The GCB DIGEST

A publication of the Georgia Council of the Blind

An affiliate of the American Council of the Blind

An organization promoting a hand up and not a hand out

Fall 2018

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From Your Editor, by Amanda Wilson

Hello, GCB Family, we thank each one who has submitted articles in this issue of our magazine. If you have any change of address, telephone number, email address or desired change of format, please inform the GCB Digest newsletter editor, Amanda Wilson at 770-547-4700, or via email at moonrocks@bellsouth.net. We would like to thank everyone who makes our GCB Digest such a big success. In particular, I want to thank our new GCB Digest newsletter committee for all of the hard work they have done on the magazine, as well as thanking our president, Alice Ritchhart, for her presidential message with information about important events, legislation and projects. I would like to let everyone know that we are trying to reconstruct the GCB Digest with more articles of interest, pictures and items contributed from our members. We would like to receive comments on what everyone thinks of this issue.

GCB Presidential Message, by Alice Ritchhart

In this President’s message I come to you with a challenge. By the time you are reading this, the upcoming elections for state office will be in full swing. With this in mind, there is a subject that is very important to us as people who are blind and have low vision. It is a subject that is very political and became that way, six (6) years ago. I am talking about Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services (GERA), and the impact it is having on those of us in the blind and low vision community.

First let’s take a little trip down memory lane. In 2012 GVRA was housed under the Department of Labor (DOL), with Commissioner Mark Butler at the helm. For the first time, during that period, we in the blind and low vision community felt we were heading in the right direction. We thought GVRA was providing the services needed, regarding employment opportunities, to ensure that we were on the right path to achieving independence and success, Paul Raymond had been hired to be the Director of services for the blind and low vision. With Mr. Raymond in place, came

dedicated counselors for the blind and low vision, along with said counselors at each one of the GVRA offices. Also, with the close work between consumer groups and Mr. Raymond and Commissioner Mark Butler, the DOL centers became more accessible to us so we could compete for the same job opportunities as our sighted peers. The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) was working to provide more vending opportunities, such as considering food trucks. Georgia Industries for the Blind (GIB) was also

considered a partner in services being provided to the blind and low vision community. They first worked to ensure that the jobs were offered to those who were legally blind, over sighted peers. Also, under the umbrella of Mr. Raymond was the program for those folks who were 55 and older, known then as project Independence with Kay McGill as the Director. Things were not perfect, but with all programs for the blind and low vision under one umbrella, we had hope for a brighter future for our community to be employed and a competing member of our state. Governor Deal was then elected, and he had different ideas about how GVRA should operate. He went to work and moved the department out from DOL to “a separate” agency. When he moved GVRA from DOL, he also managed to divide the blind and low vision community. In the end he got his way and GVRA became its own Agency. We were told our needs would be considered and that the agency would have true transparency insuring open communication. Someone legally blind was placed on the board and it did not take long to realize that our community would lose all ground, originally made to ensure that we had the services and continuity needed so we could achieve success. Except for the Atlanta office, the first thing that happened was: the dedicated counselors for the blind disappeared. Mr. Raymond was no longer the Director for the blind, but now he is a consultant to all GVRA counselors to teach them what our special needs are. In addition, the Center

for the Visually Impaired, took a big cut in their state funding. All programs such as BEP, GIB, and the older blind program are under GVRA, but each is now considered a separate entity unto itself. There is still a person who is legally blind on the GVRA board, but not sure how much he is doing to fight to ensure that the needs of blind and low vision individuals are not over looked. There is supposed to be a dedicated phone number for our community to call at GIB to apply for vocational services, but it is the best kept secret. FYI if you or someone you know wants to apply for VR services; the number to the GIB call center to apply is (888) 226-3444. In recent weeks, I have been getting phone calls from consumers who are told to call their local office, then, when they do they are told someone will get back with them, and it never happens. Also, most counselors who have a blind or low vision client seem to be lost as to what to do for them. So often they are slow to contact or return calls to their clients.

Though what should really upset the taxpayers of Georgia is that these counselors apparently don’t have a clue as to what services are available for folks who are blind and have low vision in the state. They seem to want to take federal dollars sent to Georgia, to help provide adjustment to blindness training and career training for the clients, to centers out of the state of Georgia. We have five (5) centers in Georgia who have qualified staff to provide adjustment to blindness training and have even begun to take a bigger role in employment training, but for some reason, the GVRA counselors send the clients and Georgia dollars out of state. The centers in Georgia are; the Center for the Visually Impaired (CVI), Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), Savannah Center for Blind and Low Vision (SCBLV), Visually

Impaired Foundation of Georgia (VIFGA) and Walton Options all with certified blind and low vision therapists who have specialized training in blindness and know the special needs of our community. Now after individuals have gone out of state to receive their adjustment to blindness training, they come home

and are now sitting at home waiting for assistance from their counselors to find employment. At the last GCB conference, we ask the person who is supposed to be “over blind services,

“How many legally blind and blind people have been successfully placed in a job?” As of this date, we are still waiting for the answer. We do know, as regard to the vending program, that the BEP program has only trained 20 people in the past six (6) years.

Of those 20, only 17 are currently working at a vending site. It has been reported that in the past six (6) years, 34 new vending facilities have been opened. If this is so, who is running them? With 20 having been trained, and only 17 working on site, what is going on? Furthermore, there is GIB, the call center, which takes calls from blind and low vision clients for GVRA; yet, no one knows the number to call. Again, that number is (888) 226-3444. Now, I ask, how many blind or legally blind people are currently working at this call center? We do know that under Kay McGill, the program for blind and low vision that are 55 and older, continues to meet the needs with what funding is provided from the Feds. Now to the challenge: Do you remember in the first sentence I said I had a challenge for you? Here it is, and I know you can do it, especially if you attend the advocacy/ leadership training we will provide at our October board meeting. First make sure you are registered to vote in the upcoming election. Second, contact your state legislators by visiting them in their home office or by writing them a letter through e-mail and ask them how they feel about Georgia dollars being sent out of state to train our blind and low vision clients. Also ask them what they are willing to do to make sure that GVRA provides all services needed to ensure we are fully prepared and provides career opportunities. It takes a community to make change, and that is what GCB is, a “community”. So, we must all work together to see that blind services in Georgia, are being offered to our blind and low vision citizens. If you need help to know how to contact your state legislators, contact Teresa Brenner, Betsy Grenevitch or me. Finally get out in November and vote.

Georgia Council of the Blind Board Meeting minutes, by Betsy Grenevitch

Georgia Council of the Blind Board Meeting, Via Telephone

July 21, 2018

The meeting was called to order by President Alice Ritchhart at 10:06 AM. In the absence of Fred McDade, Betsy Grenevitch was asked to give the invocation.

Adoption of the Agenda, Alice Ritchhart: President Alice Ritchhart requested a couple of changes be made to the agenda before it was adopted. She requested that we permit Teresa Brenner to present her committee report after the roll call so that she could attend a funeral. She would also move the announcement about advocacy training at this time as well. A motion was made by Deborah Lovell and seconded by Steve Longmire to adopt the agenda with these changes and it unanimously passed.

Roll Call: Those present were: Alice Ritchhart, President; Phil Jones, First Vice-President; Jamaica Miller, 2nd Vice-President; Betsy Grenevitch, Secretary; Marsha Farrow, Treasurer; Valerie Hester, Member at Large representative; Keith Morris, GCB Past President; Jerrie Toney, Athens; Deborah Lovell, Augusta; Cecily Nipper, East Georgia; Judy Presley, Greater Hall; Bronwyn Rumery, North Central Georgia; Ron Burgess, Northwest; Tonia Clayton, Rome-Floyd; Marj Schneider, Savannah; Lisa Jones, South Atlanta; Roderick Parker, Parliamentarian; Amanda Wilson, GCB Digest editor; Steve Longmire, Webmaster; and Teresa Brenner, Georgia Guide dog Users

Advocacy Committee, Teresa Brenner:

The committee met last Tuesday to discuss possible advocacy training at our in-person board meeting in October. Teresa is asking for input as to what you would like to learn at an advocacy training session. They talked about having a toolbox for those who are new in advocacy and self-advocacy. The committee is proposing that we do a workshop after the board meeting in October. They will create a toolbox to give people the tools to

learn to self-advocate. This would include a dictionary of term and how to meet your legislators. Teresa graduated from the

2006 Partners in Policy Making and others on the committee have had this training or similar training. The training would be for board members as well as members of GCB. Teresa made a motion that advocacy training be held at the end of the October board meeting and it was seconded by Deborah Lovell. Marj Schneider wanted to know who would conduct the training. Teresa said that several members on the committee are capable of presenting, but if someone has a suggestion for a presenter, the committee is open to that. They were thinking of Deborah Lovell and Elaine Byron as two of the presenters. Marsha Farrow recommended that we bring either Tony Stephens or Eric Bridges as well. Teresa will be sending out an email to the membership concerning this training. After the discussion the motion unanimously passed.

Approval of Minutes, Betsy Grenevitch:

Betsy made a motion that the minutes be approved as they were sent out via email and by phone. Lisa Jones seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

Treasurer’s Report, Marsha Farrow:

In the main checking account, we have $3835.29. She will be sending out another report to identify all of the transactions in the older blind fund in one document. There were some funds she did not have noted previously for this program. In this main check account, we have $2261.74 that is not connected with the older blind funds. Jerrie Toney told her that she has some check and deposit information concerning these funds.

GCB Conference Account: The PayPal deposits go into the GCB main account and then are transferred to the conference account. We now have $1404.56 in the conference account.

Al and Cora Camp Scholarship Fund: The balance in this account is $4979.13. We had $590.25 deposited out of the investment fund since May 2018.

GCB Money Market account: The balance in this account is $5741.58. We have this account for an emergency fund which was started by previous leadership.

Evan Barnard account: The balance in this account is $901.86. It has accrued over $50 in interest. This is money Evan raised to do Braille trails and other nature-related projects.

Long-term Investment account: We originally invested $17 thousand and now it has $18,040.36.

Way Financial Investment account: As of June, this account has $64,405.50. There was a question about how the grant was written for Evan Barnard. If it was written specifically for the Braille trails, and he is not going to use the money the money must be returned to the company who gave the grant. Alice requested that Marsha contact Evan and/or his mother about this money. Jerrie Toney said that she will look back in her records to find out how this was set up as she was treasurer when this money was given to us to hold for him. Alice said that once Jerrie has the information we will schedule a meeting with the executive board and Evan to discuss these funds.

Alice wanted to know how much money was made at the concert which took place at our conference and convention. The amount was $238. Marsha will move this amount to the scholarship account and deduct this total from the amount in the conference account. There is also $302 that is in the conference account that is designated for the first-timer scholarship. Committee Reports

Finance, Jerrie Toney: All chapter treasurers were invited to the committee meeting and the only one who came was the treasurer for the Hall County chapter. The final report as well as the conference and convention report will be sent to all chapter treasurers to discuss with their respective chapters. If there are any questions from the chapters, these can be sent to Jerrie. No one on the finance committee had any questions about any of the documents. If anyone has any questions they can ask either Marsha Farrow or Jerrie Toney.

Conference and Convention, Betsy Grenevitch:

The committee had their first meeting on July 20. Betsy has spoken to the manager at the La Quinta Inn and Suites in Covington a couple of different times. He is interested in us holding our conference and convention there. We must bring in our own food for the reception, lunch and the banquet but Honey Baked Ham is willing to do our boxed lunches for under $9 each. DJ is going to ask Chick-fil-a about catering our reception. There are fees to use the room for the meals because of clean-up and to hold the meetings. The cost is $300 per day to eat in the room and $400 per day to use it for meeting space. The room is about the size of the one we had at the last conference and convention. We will also have access to a board room that holds around 25 people. The manager has given DJ and Michelle permission to build their own temporary wall to divide up the large room. He is also going to give us a discount on the fee for using the room for food if we do our own clean-up. DJ and Michelle said they are willing to do the clean-up after the meals. Betsy Grenevitch made a motion that we hold our next conference and convention from Thursday, May 2, 2019 through Sunday, May 5, 2019, at the La Qinta Inn and Suites in Covington, Georgia. The motion was passed unanimously. Betsy asked Marsha if she felt we could offer horseback riding as an option for an activity if we asked people to sign a waiver. Marsha said that ACB allows this type of activity as part of their tours. She will have a waiver form that participants could sign.

Membership, Amanda Wilson:

We currently have 193 members. All chapters are having events, picnics, and meetings. We have a new chapter, North Central Georgia, which meets in Jasper, Georgia.

Technology, Steve Longmire:

The committee met on Thursday, July 19. The Amazon Smiles program is now completely set up. They pay four times a year 45

days after a new quarter begin. Jerrie Toney has put a direct link to Amazon Smiles on our web page. Our web page is being

looked at by other groups. Steve invited anyone to join the committee or to send him resources for our site. Steve is working on a test app for GCB It will begin with IOS/Apple. Marj Schneider thanked Jerrie and Steve for all the work that goes into the website. She was concerned that some things are out of date on the site. She suggested that a small group of people who regularly use websites review our site for usability for blind and/or sighted people who would use the site. The group would assess what might need to happen to the site so that information is there in an easy to follow order. This group could also talk about what should be featured on the home page as opposed to other pages. Marj made a motion that Madam President appoint a small ad hoc committee to do a review and assessment of the GCB website with a review of making suggestions for overall updates and changes to the site. This review would happen within a two-month period of time. Amanda Wilson seconded the motion. Marsha Farrow suggested that we have people on the focus group who have vision. Jerrie Toney brought up the point that the documentation needs to already be written before giving it to her to put on the website. Alice Ritchhart pointed out that any changes of meetings should be sent to Amanda Wilson and she would send those changes to those who publicize the changes. The motion unanimously passed.

Transportation, Phil Jones:

The committee did meet and discussed the idea of taking our transportation into our own hands. They are suggesting that each chapter form their own transportation committee and work on providing their own transportation for chapter members in the areas where they live. Marsha Farrow brought up the transportation option of Go-Go Grandparents. It uses a telephone call-in system. It is a little more expensive than Uber. They use older and more mature drivers than does Uber. You can have someone in your support system receive a text saying that you are on your way to a place. She will do a little more research on

this company for our areas. Alice told us that it does use Uber and Lyft drivers, but it has the extra piece to notify family or

friends where you are. You do not have to have a smart phone to use the service. Marsha told us that VRS uses Uber and Lyft in the 30 counties they cover. Alice asked Marsha to write a summary of the transportation options for the GCB Digest.

Fundraising, Valerie Hester:

The current ongoing fundraisers are the Kroger card, the 50/50 raffle at board meetings, the Amazon Smiles program, and the MMS program through ACB. They discussed doing a smoothie fundraiser as part of the upcoming conference and convention. Also mentioned selling products from the ACB Mini Mall with the GCB logo on them. Also, some discussion about doing a Braille Rally. Valerie Hester made a motion on behalf of the committee to find out if there is interest in a Braille Rally in 2019. At a Braille Rally you get a car club to be the drivers. You need members who know Braille and this person gives the driver the directions. You have several check-in points. At the end of the route, you have a banquet or a luncheon. There was discussion about getting donated boxed lunches for the meal. People sponsor a car to raise the funds. This would be hosted in Savannah. There would be prizes for the first three places and for a rookie Braille reader who makes it. The motion carried. The committee would like to receive any suggestions that members have for fundraisers.

Scholarship, Marj Schneider:

Marj Schneider stated that she is impressed with the number of the committees that have been meeting lately. The scholarship committee has six members. They discussed making some changes in the guidelines for the three scholarships that are offered by GCB. They talked about doing interviews with applicants. They also talked about advertising the availability of these scholarships. Marj will be revising the guidelines with respect to all three of the scholarship. She will make accommodations to the committee members who do not have email. The committee wants to try to award the academic

scholarship at the GCB conference and convention which would make the deadline March 1 for this scholarship. The awardees would be encouraged to attend the conference and convention. The committee discussed doing follow-up with the recipients a few times one the scholarship is awarded. There will also be measures for accountability for the awardees. These might include writing something for the GCB Digest and/or giving a report to the board. Marj contacted Debbie Williams and she would like to continue being involved with this committee. Marj stated that the committee needs clarity concerning what funds can be used for scholarship. This will help them know what money is available to award. She explained that a leadership scholarship could come in at any time, so the committee always needs to know what funds are available. There will be a subcommittee working on the applications for the first-timer and leadership scholarships. The members of this subcommittee are: Deborah Lovell, Jamaica Miller and Marj Schneider. The entire committee will work on the academic scholarship applications. If there is any conflict of interest someone else will be asked to help with the final decision.

GCB Digest, Amanda Wilson:

The committee met recently. Our new assistant editor is Janet Parmerter. Because the committee members are from different parts of the state, they will be able to send in articles from their chapters. They are asking members to send in articles on different topics. Betsy Grenevitch will be recording our newsletter on cartridge once the cartridges have been purchased. Some chapters have volunteered to buy the cartridges for their members. Please send in suggestions, questions, comments, and articles to Amanda Wilson. Marj brought it to our attention that the GCB brochure needs to be updated since we have a change in officers. She would like to use the brochure at White Cane Day that takes place in October in Savannah. The regular and large print versions need to be revised. Marj made a motion that the Digest committee review the brochure and make the necessary

changes, and have it completed by October 1. The brochure would be put in regular and large print versions. Betsy Grenevitch

seconded the motion. Bronwyn Rumery wanted to know if there is a digital version, and she was told that it does exist. The motion was unanimously carried.

The Older Blind, Marsha Farrow:

This fund is for people over 55 who need devices, services, or assistance in making this happen. We have purchased several devices for people from Vistas, VRS; one of our members received a pen friend, a talking clock, and some products for residents in a rehabilitation center and transportation services for the Christmas Lions Camp. We also paid for a member out of Savannah to get to the camp. We have one request pending for a telephone and one for a typing program. Alice thanked all those who have been willing to serve on committees, and she herself is also willing to serve on committees. We need more people especially for the Constitution and Bylaws committee. Jerrie Toney would also like more participation in the finance committee from chapter treasurers.

New Business:

National Scholarship to ACB, Marsha Farrow: In the past, we used to make a $500 donation toward the national scholarship fund. From 2002-2006 we started donating $50 a month toward the MMS and that was our contribution to the scholarship fund. We have not been giving to the scholarship fund since the end of the previous presidency of Alice. It has been eight years since we have made any contributions to this fund. Several members from Georgia have been given scholarships during these past eight years. Marsha made a motion to create an ad hoc committee to work in reinstating our donation to the ACB scholarship fund. Amanda Wilson seconded the motion. Deborah Lovell said, first, the committee needed to make sure that we have the funds to take care of our state scholarships. She also suggested that someone from finance be on this committee. The motion unanimously passed. The members of the committee will be: Jerrie Toney, Marj Schneider and Deborah Lovell.

A New Special Interest Affiliate, Deborah Lovell:

Deborah had been asked to investigate starting a chapter for blinded veterans. One person she spoke to was not interested in developing this chapter as he stayed busy in his community. After speaking to veterans in her chapter they feel there should be an advisory group and not a new chapter as there does not seem to be much interest. She also spoke with another blind veteran and he agrees with this idea. The group would be more of an advocacy type role. Veterans are under attack here in Georgia and across the country. We could also look at sponsoring activities for veterans.

Tabling vs. postponing a motion, Roderick Parker:

Roderick Parker, Parliamentarian, gave a brief description of the “motion to lie on the table” vs. “Postpone indefinitely” Roderick stated both motions are often misused. The motion to lie on the table is often used to kill an action rather than setting the question aside to accommodate a more pressing matter. The motion to postpone indefinitely, or object to the consideration of a question is better served when attempting to prevent the consideration of an action. Roderick has offered to do a Parliamentarian Corner in the GCB Digest.

Next meeting:

Our next meeting will be on Saturday, October 20, 2018. The advocacy committee will work on getting boxed lunches to eat during their training. The training will take place for about two hours. Teresa Brenner made a motion that we hold our next board meeting in Centerville, Georgia, on October 20, 2019. Jamaica Miller seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 12:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted by

Betsy Grenevitch, GCB Secretary

Georgia Council of the Blind, Special Board Meeting via Phone

August 30, 2018

Call to Order:

President Alice Ritchhart called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Present: Alice Ritchhart, GCB President; Betsy Grenevitch, GCB Secretary; Marsha Farrow, GCB Treasurer; Jerrie Toney, Athens; Deborah Lovell, Augusta; Cecily Nipper, East Georgia; Roy Carder, Greater Hall County; Judy Presley, Greater Hall County; Bronwyn Rumery, North Central Georgia; Ron Burgess, Northwest; Tonia Clayton, Rome-Floyd; Marj Schneider, Savannah; Lisa Jones, South Atlanta; Roderick Parker, GCB Parliamentarian; and Amanda Wilson, GCB Digest Editor.

The New Logo, Amanda Wilson:

Amanda told us that the GCB Digest committee would like to make a motion to accept the GCB peach logo for the new GCB brochure. The motion passed unanimously.

Hotel Contract, Everyone:

Alice had concerns about having to set up the room and setting up the temporary wall. Jerrie was concerned about being charged $400 per day for the ballroom. She said that we had not paid this amount for a long time. Marsha Farrow and Janet, the chair of the ACB Conference and Convention committee, spoke with Mr. Johnson via the telephone. He told them that he had a small hotel with only 56 rooms and a small staff. When he was asked what would happen if there were any damages his response was that he would have our credit card. Betsy made a motion on behalf of the Conference and Convention committee to find a different location for our conference and convention for 2019. It was

unanimously approved. Alice requested that Cecily Nipper and others be included in helping look for another hotel. Marsha suggested that we need to come up with a list of items we will accept in a contract. Alice suggested that we have a task force to work on these guidelines. Cecily wanted to know if we were supposed to look for a hotel or wait for these guidelines. Alice said that the guidelines would not be ready in time for the upcoming conference and convention.

Upcoming Board Meeting, Alice Ritchhart:

We were unable to get the Lions Club building, so we will be meeting at the Georgia Academy for the Blind in Macon. The advocacy/leadership training will be open to any GCB members who want to attend.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 7:38 PM. Respectfully submitted by Betsy Grenevitch, GCB Secretary

GCB Chapter News

The Athens chapter officers are Jerrie Toney, president; Jamie Teal, first vice-president; Ernest Bowles-Dean, second vice-president; Rebecca Verhene, secretary; and Robin Oliver, treasurer. Meetings are at MULTIPLE Choices at 145 Barrington Drive in Athens, Georgia. Fourth Saturday at 10:30 AM. Please contact Jerrie Toney at 706-461-1013 or via email at jerriemt2@gmail.com.

The Augusta Chapter officers are Deborah Lovell, president; Stanley Lopez, vice-president; Ron Worley Secretary; Kathy Morris treasurer. Chapter meetings are at the Friedman Branch Library, 1447 Jackson Road, Augusta, Georgia On the second Saturday at 1:00. Please contact Deborah Lovell at 706-726-4054, or via email at lovell.d2000@gmail.com.

The East Georgia Chapter reported that Hal Simpson was our speaker for August. He established Georgia Blind Sports. Fifty people showed up for his first tandem bike ride event. The next sport added was kayaking. He coaches three men’s Goal ball teams and one women’s team. Audio darts is also offered. We had a cochlear implant educational program in September. Our speakers were Second Vice-President Phil Jones and Secretary Linda Williams. Linda talked about the history of cochlear implants, how they work, and how they are different from hearing aids. Phil spoke of his personal experience since getting his cochlear implant. We had a guest who attended (after seeing the notice in the paper) who has had a cochlear implant for about 10 years. She shared some of her experiences. Our October speaker will be Liliana Hanley of The Gospel Light Foundation for The Blind. Our annual Board elections will be in October. Rita Harris went on a mission trip to Ghana July 20-30. This was her first mission trip. She said she went to be a blessing, but she was blessed. She felt very comfortable in the culture there. The group did VBS and a medical clinic in a very rural area. Rita was able to

visit the school for the blind. Rosetta Brown has been elected Chairman of the GLASS LCAC Committee. Thursday, August 16 from 4:30 pm until 7:00 pm the Georgia Radio Reading Service GARRS, celebrated the retirement of Phil Jones after 37 years of service. East Georgia chapter officers are Cecily Nipper, President; Ann Wheeler, First vice-president; Phil Jones, Second vice-president; Linda Williams, Secretary; Linda Cox, Treasurer; Elsie Aguilar, Brenda Maddox, and Rosetta Brown, Board Members. Georgia Chapter meetings are on the second Saturday of each month at 10:00 AM at Covington First United Methodist Church, 1113 Conyers Street, Covington. Please contact Cecily Nipper at 770-786-1551 or email roses828@comcast.net.

The Greater Hall County Chapter met on Saturday, September 8, 2018 after its summer hiatus. Dianne Roberts was back after staying with her mother, Lucy Baker, through her recent cancer treatments. Judy Presley did her customary outstanding presiding in her absence. Lucy Baker is doing much better and is almost

fully recovered from the side effects. Dianne and Harvey thank everyone for their prayers and kind expressions during this time. We had planned to commemorate International White Cane Day with activities at our local library, but due to unforeseen circumstances, this will be postponed until another time. Judy Presley is making plans for an exceptional speaker in October. Sadly, we lost two very special ladies this summer. Louise McGowan, wife of our chaplain, Matt McGowan, passed away August 3, 2018. Also, Virginia Doane, past-President of our chapter, passed away August 1, 2018. They will surely be missed. Guest speaker at the September meeting was Stephanie Pizza. Stephanie is the director of the STARS summer program at the Center for the Visually Impaired, CVI; she shared the details of the expanded summer enrichment program for children aged 5-21. We sponsored one child to this camp, and we learned a lot from Stephanie about the activities. We welcomed new members, Louise Hall, Mike's mother, Joseph Forry, and Mrs. Bell. Chapter officers are Diane Roberts, president; Judy Presley, vice-president; Sue Heskett, secretary; Roy Carder, treasurer. Board members are Don Linnartz, Bob McGarry and Harvey Roberts. Meetings are at the Smokey Springs Retirement Residence, 940 South Enota Drive, Gainesville, on the second Saturday at 10:00. Please contact Diane Roberts at 770-932-1112 or email harveyroberts2@att.net.

The North Central Georgia Chapter spent most of its September meeting discussing final plans for an upcoming fundraiser for the first weekend of October at the 38th Annual Marble Festival. The remainder of the meeting was then dedicated to Ms. Rebecca Arayan, Executive Director of the Georgia Radio Reading Services (GARRS). Ms. Arayan spoke about the various services available to GARRS patrons, its new recording facility, the various ways of accessing GaRRS and its brand new web site. Ms. Arayan encouraged those of us who have never used GARRS before, to please do so and to also visit the GRRS web site <https://garrs.org> about the valuable resource the organization can be to the blind and visually impaired. The North Central Georgia Chapter of the

Blind (NCGC) is excited to announce that we will be participating in this year’s annual Marble Festival in Jasper. This 2-day, fun-filled, activity packed festival is Lee Newton Park in Jasper on the weekend of October 6th & 7th to commemorate the discovery of marble in the north Georgia mountains. To raise funds for the chapter, NCGC will have a booth located in the arts & crafts area of the festival where we will be selling various handmade items and more that have been created by blind and visually impaired members of NCGC. Mark your calendars and make plans to visit the festival and make sure to stop by our booth. We’ll keep an eye out for you. Chapter officers are Bronwyn Rumery, president, Doug Davis, vice-President, Wendy Simone, treasurer, Rachel Simone, secretary, and Scott Rumery, board member. Chapter meetings are on the 4th Wednesday of the month from 11:00 AM until 1:00 pm. Meetings are held at the Pickens County Chamber of Commerce, 500 Stegall Drive, in Jasper. Please contact Bronwyn Rumery at 706-669-2115 at email northcentral.ga.chapter@gmail.com.

The Northwest Georgia chapter had a booth at the Jay Festival in Lafayette on August 4. Brochures, Braille cards, and muffins to were distributed to raise awareness for their chapter. Paige Griffith sang four songs to entertain passersby. Friday, August 10, 2018, Paige Griffith, played and sang some songs at the Haven. On Thursday, August 30, 2018, at 12:00 pm, they attended the Lafayette Lions club luncheon where Ron Burgess, Bethany Leigh, and Paige Griffith sang some songs. At the last chapter meeting on September 11, 2018, seventeen people were in attendance. Wendy Osteen from Vanda Prescription Company Non 24 group told them about her services. At the next meeting on October 9, out speaker is Rebecca Aryan from Georgia Radio Reading Service, GARRS. Charles, Stubblefield, Robert Sprayberry, and Billi Lloyd had birthdays in September, Bethany Leigh brought cupcakes and sang happy birthday to them. The Northwest Chapter officers are Ron Burgess, president; Fred McDade, vice-president; Bethany Leigh, secretary; Charles Stubblefield, treasurer; Robert Sprayberry, Chaplain. Meetings

are on the second Tuesday at the Bank of Lafayette Community room, 104 North Main Street, Lafayette at 1:00 pm. Please contact Ron Burgess at 706-638-1132 or email ronburgess1132@gmail.com.

The Rome Floyd county chapter’s September meeting included Chris Ingram who shared about his work and travels in the Business Enterprise Program. RITA HARRIS from Madison, Georgia, JOINED VIA PHONE and shared her experience from her Mission Trip to West Africa and a School for the Blind in West Africa. VINNY OLSZIEWSKI OF CAMPAIGNS BY VINNY PRESENTED A PROGRAM on his business as a Political Campaign Manager. At the October Meeting they are taking time to remember Martha Craig. The Rome Floyd County chapter officers are Marsha Farrow, president; Dr. Philip Dillard, vice-president; Tonia Clayton, secretary; Suzanne Jackson, treasurer; Tracey Estil, Quinn Smith and Mark Kinsley board members. Meetings are at the Rome Floyd County Library, 205 Riverside Parkway, Rome, on the third Tuesday at 11:00 am. Please contact Marsha

Farrow at 706-859-2624, or via email at marshafarrow@windstream.net.

The Savannah chapter officers: Marj Schneider, president; Bob Walls, vice-president; Teresa Brenner, secretary; Jon Bairnsfather, treasurer. Board members: Jan Elders and John McMillon. Meetings are at the conference room at J. C. Lewis Ford, 9505 Abercorn Street, Savannah the first Thursday of every month at 6:00 pm. Please contact Marj Schneider at 912-352-1415, or via email at marjschneider@bellsouth.net.

The South Atlanta Chapter officers: Lisa Jones, president; Brent Reynolds, vice-President; Chris Baldridge, secretary; Steve Longmire, treasurer. Board members: Sam Howard, Maquatia Dutton. Meetings are at the Piccadilly Cafeteria, 2000 Crescent Center Boulevard, Tucker on the second Thursday from 4:30 until 6:00 pm. Please contact Lisa Jones at 404-556-8987.

Georgia Guide Dog Users, GDDU News, by Betsy Grenevitch

The Georgia Guide dog Users is an affiliate of Guide dog Users, Inc. You do not have to be a guide dog user to be a part of our group and we would love to have you as a member or an associate member. We try to meet at least twice a year—once during the Georgia Council of the Blind State Conference-Convention and once in the fall. We are still involved with the ADA committee at the Atlanta Airport. I was not able to make it to the last meeting which was held on October 2 and due to technical difficulties was not able to listen to it either. I am trying to get notes from it in an accessible format that I hope to share later. On September 29, we had our in-person meeting at disability Link in Decatur, Georgia. We held elections and our new officers are as follows:

President, Betsy Grenevitch; Vice-President, Sam Hogle; Secretary, Marj Schneider; Treasurer, Alice Ritchhart; and the board seat we had to replace are now Tonia Clayton. Dottie Langham is still on the board as a director as well. I want to thank everyone for being willing to serve in these positions. We watched the documentary “Pick of the Litter” after we completed the business portion of our meeting. During the documentary we enjoyed a delicious lunch from Subway. Please contact Betsy Grenevitch at 770-464-0450, or blindangel@joimail.com. Web site: [www.georgiaguidedogusers.org](http://www.georgiaguidedogusers.org)

GCB In Memory of:

Edna Virginia Bosler Middleton Doane aged93, passed away on, Wednesday, August 1, 2018.

Louise Elizabeth (Westbrook) McGowan, 90, formerly from Chattanooga, Tennessee, passed away on Friday, August 3, 2018.

Martha Underwood Harrison Craig, age 85- and 15-year resident of Rome, GA, was called home on Monday, September 10, 2018.

Stella Carol Cone passed away on Thursday, September 13, 2018.

Martha Craig By Marsha Farrow

Martha Underwood Craig passed peacefully on September 10th, 2018 at 10:30 PM with her son John at her bedside. She was in hospice care at Floyd Medical center in Rome, Georgia. She had experienced serious health issues especially over the past two years. There was a Celebration of Life Gathering on Friday evening, September 14th from 4 PM-7 PM for family and friends at John and his wife Danalee Harrison’s home. John is Ms. Craig’s eldest son. The Rome-Floyd County Chapter of GCB was welcomed to gather and share memories of Martha! Funeral Services were held at Winkenhofer Pine Ridge Funeral Home in Kennesaw, Georgia on Saturday September 15, 2018 at 10:00am. Later in the afternoon, Family gathered at the Underwood Family plot for grave side services at Hill View Cemetery in LaGrange, Georgia where she was laid to rest beside her two infant daughters. Ms. Craig was a longtime Member of the Rome-Floyd County Chapter of GCB and at the time of her death was serving as Chapter Chaplin. She rarely missed a meeting and she loved GCB and understood the difficulties of having both serious hearing and vision loss. She had Usher’s Syndrome which profoundly impacted her life as she lost most of her hearing and vision. Ms. Craig often told how in 2009 she was at one of the most discouraging points in her life when Vision Rehabilitation Services of Georgia enabled her to have a life changing experience! She discovered that she was not alone when she attended the Helen Keller Confident Living Training Directed by Paige Berry of Helen Keller National Center in New York. The Confident Living Training was designed specifically for people who had serious hearing and vision loss. The training took

place in Chattanooga, Tennessee in April 2009. This experience open doors and meant so much as Ms. Craig was a retired nurse who lost the ability to work, due to her vision loss, after 22 years serving nursing home residents. She understood the medical issues faced by the lack of clear communication with health care providers. Since she had already experienced the loss of employment brought about by hearing and vision loss she was

fully aware that she and others had no choice, but to leave employment due to hearing and vision loss. At the time of her job loss, she had no knowledge of employment services for people with disabilities. Ms. Craig kept in the fight and finished well in her relentless efforts to raise awareness regarding Usher’s Syndrome and other debilitating diseases effecting both hearing and vision. She never gave up on her hope and dreams despite her years of age. At the time of her death at age 85, she continued to advocate for people who are visually and hearing impaired. Even during her most recent serious physical illness, Ms. Craig took every opportunity to teach medical professionals how to interact with patients who had both hearing and vision loss. She encouraged the hospital and nursing home employees to be inclusive of her and others as she emphatically informed medical personnel that she had a “Good Mind”! She highly resented anyone equating her vision and hearing loss with aging and dementia! Ms. Craig had been served well by many community resources for her sensory loss issues and her failing health. She had received support services from Vision Rehabilitation Services of Georgia (VRS) based in Smyrna, Georgia. VRS served Ms. Craig for over 20 years to meet her safety and independent living needs as well as providing continued support for teaching coping strategies as she made necessary adjustments to both hearing and vision loss. In 2010, funds were raised jointly by Nancy Parkin-Bashizi of VRS; GCB Rome; and Rome LIONS Club to purchase a William Sounds Listening System. The William Sounds Device provided priceless

listening assistance, so Ms. Craig could fully participate in a variety of activities and discussions. Another life changing event was when Kay McGill, Director of Georgia’s Vision Program for Seniors provided a Perkins Brailler and Ms. Craig was so very proud of herself as she learned the braille code. Dr. Philip Dillard and his wife Carolyn of Cedartown, Georgia provided years of braille instructions and Ms. Craig loved every moment! The Dillard’s are also members of the GCB Rome-Floyd County Chapter. Further support came from, Delana Hickman, Librarian and Director of the former Talking Book Library based in Rome.

Mrs. Hickman had received a donation of a Video Eye Reading System and this was donated to Ms. Craig. She often spoke of this as her life saver and was thrilled as this Video Eye, allowed her to continue reading and writing until her most recent decline in her physical health. Her continued in-home health care needs were met by Coosa Valley Home Health Agency. The Coosa Valley Staff was always there as needed. Tressa Chub, her favorite Social Worker, along with the professional nursing and therapy staff at Coosa Valley Home Health provided critical health care services which enabled her to continue living independently until three months ago. Senior housing was provided and with the assistance of Donna and Patty administrators of The Villas Apartments of Rome, Ms. Craig had some wonderful years! These two ladies were both major supports and always encouraged Ms. Craig to live independently and she did until the last three months of her life when she needed intensive medical care not available at The Villas. Ms. Craig had a younger son Michael Harrison of South Dakota and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Her adult Grandson Daniel was extremely supportive and understood how to assist his Grandmother with her vision and hearing needs. She was very proud of her family! The Rome GCB Chapter along with Ms. Craig’s family is accepting memorial donations for a project in support of individuals who are deaf-blind. If you would like to donate, please send your donations to:

Martha Craig Deaf-Blind Memorial Fund

C/o The Georgia Council of the Blind

PO Box 381

Trion, Georgia 30753

Martha, we will miss you terribly and we will make every effort to carry on your dreams… We will strive to provide greater support for people with dual sensory loss and educate service providers on these critical communication barriers. We will include medical service providers as we promote awareness of people who are deaf-blind especially as these issues relate to the aging process. Martha, you did the best you could so now rest in peace…

If anyone would like to send a sympathy card to Ms. Craig‘s family, please mail to 620 Flowery Branch Road, Kingston, GA 30145. Martha…We won’t Forget your Dreams!

The Parli-post By Roderick M. Parker

Some motions you should know:

Request for information is also called a Point of Information is a request directed to the chair, or through the chair to another officer or member, for information relevant to the business at hand. Amends allows modification to another motion by adding, deleting, or changing words. Parliamentary inquiry allows a member to ask a procedural question. Point of order calls attention to an error in procedure. Main motion brings business before the assembly; permitted only when no other motion is pending. Commit or Refer allows a matter to be sent to a committee to consider and report back.

GCB Scholarships by Marj Schneider

Each year the Georgia Council of the Blind awards several scholarships of up to $1000 through the Al Camp Memorial Scholarship Fund, to support blind and visually impaired students in their academic pursuits.

Currently, the guidelines for this scholarship are being revised, but scholarships will once again be awarded in 2019. Please share

this information with high school and college students who are blind or visually impaired throughout the State of Georgia and encourage them to visit the GCB website for updated scholarship instructions and guidelines. GCB also offers its members the opportunity to apply for a leadership or first timer’s scholarship. The leadership scholarship provides financial support to GCB members who want to attend seminars or other training opportunities to develop their leadership skills. The first timer’s scholarship provides financial support to one member who has not attended the annual GCB conference and convention to participate for the first time. Updated guidelines and procedures to apply for both the leadership and first timer’s scholarship are available on the GCB website.

“My Temperamental Talking Timepiece”, by Janet Di Nola Parmarter

<http://www.aisquared.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/JANET-LEADS-TOUR-GROUP-IN-FLORENCE-ITALY002.jpg>>

My Talking Watch by Janet Di Nola Parmerter

“In recent decades, an unfeeling thief has robbed a valuable possession from thousands of men and women. In some cases, this thief quietly appears at night, long gone by morning, stealing their most precious irreplaceable treasure, their sight. The name of this culprit is Macular Degeneration. It has been a devastating shock for many, but thanks to modern technology, coping with this disease has become easier. Since the age of nine, I have struggled with this now familiar eye disease. Therefore, I for one am grateful technology did not leave the blind in the dark. For visually impaired individuals, talking aids now make independence a reality. For example, in my home, there are clocks talking from different rooms, different handbags, and different times of day and night. There are talking desk clocks, talking alarm clocks, talking kitchen clocks, talking travel clocks,

talking stopwatch clocks, talking calculator clocks, and talking wristwatches everywhere. These clocks are all shapes and sizes, but the tiniest is the talking mini clock in my purse. In our quiet home, when the hour strikes, and all clocks begin speaking this synchronized cacophony of voices, my usually patient husband wants to see time fly…right out the window! When having overnight guests, I attempted to turn off each clock but inevitably would miss one. Kindly, my daughter began warning our guests about the speaking clocks, after they terrified two of our Italian friends. The two girls said they were frightened all night, “Earing dee leetell teeny voices.” Now this story, and believe me there are many, many clock stories, began in Europe. Unfortunately, for this clock, it also ENDED there. That troublesome watch would never take another trip with me. Its next journey was a solo, non-stop direct flight to the garbage pail. However, in its

defense, it did have one redeeming feature…its size. It was the tiniest little thing, the size of a credit card, with a small, square, raised button. When this button was pushed, it announced the time in a female voice. The problem was, this tiny square was raised just enough so if anything inside my purse touched the button, the clock automatically began an irritating time announcement. Often, the button stuck in the talk position, and repeated the time like a rap song. If the clock showed 5:36 PM, it would rap… “ffifififififive ththithithithirty sisisix.” Compounding that annoyance, right before its demise, it plagued me with a new dysfunction. Whenever it became cold, it started making strange high-pitched screeching electronic sounds, and stopped only after warming up. All that, rapidly lead to this tiny ticker downward plunge to “the old clock graveyard.” At work, this tiny talking clock was indispensable and always with me. Being in the travel industry, arriving at each museum, city or hotel on time was essential. With my visual impairment, as strange as it may seem, for decades I have escorted groups of American tourists to foreign countries. My goal was, and still is, to help their International vacation be as fun and problem free as possible. Though, Europe is my forte I have accompanied groups to places like China, Russia, and the Middle East. With assistive tools for

the blind, like my typical white cane, and talking devices, I can lead tourists around tiny quaint villages, to bustling world capitals. Honestly, I must admit because I was a skier, my favorite tours of all were ski tours to the western states, and the

majestic Alps of Italy, France, Austria, and Switzerland. At that point in time, my next job was a ski tour in Switzerland. However, as you will soon come to find out, this infuriating clock’s time was definitely up! To set the scene, we must move back counterclockwise in time, to my final tour with that crazy clock. The saga began as my tour group departed from a ski trip in the Jung Frau region of Switzerland. After the one-week tour, we included a three-day stopover in Belgium. In order to catch the first flight from Zurich to Brussels, we had to wake up at 4:00 AM. Though the group only had a few hours’ sleep, everyone seemed comfortable on the plane except me. I was freezing!

Under my seat was a crack on the floor to the unheated cargo area below. A constant icy cold breeze blew directly on my feet and I was miserable. My legs were bitter cold, and the liquid contents inside my purse froze solid. As if things were not bad enough, all of a sudden, this continuous, high-pitched, piercing sound exploded from my purse. It was my tiny, temperamental timepiece again reacting to its intense hatred of cold. Quickly, I cupped the credit card size clock in my hand trying to warm it up and curtail the exasperating electronic shrieks. But, regrettably, it screeched even louder! In an effort to muffle the shrieks, while still in a sleep-deprived state of confusion, I thought I could stop the piercing sound by tucking it next to my belly under the waistband of my pants. Soon, the clock warmed up and Little by little the shrieks lessened until there was silence. Being thoroughly exhausted, in seconds I drifted into a comatose sleep. Surprisingly, the rough landing did not even wake me. Suddenly, someone shook me and laughed, “Wake up! We’re in Belgium!” Startled, I awoke in a daze, and again heard others from my tour group shout, “Hey, you have to get up, we’ve landed, and the plane is half empty!” Still somewhat asleep, I grabbed my purse and coat, and by instinct jumped to my feet stretching my arms up to open the overhead bin. Simultaneously, as I stretched up

and pull out my carry-on, the tiny clock shifted from my waistband, slid down my silky panty hose, and stopped at the top of my thigh just below my crotch. As a result, every time I put my right leg forward to take a step, my thigh pushed on the raised button and in a muffled voice, my crotch proudly announced the time. Unavoidably with every agonizing step I took, my crotch blatantly said, “Its 8:30 AM, its 8:30 AM, its 8:30 AM.” Sylvia, a friend from back home, burst into a fit of laughter because she knew the muffled, crotch time announcement was my crazy clock. People looked around, turned their heads and wondered where this semi-muffled time announcement was coming from. With a confused and embarrassed red face, I tried to ignore people who curiously stared at my crotch. At first, I wondered whether I should stop and try to dig it out. DUHH, NO! What was I thinking? As I envisioned a bizarre scene of digging

the clock out of my pants, I reasoned, that would LOOK really, really strange! In a split second, after weighing the matter of sound verses looks, I decided I would much rather SOUND really, really strange, than LOOK even stranger, so I left it in my pants.

As if things were not bad enough, my crotch watch changed into that funky STUCK rapper mode, as I began strutting down the long, seemingly endless aisle. With each agonizing step my discomfort grew as my crotch did its wrap thing with, “It’s eh ehh ehh ehh eight thi thir thir thir thirty-two.”

“It’s eh ehh ehh ehh eight thir thir thir thir thirty-two.”

“It’s eh ehh ehh ehh eight thir thir thir thir thirty-two.”

Hysterical laughter came from my tour group, but I had a sickening feeling when I heard the dragged-out wrap version of, “It is 8:32, 8:33, and 8:34.” Frantically, in an effort to shut the humiliating thing up and stop my thigh from pressing on the button, I began dragging my right leg behind me. As a result of this abnormal gait, I looked like Quasimodo doing a STEP / DRAG, STEP / DRAG, STEP / DRAG. Again, weighing the level of embarrassment in my choices, I wondered which brought me a greater feeling of humiliation, the talking crotch watch or the Quasimodo drag. Either way, to say the very least, it was a mortifying choice! As I recall, I did a little combo of the two, then

finally came to the end of the plane. With my tour group waiting in the terminal, my hysterics turning to tears, and my makeup running down my face, Sylvia and I prepared to disembark. As we turned left to walk through the galley, Silvia looked ahead, then covered her mouth and bent over with laughter. Through her giggles, she forced out the words, “Get this Janet, the whole crew is lined up, shaking hands, and saying good-bye to every passenger leaving the plane.” Sure enough, there they were; the pilot, the co-pilot, and seven flight attendants, perfectly lined up like officers at attention bidding farewell to their troops. It was certainly an impressive gesture on the part of Sabina airlines, but, I groaned, “Of all times, what timing, not now, WHY now?” In all my years of tourism, this was the first time I ever experienced nine people from a flight crew on a happy handshake line. Even the “Friendly Skies” of United were not THAT friendly.

In any case, considering my current dilemma, that lineup was a bit too friendly for me! All of a sudden, like a cartoon light bulb appearing over someone’s head, a crazy thought came into my mind. If I slipped into the cockpit until everyone left the plane, I could sneak out when the cleaning crew entered. For two seconds I actually contemplated that outlandish idea. Could that work? Instantly, I dismissed the delusional thought with a shake of my tired and giddy brain. First, that thought was insanity, and second, I had a tour group waiting for me to bring them to baggage claim. Giving my head a good left to right shake, I tried to clear my brain and wondered if there was a chance I could slide past that so-called, “jolly flight crew line” without being noticed. That was something I was NOT sure of. However, there was something I was sure of, I would NOT stroll past this group dragging my leg behind me and looking like some red-faced hysterical Hunchback of Notre Dame. At this point, Silvia and I desperately tried to stop laughing, regain our composure, and prepare for the inevitable. After straightening my posture and lifting my head, I took a deep breath and tried to have a confident, poised and businesslike appearance. Was I now prepared to meet each one of the polite, well-mannered and friendly crew? Of course not! But, taking one last deep breath, I

wiped tears off my face pulled my shoulders back, then boldly walked toward the airline cheerleading squad. With a somewhat stern, professional face, I extended my hand forward, shook hands with each one, thanked them for a safe flight, and tried to act indifferent when my crotch proudly announces “its 8:38, its 8:38, it’s 8:38!!!” Silvia chuckled as she whispered,

“The crew is looking all around with puzzled, confused faces,” then added, “They’re looking at the floor, at their legs, at each other, then uncomfortably at your crotch.” Yes, they were wondering where this strange muffled time announcement came from.” Therefore, with my face still expressionless, I politely said good-bye to all nine-airline personnel, and pretended I heard absolutely nothing from my impertinent, impolite, and infuriating… “TALKING CROTCH WATCH.”

Raindrops on Roses – 3 Ways to Control Your Thoughts and Foster Resilience by Kimberley Duff

Rain drops​on roses

And whiskers on kittens

Bright copper kettles and warm woolen mittens

Brown paper packages tied up with strings

These are a few of my favorite things

Girls in white dresses with blue satin sashes

Snowflakes that stay on my nose and eyelashes

Silver-white winters that melt into springs

These are a few of my favorite things

​When the dog bites

When the bee stings

When I'm feeling sad

I simply remember my favorite things

And then I don't feel so bad

As a child with pediatric brain cancer, I recall listening to this song while in the hospital over and over to get through the many struggles I encountered.

This song describes something that psychologists and counselors study and try to impart during therapy… the impact of our thoughts on our feelings and overall mood.

Here I examine 3 ways to foster this resilience and pattern of thinking including developing an optimistic outlook through interventions such as cognitive behavioral therapy, meditating on scripture and using imagery and mindfulness to foster psychological well-being. More...Whether we are going through a chronic illness, dealing with financial problems or dealing with a disability, we each possess the key to resilience and happiness in the midst of adversity. We are able to think thoughts and rehearse words to find strength and courage in the worst circumstances.

The Power of Positive Thinking

Winston Churchill said, “A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty,”

According to Webster’s dictionary optimism is:

1: a doctrine that this world is the best possible world."

​2: an inclination to put the most favorable construction upon actions and events or to anticipate the best possible outcome

I often talk to clients about creating a fence for their thoughts. Based on this definition, the optimistic individual creates a thought fence that allows him or her to ignore negative evidence and get encouragement from positive influences.

Optimists: Choose to dwell on positive subjects and choose to believe evidence that supports a favorable outcome

develop a “thought fence” that only allows for favorable interpretations and conclusions

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a type of counseling therapy in which the therapist works with the client to modify his or her beliefs about their situation to change the way they react and respond to events and circumstances.

Using cognitive behavioral therapy [https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/what-is-cbt-definition-meaning/(CBT)](https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/what-is-cbt-definition-meaning/%28CBT%29) I assist the individual by disputing negative thoughts and perceptions. I teach them to recognize faulty thought patterns and help them develop a healthier outlook on their situation.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):

Helping the subject change their thoughts to productive, positive cognitions.

Meditating on Scripture and Other Positive Messages:

Anyone who worried in the past about a situation understands the concept of meditation. When we meditate on something, we examine it closely and rehearse it mentally and focus on its various angles and components. In Isaiah 40:31 we see the role of waiting on the Lord and meditating to receive strength and direction. ” They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

In Joshua 1:8 we see the role of speaking scripture and meditating on God’s word. “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night… for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success”

Facing our fears through scripture and positive thoughts.

When I look back on my experience of childhood brain cancer, I realize that my thoughts played an important role in overcoming my diagnosis.

I remember preparing for brain surgery and telling myself that everything would be ok with thoughts such as, “I’ve had surgery before and everything was ok afterwards, so this will also turn out well,” I also remember seizures and rehearsing the thought,” this always stops eventually, and it will eventually stop once again,” Another thought I rehearsed over and over again was a statement my mom made after I lost my sight, “you can still do

all of the things you wanted to do before, you’re just going to have to learn to do things differently now.” I also remember listening to hours of healing scriptures. I believe this played an important role in overcoming what the doctors called “terminal cancer”. When facing fear, memorize scriptures such as II Timothy 1.

GCB Digest articles

The GCB Digest committee wishes to announce some new topics for articles for our newsletter. Please feel free to pick one of the following topics, write an article about that subject then send it to us. Recipes, easily made in a few minutes; VoiceOver friendly iPhone apps; K9 Korner, which could be about any pet or guide dog; Ponder This, could include a question about blindness related issues; Trends Things; items used in your everyday life; Travel, could include traveling around your community, your state, your nation or abroad; Riddles; Brain Teasers; trivia, could be about GCB or other subjects; Fundraising, could include activities in your chapter, in your community or in the state; Older Blind, could include activities or equipment for people over the age of 55; Fun Stuff, could include Hobbies, crafts or leisure activities; Helpful Hints, could be anything useful at home or garden; Essay contest Write an essay; Janet Parmerter will read it and give recognition to the winner.

Interview Corner with Audrey Menefee by Janet Parmerter

Audrey Menefee is a local Georgia artist who created a tactile model and a visual design for the new GCB logo. This design is

unique for Georgia, “The “Peach State”, and is a delicious looking peach with a tiny stem, and a long green leaf hanging down the left side of the peach. Clearly drawn in the center of this colorful peach, are three capital letters GCB, with the corresponding Braille letter under each letter. Raising the peach up, is a strong non-descript hand with the thumb facing the viewer, while caressing the rest of the peach are the other fingers. Below the peach, Georgia Council of the Blind is in an upward semi-circle, while above the peach, in a downward semi-circle, is the phrase,

“A Hand Up, Not a Hand Out” When asked why she created this design, Menefee said, “First of all, I have so many projects I’m asked to become involved in, and I could volunteer for many good non-profit programs, but I have to caution myself to be balanced. Quite frankly, when you called me with the idea of creating a peach logo for the GCB, I was more than happy to do it for you, because I have always admired the time you spend bringing accessible spiritual items to blind individuals throughout the United States. So, if you felt this was important for your blind community, and I could give my art to assist you to help the blind, then I wanted to support your idea.” After expressing her sincere comment, Audrey recently donated this design for the GCB, out of her desire to do something positive for our blind community. Yet, her personal story is both interesting and exciting. Coming from generations of professional artists, in 1967, Audrey Menefee took private lessons in fine art. Rather than taking group classes, she chose these private lessons to insure she could develop her own style, and not be locked into the style of one regimented standard class. www.audreymenefee.com<

<http://www.audreymenefee.com>>

In her vast body of works, the specialty of this Loganville resident is wildlife and portraits. With paintings in The Caribbean, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, and Japan, she is renowned as a worldwide artist.

Yet, having clients like the National Wildlife Federation, MasterCard, the Atlanta Zoo, J&B Scotch, the Kentucky Derby, and with paintings hanging in homes of Celebrities, museums, galleries, golf clubs and much more, her fame extends also

throughout the United States. Being published in a variety of magazines like Better Homes and Garden, Ebony, Golf Living Digest, Taxi, Season's, Designer Direct, Living Space and Georgia Agriculture has made her work sought by professionals and the private sector alike. Audrey’s work has been seen on the TV show living with Soul, and many feel she is a silent celebrity in her own right. Personally, I am most impressed by her current work with PPAATH, the acronym for Protect and Preserve African American Turf History. <http://www.PPAATH.org>

This mesmerizing series was commissioned to raise awareness and give tribute to the forgotten African American Jockeys of the Kentucky Derby. From 1875 to 1902, these famous jockeys made the Kentucky Derby what it is today. By Audrey’s stunning and riveting portraits, of these once forgotten jockeys, their story now comes alive. Exquisitely displayed in the Louisville, Kentucky Center for African American Heritage, is Audrey’s painting of Isaac Murphy (1861to 1896), a three-time winner of the Kentucky Derby. In 2016, the famed Churchill Downs commissioned Menefee to do a painting of the 1877 winner, William "Billy" Walker (1860 to 1933). This enthralling painting is now being displayed in the new addition of the clubhouse. <http://www.PPAATH.org>

Audrey admits, “At literally hundreds of art shows, people often comment that the eyes in my portraits express so much emotion. That means a lot to me, because my goal is to convey emotion with my art.” It seems Audrey accomplished her goal, because many have said, if you stare at these now remembered jockeys, and gaze deeply into their eyes, you can almost feel the sense of pride, power and prestige they once felt. From the delicate strokes of Audrey’s paint brush, these emotions are clearly conveyed by the exquisite and precise use of shade and color.

“I read about the jockeys”, Menefee explained, “then, after studying them I tried to put their personality into their portraits.”

When asked what goal she had for her design, Audrey responded,

“Well, even though the logo is for a blind organization, I wanted it to be beautifully painted, to visually draw people to it so they would become involved in the message of the logo. As a fund

raiser, I envisioned it on T-shirts, mugs and other items, so I wanted it to be visually appealing to all consumers.” Knowing how serious Audrey is about her art conveying emotion, I asked how she transmitted that into her art for the blind. “As I mentioned, I want emotion in my art, but all these years, I never considered that blind people cannot see the emotion in my work, so I began giving that concept serious consideration. Maybe I can explain it better like this; when you have a gallery show, an artist is putting themselves out there for people, and you are hoping to touch their heart. Now, with the blind community, I’m trying to design ways to reach their mind and hands, to eventually touch their heart.” That led to the question, “Was that why you also made a tactile model of the logo?” “Yes, when I paint, all the paintings begin in my mind. I see it in my head before I paint it. So, I wanted to also create the physical tactile peach, so everyone can feel it and see my logo in their minds eye. The visually impaired may be able to see some of my logo, but, I didn’t want anyone to be left out, so I also made the tactile model. For a blind person to see in their head, the emotion that I want to create, well, that is just unbelievable to me.” In conclusion, Audrey Menefee added these final words, “As I mentioned, I want emotion in my art, but all these years, I never considered that blind people may not see and feel the emotion in my creations. I know I have a gift that I can share with the blind, so when you asked me to sketch a peach, I wanted to do more than sketch it, I wanted people to emotionally feel your Georgia peach idea. Now, I feel privileged to offer not only a colorful logo, but, also the tactile model to the blind community. I prayed a lot about doing art for the blind, and with the joy I am receiving from doing this, and making tactile scripture shadowboxes, I feel like my prayers have been answered.” Therefore, the GCB committee feels honored to announce, that Audrey Menefee, such a prestigious and respected artist, designed our new Georgia, the peach state, Council of the blind Logo. In addition, Audrey made a tactile model of the logo, which she presented to the GCB on October 20, 2018, at the Macon Academy of the Blind. Everyone will be able to feel this logo peach at the next GCB state convention. Thus, we

wholeheartedly thank you Audrey, for using your God given talent and Christian love, to create something meaningful for all blind ones in Georgia and the members of the Georgia Council of the Blind.

Ponder This by Bronwyn Rumery, NCGC President

Note: This is a new section of the Digest. Please send any comments, suggestions or a pondering

Question you would like to have discussed to Digest Editor Amanda Wilson, Bronwyn Rumery or any member of the Digest Committee.

How do you handle social events as a blind or visually impaired person? Most people would say that I am a very comical, out-going, fun-loving individual, but I will let you in on a little secret. I am not this way at all when it comes to large social events, especially those where I am the only blind person attending. I

Have no problem going to an event such as a lady’s retreat, support group or a concert. However, put me In a situation where I have to mingle with others or have a discussion with more than just one person at a time, well, that’s when the butterflies in my stomach start performing somersaults! While attending social gatherings, it amazes me still, how I will eventually wind up sitting alone twiddling my thumbs or after starting up a conversation with someone, will wind up talking to empty space or an inanimate object because the individual walked away and never returned. These situations can be quite frustrating to those of us who cannot see and who are trying their best to participate within a sighted environment. I must admit that it was a great deal easier attending such events when I had my now retired guide dog Jadyn at my side, because I could just have a conversation with her and eventually someone would want to know more about my guide and that would break the ice, and all would be fine with the world.

However, I don’t think that will work now that I am back to using a cane and I truly don’t want to take the risk of being hauled off to the local sanitarium! Therefore, I usually take a deep breath, hope that the trampoline jumping butterflies within my stomach will eventually dissipate and force myself to attend some type of event where I usually wind up having a pretty good time.

How do you as a blind or visually impaired individual handle social event? Send your responses to the following email address northcentral.ga.chapter@gmail.com and who knows, you might have it printed in the next Digest.

Georgia Blind Lions: Bringing blind lions together in service. By Mike Hall

As I attend district meetings of Lions Clubs, I notice more blind folks who are Lions. It was at a district cabinet luncheon where I first met GCB Secretary Betsy Grenevitch. As I listened to Betsy's conversation with her daughter Michelle, I kept hearing them mention James. I thought, “Wow! These guys brought a baby to the cabinet meeting.” Then I learned that James is a dog. It is quite fitting that people who are blind are part of Lions Clubs. After all, in 1925, Helen Keller challenged Lions to become knights of the blind. In 1932, it was a Lion in Peoria Illinois who began to promote the use of the white cane by blind travelers after he noticed a friend working with a dark cane that could not easily be seen by drivers. The work of this Lion to help pass laws giving the right of way to blind pedestrians with white canes resulted in the annual White Cane Safety day, officially celebrated on October 15th. Lions have helped to support such organizations as the Hadley School for the Blind, now the Hadley institute, Learning Ally, the Georgia Lions Camp, the Georgia Lions Lighthouse and much more. A group of blind lions in Georgia has formed Georgia Blind Lions. This organization brings

blind Lions together via conference call each month, on the first Thursday evening of the month at 8:00 P.M. Blind Lions receive

updates from the Georgia Lions Camp, formerly the Georgia Lions Camp for the Blind and the Georgia Lions Lighthouse, an organization that provides eye glasses, eye surgeries and hearing aids to uninsured Georgians. In addition, members on the conference call share happenings from their local Lions Clubs, where most blind members serve with their sighted lions club members. Guest speakers from other states are invited on the call to share their Lions experience and to share ideas from their clubs. An added bonus is that folks can stay on the Thursday night call and join the ACB Lions conference call at 9:00 P.M. being a part of Georgia Blind Lions helps a blind lion to learn, grow and share information with his or her local club. Georgia Blind Lions attempts to have a meeting in person once a year at the Georgia Lions state convention. Officers are elected to serve from July 1 till the following June 30th, coinciding with the Lions year. Fund raisers such as Georgia Blind Lions T shirt sales; help the group to provide scholarships to the Georgia Lions Camp. The next conference call is set for Thursday October 4, 2018 at 8:00 P.M. Carla Ruschival from the Kentucky Council of the Blind and a member of the Downtown Louisville Lions Club will be the guest speaker. If you are a lion and you would like to be on the call, get in touch with Betsy Grenevitch, co-chair of the Georgia Blind Lions and she will give you the information you need. Contact Betsy via email at blindangel@joimail.com. You may call Betsy at 770 464-0450. We would love to have you join the fellowship of the Georgia Blind Lions.

GCB Digest Deadline: The next deadline for articles for the GCB Digest is Monday, December 17, 2018.

GCB Dues Reminder: It is time to start thinking about paying your dues to be a member of the Georgia Council of the Blind for 2019. The dues are $15.00. This increase was voted on to cover the cost of liability insurance for GCB board members. You can

pay your dues at your chapter meeting, or if you are a member at large you can send a check to Marsha Farrow who is the GCB treasurer. The GCB treasurer contact information is as follows: Marsha Farrow, GCB Treasurer, and P O Box 381, Trion GA 30753. You can also pay your dues by using pay pal on our web site. The web address is [www.georgiacounciloftheblind.org](http://www.georgiacounciloftheblind.org). By paying your dues you are a member of your local chapter; a member at large; a member of the Georgia council of the Blind; and a member of the American Council of the Blind. By paying your dues you will receive a quarterly newsletter from the Georgia Council of the blind and a monthly newsletter from the American Council of the Blind. Thank you for supporting the Georgia Council of the Blind. If you have any questions please contact Marsha Farrow, the GCB treasurer at 706-859-2624 or via email at marshafarrow@windstream.net.

GCB Digest Deadline:

The next deadline for articles for the GCB Digest is Monday, December 17, 2018.

GCB Audio Reminder:

## If you receive a digital cartridge version of the GCB Digest, please flip your card over and return it to us. If you lose your cartridge you will have to purchase another cartridge on your own.

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