## The logo picture is inside a light-yellow circle, with words at the top and bottom in large, upper case, bold black letters. The top of the circle reads, ‘A HAND UP NOT A HANDOUT.’ Under the circle, the words are, ‘GEORGIA COUNCIL OF THE BLIND.’Diagram  Description automatically generated In the center of the circle is a pencil drawing in gray tones. It is a palm of an open right hand cradling a Georgia peach. At its top, from the left side of a short brown stem, a thin green leaf hangs down and over the thumb. The peach has colors like the warmth of the sun. The vivid yellow and orange colors contrast with the black, upper case letters GCB in the middle of the peach, with corresponding Braille dots directly under the three letters

## 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 handout.

Summer 2023

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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 our GCB treasurer.

Thanks to everyone who made our GCB Digest such a considerable success. Particularly, I want to thank Janet Parmerter, Assistant Editor, for her editing skills and for the many hours she has worked on the magazine. In addition, I want to thank our President Cecily Laney Nipper, for her presidential message with information about momentous events, legislation, and projects. Also, I appreciate the contributions from our new GCB Digest committee, each member who sent articles, and those who made suggestions.

Note: The GCB Digest is on NFB Newsline and on the Georgia Radio Reading Service, GARRS.

Connect with us on social media! To find it, search on Instagram for gacounciloftheblind. That represents ‘GA Council of the Blind’ without spaces and in all lower-case letters. Also, on Facebook Georgia Council of the Blind

## Attention:

ACB Braille Forum Cartridge Subscribers

More than half of our cartridge subscribers have not returned any of them in more than a year. If you are one of them, please note that we must receive the unreturned cartridges ASAP to enable us to send new ones. The cartridges are just like the books you borrow from your NLS library – they must be returned. Look through your homes, find the cartridges, flip over the cards on the mailing boxes and put them out for the next mail pickup.

The same applies for GCB cartridges.

GCB Presidential Message:

By Cecily Laney Nipper

As the summer draws to a close, let’s look back at some of the achievements of our Georgia Council of the Blind. On July 1, 2023, the membership of the American Council of the Blind elected me to serve out a one-year vacancy on the Board of Directors, giving Georgia representation on the board for the first time since Marsha Farrow served there more than a decade ago. With this new responsibility comes a determination by me, as your president, to hold the Georgia Council of the Blind as first place in my heart, and this is my commitment to you.

Another achievement that was made at the national convention, which took place in Schaumburg, Illinois, was the connections made by our Georgia delegation, which included fourteen GCB members in person, and other virtual Georgia attendees. Spending time together as a delegation was a delight, as was reaching out to old and new friends, not to mention selling raffle tickets.

Calls continue to come in from folks looking to connect with GCB, which I credit to the outreach that each of you as members make continually with brochures, word-of-mouth, as well as the GCB Link application, Facebook, and Instagram pages. Without you there would be no GCB!

One of the talking points I plan to drive home at each opportunity on the ACB Board of Directors is the need to revive our base, which means us reaching back out to those who may not be attending any longer, whether they dropped off during COVID, do not have access to technology, or perhaps just need that friendly call inviting them to a meeting to get them engaged. Our strength is in our base, our history, and our vision for the future. Please reach out to me with your questions and concerns, and I will continue to refer people to the local chapters near them when they call, a process made easier by the find feature in the GCB Link application, which allows me to search their address and locate their nearest chapter. When those new people come your way, welcome them, give them a job, and help them. In the words of the ACB Manager of Member Engagement, “Embrace, Empower, Engage” those new members! Don’t allow those who have dropped off to just disappear – reach out! And when new members join, make sure they find a place. The fact is, I’m “preaching to the choir” as you all are doing a tremendous job already. We can all do more. I know I can. Thank you for being you, and here’s to the end of summer and a beautiful fall with (hopefully) cooler weather.

Georgia Council of the Blind

Board Meeting Minutes

April 15, 2023

Multiple Choices

145 Barrington Drive,

Athens, Ga

The meeting was called to order at 10:21 am by President Cecily Laney Nipper. Sharon Nichols gave the invocation.

Roll Call:

President, Cecily Laney Nipper; First Vice President, Marj Schneider; Second Vice President, Judy Presley; Secretary, Kathy Morris

Assistant Secretary, Cecily Nipper, Sr.; Treasurer, Marsha Farrow

At-large Representative, Betsy Grenevitch; Immediate Past President, Alice Ritchhart; Athens, Jamaica Miller; Augusta, Ron Worley; East Georgia, Phil Jones; Greater Hall, Dianne Roberts; Northwest, Sharon Nichols; Rome, Amanda Wilson; South Metro, Tiyah FM Longmire; Savannah, no representative; Digest, Tiffany Montalvo; GGDU, DJ McIntyre; Alliance on Aging, Debbie McDonald; Webmaster, Steve Longmire.

Guests: Jerrie Toney, Marlene Koncewicz, Kathy DePriest, Wendy Simone, Rachel and Daniel McIntyre, Deborah Lovell, Zack Nipper, Hoyal Presley, Joan Guy, Steven Smith, Addie Orr, Janet, and Keith Parmerter.

Out of 16 Board seats, fifteen are represented so there was a quorum.

Agenda: Cecily asked to have an amendment to the agenda to include a moment of silence. Alice Ritchhart made the motion to approve the agenda as amended and Phil Jones seconded it. The motion carried.

The following members were remembered during the moment of silence:

Roger Keeney, Athens; Karen Hughes, Rome; Annette, Debbie Young’s sister; Don Linnartz; John Simms.

Scholarship Report: Marj Schneider requested to move the scholarship presentations up on the agenda, as the recipients were on zoom at this time, and this was done. Marj thanked the committee for their help. The recipients were Addison Orr and Steven Smith. Board members and guests offered their congratulations to both recipients, and both recipients offered words of appreciation.

President’s Report:

Since the last meeting, President Nipper has had the opportunity to represent GCB at the AER conference and has presented to Senior Citizens center at Athens and passed out applications for Alliance on Aging. She attended the Legislative Seminar. During the Seminar, they had a rally for accessible currency and marched to the Treasury Building. Treasury states they will put out money with tactile markings in 5-7 years.

There were changes to the organizational structure of ACB. After ACB Executive Director, Eric Bridges, was hired as Executive Director of the American Foundation for the Blind, Dan Spoone stepped into the role of Executive Director. Deb Cook Lewis will serve as interim president of ACB until the vote at the convention in the summer. There is a You Tube link for the Rally if you are interested. ACB media has many parts of the Seminar on podcasts.

Cecily appointed herself as nominating committee representative to the national convention, Marsha Farrow as delegate, and Phil Jones as alternate delegate.

Secretary’s Report:

There was a typo/clerical error in the minutes from the Board meeting on 11/12/2022, stating that Ann Martin was the representative for the Greater Hall County Chapter, while Mike Hall was the actual representative. Alice Ritchhart stated that Parliamentary procedure states it is a matter of record as it was already approved. Since this cannot be changed in the previously approved minutes, a note will be made of it in these minutes for the record.

The minutes from the Board Meeting dated 1/21/2023 were read. Alice Ritchhart made motion to accept the minutes and was seconded by Marsha Farrow. Corrections were made, and the minutes were approved as amended.

Treasurer’s Report: Marsha Farrow

Balances in the accounts

GCB main checking - $8,970.41

Under that account several other accounts are listed: $1,000 in legal advocacy fund; $3,636.04 for Senior Fund and $1,267.98 in the Youth Fund.

General operating - $3,066.39. She has paid insurance for liability for the board -$611.00.

Conference account $4,138.81, which includes $1,000 from the church in Helen; Dr. Shivers’ fund is available for travel, but no amount was given.

Scholarship - $166.35 total, with $66.35 first timer’s scholarship available. Investment - $20,573.82; Way Financial, as of 3/23 total was $69,773.61. The treasurer’s report will be filed for audit.

Finance Committee: Jerrie Toney

There are two changes in the Youth Gap and Senior fund to reflect what was donated and what is spent and new balance. Those changes are in the new budget. Ron Worley will be working with Tiffany Montalvo to create an application for the Youth Gap Fund.

Fundraising Committee: Cecily Laney Nipper

We will proceed with the Cow Patty Raffle. Chapters will be asked to sell the tickets. Marsha is getting the cow. Looking at the Agricultural Center in Cartersville. No date set yet. Will have Zoom and/or Facebook components to stream live.

Dianne Roberts asked where the money would go. Cecily stated the prize money will be distributed first and the remainder will go into the general fund.

Convention Committee:

Jamaica Miller stated that the theme for the convention is “Set Your Sights Higher with GCB.” Ron Worley submitted this.

Today we are considering the dates and city where it will be held.

Ron Worley has suggested Augusta. The hotel would be the Comfort Inn and Suites. The dates that are available are October 26 through 28, 2023 and November 2 through 4, 2023. The committee made a motion to have the convention in Augusta with the dates of November 2 through4, 2023. The motion carried.

There will be a site visit to the hotel on April 24th. The room rate is $89.00 per night, with the total being $102.90 per night. The conference rooms are $250 per night. May be able to use the shuttle to get to the conference center.

There are several avenues for volunteers. Alice suggested that the committee ensure there are wheelchair accessible rooms at the hotel.

Legislative Committee: DJ McIntyre

DJ states we did not get as far as we wanted, but we now have a game plan for next year. The Braille bill got to the floor and crossed over. The Commission bill was pushed by the Senator to the floor but did not get pulled off the table. None of the bills passed.

DJ stated that they did have a sit down with Mr. Wells of GVRA, with promises made, but unsure of the results.

They were told the voting bill would not pass in a republican congress without a lawsuit. Alice Ritchhart made a motion to reach out to Disability Law and Policy Center to file a lawsuit. Betsy Grenevitch seconded the motion, and after some discussion the motion carried.

Alice stated there may not be an outlay of money if the Center takes it on.

Alice also stated that there were people in the blind community fighting against the movement toward a commission for the blind in Georgia. Some in the Business Enterprise Program are spreading the rumor that the commission system would reduce income for vendors.

Braille Projects Committee: Phil Jones

The committee meets each month which has even days, but did not meet this month, but will hold a make-up meeting in May.

The committee is looking to plan an event for the convention. One idea is to hold a contest for people to write about how they use Braille.

President Cecily Nipper suggested offering money to be used for prizes. DJ moved that $100 be set aside from the Youth Gap Fund to cover prizes. The motion was seconded by Alice Ritchhart and passed.

GGDU: Marj Schneider

They have not had an informal gathering since February, but they plan to have zoom meetings in June or July.

The STARS summer camp at CVI has invited GCB to send a representative from GGDU to speak about the guide dog lifestyle. Marj states that GGDU can be a resource to any group that is interested.

Alliance on Aging: Alice Ritchhart

The next group topic on Monday from 7-8 PM will be a presentation from Accessible Pharmacy. They are planning for the conference and Bingo will be back!

They hope to start working on a new project and will put together kits that can go out to Senior Centers, etc., to tell people fifty-five and over about available assistance and devices. Alice asked if the application for Senior Fund could be put on the web page.

After a 20-minute recess to pass out food. The meeting resumed at 12:20 PM.

Technology: Steve Longmire

Steve is excited about the growth Technology Committee, which is now meeting once a month on the second Thursday at 8:00 PM. The members are interested and engaged. They are doing things with the website and the app. With the GCB Link app, a skill is in beta testing which will allow individuals to search for their closest chapter or for a chapter closest to an address they enter. Steve is also working on a Bible app. Tiffany Montalvo maintains an Instagram page for GCB. She and DJ have recently integrated Instagram and Facebook to enhance GCB’s social media presence.

Public Relations Committee: Mike Hall

The brochure is now available and can be adapted for whatever you need. The committee is looking to use Press releases to get information out. One suggestion the committee received was to hold occasional virtual joint chapter meetings. Amanda will send the brochure out to all members again.

Membership Committee: Amanda Wilson

GCB has 126 members, two have passed and we have three lifetime members.

Peach Talk is continuing with the ACB community. It is being held on the 3rd Thursday at 7:30. Two other calls are continuing: Prayer and Praise and the Book Club. Amanda sends out reminders for all meetings.

The question was asked what it takes to be a Lifetime member. Nancy Becker at the National Office could provide more information on becoming a lifetime member. It costs $1000, to be paid all at once or in installments.

Digest Committee: Tiffany Montalvo

The committee continues to meet on zoom to edit the document. They are always looking for new information, and member profiles.

Betsy suggested getting the email Digest sent at the same time as the Braille and audio versions for consistency.

At-Large Representative: Betsy Grenevitch

Betsy states she has talked with all at-large members, and they are all doing well.

Janet and Keith Parmerter made an invitation to offer their home to the board and interested GCB members for a fall social.

Old Business:

As Multiple Choices has allowed us to meet without a charge, Alice made a motion to make a $150 donation to Multiple Choices. It was seconded by Phil Jones, and the motion carried.

Discussion was had about adding Ann Simms name to the Rhoda Walker award. Marsha and Judy stated that not enough is known about who Rhoda was and discussed the need to gather more information. Marsha states they want to include people who were actual teachers of Braille to be eligible for this award.

New Business:

Time and place of next board meeting. President Nipper suggested having it on the fourth Saturday, July 22instead of the third Saturday due to National Conference. Phil Jones made a motion to meet on the 4th Saturday at Zoom. Marsha Farrow seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

President Nipper will set up an ad hoc committee to have a social at Janet Parmerter’s home.

Motion to adjourn was made by DJ McIntyre and was seconded by Amanda Wilson. Motion passed. Alice advised that according to parliamentary procedure, once the chair has determined that there is no further business coming to the floor, the chair may adjourn the meeting without a motion. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by, secretary, Kathy Morris,

Georgia Council of the Blind Called Board Meeting

Saturday, May 27,2023

The Zoom meeting was called to order by President Cecily Nipper at 10:07 AM. The invocation was given by Sharon Nichols.

The roll call was given by Secretary Kathy Morris with the following attendees:

President, Cecily Laney Nipper; First Vice-President, Marj Schneider; Second Vice-President, absent; Secretary, Kathy Morris; Assistant Secretary, Cecily Nipper, Sr.; Treasurer, Marsha Farrow; At-large Representative, Betsy Grenevitch; Immediate Past President, Alice Ritchhart; Athens, Jamaica Miller; Augusta, Ron Worley; East Georgia, Phil Jones; Greater Hall, Dianne Roberts; Northwest, Sharon Nichols

Rome-Floyd, Amanda Wilson; South Metro, Tiyah Longmire; Savannah, no representative.

Digest, no representative; GGDU, DJ McIntyre; Alliance on Aging, Jerrie Toney; Webmaster, Steve Longmire. Seventeen out of twenty were present, which constitutes a quorum. There were no guests.

Agenda:

A motion was made to approve the agenda by Jamaica Miller and seconded by Phil Jones. DJ asked if Cecily was going to mention the water bottles. President Nipper stated she would add announcements at the end and that adjustment was approved by Jamaica Miller and Phil Jones who had made the earlier motion. The motion passed to accept the agenda with the added announcements.

President Nipper stated she wanted to take each contract one by one to go over and review.

Block of hotel rooms contract:

There are several changes that President Nipper reported that need to be corrected, including correcting the name of the hotel and correcting our name to Georgia Council of the Blind. It needs to include the statement about fire alarms pulled for false alarms. The cancellation policy is 14 days in one place and 15 days in another, and this should be changed so that they match up. Marj Schneider had a question, wondering if we had more than this block of rooms? We were told that it was doable if it was done before time and according to room availability. Marj also asked if there was a penalty for not booking all 3 nights. There was no penalty, except having to pay for hotel meeting space if ten rooms were not met on the final night.

Hotel Space Contract:

The meeting space will be $150, but if we meet the minimum room requirement of ten rooms for all 3 days, the fee will be waived. The motion was made to sign the contracts with changes by Jamaica Miller and was seconded by Alice Ritchhart. The motion carried.

General Update on Convention:

There is exciting programming in store for the convention.

Alliance on Aging will be having Bingo again. There will be a Friday night Banquet meal. Friday lunch you will be on your own. The Augusta Chapter is lining up volunteers to help as needed. On Saturday there will be the business meeting and Board meeting. There will also be a Braille Projects Committee presentation and then the Saturday awards luncheon. There is also a cruise on the Augusta Canal.

Questions were called for, but none were asked.

Announcements:

DJ McIntyre and Cecily Laney Nipper reported that GCB had purchased water bottles and RFID cases, and all have not been sold. We are selling the water bottles for $5.00 and $10 for the case. We paid $1.00 for the bottles and $5 for the case. DJ is requesting fifty water bottles to go at the cost of swag bags for the national affiliate, ACB Next Generation.

Marsha Farrow made a motion to donate fifty water bottles outright to Next Gen and it was seconded by Jamaica Miller. The motion carried.

Marj Schneider suggested that we make everyone aware of them and make an opportunity for everyone to purchase. It was suggested that we add a line item on the registration form to purchase these items or include them in welcome bags for increased cost.

Cow Patty Raffle:

The Cow Patty Raffle will be in the fall, on September 30th. Our job is to sell tickets and to send the money and tickets to Marsha and the list of ticket numbers and contact information to Jerry.

Steve Longmire asked if it would be possible to use on-line payments. Discussion was had and it was decided not to involve the internet due to any possible problems.

Marsha Farrow states she will be sending out tickets on May 31st.

Ron Worley asked about ideas for Friday Banquet entrees. Cecily stated the committee will work on it.

Motion to adjourn was made by Phil Jones and seconded by Jamaica Miller. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Kathy Morris

GCB Chapter News:

Athens Chapter:

The Athens Chapter reported that at our June meeting that we heard from Hedi who is with the White Oak Farm, which is located at 1391 Jerusalem Road in Watkinsville, Georgia. She talked about the different types of horse therapy offered at their location.

The Athens Chapter will hold their annual meet-up in the park on Saturday, September 23rd, at 10:00 AM, at Memorial Park located at 293 Gran Ellen Drive, Athens, Georgia. Everyone is welcome to come. Please bring a snack you can share.

We would like to inform everyone that a long-time member of the Athens Chapter, Roger Keeney, passed away on April 13, 2023. A celebration of life was held on April 22, 2023, at the Tuckston United Methodist Church in Athens, Georgia.

The Athens chapter meetings are held by conference call at present on the fourth Saturday of every month at 11:00 AM. The call-in number is 605-313-4818 and the access code is 463476#.

For more information about the Athens Chapter please contact Jerrie Toney at (706) 461-1013 or via email at jerriemt2@gmail.com.

Augusta Chapter:

The Augusta Chapter reported that we agreed to meet in person during the odd numbered months; and, at a local restaurant during the even months as a social event. This month is an even month, so we get to meet at a local restaurant for a social. Interesting enough, all our members at this time are couples and we usually have 100 percent participation. Our membership is up to 10 now and we want to continue to grow of course. During our July face-to-face meeting, we had a training on creating a group FaceTime call. We also had the presentation of the Accessible Pharmacy by Levell Keeling in person because he is from our hometown. That was great because he showed us some unique medicine packaging methods for those who have neuropathy. We might break the pattern and do a pontoon boat ride on Clark Lake in the month of August instead of a dinner outing.

For more information about the Augusta Chapter please contact Ron Worley at 706-726-9438, or via email ron65@knology.net.

East Georgia Chapter:

The East Georgia Chapter reported at our April meeting we welcomed the President of the GCB affiliate Alliance on Aging and Vision Loss, Alice Ritchhart, to talk about past programs open to the public as well as how to join the organization. In May we talked and shared resources we have had experience with. In June we held our annual picnic. We had sandwiches from a local restaurant. We played games and just enjoyed our time together. We did not meet in July due to several members attending the National convention.

The East Georgia Chapter welcomed three new members Angela West, Randy West, and Allison Ellerbee. We are also sad to report the loss of our beloved member Andrew “Mr. P” Pregenzer in May. He was a respected member, and he will be missed.

Supporter Shoutout

The Covington Lions Club is a major supporter of the East Georgia Chapter. Through their generous donations over the years, we have been able to support our members and local members of the visually impaired community with things in their everyday lives such as video magnifiers, computers equipped with JAWS, tactile school supplies, and so much more. On Thursday May 11, 2023, President Cecily Laney Nipper attended the Covington Lions Club meeting to personally thank the group for their continued support of the East Georgia Chapter and show them just how grateful and useful their donations have been. We are forever thankful and look forward to their continued support.

Connect with us: Follow us on Facebook at East Georgia Chapter of the Georgia Council of the Blind; Instagram eastgachapter. The East Georgia Chapter in person meetings are held at Conyers Presbyterian Church and via Zoom on the 2nd Saturday of every month at 10:00 AM.

For more information about the East Georgia Chapter, please contact Cecily Laney Nipper, at 470-218-7885, or via email at roses828@comcast.net



East Georgia Chapter President Cecily Laney Nipper with Guide Dog Shadow standing in front the Covington Lion’s Club sign.

Greater Hall Chapter:

The Greater Hall County Chapter reported that at our May meeting, Vice-President, Judy Presley, was our speaker. Judy shared highlights from her recent trip to Scotland, including an over-the-counter remedy box, embossed with Braille, that she purchased in a local Scottish pharmacy. We partnered with the Gainesville Lions Club and the Disability Resource Center to sponsor one returning camper to the Georgia Lions Camp in Waycross. Georgia magazine ran an article that the National Eye Institute designated May as Vision Health Month, urging people to get your eyes checked. Many vision conditions are discovered during routine eye exams. At our June meeting, we enjoyed a luncheon at O’Charley’s in Gainesville. Member, Bill Miller, won the door prize of an ILA Atomic Clock Indoor/Outdoor Thermometer. No meetings are held in July and August as members travel.

Medical Update: Member, Jean Ann Miller, received an eye injection of Syfovre on July 12 and will follow up with a second injection in September. This new drug is used to treat dry macular degeneration, and doctors have hope that it will restore some lost vision. Since Medicare has not yet approved payment codes, Jean Ann is one of a few to be chosen by her ophthalmologist to receive the injections via samples of the drug. We look forward to hearing an update from Jean Ann after September.

We are saddened to announce that longtime member and former board member, Matt McGowan, passed away on Wednesday, June 14, 2023. Our deep condolences to his wife, Mrs. Reba, and their family. Matt’s obituary is included later in this newsletter.

As reported previously, the Center for the Visually Impaired of Atlanta began offering a monthly low vision clinic in the offices of Georgia Retina in Gainesville. Dr. Gregory Lee and staff report that the clinic is very successful, with a waiting list for clients. CVI professionals do a thorough evaluation of each client; therefore, they limit the number of appointments for each clinic. The clinic is typically offered one Monday per month at the Gainesville location. Dr. Lee also stressed that a client does not have to be a Georgia Retina patient; the clinic is open to anyone. For more information or to make a clinic appointment, please contact CVI at 404-875-9011.

The Greater Hall County Chapter meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month, from 10:30 AM until 12:00 PM, at Smoky Springs Retirement Residences, which is located at 940 South Enota Drive in Gainesville, Georgia. Videos of guest speakers can be viewed on our Facebook page, Greater Hall GCB. For more information, about the Greater Hall County Chapter, please contact Dianne Roberts at 770-932-1112 or via email at harveyroberts2@att.net.

Northwest Georgia Chapter:

The Northwest Georgia Chapter reported that we are still meeting on the second Tuesday at 1:00 PM, at the bank of the Lafayette community room located on 104 North Main Street in Lafayette, Georgia.

For more information about the Northwest Chapter, please contact Sharon Nichols at 423-255-4551, or via email at sharonnichols347@icloud.com.

Rome Floyd County Chapter:

The Rome Floyd County Chapter reported that we met in person on Saturday, June 3, 2023, in Rome, Georgia, at Casey Owens house. We enjoyed eating sack lunches and talking to each other. We celebrated Leah Streams, who had just graduated from Pepperell High School. She is planning on attending Reinhardt University this coming fall.

The Rome Floyd County Chapter monthly meetings are held on Zoom on the first Monday at 7:00 PM. They plan to meet in person once a quarter on the first Saturday, at 11:00 AM.

For more information about the Rome Floyd County Chapter, please contact Amanda Wilson at 770-547-4700, or via email at moonrocks@bellsouth.net.

Savannah Chapter:

For more information about the Savannah Chapter, please contact Marj Schneider at 912-352-1415, or via email at marjschneider@bellsouth.net.

South Metro Chapter:

For more information about the South Metro Chapter, please contact Brent Reynolds at 404-814-0768, or via email jbr53@samobile.net.

Georgia Guide Dog Users News:

For more information about the Georgia Guide Dog Users group, please contact Marj Schneider, 912-352-1415 or via email at marjschneider@bellsouth.net.

GCB Alliance on Aging and Vision Loss:

The Alliance on Aging and Vision Loss special affiliate reported that we are planning events to host at the upcoming GCB conference and convention. We plan to have Bingo night again this year.

For more information, about the Alliance on Aging and Vision Loss special affiliate group please contact Alice Ritchhart at 912-996-4213, or via email alice.ritchhart@comcast.net.

GCB Braille Projects Committee:

The GCB Braille Projects Committee reported that we are working on a Braille essay contest and the winner will be revealed at our upcoming GCB conference and convention in November. The GCB Braille Projects Committee meets every other month on the second Tuesday at Zoom at 7:00 PM.

For more information about the GCB Braille Projects Committee please contact Phil Jones at 770-713-3306, or via email at Brilman1952@gmail.com.

GCB Community Phone Calls:

The Georgia Council of the Blind is holding community phone calls. The phone number for all the GCB community calls is 1-605-562-0400, and the access code is 780-5751, followed by the pound sign. If you cannot get in, then use the alternative phone number. It is 1-717-275-8940 and the access code is 7805751, followed by the pound sign.

Here is the schedule for GCB community phone calls.

Praise and Prayer:

Mike Hall will lead us in praise and prayer on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM.

GCB Book Club:

Debra Lovell and Judy Presley

Our GCB book club has read a variety of books including fiction, nonfiction, as well as biographies. Sometimes when you read a delightful book, you feel like you just must share it with others. This is what makes book clubs so much fun. That is why we encourage our members to suggest their favorite books and would love to have other book lovers out there to join us. We meet on the last Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM, on zoom.

GCB Peach Talk:

From the Membership and Project Committee:

The membership committee holds an ACB community Zoom call which meets on the third Thursday from 7:30 PM until 8:30 PM. On our last call in July we had lots of fun. We talked about our favorite summer activities. We talked about going camping, canoeing, swimming, and other summer activities.

GCB In Memory Of:

Roger Glenn Keeney:

1946-2023

Roger Glenn Keeney was born in Courtland, New York on September 13, 1946, to the late Theodore and Naoma Keeney. He passed away on April 13, 2023, after a brief illness. He is survived by his wife Kimberley; children Timothy, Raymond, Stephanie (Fournier), Dustin, James, and Alexis; brothers Kevin, Bradley, Dakato, and Mikhail; and grandson Stefan. Roger was the Executive Director of Athens Inclusive Recreation and Sports (AIRS). He worked for more than 35 years in adaptive sports for individuals living with disabilities. His education included a bachelor’s degree from Arizona State University, a master’s degree from the State University of New York at Cortland, and further graduate work at the University of Georgia. A program developed by Roger in Arizona underscored the benefits gained by individuals living with disabilities who participate in adaptive sports. Roger developed blind archery, with notably amazing attitude changes of the participants. Since then, Roger has been at the forefront of many interesting developments for his fellow blind citizens. Additionally, Roger played beep baseball at the national level for 40 years, and continued his involvement in uncommon activities for people who are blind. In 2009, Ford Motor Company took Roger to Arizona to test drive the 2010 Mustang. Roger’s overarching dream was to help people living with disabilities participate in sports. He wholeheartedly spoke at many clubs and assemblies in Athens, Georgia. A member of Tuckston United Methodist Church for many years, Roger was also a member of the Faithlinks Sunday school class and was the Chaplain of the United Methodist Men.

Barbara Graham:

Barbara Graham passed away on Friday April 21st, 2023.

Annette Rhinehart Saffles, (Debbie Young’s sister)

Annette Rhinehart Saffles was born on May 23, 1945, and died on March 29, 2023. She was 77 years old. She lived in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. She went home to be with her Lord and Savior on Wednesday, March 29, 2023. She was born on May 23, 1945, in Chattooga County, Georgia and had lived in the North Georgia area for most of her life.

Laverne Smith:

Laverne Smith King was born on November 24, 1929, and died on April 14, 2023. She was 93 years old. She lived in Marshallville.

She was predeceased by her parents, John Thomas Smith and Florence Clark Smith, and her siblings, Rufus Smith, Jack Smith, Bill Smith, and Lizzie Cromer. She is survived by her daughters, Beverly Simonds, and Lynn Williams. Several grandchildren, nieces and nephews also survive her. Her visitation was held on Sunday, April 16, 2023, from 1:00 PM, until 2:00 PM, at 42 S Collins St, in Reynolds, Georgia 31076. Her funeral service was held on Sunday, April 16, 2023, at 2:00 PM, at the same location. She was a long-time member of the Georgia Council of the Blind.

Karen Hughes:

On March 22, 2023, the members of Son Rise Community Church in Summerville, GA were shocked to hear that our friend Karen Hughes had died as a result of a hit and run accident in her new hometown of Madison, Tennessee. Karen was walking her dog, Patch, in the early morning hours close to her apartment when the incident happened. Sadly, it is a tale all too familiar because there were no sidewalks available to walk on and she had to walk on the side of the road or in the road. Police are still looking for the driver of the vehicle. When authorities arrived on the scene, they found Patch unharmed, sitting outside of their apartment door. He was taken to Metro Animal Control. They began searching for Karen’s next of kin.

Karen moved to Summerville in 2022. She became involved in Son Rise Community Church where her friend Shawn Hogue attended. She immediately became involved in all the church activities from Children’s Church, Worship team member, to other volunteer opportunities. In October of last year, she dressed up in a full body costume provided by Shawn and helped give candy to children from our church booth at the town’s annual Halloween Walk. She posed with dozens of children as they wanted to have a picture taken with her. She was very independent, but allowed several of the church children to lead her around because they liked her and wanted to help her.

Karen desperately wanted to live in her own apartment and hoped it would be close to Summerville so that she could continue to come to the church. She and many others searched tirelessly to find a place for her to live. In late fall she was finally approved for an apartment located outside Nashville, Tennessee. She was excited but hated to move away from her friends here in Summerville. In January, Shawn and his family moved Karen to her new hometown of Madison, Tennessee. Karen became involved in Madison Heights Baptist Church. They assisted Karen with various needs to help her get settled into her new apartment. According to Pastor Ray Marin, when she sang with the worship team at church, Patch joined in the singing as well. This group of people quickly became friends with Karen and Patch. Since Patch was taken to Animal Control, the Pastor said that they would gladly take him. The church stated that they would be providing Karen’s funeral.

Patch became somewhat of a celebrity while at Metro Animal Control. His and Karen’s story was reported on multiple news outlets. On April 3, 2023, a news article reported that Patch had moved to “Medical Mutts Service Dogs” and will receive training as a service animal. He was a loyal friend to Karen, and we can’t help but think that Karen would be pleased to know that Patch will continue to serve and be loved by someone else who needs a furry friend.

Andrew Pregenzer:

Mr. Andrew “Mr. P” Pregenzer, master’s in education, age 70, of Covington formerly of New Jersey passed away on Monday, June 12, 2023. He was born in New York on November 25, 1952, to Joseph Michael, Jr and JoAnn E. Marshall Pregenzer who have preceded him in death. Mr. Pregenzer grew up in River Edge, New Jersey and resided in Pompton Lakes, NJ for many years where he worked a variety of jobs including a volunteer fireman, a photographer for the Suburban Trends, a logistics coordinator, a special police officer, and then continued his education where he earned a master’s degree in education and became “Mr. P” a wonderful special education teacher specializing in the blind and visually impaired who loved and cherished his students teaching in New Jersey, North Carolina, and Georgia. He was a die-hard New York Giants fan and also a man of extreme Faith who was currently a member of Discovery Point Church in Conyers. Along with his parents he was preceded in death by his sister Lynne Walsh and nephew Justin Pregenzer. Mr. Pregenzer is survived by his children Nickolas Pregenzer (Maggi), Suzanne Goddard (Mark), and Daniel Groschopp all of New Jersey; his thirteen grandchildren; his brother Gerard Pregenzer, Sr., MD (Linda) of New Jersey; his sister Virginia Blacker (David) of Colorado; along with several nieces, nephews, other family members and many close friends.

A memorial service was held on Saturday, July 1, 2023, from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM, with light refreshments at Discovery Point Church in Conyers, Georgia.

Rev. Matthew McGowan:

The Reverend Doctor (Colonel) Matthew McGowan, 97, of Gainesville, Georgia (formerly of Chattanooga, Tennessee) passed away on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at Hospice of Northeast Georgia Medical Center. A private service for the family was held on Saturday, June 24, 2023, at 10:30 AM, at the Columbarium Chapel at First Presbyterian Church, Gainesville. A Memorial Service followed at 2:00 PM. in the sanctuary with the Revs. Lee Koontz, Charles McGowan, Rebecca McGowan Spooner, and Kennedy McGowan officiating. The family will receive friends following the service in Swetenburg Hall (Fellowship Hall). Matt was born on September 29, 1925, in Pitt County, Greenville, North Carolina. He was the son of the late Lonnie and Eva McGowan. He was the third of seven children. Following high school, he served in the Marine Corps in Pearl Harbor during World War II. His brother, Jesse, was killed in action in the Battle of the Bulge. He was nineteen. While serving during the War and following his brother’s death, he felt called to Christian ministry. He took classes to prepare for college while in the Marine Corps and entered Davidson College on the G.I. bill, graduating in 1948 with a double major in Philosophy and Bible. The following summer he took classes at Wheaton College in Bible and Christian Ethics. He went on to receive his Master of Divinity from Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. While in seminary, he and his roommate Kennedy Smart would preach in the mill villages in the Gainesville area. He was ordained by Athens Presbytery on June 1, 1952, and was the installed pastor at the Homer, Maysville, and Chestnut Mountain congregations. The Chestnut Mountain Church was elected Rural Church of the year in the Southeastern United States. In 1955, he moved to Rocky Mount, North Carolina to serve Second Presbyterian where he led the congregation to build a new education building and doubled the membership in 5 years. In 1960, he began serving Overbrook Presbyterian Church in Richmond, Virginia, where in 6 years a new addition was constructed, and the membership doubled. He then moved to Canal Street Presbyterian Church, New Orleans, Louisiana, and on to Central Presbyterian Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee. He pastored in Chattanooga for 13 years, doubled the membership, started an inner-city neighborhood program, and orchestrated the establishment of an apartment complex for the elderly, John Calvin Apartments. In 1983, he became the Executive Director of Covenant Fellowship of Presbyterians (Presbyterian for Renewal) and retired in 1989. In retirement he was the interim pastor, with Dr. John Anderson, at First Presbyterian Church, Houston, Texas, and became a Parish Associate at First Presbyterian Church, Gainesville in 1991. He was a champion for civil rights and fought for the rights of the underserved. During his ministry, he served on the Executive Boards of his denomination (Presbyterian Church U.S. and later the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.), including as Chair of the Board of International Missions. For more than 25 years, he served on the Board of Trustees for Montreat College, Montreat, North Carolina, where the McGowan Center for Christian Studies is named for him. He also served on the Board of the Evergreen School in Minden, Louisiana. As a chaplain at the rank of Colonel, he retired from the Army Reserves in 1985 after serving for 27 years. In lieu of flowers contributions may be made to the World Mission Conference, First Presbyterian Church, 800 South Enota Drive NE, Gainesville, GA 30501; and his scholarship funds at either Montreat College, 310 Gaither Circle, Montreat, North Carolina 28757; or King University, 1350 King College Road, Bristol, Tennessee 37620. The family wishes to express deep gratitude to his pastors, the Revs. Lee Koontz and Shon Peppers; his friend and colleague Bill Carr, who will lead the Honor Guard; his physicians Dr. Andre Kallab, Dr. Kevin Smith, Dr. William Manus and others; the Hospice of Northeast Georgia Medical Center; the wonderful staff at Ashton Senior Living; the residents and staff at Smoky Springs and his church family and friends for all their love, prayers and support.

GCB Cow Patty Fundraiser

It is time this summer to help the Georgia Council of the Blind by raising some of the funds needed to keep our organization strong and able to do the wonderful work we do on behalf of blind and low vision Georgians. Each of us can help by selling raffle tickets at $10 each for a chance at winning $500 in this year's Cow Patty raffle. What, you may be asking, is a cow patty raffle?

Well, it's an all-natural way to name a lucky winner. It's not a name someone draws out of a hat, or a number chosen by Alexa; it's a cow who chooses the winner, and your part works like this.

Just 250 tickets have been printed, each with a number. GCB chapter presidents will be receiving tickets for chapter members to sell for a donation of $10 per ticket. You will have until September 9, 2023, to sell your tickets and return the ticket stubs and money to treasurer Marsha Farrow at the GCB mailing address, P. O. Box 381, Trion, Georgia 30753.

Your chapter can ask for more tickets to sell, and you as an individual member can ask for tickets as well by contacting Marsha Farrow at (706) 859-2624. As a backup, you will also need to email your list of ticket buyers, their contact information, and which number ticket each bought to Jerrie Toney at jerriemt2@gmail.com.

 After all the ticket information and numbers have been collected, each one of those numbers, between 1 and 250, will be printed on a large square of paper. The drawing will take place on Saturday September 30, 2023, at 10:00 AM, weather permitting at the Chattooga County Agricultural Center, with the participation of local young farmers and will be broadcast live on the GCB Facebook page. Here's where the cow gets involved.

 Imagine a pasture with numbered pieces of paper on the ground, looking something like a giant bingo card. The cow is offered the chance to meander through the grid until she feels the call of nature. Whichever number she's on when that happens, that is the winning ticket for a prize of $500!

 If every GCB member sold just one, we could easily sell all 250 and fill the gap in needed funds for our organization. Let's join together and give a cow a moment of Facebook fame!

The text on the ticket says:

$10 donation; $500 Cow Patty Grand Prize. An all-natural way to support the Georgia Council of the Blind’s programs. An always ready cow will move, and a winner declared on September 30, 2023, at 10:00 AM. The winner will be announced on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/GCB2018>. You do not have to be present to win. Thank you for your support!

Coming Home with #6

By Marj Schneider

It had been almost two years to the day since I last held a guide dog’s harness in my left hand when on February 1 this year I met Verlin and I once again felt the pull of a Seeing Eye dog at my side.

I was at the Seeing Eye in Morristown, New Jersey for two-and-a-half weeks of training with my new dog, the sixth for me. I stayed for two additional days for extra work on things Verlin and I needed to cement, but the time went by all too quickly and before I knew it, I was back home in Savannah.

Returning home, I was counting on my 35 years of experience with five previous guide dogs to help with the process of acclimating Verlin to his new environment. Training at Seeing Eye is rigorous and demanding, so I also carried the voice of my instructor in my head, telling me what to do in what we encountered on those early walks.

You might be asking, ‘well, isn’t that dog fully trained to guide you? Doesn’t he just do what you tell him to do? What’s the big deal?’

Yes, Seeing Eye dogs have four months of formal training, and that builds the foundation of what they know how to do: follow a path, stop at curbs and steps, stop if a car is moving through their line of travel, guide the handler around obstacles, and much, much more. But while home is familiar for me, it’s completely new for this young dog who I barely know. He has to learn these new surroundings with my guidance until he knows what’s expected and can guide me safely and reliably.

I live in the middle of Savannah in an area of curving streets, some with sidewalks, some without. Other nearby streets have heavy traffic and multiple lanes, yet my neighborhood also has open areas that I need to traverse and a drainage canal that is crossed by short bridges for pedestrians. These conditions pose challenges that are different from those faced by guide dog teams that live in a big city, commute to a job every day, navigate a college campus or travel by air frequently. Each person’s adjustment with a new dog varies because of environment and daily activities and because of the new dog’s personality. Yes, experience with prior dogs counts, but each dog can be so different.

Like four of my prior dogs, Verlin is a German Shepherd, but those other shepherds were female and two-thirds his size. Verlin is tall and long, very long, and that means I have to go through doors differently and figure out where he can lie out of the way when we’re in more crowded places like restaurants. Verlin is exuberant, affectionate, and less anxious than his predecessors. He’s taking longer to learn some things and he is distracted by people more than my most recent shepherd. Those differences and his newness to the work of guiding a blind person have caused many challenges in these early months.

Verlin and I are out walking every day, often in my neighborhood. It might be I want to try a new route to teach him more about the area, or I want to be sure he really does understand how we have to handle crossing at particular intersections. My neighborhood isn’t one for conventional corners with obvious curb cuts. Each is different. We may be crossing from or to a corner without a sidewalk the pavement may be broken, there may be a storm drain right where I need to step, or there may be a pole that I’ve hopefully taught Verlin to find, so that I can orient myself to cross a street.

My own orientation skills are as important as Verlin’s training for our success. If I’m not oriented correctly when we’re going to cross a street, I can easily send him in a direction that will mean he crosses diagonally, something that is disconcerting and potentially dangerous. To help both of us stay on track I usually have a GPS device with me to let me know where I am. Those announcements of street names and intersections we are approaching are especially helpful when I’m walking on the left-hand side of the street because there is no sidewalk, and I can’t quite tell when we are coming to the next intersecting street. Other times my husband accompanies us and can give his observations to help me orient and decide how to best navigate.

Verlin is learning so much right now, and though he will continue learning new things throughout his life, it is what he takes in during these initial months with me that will have the most impact. It can take more than six months for a new guide dog team to be truly in sync in their work together, but I know my efforts now will pay off.

As Verlin learns, he needs verbal praise from me. There are also times when I use food treats because these can help quickly solidify his doing things like finding a traffic light or the neighborhood mailbox, but guide dogs thrive on praise for anything and everything they do well. I can tell how Verlin is encouraged by my praise and how he gains confidence from it.

My praising him also builds the bond of love between us. He is willing to guide me because he has grown in his love for and loyalty to me, while I have grown in my trust of and love for him.

Is it worth the time and energy I must give to this relationship every day? To me, it is for the independence I can gain if I choose to venture forth to both familiar and new places. In Verlin I always have a partner in travel, one who can take me around some of the world’s obstacles, rather than finding them as I would with a cane. With a white cane I can get where I need to go, but with a guide dog I can do it with grace and speed. For me that makes the investment worth it, once again with #6.

2023 Al and Cora Camp Scholarships

By Marj Schneider

On April 15, 2023 at our spring meeting of the Georgia Council of the Blind board, two students were each awarded $1000 scholarships to assist with their college expenses. GCB has been able to offer this scholarship to blind and low vision students for many years because of the dedication of GCB members Al and Cora Camp, their years of helping to raise funds and providing the solid foundation that scholarship programs need to continue into the future.

I want to thank the members who served on the scholarship committee with me this year: Granger Ricks, Deborah Lovell, Tom Ridgeway, and Mary Woodyard. It’s so helpful to have a group to discuss and evaluate the applications we receive. We are pleased to award this year’s scholarships to Addison Orr of Villa Rica, Georgia and to Steven Smith of Roswell, Georgia.

Addie Orr knew from a young age that she wanted to be a teacher, and after graduating from Villa Rica High School this spring, she plans to start this fall at Berry College in Rome to major in elementary education. In high school Addie was active in clubs, as well as playing softball and flag football. She also served as a tutor for elementary school students who had fallen behind in basic skills and participated in her church’s Wednesday evening program for children. She says that this involvement with kids helped her see the kind of impact she could have on youngsters.

At Berry College Addie will be studying elementary education and plans to play on the school’s softball team as well. Addie says that Berry has been her dream college because of its close community and high academic standards. While there she will be able to hold a job related to elementary education and also obtain certification in teaching English as a second language.

We hope for every success for Addie and hope that she and her mother, who is visually impaired, will become involved with GCB.

Steven Smith is in his fourth year at Georgia State University. Steven is also pursuing a teaching career, in his case through an interdisciplinary major in human development and learning. He plans further study in special education, with the goal of becoming a teacher of the visually impaired.

Steven currently volunteers with a North Fulton/Forsyth County community group, Young Life Capernaum, an organization of youth with disabilities. He assists with events and with motivating and helping students to participate. His involvement there since 2019 helps him better understand how young people with various disabilities learn and socialize.

On the Atlanta campus of Georgia State Steven serves on the Student Library Advisory Council, where he has contributed to improving the learning environment and has made recommendations for improving the technology available to blind and visually impaired students at the library.

Through the Baptist Collegiate Ministry on campus, Steven is involved with doing outreach and hosting events whenever his schedule allows, and somehow Steven also finds time to play on the Atlanta goalball team sponsored by Georgia Blind Sports. He has been playing in tournaments with the team since 2021 and he provides encouragement and advice to youth players who are part of the team.

We wish Steven all the best as he continues on the path towards his career goals, and we hope to see him become more involved with GCB.

The deadline for receipt of the Al and Cora Camp Memorial scholarship information is March 15, 2024.

 Scholarship applications may be obtained from Chair, Marj Schneider, at the address above, or via GCB Web Site

Al and Cora Camp Memorial Scholarship Awards:

Marj Schneider, Chair, 212 Oxford Drive, Savannah GA 31405, 912-257-9750, marjschneider@bellsouth.net

Committee members:

Granger Ricks 770-898-9036, Ricks, granger.ricks1@gmail.com

Tom Ridgway 478-474-3577, tom.ridgeway1944@att.net

Mary Woodyard 770-639-7092, marywoodyard@comcast.net

Music for the Blind

Bill and Debra Brown have given us permission to print this announcement.

We have audiobook lessons which use no print, video, Braille for over a dozen instruments. Our flagship courses, Intro to the Guitar for the Visually Impaired and Intro to the Piano for the Visually Impaired are still only $35 in the downloadable format.

Please help spread the word!

[www.MusicForTheBlind.com](http://www.MusicForTheBlind.com)

Bill and Debra Brown

Valdosta Music & Publishing

Teaching & Recording Studio

704 Habersham Road

Valdosta, GA 31602-1954

229-249-0628

billdebb@bellsouth.net

GCB Awards Criteria and Committee Members

Judy Presley, GCB Award Committee Chairperson, PO box 231, Helen GA 30545, 706-400-2185, Judygpresley23@gmail.com

The June Willis Guiding Eyes Award:

The recipient must be a sighted GCB member who is known to GCB members through attendance at GCB state activities, and through his/her willing assistance and service to the blind and visually impaired.

June Willis Guiding Eyes Award Committee:

Keith Morris, Chair, 3359 White Oak Road, Thomson GA 30824, 706-595-1465, keithmorris53@icloudcom

Committee Members:

Teresa Brenner, 912-247-0446, Tabrenner49@gmail.com

Mike Hall, 678-936-3911, N4hgo1@gmail.com

The Gerald Pye Community Service Award:

The recipient must be an active legally blind member of GCB in good standing. He or she must have demonstrated superior service to his or her community in several ways that exemplify the work of Gerald Pye. The candidate must be nominated in writing by a GCB member who knows firsthand of the candidate's community services. Examples of this service must be included in the written recommendation.

Gerald Pye Community Service Award Committee:

Cecily Laney Nipper, Chair, 21 Butler Bridge Road, Covington GA 30016, 470-218-7885, [roses828@comcast.net](roses828%40comcast.net)

Committee Members:

Teresa Brenner 912-247-0446, Tabrenner49@gmail.com

Kathy Morris, 706-466-2253, mkumorris@yahoo.com

The Rhoda Walker/Ann Sims Award:

The recipient can be a blind or sighted individual. Services may be any endeavor in the field of teaching, service, and betterment of life for the blind. The recipient must provide public awareness through speaking, seminars, and/or demonstration. There must be involvement of the educational field/teaching Braille. The recipient must push any innovation involving blindness or blind people.

The Rhoda Walker/Ann Sims Service Award Committee:

Hoyal Presley, Chair, PO box 231, Helen GA 30545, 706-878-6041, hoyalpresley@gmail.com

Committee Members:

Jeremy Adams, 706-200-2087, adamsj154@gmail.com

Phil Jones, 770-713-3306, Brilman1952@gmail.com

The Walter R. McDonald Service Award:

The recipient is an outstanding visually impaired individual who has, through his/her leadership and service, contributed significantly to the betterment of the blind and visually impaired community, and who has demonstrated by deeds and achievements his/her dedication to the principles incident to blindness espoused and practiced by the late Walter R. McDonald. The recipient may or may not be a member of GCB.

The Walter R McDonald Service Award Committee:

Deborah Lovell, Chair, 3215 Lake Forest Drive, Augusta GA 30909, 706-667-3085, Lovelld2000@gmail.com

Committee Members:

Amanda Wilson, 770-547-4700, moonrocks@bellsouth.net

 D J McIntyre, 678-343-7550, dgrenevitch@me.com

The nominations shall include the name of the candidate, plus the reason the candidate deserves the award. Nominations for all awards shall be submitted to the respective award committee chairperson in writing (including email) no later than October 15, 2023.

Georgia Council of the Blind First-timers Scholarship Guidelines and Procedures:

GCB offers its members who have never attended the organization’s conference and convention the opportunity to apply for a scholarship to cover expenses to attend this annual event. Applicants are required to be 18 years of age or older; must be blind or visually impaired; should be members in good standing of GCB; and have never attended the GCB conference and convention, either as a member or non-member.

A member interested in applying for this scholarship should draft a letter of application and should obtain a short letter of reference from his or her chapter president. If he or she is not a member of a GCB chapter, the member at-large representative or a leader in the blind community can be asked to provide this reference letter. Both letters should be submitted to the scholarship committee for consideration. The deadline for letters to be received will be September 15, 2023.

The application letter should include:

· Discussion by the applicant of his or her background, education, and how long he or she has been blind or visually impaired;

· A description by the applicant of his or her involvement and contributions to a GCB chapter, to the local blind community or to the larger community;

· What the applicant hopes to gain personally by attending the GCB conference and convention;

· How the applicant hopes to contribute in the future to his or her GCB chapter or to the local blind community as a result of participation in this event.

The first-timers scholarship recipient is expected to attend and participate in all sessions during the GCB conference and convention. He or she will be introduced during the opening session and will be asked to speak briefly. Following the conference and convention the recipient is expected to submit an article reflecting on the experience for publication in the GCB digest and is expected to give an oral report at a GCB chapter meeting, a board meeting or at another GCB event. Failure to submit an article and provide an oral report will result in the recipient being ineligible to apply for GCB scholarships in the future.

The scholarship committee of GCB will meet immediately following the September 15 deadline for first-timer applications to review those that have been submitted. The committee will determine the dollar amount to be awarded, given the cost of registration, hotel accommodations and transportation to the conference and convention. The scholarship recipient will be notified as soon as possible and, if needed, the committee will assist him or her in making arrangements to attend the event.

As an organization GCB will make efforts to inform members of the first-timers scholarship, both through the GCB Digest and at GCB chapter meetings or other GCB events. Chapter presidents and other leaders will encourage members to apply for this scholarship.

The letter of application and letter of reference should be emailed to scholarship committee chair Marj Schneider at marjschneider@bellsouth.net. For questions call Marj Schneider at 912-352-1415.

Recipe:

No Churn Ice Cream

16 oz Whipped topping or two cups of heavy cream whipped to stiff peaks.

14 oz sweetened condensed milk (one can)

1 tsp vanilla

Pinch of salt

Instructions

Fold together the whipped topping and the sweetened condensed milk until combined. Add salt and vanilla and stir.

Pour in a freezer safe container, cover, and freeze for at least 4 hours or overnight (at three hours it will be the consistency of soft serve if you’d like to eat it then). If you wanted to do a mix-ins like crushed Oreos, chopped candy bar of your choice, or shredded coconut, you would need to mix it in at the one-hour mark.

Variation: In place of the cool whip, use one pint (2 cups) heavy cream whipped to stiff peaks. Fold in as directed. This will freeze much faster. Mix-ins still go in at one hour, but the entire mixture will be frozen in 2-3 hours.

GCB Conference and Convention Announcement:

Come in November so you can see how to “Set Your Sights Higher,” with GCB!”

The Georgia Council of the Blind wishes to extend a warm invitation to join us for the upcoming annual conference and convention.

Together attendees will enjoy meetings, educational information about vision loss, an informative exhibit hall, tasty food, good fellowship, and some fun activities. Plans have been made for this year’s convention to be held in historic Augusta, Georgia founded in 1736. In addition to the usual convention events, you may wish to book a guided sunset river boat tour with fellow GCB members. The GCB Conference and Convention will be held on Thursday, November 2, 2023, thru November 4, 2023, at the Comfort Suites, Augusta Riverwatch on 2911 Riverwest Drive, Augusta, Georgia 30907.The room rate will be $85 (+ Tax/Fees of $17.90 per room per night) with a total room rate of $102.90 a night. This rate will be good until October 19, 2023. GCB has a block of rooms reserved at this special price. Reservations must be made on or before this date to ensure this discounted rate. To reserve your room you can call 1-706-434-2540, or by booking online at <https://www.choicehotels.com/reservations/groups/QX97G5>. If you need assistance, please contact Cecily Laney Nipper at 470-218-7885, or via email at roses828@comcast.net. Please note that all of the above information is on our website which you can visit by going to <http://www.georgiacounciloftheblind.org>

2023 Braille Creative Writing Contest

The Georgia Council of the Blind (GCB) is an advocacy and support organization with blind and low vision members across Georgia. The goals of GCB are to promote social, educational, employment and economic opportunities for people who are blind.

Literacy for those who are blind and low vision means reading and writing Braille. One of GCB’s goals is to encourage the learning and use of Braille among visually impaired Georgians of all ages. We celebrate all that can be explored and known through use of this six-dot tactile reading and writing system.

To celebrate Braille, this year GCB is holding a creative writing contest for Braille users, children, and adults. Applicants are encouraged to submit a document on paper in Braille which is composed by them using a standard Braille writer or a slate and stylus. Documents using a computer with Braille translating software will be disqualified.

Submissions will be judged by a committee of GCB members and winners will be awarded gift cards! The winning essays will be presented at the GCB 2023 annual conference and convention in Augusta, Georgia on Saturday, November 4, 2023. To participate please follow the instructions on the following pages.

GCB 2023 Braille Creative Writing Contest Instructions

1. The contest will be divided into two categories, children under age 18 and adults over age 18. Any blind or low vision Georgian may participate. Membership in GCB is not required.
2. Submissions are limited to 500 words and no fewer than 300 words.
3. What can be submitted? Write a short story, essay, or poem on any topic that interests you.
	1. Suggestions for topics:
		1. What Braille means to me.
		2. My favorite vacations, pets, and friends.
4. Hard copy Braille submissions will be accepted in both contracted and uncontracted Braille, Perkins or computer (6-key entry).
5. Braille notetakers can be used; Braille translation software is not allowed. BRF files can be submitted as attachments by participants without access to a Braille embosser.
6. Entries will be judged on accuracy of the Braille code, spelling and grammar, as well as the quality of the content.
7. Mail completed entry form and submission by October 1, 2023, to:

Phil Jones

Committee Chair

922 Edgewater Drive

Loganville, GA 30052

For questions or to submit attached BRF files, email Phil at: brilman1952@gmail.com

GCB 2023 Braille Writing Contest Submission Form

Please include the following information with your submission. Applicants or parents of a minor child must sign (or initial) at the bottom, and this form must be mailed with the Braille entry.

* Applicant’s name
* Address
* Telephone
* Email address

NOTE: Applicants under age 18 should include a parent’s email.

* Age of applicant (optional for adult submissions):
* Age category, please check one:
* Child, under age 18
* Adult, 18 and over
* Category of entry (please check one):
* Story/Essay
* Poem
* I understand the rules of this contest. I wrote this story/poem by myself. I did not copy it from any other person, book or any other source.
* Applicant’s signature: (or initials)

The End