en/ShowResults.jsp?lang=en&treaty\\_id=843](https://www.wipo.int/treaties/en/ShowResults.jsp?lang=en&treaty_id=843)**

**The treaty is designed to facilitate access to published works for people who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled by creating a universal copyright exception that will allow authorized parties to "travel" accessible formats to appropriate consumers.**

**"The Marrakesh Treaty is WIPO's fastest-growing treaty and we hope it becomes a universal one soon, so visually impaired people in every corner of the globe can more easily benefit from learning and culture no matter where it**

**is created," said Mr. Gurry. "The US already houses the world's largest repository of accessible English-language material, representing a major increase in the global resource base for visually impaired people living in countries that have joined the Marrakesh Treaty."**

**"I'm proud of American leadership and the USPTO's efforts in the negotiation of the Marrakesh Treaty, and the opportunities that our ratification creates for the blind and visually impaired community in the United States and around the world," said Andrei Iancu, Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the US Patent and Trademark Office**

**(USPTO). "This treaty establishes an important mechanism to both protect intellectual property rights and expand access to information and resources."**

**"We pause to celebrate this moment as the United States formally joins the Marrakesh Treaty," said Maria A. Pallante, President and CEO of the Association of American Publishers. "Having worked so tirelessly with so many talented partners to realize a better legal framework for accessible formats, publishers now salute the many readers throughout the world who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise living with print disabilities.**

**Congratulations and happy reading!"**

**"The United States' formal membership in the Marrakesh Treaty marks a major achievement for our country and a significant positive step forward for the millions of persons who are blind and visually impaired throughout the world," said Karyn A. Temple, Acting Register of Copyrights and Director of the United States Copyright Office. "The United States will now join our fellow nations in promoting greater accessibility to print materials around the globe."**

**Information about the Marrakesh Treaty is available at**

**<https://www.wipo.int/marra>**

[kesh\\_treaty/en/](https://www.wipo.int/treaties/en/ip/marrakesh/)

and the documents, including a summary, are available at

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<https://www.wipo.int/treaties/en/ip/marrakesh/>

They include versions in Braille, full audio, and Daisy format.

## **From the CCB Scholarship Committee**

**By Christy Crespin**

The CCB Scholarship Committee is now accepting applications from CA residents attending college full time for the 2019-2020 academic year. This

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application will be open from February 1 through May 15. Please go to <http://ccbnet.org/drupal7/node/11>.

Thank you.

## **Apply to Become a 2019 DKM First-Timer: March to the Beat of a Different Drum**

**By Kenneth Semien, Sr.**

Link to this announcement on the ACB website:

<http://acb.org/2019-first-timer-awards>

Right, left, right, left, right. Step up to the plate to take advantage of future leadership opportunities. The DKM First-Timers Committee encourages members who have never attended an ACB Conference and Convention and have a desire to learn more about ACB and its rich history to march forward to participate in the DKM Experience while joining the class of over 40 current DKM First-Timers

and interact with hundreds of other members during the 58th annual ACB Conference and Convention in Rochester, New York this July, by completing all required steps listed below.

To be eligible for consideration, each applicant must meet specific requirements, which include being age 18 or older, blind or visually impaired, an ACB member in good standing, and never have attended a previous ACB national conference and convention. In addition, two letters must be

submitted for each applicant: a letter of application from the interested member and a letter of recommendation from a state or special interest affiliate president. The letter of application introduces the applicant to the committee and contains reasons for applying for the award, a brief summary of education and experience related to the applicants community service, contributions to the affiliate, and the significance of the First-Timers award to the applicant's personal or career development. The letter of recommendation should include the applicant's leadership contributions and potential. Another step of

eligibility for applicants will be the expectation of undergoing a 30 minute interview with a team of DKM committee members during mid-April.

The DKM program and ACB honors recipients by funding round-trip air travel and supporting transportation, hotel accommodations (double occupancy), per diem allowance for meals and incidentals and leadership activities, reception, banquet tickets, the general convention registration fee, and other activities determined by the committee and ACB Board of Directors. Optional tours and other fun activities are not covered by the program. The responsibilities of each recipient include, but

are not limited to attending the full week of conference and convention activities from Friday, July 5 to Friday July, 12; participating in daily general sessions, Keys to the Convention Seminar along with special-interest and committee seminars, while interacting with ACB leaders and fellow members.

Applications and supporting letters should be forwarded to Kelly Gasque, [kgasque@acb.org](mailto:kgasque@acb.org), and must be received in the ACB national office no later than April 3. Incomplete applications will not be considered. The DKM Committee will select the 2019 First-

Timers during the latter part of April. Eligible applicants will be notified shortly thereafter. The selection process will conclude with two recipients being awarded as DKM First-Timers, one from East and one from West of the Mississippi River. The DKM Committee reserves the right to recognize two recipients from the East or West, if there are no qualified applicants from one of the specified areas.

All questions should be sent to DKM Chair Kenneth Semien, Sr., [semien.k@att.net](mailto:semien.k@att.net) or dial 409-866-5838. We look forward to offering support to every applicant in an effort to ensure a rewarding experience.

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## **California Council of the Blind Board Minutes Summaries**

**Compiled by Ardis Bazyn, Secretary**

### **Board Minutes Summary, November 8, 2018, approved December 13**

**President Judy Wilkinson opened the meeting and Sharlene Ornellas and Paul Patche JR were absent. 20 guests were present. The October 11 and October 25 minutes were accepted as sent. The treasurer's report was accepted as presented. The DSI fundraising contract was cancelled. The Board approved sending an appeal letter to all on the CCB data base. The Board also voted to continue with the Dining in**

**the Dark experience using the extra events and contacts from the campaign.**

**Paul's contract will be ending November 30, but CCB is consulting with him for a week in December and January. CCB is working on a volunteer system for answering calls. The Energy Upgrade California grant for \$139,500 will get members involved in reaching low income, blind, and seniors to explain how to save on energy costs. The coordinator is Duane Koons.**

The Board has proposed a "Phoenix Committee" to check for fundraising and budgeting to move forward. [It is described in detail in President Wilkinson's column in this issue.]

Christy Crespín reported that CCB scholarships had 17 applicants. [Read Christy's Scholarship article in the Winter, 2019 BC.]

Judy mentioned that the mini treadmill project looks like it will be ready in early 2019. She mentioned chapters and committees should

continue to have volunteer hours sent to the office. The meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

**Executive Session  
Minutes Summary,  
January 10, 2019,  
approved February 7**

When the meeting was called to order, two board members were not present: Jeff Thom and Vivian Younger.

A motion to raise Nicole's salary to \$45,000 with a new letter of understanding passed. Personnel, financial, and legal matters were discussed.

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# **California Council of the Blind Officers and Directors**

**July 1, 2018**

**[Editor's note: We are indebted to Donna Sanchez who updates and corrects the list of CCB officers and Directors, 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.]**

## **Officers**

**President: Judy Wilkinson (18-20, 2nd term), San Leandro, 510-388-5079 c, judy.wilkinson@ccbnet.org**

**1st Vice President: Gabe Griffith (18-20, 1st term), Concord, gabe.griffith@ccbnet.org**

**2nd Vice President: This position will remain vacant until the next election in 2019.**

**Secretary: Ardis Bazyn (17-19, 2nd term), Burbank, ardis.bazyn@ccbnet.org**

**Treasurer: Lisa Presley-Thomas (18-20, 1st term), Fresno, Lisa.thomas@ccbnet.org**

**Immediate Past President: Jeff Thom (16-?), Sacramento, jeff.thom@ccbnet.org**

## Directors

**Sarah Harris (17-19, 1st term), Fresno,  
sarah.harris@ccbnet.org**

**Pamela Metz (17-19, 2nd term), Chatsworth,  
pamela.metz@ccbnet.org**

**Sharlene Ornelas (18-20, 2nd term), Oceanside,  
sharlene.ornelas@ccbnet.org**

**Paul Patche, Jr (18-20, 3rd term), Sacramento,  
paul.patche@ccbnet.org**

**Linda Porelle (17-19, 1st term), San Francisco,  
linda.porelle@ccbnet.org**

**Karen Shrawder (17-19, 1st term), Sacramento,  
karen.schrawder@ccbnet.org**

**Rob Turner! (18-20, 2nd term), Sunnyvale,  
rob.turner@ccbnet.org**

**Frank Welte (18-20, 1st term), San Leandro,  
frank.welte@ccbnet.org**

**Vivian Younger (\*17-19, 1st term), Downey,  
vivian.younger@ccbnet.org**

## Publications Committee

**Linda Porelle, Chair San Francisco, CA 94112,  
linda.porelle@ccbnet.org**

**Mike Keithley, Editor and Susan Glass, Associate Editor,  
editor@ccbnet.org**

**Sarah Harris**

**Roger Petersen**

**Bonnie Rennie**

**Lynne Nishihara**

**\*\*\***

## **Donations**

**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.**