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

Summer 2017

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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, Marsha Farrow at 706-859-2624, or via email at marshafarrow@windstream.net. Thanks to everyone who makes our GCB Digest such a big success. I particularly want to thank Misty Ingram, assistant editor, for the many hours she has spent on editing the GCB Digest. I want to thank our president Keith Morris, for his presidential message with information about important events, legislation, and projects. I also appreciate the contributions from each member who sent articles and who made suggestions.

GCB Presidential Message, BY Keith Morris

Hello, everyone.  We have just finished another great convention. Thanks to all of the convention committee members for all your hard work in bringing this together. They pulled together many different activities and people to lead several different informative sessions and activities. Also, a large number of volunteers were on hand to assist members as needed at the hotel. There was a panel discussion with Kay McGill, Paul Raymond and Denise Woodson about the direction of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services. They were all very informative and answered many questions that were asked of them. The hotel itself was very nice and accommodating to our requests. They even gathered together $200 and donated it to GCB. Our room quota was met and we received the meeting room for free! Way to go GCB! A group of massage students from a local school came on Friday night and offered chair massages to anyone who wanted one. The cost was $10.00, Kathy and I both had one and we enjoyed it. The massage students turned around and donated that money back to GCB! That was truly a great gesture from the students. They can come back next time! One important change that was made at the business meeting was to increase the state dues. State dues will now be $15. This will just affect the state part. Remember, the local chapter decides how much they want to charge and then adds the state dues in to their amount. The convention committee is asking everyone to complete the survey that was sent out to them, giving them feedback to help them make next year’s convention even better. We will be back at the same hotel in Gainesville, Georgia, in 2018. I wanted to get the word out to all board members to make plans for the July board meeting. It will be held in Centerville, Georgia at the Lions clubhouse which is located at 612 North Houston Lake Boulevard, in Centerville, Georgia 31028. The meeting will start at 10:30 am. If you cannot come to the meeting in person you can call in and listen to the board meeting by calling 1-218-339-0420, and the passcode is 155648#. Thank you again, to the convention committee for all your hard work. It paid off and we had a great convention. I am looking forward to 2018!

Georgia Council of the Blind Board Meeting Minutes, Betsy Grenevitch

Disability Link

1901 Montreal Road, Suite 102

 Tucker GA 30084

January 28, 2017

Call To order:

President Keith Morris called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM.

Invocation:

Second Vice-President Fred McDade, Second-Vice President and Chaplain, Fred McDade mentioned that Ron Burgess recently lost his mother and the Northwest Chapter also lost their secretary, Mayella McDonald.

Roll Call:

Present: President, Keith Morris; First Vice-President, Phil Jones; Second Vice-President, Fred McDade; Treasurer, Marsha Farrow; Secretary, Betsy Grenevitch; Member at Large Representative, Alice Ritchhart; Athens Chapter, Jerrie Toney (via phone); Athens Chapter, Jamaica Miller; Augusta Chapter, Deborah Lovell (via phone); East Georgia Chapter, Cecily Nipper; Hall County Chapter, Dianne Roberts; Hall County Chapter, Roy Carder; Northwest Chapter, Ron Burgess (via phone); Rome/Floyd County Chapter, Amanda Wilson; Savannah Chapter, Marj Schneider; South Metro Chapter, Chris Baldridge; Georgia Guide Dog Users, Judy Presley; Webmaster, Steve Longmire. Other members present were Evan Bradford, Kathy Morris, Harvey Roberts, Valerie Hester, Jane Free, Bobby Free, Hoyal Presley, Charles Stubblefield, Michelle Grenevitch, and Anita Timmons. Parliamentarian, Roderick Parker

President's Report:

President Keith Morris did not have a report.

Secretary's Report:

Betsy Grenevitch asked that the minutes that were last sent out be approved as they were emailed. Deborah Lovell moved and Fred McDade seconded that they be approved. Marj Schneider asked that the minutes be proofed more thoroughly since they are the record, so that the document is cleaner and more accurate; content is not the concern. The minutes were accepted unanimously.

Treasurers and Finance Report:

Marsha Farrow and Jerrie Toney: Marsha Farrow wanted us to know that she inadvertently left out the conference account. This account has not changed and still has $550.26 in it.

In the main checking account, we have $4646.44. We will be sending approximately $1000 from GCB for our national dues. Amanda Wilson is handling the system which records our membership list. We now wait for a bill from the national office and we should receive this in late April.

Donations: Joseph Michael Benson Foods made a $1000 donation to our older blind device fund. Federal funds can no longer be used to purchase devices. We had some anonymous donations for this fund as well, so now have $1600 in this account.

Scholarship Fund: This fund is fed with donations and the Way Financial Portfolio. We inherited this fund from the Atlanta chapter. In the past our board voted to use the interest to promote scholarships and leadership in the organization. So far we have been able to spend only the interest and have never touched the principal. As of January 24 $2105.93 is in this account. Debbie Williams donated $38 to the scholarship fund when she sent in her dues.

Money Market: This account has $5740.71. This emergency fund is available so that we have access to it without any penalties.

Long-term investment: $17,513.99. This will mature on March 20, 2021. Evan Barnard CD: This account has $901.19.  It will mature on August 7, 2017. We are holding this account for Evan because he had to feed this account through a 501(c3) organization. Charities Commission: We have filed with this commission and it is good for 2 years.

Secretary of State Fee: We are about to pay this fee of $30, which will be taken out of the conference account because it is the only account that has a debit card attached to it. Marsha Farrow will be meeting with a tax preparer in her area that will assist her with the IRS 990 reporting. This lady is recommending that we just give her a donation for her time. Once Marsha Farrow sees how long this will take she will come back to the board to decide how much to pay her. Deborah Lovell made a motion that we accept the treasurer's report as presented and file it for audit. It was seconded by Alice Ritchhart. There was no discussion and the report was approved unanimously.

Liability insurance:

 The finance committee has been speaking with a nonprofit liability insurance specialist in California. The last cost quoted was $2600 but this quote included every chapter. If each chapter feels they need liability insurance then each chapter will be asked to pay the cost for their own liability insurance. We need to make some sort of statement about the relationship that we have with our chapters and affiliates. Jerrie Toney thinks we need to go back to the person we are working with concerning this insurance and ask him some questions. We could then bring the new information back to the board. Alice Ritchhart wanted to know a ballpark figure for what each chapter would have to pay and Marsha Farrow thought it was about $260 per year but that was not a definitive amount. Alice Ritchhart wanted to know what would happen with the small chapters that may not have this amount of money. Deborah Lovell wanted to know if there were any guidelines from The American Council of the Blind regarding this type of insurance. Marsha Farrow said that the American Council of the Blind would help give structure but we need to establish our own guidelines such as what is acceptable on the web site, social media and our conference. Marsha Farrow suggested we establish a committee to work on these guidelines.

Someone wanted to know the limits on this insurance but there was not a definitive answer at this time. At present, we do not know what we would be getting for our $2600 fee. The company is still in the process of asking questions about our organization. Marsha Farrow believes we need coverage for our officers, board members, and our conferences.  She said we need people on the committee who have knowledge about this type of insurance. She thinks we need legal advice about what we need. Roderick Parker recommended that we get a consultant from the nonprofits center to help us. Alice Ritchhart made a motion that the president form a committee to seek out a consultant and help find solutions and help us figure out some kind of liability package that we can invest in. Judy Presley seconded this motion. Marsha Farrow suggested that Mr. Stevens be on the call with us. The motion passed unanimously.

Other finance committee business:

Jerrie Toney discussed the need to talk to the convention committee about a few other items before deciding how much to designate to the convention. During the finance committee meeting Betsy mentioned using Square Card and Steve Longmire is going to be checking on this. Steve Longmire is also going to be checking into the Amazon Smile program. Marsha Farrow asked Jerrie Toney if we needed a motion to designate how much we would set aside for the conference-convention. Jerrie Toney suggested we set aside $1000 for conference-convention, as we had already designated in the budget. It was noted that we needed to approve the 2017 budget since this amount will also be listed. Alice Ritchhart made a motion we accept the budget with the change of $1000 to the conference item. Amanda Wilson seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously.

Fundraising:

Alice Ritchhart had nothing to report. The committee is still planning for the Braille rally but due to bad weather and the increased workload of the co-chair nothing has been done on this. Marsha Farrow wanted to know if we should do a silent auction again at the conference and Alice Ritchhart said yes.

Legislative:

Betsy Grenevitch reported that we had a low turn-out at the Blind Day at the Capitol but all the flyers did get handed out to all of the offices. We had excellent speakers. Linda Shepard spoke about how to work with our legislators. Betsy took a lot of notes and is hoping to send an article to Amanda Wilson this topic.

Mr. Harvey, from the Secretary of State's office, did a great job as well.

At the last minute an appropriations committee meeting was called for that morning at 8:00, so a lot of the legislators were at that meeting. Betsy Grenevitch mentioned our talking points for this year. We are still working on the Braille Literacy Bill. Betsy spoke with Falon and she is supposed to find out if Representative Coleman has found a sponsor. We are still working on the service animal bill and spoke to Rep. Kirby when we were at the Capitol. He is still interested in the bill and Betsy reminded him that it was important to speak with us before reintroducing the bill. Betsy re-sent him the copy of the Florida law that we want to model our bill after. Alice Ritchhart brought up the concern that the current version of the bill that he brought forward last year does not allow for people to self-train their own dogs. The other issue is to decide who is going to hand out the ID cards to show the animal is legitimate. We also have talking points about the task force on services for the blind. Betsy told us that if we need contact information for our representatives to call her for the numbers or addresses. Alice Ritchhart gave the report about what the legislative committee was assigned to do concerning forming an alliance. The committee decided we needed to do what the Coalition originally did, find a place and bring in all the parties that deal with all the sensory disabilities. Betsy and Marsha Farrow have been working with Steve Longmire about possibly meeting at the Decatur Recreation Center. We would bring the service providers and consumer groups together. We would bring in people like Bob Green, Vincent Martin and Fay Loggins. They also have sensory disabilities and are supposed to be representing us. They could speak to us about what they are doing to look after sensory disabilities, what are they not doing, and for us to speak out about what we need to see. We want to bring the service providers and the consumer groups together from around the state. While we were working on this we got word that Paul Raymond told the group at the National Federation of the Blind conference that Mr. Casey, the head of Vocational Rehabilitation, has decided there should be a director over sensory disabilities. People at the National Federation of the Blind conference told him that this is not acceptable, that each sensory disability needs to have its own director. This past Wednesday the news came out that a new director is being sought for blind and deaf services. We think we need to hold off having a meeting at this time. Georgia Council of the Blind will be the host of this meeting. We decided we needed someone who was neutral, who was not a member of an organization. We suggested that Roderick Parker be this person. He has accepted this position. We decided to wait and see who is appointed as the director because it will be important to invite that person to the meeting. Alice Ritchhart mentioned the fact that GVRA is getting a new email address and the letter representing "rehabilitation" is being removed from this new address. It will now be called GVS.

Raj Gandi is now over the Business Enterprises program once again. There was talk about putting the Business Enterprises Program under the rehabilitation center at Warm Springs and opening it up to people with other disabilities. They realized it was not permissible to open it up to all disabilities; thus Raj is over this program again. Kevin Harris, who used to be the policy person for The Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, is now over the Georgia Industries for the Blind. They are very top heavy at the administrative side of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency. It sounds like the State Rehab Council is getting back some of their power. Deborah Lovell was somewhat impressed with Mr. Casey at their recent State Rehab Council meeting. Deborah Lovell said she recommended that two people be under the director of the Deaf and Blind division to represent each disability. She explained that the State Rehab Council is an appointed board and their job is to advise and recommend to the agency. This board is supposed to have a say in policy concerning the rehabilitation program. The State Rehabilitation Council is trying to get back to the original nine goals and reporting to the main board. President Morris wanted to know if the job listing for the director was internal to see if anyone had a different answer. He said it was internal. Paul Raymond has applied for this position. There is word that at the federal level part of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) may be taken out and the homemaker status brought back.

Membership:

Amanda Wilson reported that we have 180 members. The different chapters are on Facebook and they are doing activities to reach out to the community. We also have new brochures. Alice Ritchhart asked about the establishment of the Warner Robins chapter. Amanda Wilson said that Dawn McAllister’s father has been in the hospital with pneumonia. Amanda has tried to reach out to her, but has not received a response, so this chapter is now on hold. Marsha Farrow said that each chapter will be receiving at least 15 of the brochures. She thanked Paul Grenevitch, Kay McGill and Marj Schneider for working on the brochure. Amanda thanked all the chapters who sent in their lists and money. The Athens chapter is being processed through PayPal. Amanda is working on the database.

GCB Digest:

The current issue of the Digest is in the mail. The large print costs $6 per copy and dues from members only cover one issue. She is seeking chapter donations to go toward this cost. We also may want to consider doing the Digest fewer times per year.

Technology:

Steve Longmire explained that there has been a modification to the website to allow each individual chapter to modify their own web page. Jerrie Toney has sent out the user ID and password needed to each chapter so that they can access their page. You can download pictures, videos, or copy and paste your material on to the page. He wanted to know if any chapters have tried to access their page, but so far there was nothing to report. He is looking into the use of the Square Card and into the Amazon Smile program. He said that it is standard to have to use your bank account number with the Amazon Smile account. This would be linked to the smallest account. Steve Longmire hopes to start having committee meetings over the next couple months. Alice Ritchhart had received a call from the state ADA Coordinator about whom to contact when emergency information needs to get out to our group. Alice Ritchhart recommended that she get in touch with either Jerrie Toney or Steve Longmire so that they can disseminate this information on our web site. She suggested that someone from the technology committee follow up with the coordinator. Steve Longmire said that he would get in touch with her if Alice Ritchhart would give him her contact information. Steve Longmire would like a copy of the brochure to put it on the web site. Marj Schneider had a couple of suggestions for the website such as writing out vice president and not just first vice and second vice. The link for donations does not go anywhere.

There is no information about Georgia Guide Dog Users on our website. Steve Longmire said he will be working on redesigning this page and asked Marj Schneider to look at it once he completes it. Steve Longmire also said that he will be redesigning the donation page on the site and would like feedback from Marj Schneider and anyone else who wants to give it once the page is ready. He is going to change the feedback link so that it goes to his email address. Steve Longmire and Jerrie Toney were thanked for their work on the website. Roderick Parker suggested that since access to pages has been given to chapters that a committee be formed to set guidelines for what is appropriate/inappropriate material to put on the website. He suggested there should be a list of 5-10 things that we should not put on the site in these guidelines.

 Transportation:

Alice Ritchhart had nothing to report. Roderick said he applied for the chair position on the MARTA Advisory Committee, MAC. He recommended that they get more involved in informing people who their representatives are concerning MARTA.

 Convention Report:

Dianne Roberts said on Friday we will have a tour at Northeast Georgia History Center for people who come in before check-in. This tour will take place from around 1:00-3:00PM. We will be holding the conference at the Holiday Inn Lanier Centre, soon to be called the Ramada Inn in Gainesville. We can check in as early as 3:00 PM. 5:00-7:00 is registration. We will have sighted volunteers to help. 7:00-9:00 is a reception.  9:00-10:00 we will have some games. On Saturday we have breakfast from 6:30-8:45; business meeting from 9:00-10:00; 10:00-11:00 vendors will introduce themselves with a five-minute presentation each; 11:00-12:00 we will visit the exhibit area; 12:00-1:30 luncheon; 2:00-4:00 business meeting; and 4:00-5:00 our board meeting. Currently the only money being spent is for the hors d'oeuvres. The luncheon has 2 entrees, 2 vegetables, a starch, a salad, rolls, butter, fruit cobbler, tea and coffee.

Activities: They are not all nailed down yet. We are looking at having tandem bike riding, and some kind of kayaking from 2:00-4:00. We are still trying to confirm a speaker for our Friday night reception. It will possibly be Matt Simpson, a special para-Olympian. They have contacted the Woodruff Medical Training School to offer free chair massages, which the students will earn credit for. If we can get Matt Simpson, we will open the reception to the public for a fee. This will be a fundraiser to bring in people to hear him speak about his experience. You can sign up for the meal separately from the registration fee. Alice Ritchhart reminded us that the hotel information needs to be put out on the website. Marsha Farrow explained that the contract is almost ready but a few things had to be changed before it is signed.

The hotel is changing to a Ramada Inn but they will honor the contract that we already have. The transition will be finished by February 28. We have meeting space and exhibit space. Because the hotel is catering our luncheon they are waiving the fee for the meeting space and for the hospitality room.

The sound equipment also comes with the rooms. Marsha Farrow mentioned that we may have speaker travel and speaker fee expenses. Marsha Farrow is still in contact with Hal Simpson about bringing Matt Simpson to speak to us and also about bringing tandem bikes and kayaks. There will be a seminar for those who are not able to do these activities and because of Cecily Nipper's suggestion, Audrey Demitt has been contacted to come and speak to us. She is an RN and has been a school nurse. She does diabetic awareness education and writes articles for the Vision Aware website. She is willing to do 2 one-hour seminars and will not charge us a fee. We had to guarantee 30 rooms reserved to get the $90 per night cost. Ask for Cathy Scarbrough if you want to reserve your room. The rooms need to be reserved 30 days prior to the event. Alice Ritchhart wanted to know how many rooms is wheelchair accessible. This question was answered later on in the meeting. The hotel number is 770- 531 and 0907. Be sure to tell them you are reserving your room for GCB. Your room rate includes your room and a full breakfast. They have a full restaurant that is open to the public for breakfast and supper. It is not open to the public for lunch. We will not have to eat at the restaurant; we will be eating in our meeting room. There is an enclosed dog relief area in a grassy courtyard. There is Braille on all doors of the rooms and meeting rooms. All four floors of the hotel are identical. We voted on the theme for the conference among five possibilities that had been submitted. The winner was, "Spring into Action with GCB." Marsha Farrow reminded us to have the hotel room described to you in detail to make sure it will be accessible to you. If we have any sighted volunteers who would like to assist please send their names to Judy Presley, who will compile the list. Marsha Farrow said she was willing to train the staff at the hotel and Judy could go to the hotel with her dog.

GGDU:

Marj Schneider gave this report. She announced our new president is Rita Harris. The past presidents will be sharing a lot of information with her and trying to get her up to speed. Our treasury has gotten pretty low, so we need to increase our funds. Marj Schneider brought several fundraising canisters for members to bring to pet stores or restaurant to solicit donations. Betsy attended the Top Dog conference in Orlando, Florida, an event featuring workshops for guide dog handlers. She sold fundraising items there for GGDU, pet soap and collapsible food bowls. She gave Alice Ritchhart a check for $215 which included one new member.

Scholarship:

Debbi Williams was not present. Alice Ritchhart raised concerns about how well the committee was getting work done and its composition.  President Keith Morris pointed out that the current members on this committee are Betsy Grenevitch, Debbi Williams, Deborah Lovell, and Marsha Farrow. President Keith Morris is going to the American Council of the Blind Legislative Seminar in Washington DC to represent vendors as well as Georgia Council of the Blind. Marsha Farrow will be attending the seminar as well. Roderick Parker explained that Keith, as president, is a member of this committee and may need to call a meeting and elect a new chair in order to get things accomplished. DJ Grenevitch was able to come on the phone to answer Alice's questions about the convention hotel rooms. She said the bathroom should be big enough for a wheelchair, but without enough space to turn around. The tubs are like garden tubs but have a shower in them as well. She thinks there are two handicapped accessible rooms on each level.

Old Business

Training on duties of Officers, Roderick Parker:

Roderick asked Evan Bradford to read from the affiliate manual that the American Council of the Blind has produced. Note: You can request this manual for your use so I will just mention extra things that Roderick presented. He explained that if Keith Morris is presiding over a meeting and wants to be involved in a debate he can ask the first vice president to take over the meeting so that he can enter into the discussion. Roderick explained that the agenda lets you know what is going to happen at the meeting in advance and prevents discussions from being sidetracked. He noted that the minutes do not have to be voted on if no corrections are needed. Minutes are not a transcript. It is not necessary to write down the entire discussion. You can use the phrase such as "A discussion was held about ..." A consensus can be called a unanimous consent. You can simply say, "If there is no objection we will ..." He stressed that a motion needs to state exactly what you want to accomplish. Alice Ritchhart brought up the point that our Constitution says the minutes are to be posted 30 days after the meeting, so that if there are actions to be taken the members will know what they are to be doing. Roderick said that we needed to go by our Constitution because it is law. He also stressed the importance of the president and secretary looking at the minutes to make sure they are clear and understandable and that nothing is missing that should be in them. He recommended that we have an annual fundraiser and the board should set a goal for that fundraiser.

 New Business

Board Meetings and Locations:

Roderick recommended that President Morris put together a task force to look at different churches, libraries, or central locations where there is not a fee to hold a board meeting. Steve Longmire is in contact with someone from the Decatur Recreation Center and is waiting to hear back from him. He is also willing to check with a library in the area. Marsha Farrow mentioned that some libraries will not let you book ahead. Marj Schneider requested that the board consider holding afternoon meetings if we are meeting in the Atlanta area because of the distance some have to travel to these meetings. Roderick asked for volunteers from the various counties to find meeting places. Deborah Lovell, Amanda Wilson, and Steve Longmire have volunteered to look for locations in their areas. He challenged everyone else to look in their areas to find a location that has the available parking, would be free, would allow food in the meeting room, and would be accessible.

Potential conference site:

Marsha Farrow wanted us to know that she has received information from a hotel in Columbus about holding a future convention at their location. The Columbus chapter has expressed interest in having a conference-convention there.

Steve Longmire said they are wishing to increase membership on the Library for Accessible Services committee and he wants GCB to appoint someone to be on this committee. Deborah Lovell suggested Jerrie Toney to be GCB'S appointee. Deborah Lovell nominated Jerrie Toney to be this representative, she accepted the nomination and she was approved unanimously.

 Donation:

Marsha Farrow wanted the board to decide how much we would donate to Disability Link for allowing us to meet there. She explained we had been giving $50 to CVI for a long time and then had to start paying $25 an hour for the security guard. Fred McDade made a motion that we give $50 to Disability Link. Judy Presley seconded the motion. The motion approved unanimously.

Editor of the Digest:

Suzanne Jackson resigned as assistant editor of the Digest but Misty Ingram has accepted this position. Misty Ingram would also like to use a different computer voice to narrate the Digest. Amanda Wilson made a motion that Misty Ingram take Suzanne Jackson's place as assistant editor of the Digest, and read it or have it narrated with a friendlier voice. Alice Ritchhart seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

Technology Fair:

Deborah Lovell's chapter is doing a technology fair on September 23 that will be on IOS devices. It would be free of charge except for lunch. Roderick Parker made a suggestion that we are a 501(c3) organization and we have to raise money, so there should be a registration fee. Deborah Lovell said she would take this back to her chapter. She said they are considering it a community awareness project. Alice Ritchhart held a 50/50 raffle during the meeting and Roy Carder won. He donated his money to Georgia Guide Dog Users.

Adjourn:

Deborah Lovell moved that we adjourn and Phil Jones seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 1:22 pm.

Georgia COUNCIL OF THE BLIND CONFERENCE/CONVENTION 2017

RAMADA INN, GAINESVILLE, GEORGIA

SPRING INTO ACTION (THIS IS OUR THEME)

APRIL 28and 29, 2017

WELCOME FROM THE GREATER HALL COUNTY CHAPTER

To all our friends and neighbors of GCB and to our honored guests:  Welcome to beautiful Gainesville, Georgia!  We are happy you have come to enjoy food, fun and fellowship with us at the 2017 Georgia Council of the Blind Conference and Convention.  We hope you have a wonderful time this weekend, and we are working hard to ensure your comfort and safety while you are here with us.  The statewide convention is an integral part of the GCB family, a time when important business is conducted and friendships grow into life-changing relationships.  We hope all GCB members benefit from attending the 2017 convention and conference.  We hope you will be encouraged and equipped to make an impact in the lives of others experiencing vision loss.  Welcome, we are glad you are here!

GCB fun facts, By Mike Hall

MEMBER OF Gainesville LIONS Club and Past Member of the Georgia Council of the Blind

As you celebrate the sixty-first year of the Georgia Council of the Blind, you may be interested in some fun facts about GCB. Did you know that GCB was once known as the Georgia Federation of the Blind?  The name was changed to GCB on November 21, 1983. Did you know that in 1969 that the audio edition of the Braille Forum was produced on 7 inch, 2 track reel to reel tapes and the editor was former GFB president Ned Freeman? Did you know that GFB once had a credit union and that local chapters were subsidized annually by the state organization in the amount of $100.00, up to $250.00, depending on membership? Did you know that GFB once had a thrift store and a camp for blind children? Did you know that one convention had a king and queen and that another convention had a womanless beauty contest where the judges were blind women? Did you know that one convention banquet was held at the King’s Bay Submarine Base in St. Mary’s Georgia? Did you know that the Greater Hall Area Chapter of the Georgia Council of the Blind was formed 20 years ago? Did you know that the first chapter of GCB in Gainesville was formed in 1974 by Dickie Cannon?  They first met in the office of Fay Loggins, a blind attorney who is still in practice in Gainesville.  Out of that chapter came Nancy Brewer, who served a term on the library board to support talking books.  A young Deborah Lovell came on later to serve as chapter president and state secretary.  Mike Hall served as newsletter editor for about 10 years as well as state secretary and a number of years as chapter president. I hope you will continue at least sixty-one more years in advocacy and service to people who are blind or visually impaired.

In Memory of:

Dr. Otis Stephens passed away on December 1, 2016. He was a former President of the American Council of the Blind and an acclaimed author. He was the brother of Ann Sims, GCB Life Member. Born in 1936, he was educated in Atlanta’s schools in a special class for blind students. He graduated from the Georgia Academy for the Blind, and then earned his B.A. and M.A. degrees in political science at the University of Georgia before going on to a Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins University. He then began teaching at Georgia Southern College. In 1975 until 1976, he was a liberal arts fellow in law and political science at Harvard. After that year, he moved south to the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, where he served as a professor of political science, associate dean in the College of Arts and Sciences, and then professor and resident scholar of constitutional law in the College of Law. His transition to the Law School faculty in 2000 and was facilitated by the fact that he had completed the J.D. degree at the University of Tennessee in 1983. Dr. Stephens wrote the history of the Georgia Academy for the Blind in Macon and was a major contributor to the American Council of the Blind History Book entitled “People of Vision”.

Vance Barnes of the Greater Hall County chapter passed away on January 26, 2017. He was the vice-president of the Greater Hall County chapter from 2015 until 2017. Edwina Bagley of the Greater Hall county chapter passed away on June 17, 2016; she was the wife of former President Richard Bagley. Jeanne Ebbs of the Greater Hall County chapter passed away on January 21, 2017. She was a faithful member of the Greater Hall County chapter. Hank Singleton of the Greater Hall County chapter passed away on March 16, 2017. He was in charge of contacting members about their meetings. Mayella McDonald secretary of the Northwest chapter passed away on Friday, December 16, 2016. Ron Burgess of the Northwest chapter Mother passed away on January 7, 2017. Timothy Kelly of Macon, mother passed away on September 15, 2016. Deborah Lovell of the Augusta chapter mother passed away. On Friday, April 28, 2017, many Georgia Council of the blind members took a tour of the Northeast Georgia History Center. It was conducted by Ken Johnston, who is the Curator of Education Northeast Georgia History Center at Brenau University which is located at 322 Academy Street, in Gainesville, Georgia.

The Georgia Guide Dog Users held a business meeting in the board room. Their guest speaker was Deanna Izzo, Field Representative with Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind. Many Georgia Council of the Blind members took part in receiving chair massages. The massages were provided by Students of Woodruff Medical Training Center. Individuals who received massages were notified by volunteers and they were escorted to the massage area. The welcome reception was great. We had great food and Matt Simpson was the guest speaker. He inspired us with his stories of his life. Matt Simpson was raised outside of Atlanta Georgia. After graduating from Washington and Lee University, a small liberal arts school in Virginia, in 2012, he accepted a job with the United States Association of Blind Athletes in Colorado Springs, Colorado. For over three years with USABA, Matt worked to expand USABA’s local and regional infrastructure across the United States, as well as working in development and program administration. Matt moved to Fort Wayne in 2015 to join the newly formed USA Men’s National Goalball resident training program. Matt’s athletic accomplishments in the sport of goalball include a 2009 World Youth Championship gold medal, a 2011 & 2014 adult national championship, a 2014 IBSA World Goalball Championship bronze medal and two Pan-American silver medals (2013, 2015). He was recently selected to be a part of his first Paralympic team. He and the team finished second at the Rio Games, earning a silver medal in men’s USA Goalball which was their highest finish at a Paralympics since 1988. Matt intends to pursue a law degree starting in the fall of 2017, while also training for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games.

Tommy Woodyard and his mother Mary Woodyard conducted the live auction. The Craft Loving Beer Basket that was donated by the Augusta Chapter and was purchased by Mike Williams for $120.00. A collectable doll was donated by Lanna Carder and was purchased by Jerrie Toney for $15.00. The insolated mug and medium lunch box was donated by Steve Longmire and was purchased by Deborah Lovell for $25.00. The sports lovers’ basket was donated by the Rome Floyd County chapter and was purchased by Teresa Brenner for $25.00. The Moshi Snuggle Pillow Pal (a pink bunny) was donated by Independent Living Aids was purchased by Rita Harris and was purchased for $10.00. The Moshi Snuggle Pal Pillow (a Green Frog) was donated by Independent Living Aids and was purchased by Rita Harris for $15.00. The Martini Snack Basket was donated by the Savannah Chapter and was purchased by Amanda Wilson for $35.00. The Lunch Box Kit was donated by the Athens chapter and was purchased by Brenda Knight for $40.00. The voice activated Moshi office clock was donated by Independent Living Aids and was purchased by Lisa Jones for $35.00. The rainy day basket was donated by the East Georgia Chapter and was purchased by Cecily Nipper for $40.00. The picnic back pack basket and blanket was donated by Alice Ritchhart and was purchased by Dr. Gottlibe for $75.00. The movie, chicken and snacks basket was donated by the Greater Hall County chapter was purchased by Alice Ritchhart for $70.00. The grab and go cane was donated by the Greater Hall County Chapter and was purchased by Alice Ritchhart for $15.00. The milk bone dog treats container was donated by the Coastal Carolina Trainers and was purchased by Alice Ritchhart for $45.00. The Presidential Dollars Complete Collection was donated by Roy Carder and was purchased by Lillian Hanley for $80.00. The grand total was $645.0 0. Tommy Woodyard and his mother Mary Woodyard conducted a trivia game after the auction ended. They reported that they actually played Jeopardy this year with the categories being Famous Blind TV Characters, Famous Blind Politicians, Famous Blind Characters in Literature, and Legal Advocacy for Vision, Famous Blind Songs or Singers, and Eye Health. She stated that they did not get started until 10:00 pm. They stated that she thinks that everyone enjoyed the trivia games. Mary Woodyard stated that she had another game with different categories to play, but because it was so late, they decided to table that game until next year. They had another Name That Tune Game which we also did not play because it was so late. The Council of Citizens with Low Vision will be using both Jeopardy Games and the Name That Tune game at the American Council of the Blind National Convention for the Council of Citizens with Low Vision Impairments game night.

On, Saturday, April 29, 2017, the exhibit hall was open all day. The following vendors were there to discuss their products. Audrey Demmit, AFB-Vision aware, 678-386-5119, [www.visionaware.org](http://www.visionaware.org); American Printing House for the Blind, 502-895-2405; Enhanced Vision, 770-882-9229; Georgia Guide Dog Users, 706-474-0404; Georgia Industries for the Blind, 229-243-5326; Georgia Libraries for Accessible Services, 1-800-248-6701; Georgia Radio Reading Service, 1-800-248-6701; Gospel Light Foundation, 678-475-7879; Gottlieb Vision Group, 678-417-9778; Hadley Institute, 1-800-323-4238; ITN Lanier, 678-696-0360; Learning Ally, 706-549-1313; Multiple Choices, 706-850-4025; Sprint Blind and Low Vision Outreach, 1-866-588-5814; Sunbright, 404-234-5820; Visual enhancements, 1-877-236-7092; Vistas, 706-995-2216. We heard from three members of the Georgia Vocational Services. Kay McGill, Paul Raymond, and Denine Woodson gave an update on how services are being updated all around the state for individuals with disabilities. Kay McGill graduated from the University of Kentucky, UK with a Bachelor’s degree, cum laude, in Psychology and Master’s degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. She is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor and Certified Public Manager. She has been with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) her entire career serving as a Rehabilitation Counselor, facility and field supervisor, an Employment Manager, Special Populations Coordinator for the Blind, Deaf, and Deaf-Blind, State Coordinator for the Blind and Older Blind Program Manager. She received awards from the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind, the National Federation of the Blind of Georgia, Georgia Council of the Blind, the Business Enterprise Program, Helen Keller National Center, and the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired, and Vocational Rehabilitation.

Although Kay retired from Vocational Rehabilitation December 1, 2006, she was rehired in January 2010 to work with the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) as the GVRA Older Blind Program Manager – Project Independence: Georgia Vision Program for Adults Age 55 and over. She and her husband, Dick, have been married for 27 years and are the aunt and uncle of Anderson and his triplet siblings Marshall, Harper and Elena. She is an avid University of Kentucky basketball fan and was on the UK Fencing Team (her athletic collegiate venture!) If you want to learn more about Project Independence please contact Kay McGill at 404-299-8638, or via email at kay1949@comcast.net.

Paul Raymond has been serving people with disabilities for 36 years. For the past 24 years, he has been serving people who are blind or visually impaired through the Vocational Rehabilitation Program and the Older Blind Program. He has served in the capacities of a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, Supervisor and Administrator. Paul earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Human Services from Springfield College and a Master’s Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Assumption College in Massachusetts. He has also competed additional coursework in vision loss and leadership. Paul grew up in Maine where he lived, worked and raised his family. He has been married for 38 years, has two adult children and two grandchildren. Paul relocated to Georgia 9 years ago and is the Statewide Blindness Services Coordinator for the VR and Older Blind Programs. If you want to learn more about the Georgia Vocational Services in Georgia please contact Paul Raymond at 770-500-9160, or via email at paul.raymond@gvs.ga.gov.

 Denine Woodson, Director of Blind and Deaf Services came to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) as a VRCT in LaGrange in 2004. She was promoted to a Rehabilitation Unit Manager (RUM) and then a Regional Director in 2008. She has served on numerous boards and completed VR service projects, and she has consistently led her team to meet or exceed their performance standards. She has also served in the capacity of Director of Operations and Director of Field Services. As part of her most recent position as Director of Outreach and Intake, she has worked closely with the Specialty Team to develop unique avenues to assist our sensory population with entry into GVRA services. Denine has served with the organization for more than 13 years and has more than ten years of VR experience in both Ohio and New York. She currently holds an active Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification. She is a graduate of the University of Akron, where she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree, and Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH, where she earned her Master's in Social Administration. She has also completed post graduate studies in Ohio and New York. She earned her Master’s in Social Administration. She has also completed post graduate studies in Ohio and New York. She and her husband of 23 years currently reside in Newnan, GA, with their two sons (20 and 18 years) and their 14 year-old-daughter. Denine’s vision for the Blind/ Visually Impaired and Deaf/Hard of Hearing is to redesign and build a process that will allow our staff and providers to understand the needs of the clients and community and institute innovative services to meet those needs from intake through successful closure. If you want to learn more about the Deaf Blind services offered by the Georgia Vocational Services agency please contact Denine Woodson at 770-254-7210, or via email at denine.woodson@gvs.ga.gov.

The GCB annual business meeting was conducted by President Keith Morris. The entire GCB committee chairperson submitted reports re: their committees so that the GCB business meeting would flow more smoothly. If you want a copy of any committee’s report please let us know and we will send them out to you.

The GCB committee’s chairpersons and their contact information are as follows: The GCB Digest Committee, Amanda Wilson, 770-574-4700, moonrocks@bellsouth.net; GCB membership Committee, Amanda Wilson, 770-547-4700, moonrocks@bellsouth.net GCB Technology committee, Steve Longmire, 404-234-5820, info@sunbright.biz GCB Finance Committee, Jerrie Toney, 706-461-1013, jerriemt2@gmail.com GCB Conference Committee, Diane Roberts, 770-932-1112, harveyroberts2@att.net GCB Fundraising Committee, Alice Ritchhart, 912-996-4213, alice.ritchhart@comcast.net GCB Transportation Committee, Alice Ritchhart, 912-996-4213, alice.ritchhart@comcast.net GCB Awards Committee, Judy Presley, 706-878-2962, hoyal@windstram.net GCB Scholarship committee, Deborah Williams, 770-595-1007, debbie\_teaches@comcast.net GCB Legislative Committee, Betsy Grenevitch, 770-464-0450, blindangel@joimail.com GGDU Georgia Guide Dog Users, Rita Harris, 706-474-0404, rita@livinglifeteam.net.

The GCB annual awards luncheon was lots of fun. Marsha Farrow was our master of ceremonies for the annual award luncheon which was held on Saturday, April 29, 2017, from 12:00 pm until 1:30 pm. Our keynote speaker was Dan Dillan, who is an American Council of the Blind Board Member. He is a musician and a National Blind Golfer. Dan sang some cool songs for us. He told us all about what is going on at the national level of our organization. Dan Dillon was born legally blind in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and gradually lost his sight until he became totally blind in his late teens or early twenties. Upon graduating from Michigan State University, he journeyed to Nashville to pursue the music business. For the past 17 years he has been very active in the American Council of the Blind (ACB), and served as President of the Tennessee Council of the Blind and President of the local chapter in Nashville, the Mid-Tennessee Council of the Blind for 6 years in each organization. Some of Dan's interests include playing golf, bowling, playing cards and trivia games, fishing, woodworking, singing and playing his guitar, traveling to the beach as often as possible. Dan has always been involved in some kind of an exercise program and tries to walk every day. He feels extremely fortunate to have been a participant in the tandem bike riding program for the blind and visually impaired since its inception. He is very excited about riding in his eighth Harpeth River Ride this coming June. For the past few years Dan has been co-chair of the Resource Development Committee, RDC, of the American Council of the Blind (ACB), and last year Dan was elected to the Board of Directors of ACB. If you want to learn more about the American Council of the Blind please contact Dan Dillon at 615-874-1223, or via email at Dan.dillon@comcast.net. Many GCB members went on the tandem bike ride that was organized by Hal Simpson of the Georgia Blind Sports Association. He and his group of volunteers rode on the tandem bike ride. Many GCB members stated that it was lots of fun. If you wish to find out more about adaptive sports for individuals with visual impairments please contact Hal Simpson at 770-833-2061, or via email at halsimpson@gmail.com. Audrey Demmitt Registered Nurse discussed several areas of health related issues facing individuals with vision loss and concerns regarding the care of aging parents. If you want to learn more about how to care for aging parents please contact Audrey Demmit at 678-386-5119, or via email at visionaware@afb.net. Mike Wofford, Entrepreneur shared his life journey and how he has achieved success as a business owner that provides a valuable service to others in his community. Mike Wofford, 59, is a life-long native of Gainesville/Hall County.  Mike was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa at age 15 when he failed the eye test for his vehicle learner’s license.  He was able to obtain a driver’s license on his 18th birthday, three weeks after he graduated from North Hall High School.  Mike was able to drive throughout college as he attended Gainesville Junior College, the University of Georgia, and North Georgia College, where he graduated in 1979 with a Bachelors of Business Administration degree in management and marketing.  He was able to work at his first job after college for just over a year before he was dismissed from his position due to the decrease in his vision.  In one year his eyesight dropped from 20/80-20/100 to not being able to see the big E on the eye chart.  Mike was declared legally blind in 1982.  He had to stop driving and sold his car.  Unable to find a job in the Gainesville/Hall County area he lived with his parents until 1998. During his senior year in college Mike became a part-time sports broadcaster on local radio as a statistician/spotter for the local high school football broadcasts.  Through the years he was able to continue his work due to his passion for sports and radio and because it kept him busy while unemployed due to his disability.  The owner of the radio station did not mind that Mike could not see as long as he could do the job.  Mike worked for three different Gainesville stations.  The owner of the last station that he worked for would pick him up at his house and drive him to Gainesville and to the station to work.  At 39, Mike met his wife, Janet, on a blind date.  They were married in April, 1998, and they have one daughter, Lilly.  Doctors assured Mike and Janet that Lilly would not inherit his disease. Mike started a corporation named Vision Communications, Inc. and in 1998 he purchased WKZD-AM, where he worked as sports director from 1986 until 1994. Mike currently works at the station, known as Glory 1330 WGTJ, and is the main person involved in the business.  He conducts all of the broadcasting with the help of assistive devices and software that enables his computers to talk to him as he does his job. Mike is also working to launch a new venture that will assist blind and low-vision individuals to become more independent and productive.  The new business is called “I Can See Computers”.  The idea is to provide a low-cost tablet that will allow anyone who is blind or has low vision to easily access all of the functions of a computer. The Georgia Council of the blind Quarterly Board Meeting was conducted by President Keith Morris. The Conference/Convention committee wishes to thank everyone who made this Conference/Convention a huge success! The Georgia Council of the Blind Family extends our gratitude to each and every one who worked so hard to make this Conference/Convention possible. The Greater Hall Chapter’s Leaders and Members worked tirelessly ensuring every detail was properly covered. The many Exhibitors and Guest Speakers have provided the Attendees with rich and valuable information. The Ramada Inn Conference Planners and Staff have served us well! All of our volunteers have provided invaluable service both inside and outside the facility and enabled us to learn about the rich culture of this lovely area. The Tour of the History Museum was a highlight of the weekend. Many of our Attendees enjoyed the Tandem Bike rides which provided fun and a sense of freedom like no other!  Please know that the GCB Conference/Convention Planning Committee Members have made every effort to ensure that everyone has enjoyed the wonderful hospitality of lovely Gainesville.

Georgia Council of the Blind

Annual business Meeting, Saturday, August 6, 2016

Call to Order: President Keith Morris called to order at 2:15 PM.

Invocation: We were led in prayer by our chaplain, Fred McDade.

Roll Call: Present: President, Keith Morris; First Vice-President, Robin Oliver; Second Vice-President, Fred McDade; Secretary, Betsy Grenevitch; and Treasurer, Marsha Farrow. Chapter representatives Included: Athens, Jerrie Toney; Augusta, Deborah Lovell; Columbus, Cliff Jones; East Georgia, Phil Jones; Greater Hall, Judy Presley; Northwest, Ron Burgess; Rome, Amanda Wilson; Savannah, Marj Schneider; and South Metro, Lisa Jones. At-Large members were represented by Alice Ritchhart. Georgia Guide dog Users was represented by Dory Israel. Webmaster Steve Longmire and Parliamentarian Roderick Parker were also present.

Secretary’s Report:

Betsy Grenevitch asked that the minutes be approved from the business meeting in 2015 as sent out to the membership. They were unanimously approved.

Treasurer’s Report:

Marsha Farrow asked that the report from last year’s conference and convention that was sent out to the membership be approved. It was unanimously approved.

Committee Reports

Fundraising, by Alice Ritchhart:

A Braille Rally is being planned. She and Valerie Hester have an automobile club that is willing to work with them but Alice and Valerie need to schedule a time to meet with them. They are hoping to have the rally in the spring. Marsha reminded us that we have regular donations coming in from the Monthly Monetary Support program. We have also received a $500 anonymous donation that will be set aside for blind or visually impaired individuals who are 55 and older. John and Valerie Hester donated $1000 toward the general fund or the conference and convention fund if it is needed. Hall County chapter has donated over $750 dollars from contributions given to their chapter. Marj Schneider gave us information about the Macy’s Shop for a Cause program taking place on August 26-28. Tickets are $5 each and the organization will receive $2.50 for each ticket sold. Tickets were handed out to members. Fundraisers discussed to consider for the future were: The Kroger program, Amazon Smile, and Betty Ideas.

Membership, Amanda Wilson:

The committee wants information to put on Facebook and Twitter about the activities in the chapters. They also want to put chapter events on the GCB website. Marsha told us that we have four new members who have joined in the past few weeks.

Technology, Steve Longmire:

He reminded us of our organization’s website address: [www.georgiacounciloftheblind.org](http://www.georgiacounciloftheblind.org). We have Resource section on the site. He is requesting that the chapters send him information about upcoming events, photos and videos. He is now working on a phone app for the Georgia Council of the Blind. The app is completed for the Android and is working on one for the IPhone.

Legislative, Betsy Grenevitch:

Alice Ritchhart gave the update about the Blind Day at the Capitol since Betsy was not present. All of the senior class from the Georgia Academy for the Blind was present along with the superintendent of the Academy and the transition counselor. The Secretary of State’s office brought in some voting machines and talked about the voting process.

Representative Coleman spoke to the group about our Braille Literacy bill. He told us he had received pledges from other representatives who thought it was a good idea.

The legislation that we had proposed to establish a task force concerning blind services had a sponsor but nothing further happened with the bill. Michelle Grenevitch and some of her high school class members assisted the students from the Academy while at the Capitol. Betsy thanked Michael Benson for his donation of $500 to help with expenses when we go to the Capitol. Betsy Grenevitch attended the Education Committee session that was held in Watkinsville. This meeting was for the superintendents and principals to give their opinions on different aspects of education in our state. She was able to present our concerns about Braille literacy in our schools. Rebecca Sheffield from the American Foundation for the Blind gave her some statistics that she was able to share with the committee. Alice Ritchhart brought up a concern about Georgia going back to an Order of Selection process. She is also concerned that no statistics have been kept about how many who finished the homemaker status went on to be employed. Paul Raymond gave us information about the Workforce Initiative Opportunity ACT. He encouraged us to attend the public hearings about this new program. Robin Blount, the Disability Community Liaison between GV`RA and the State Rehab Council, talked further about the new regulations and the public hearings. After a lengthy discussion on this topic, we moved on to the next committee report.

Constitution and Bylaws, Alice Ritchhart:

Proposals were read to make changes to our Georgia Council of the Blind Constitution and Bylaws. After some discussion about the proposals they were all passed. All members of GCB had received the proposals in advance of the meeting. The newly revised Georgia council of the Blind constitution and Bylaws will be attached with these minutes.

Old business:

There was not any old business so we moved on to new business.

Resolutions, Alice Ritchhart:

Three resolutions were presented: A Leadership scholarship, a thank-you to the convention hotel, and a thank you to our volunteers. Before all three resolutions were unanimously approved the only change requested was to correct the name of the hotel to “Clarion Suites and Conference Center” in that resolution. The resolutions will be attached with these minutes.

Presentation, Robin Oliver:

Robin Oliver gave a presentation in memory of the immediate past president of The Georgia Council of the Blind, Bill Holley, who recently passed.

Future of GCB conferences and conventions, Marj Schneider:

Marj Schneider proposed that President Keith Morris appoint a committee to discuss the time, date, and scope of future Georgia Council of the Blind conferences and conventions. She felt this committee should be representative of our membership. This was passed in the form of a motion. Note: Unfortunately, I did not get the name of the person who seconded this motion. It passed unanimously.

Current Conference and Convention Update, DJ McIntyre:

We had 72 or 73 attendees. We do not have to pay for any room rentals.

GCB Digest, Amanda Wilson:

Amanda informed us that it costs $150 to produce the large print editions of the GCB Digest. She is looking for ideas concerning how to reduce this cost. No decisions were made at this time.

Election of Officers, Marj Schneider:

The slate of officers presented to us by the committee were: President, Keith Morris; First Vice-President, Phil Jones; Second Vice-President as well as chaplain, Fred McDade; secretary, Betsy Grenevitch; treasurer, Marsha Farrow; Member at Large Representative, Alice Ritchhart. Each of the candidates from the proposed slate of officers was approved by acclamation.

Parliamentary Training, Roderick Parker

Rodrick Parker, our parliamentarian, gave training on parliamentary procedures during meetings.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned around 5:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Betsy Grenevitch

GCB Member Updates on Kianna Hamilton, Tommy Woodyard and Timothy Jones

Kianna Hamilton stated that she is attending Georgia State University. She got on the President's List for having a 4.0 GPA for her first semesters. She became a little more social and joined a student organization. Kianna’s personal life is going fine. She is preparing for her sophomore year. She is very excited. Kianna wishes to thank GCB for the opportunity to receive the GCB scholarship. It has helped her out a lot. Kianna was able to get her books in large print for her classes. She wishes to thank GCB again from the bottom of her heart.

Tommy Woodyard stated that his Spring Semester at UGA was fun and challenging for him. The classes that he took were: Marine Environment, Interpersonal Communication, Intermediate Japanese II, US History to 1865 and Adaptive physical education. He had trouble in the fall getting his media accommodated, so he started there at 8 am on the first morning on the first day of pre-planning! He worked closely with the Alternative Text Department this semester and they actually made some changes to the Alternative Text Department to help print disabled students. The UGA DRC went online this fall to help the mobility impaired students. However, having to submit email requests for every test, quiz and media request is very time consuming and each accommodation has to be checked separately. Tommy had 54 tests and quizzes and he receive 2 emails back for each one that he sent so his email box was getting overwhelmed. He learned how to use the “Rule” function in email so that he could direct emails from specific addresses to their own folder and this helped A LOT! Tommy was a little scared of his Marine Environment class as he really worked hard, and saw disappointing results, with Biology and the Biology lab. However, both of his teachers were wonderful and after they noticed Tommy bringing a large print desk copy to class one day they always gave him color large print handouts. They were so nice! The first half of the class dealt with Chemistry and also a lot of the Biology that he had just learned particularly the Nitrogen Cycle. Tommy got an A on that half. The second half was more Physics dealing with wind speed, patterns ECT. He got a C plus on this half earning a B plus overall. Communications was his favorite class and he learned all about different communication styles and did several interesting group projects. He had to analyze a relationship from a movie and his group had Titanic. He really liked it! His United States History class was taught with an international focus so that was really interesting. This teacher was the hardest to work with for vision accommodations. Despite numerous requests for maps for him to test with (which were 40% of his grade!) he was very late giving them to the DRC. He gave it to the DRC on Friday morning, April 28, 2017; DRC was able to give him an enlarged map at 1:00 pm in the afternoon of the GCB conference and Convention. His test was at 8:00 am on Monday morning. Despite the fact that he was very forgetful, Tommy really liked his class and received a B plus. Tommy started his UGA at Oxford online portion of the class on May 22, 2017. Tommy is taking Tudor and Stuart England: 1485-1689 and Drama inside and outside the playhouse. So far they are really interesting! He goes to Oxford on June 8, 2017, and returns to the US June 26, 2017. He analyzed the plays Julius Caesar and Twelfth Night, several excerpts like John Bale’s, John the Baptist preaching. Tommy knows that he will be going to the Royal Shakespeare Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon and the Globe Theatre in London. For the Tudor and Stuart class, he will probably be visiting some historical sites, but the schedule is not out yet. In addition, Tommy is going to visit Stonehenge and then spend the weekend in Amsterdam, where he is going to connect with one of his Skype friends. He knows that he is visiting the Van Gogh Museum and also doing a Canal Boat tour, but he is still planning the rest of the trip. Tommy was chosen to participate in a Legal Mentorship Program with Pearson, the textbook manufacture. It is a 3 -month trial program where students who want to be lawyers are connected with Pearson’s legal staff. His mentor is the Vice President of Patents, Karl, and is very helpful. We are doing a résumé online instructional class together right now. Tommy is involved with his regular Residence Hall Association (RHA) activities and the UGA DRC Speaker’s Bureau this semester. His favorite extracurricular activity is a singing group called Sing n’ Strings which meets for fun once a week. He was part of the Franklin Residential Community (FRC) in Rutherford Hall where he lives, but he has decided to live again in Rutherford but not participate in the FRC again. Tommy wants to spend more time with RHA. He is still volunteering on the Technical Team at his church this year, marking his sixth consecutive year. Finally, Tommy will be going to the ACB Student Leadership conference in August. He will be hosting a trivia game there. It’s in Nebraska, so it should be really interesting. If you want to know more about Tommy Woodyard, please contact him at 770-733-2412, or via email at thomas.woodyard25@uga.edu.

Timothy Jones has just completed his sophomore year at Mercer University. He has been on the President's List for three semesters (Dean's List first Semester) and is continuing work on his Bachelor of Music degree in Organ Performance under Dr. Jack Mitchener. He's been inducted into two honor societies: Phi Beta Sigma and Sigma Alpha Pi (National Society of Leadership and Success) and is expecting to be inducted into the music fraternity Mu Phi Epsilon in the fall. He did a 40-minute organ concert at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Macon in February, and did his sophomore organ Recital in April. He'll be doing his formal Junior Recital this coming fall (probably in October). He's been asked to serve as unofficial "Assistant Organist" at the church he's now attending in Macon, Gilead Baptist. While home for the summer, he's taking two online courses to fulfill core curriculum requirements (Speech and Psychology) and is available for piano "gigs", so if anyone has an upcoming event between now and August for which you'd like to have either background music or a program of piano music, please contact Timothy at casioplayer@bellsouth.net . Timothy Jones has a website. The web site address is www.byfaithnotbysight.net, and his You Tube is under his name, Timothy R Jones, but the link to it is <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCo1FjEsXMB8kbiJc87rLGQ> . If you wish to learn more about Timothy Jones, please contact him at 770-212-0416, pr via email at casioplayer@bellsouth.net.

GCB Chapter News

The Athens chapter officers are Jerrie Toney, President; Jamaica Miller, First Vice-president; Earnest Dean Second vice-president; Evan Bradford, Secretary; Robin Oliver, Treasurer. Meetings are held at MULTIPLE Choices at 145 Barrington Drive in Athens, Georgia on the fourth Saturday at 10:30 AM. For more information about the Athens chapter please contact Jerrie Toney at 706-461-1013, or via email at jerriemt2@gmail.com

The Augusta chapter reports that their chapter has several events coming up. They are going to tour the River Watch Brewery, on July 22, 2017. The Augusta Chapter is hard at work planning the Stay in Touch seminar.

The Augusta chapter reported that they are holding an iOS voiceover seminar which they are calling Stay in Touch. This event will be held on Saturday, September 30, 2017 at the Saint Marks United Methodist Church in Augusta. Training will focus on using the iPhone with voiceover.  Topics that will be covered are social media and shopping. To reserve a place and lunch please contact Deborah Lovell, at 706-726-4054, or via email at lovell.d2000@gmail.com. The Augusta chapter officers are Deborah Lovell, President; Stanley Lopez Vice-president; Ron Worley, Secretary and Kathy Morris, Treasurer. Meetings are held at the Columbia County Main Library on Evans Town Center Blvd, Evans, Georgia on the second Saturday at 1:00. For more information about the Augusta chapter, please contact Deborah Lovell at 706-726-4054, or via email at lovell.d2000@gmail.com.

The East Georgia Chapter reported that they had their annual picnic that was held on Saturday, June 10, 2017. They were happy that Cecily Nipper was able to attend their picnic. She is recovering nicely. Anne Wheeler, their first vice-president was presented “the Presidents Certificate Award”. This prestigious certificate of excellence was presented in honor of Anne’s outstanding performance and dedication to their chapter. Several friends and guests joined them for this event. They played Bingo; enjoyed many delicious covered dishes, and enjoyed fellowshipping with each other. At their March meeting their speaker was Ed Johnson, who is a special advisor to The Lions Camp for The Blind in Waycross, Georgia. He spoke from an administrative aspect. Brian Dunnigan addressed us from a camper’s point of view. He attended the camp several summers as a child. Their Treasurer, Linda Cox related her experience as a camper’s mother. Her daughter, Patricia, participated in the camp at an early age. At their May meeting, Ann Wheeler introduced Jonathan Fuqua, who is the education director for the Covington Fire Department. He presented a hands-on program on CPR, the Heimlich maneuver, and fire safety and prevention. Rosetta Brown, who is the public relations chairperson, was awarded The Loving Cup Award by President Cecily Nipper at the GCB conference and convention. She was honored and surprised to be selected. Andrew pregenzer who has just joined the East Georgia chapter and he is a teacher of the visually impaired and he works in the Newton County School System. Joshua Hanley who is Lilianna Hanley’s husband just graduated from college with a degree in Computer Design last month. He has recently become employed. Congratulations Joshua. Sara Maddox is playing outfield for The Braves Baseball team in Covington, Georgia. She is a member of the Miracle League. Sarah was a contestant in The Hope Park Beauty Pageant in Henry County. Sarah Maddox recently attended the “Not to Shine” dance sponsored by Tim Tebow. She was crowned Queen. Tim Tebow addressed the party via video. Sarah is a member of the Newton County Masters Bowling League and she will participate in the State Bowling competition in August. The East Georgia chapter has purchased games for children who are Blind and Visually Impaired to play during their business meetings. Parents will be able to attend meetings while the children play bingo, Uno, Connect Four, etc. Rosetta Brown has become a member of the Georgia Library Assistive Statewide Services, Glass advisory committee. She was elected Vice Chairman of this group. Cecily Nipper recognized Lucas Montalvo, who won the Braille Challenge at the Georgia Academy for the Blind earlier this year. Cecily Nipper and Anne Wheeler presented him with a gift certificate to Seedlings to be able to order books of his choice. The 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 and Rosetta Brown, Board Members. For more information about the East Georgia chapter, please contact Cecily Nipper at 770-786-1551, or via email at roses828@comcast.net.

The Greater Columbus chapter officers are Dirk Jones, President; Donald Hicks First vice-president; Greg McDuffie Second vice-president; Harriet Porter, Secretary; William Miles, Treasurer and Otis Smith, Chaplain. Meetings are held at the Columbus Public Library at 3000 Macon Road in Columbus, Georgia on the third Friday from 10:30 until 12:00. For more information about the Greater Columbus chapter please contact Dirk Jones at

The Greater Hall County chapter reported that they have had an active year so far.  Early this year they enjoyed speakers Mike Wofford of GLORY1330 AM and Jane Boynton of GaRRS.  At their April meeting, Gary Payton and Karen Orband, R.N., of Vanda Pharmaceuticals spoke on Non-24.  In May, we enjoyed hearing member and former president, Richard Bagley spoke about his new venture into oil on canvas painting.  Sue Hesketh read a nice newspaper article in The Times on Richard's activities. We were saddened that three faithful members passed away early in the year:  Vance Barnes, Jeanne Ebbs and Hank Singleton. We welcome new members this year:  Bobby and Jane Free, Jeremy Adams and Wanda Vandiver. Judy Presley and Wanda Vandiver volunteered at a table for the Belk Charity Day event on Saturday, April 29, 2017. The Greater Hall Chapter performed duties as host chapter at the 2017 GCB Conference & Convention which was held April 28-29 in Gainesville.  Chapter members donated a theme basket and individual items for the auction fundraiser:  "Chicken and a Movie" basket, Commemorative 37-President Gold Dollar Collection, Effenbee Savannah doll, and a Get-Up-And-Go cane.  Loving cups were presented to Judy and Hoyal Presley, Dianne and Harvey Roberts in appreciation of their work as co-chairs of the convention committee in preparation for the event. For our June meeting they held a picnic, where they enjoyed a spaghetti lunch in Swetenburg Hall at Gainesville First Presbyterian Church.  This year marks their chapter's twentieth anniversary, and past presidents shared their memories and thoughts.  They awarded $500 scholarships to local students and chapter members, Timothy Jones and Tommy Woodyard. The Greater Hall County chapter has a Facebook page. It has photos from the GCB conference and convention and from our June picnic. You can look up their page on Facebook by searching for greater hall gcb.  Our newest member, Jeremy Adams, developed it for us. The Greater Hall County chapter officers are Diane Roberts, President; Judy Presley, Vice-president; Sue Heskett, Secretary; Roy Carder Treasurer; Don Linnartz, Harvey Roberts, and Bob McGarry, board members. Their meetings are held at the Smokey Springs Retirement Residence at 940 South Enota Drive in Gainesville, Georgia, on the second Saturday at 10:00. For more information about the Greater Hall County chapter, please contact Diane Roberts at 770-932-1112, or via email at harveryroerts2@att.net.

The Northwest chapter officers are Ron Burgess, president; Fred McDade, vice-president; Charles Stubblefield secretary and treasurer; Robert Sprayberry, chaplain. Their chapter meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every other month at the Bank of Lafayette Community room, which is located at 104 North Main Street in Lafayette, Georgia at 2:00 pm. For more information about the Northwest chapter please contact Ron Burgess at 706-638-1132.

The Rome Floyd County chapter reported that at their April meeting that Marsha Farrow demonstrated how to use the new Rainbow color detector and the new money reader. Marsha Farrow talked about the upcoming GCB state conference. It will be on Friday, April 28, and 29, 2017, in Gainesville, Georgia. Misty Ingram brought us our sports basket for the auction at the conference. It is very cool. It is a soft side cooler filled with lots of cool stuff that you would use if you were going hiking, jogging or walking. At their May meeting, they held a lively discussion about how individuals with vision impairments can use different types of technology to assist them in completing task at home, at work or at school. They reported that since the library is full of little children participating in the summer reading program, they decided to hold their June meeting at the Landmark Restaurant in Rome, Georgia. Dana Tarter and Rebecca Cowan-Story presented an entertaining and informative program. They covered a variety of topics including how important valuing one another is to our group and compared this to Christopher Robin and the Pooh Characters. Dana Tarter shared her experience of going to the Macon Prison Braille Program and suggested we tour the Prison Program as a Group. The Floyd County chapter officers are Marsha Farrow, president; Carolyn Dillard vice-president; Amanda Wilson , secretary; Suzanne Jackson treasurer; Martha Craig, Chaplain;, and Bronwyn Rumry, Terrica Standridge and Mark Kinsley, board members. Their meetings are held at the Rome Floyd County Library at 205 Riverside Parkway, in Rome, Georgia, on the third Tuesday, at 11:00 am. For further information about the Rome Floyd County Chapter, please contact Marsha Farrow at 706-859-2624, or via email at marshafarrow@windstream.net.

The Savannah chapter reported that some of their members of the Savannah Council of the Blind attended the local listening session held in April by Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation and several of us made comments about the state of vocational rehabilitation services. In late April, members who couldn't attend the GCB convention worked at Belk Charity Day on Saturday, April 29, 2017. Vivian Loesch and John McMillan sold coupons in advance and John and Kim Harrison volunteered on the day of the event. Thanks to the three of them, this turned out to be our most successful Charity Day and we are very happy about the current balance in our treasury. In late April Kim Harrison had a very special opportunity through her daughter's employer, Federal Express. Kim's daughter Megan was one of 10 winners of an essay contest for Fed- Ex employees to write about their mothers. The contest winners and their moms were flown to Fed-Ex headquarters in Plano, Texas were they received royal treatment for two days. Kim and her daughter had a fantastic time being wined and dined by Fed-Ex and Kim shared her experiences with us at our May meeting. Instead of holding our usual meeting in July we are planning a picnic on July 15. If you find yourself on the coast that day, you're welcome to attend as well. Vivian Loesch will be our host and will prepare all the food as well. Vivian lives on a small lake, so we're all anticipating a chance to be out on the water in paddle boats and enjoying breezes from the lake. We're all looking forward to some summer fun before we start thinking about activities for the fall. The Savannah Chapter officers are Marj Schneider, President; Bob Walls, Vice-president; Teresa Brenner Secretary; Jon Bairnsfather, Treasurer. Their Board Members are Jan Elders and John McMillon. Meetings are held at the conference room at J. C. Lewis Ford located on 9505 Abercorn Street in Savannah, Georgia. They are still meeting on the first Thursday of every month at 6:00 pm. For more information about the Savannah chapter, please contact Marj Schneider at 912-352-1415, or via email at marjschneider@bellsouth.net.

The South Atlanta chapter reported that their February meeting was held at the Barbecue Kitchen for the last time. In March, they met at Manuel’s Tavern, which is located at 602 North Highland Avenue in Atlanta, Georgia. However, it was later decided that they try out the Piccadilly Cafeteria on Howell Mill Road, in Atlanta, Georgia. They did not have a speaker for their March chapter meeting. However, Brent Reynolds, their vice president, stated that arbitrators from MARTA decided that MARTA Mobility, currently under MV transportation, must go back into MARTA’s hands within 120 days. According to an article in the February edition of the Atlanta Journal and Constitution, as of this writing, MARTA is appealing this decision. On March 22nd, everyone received the sad news about Ann Sims’ diagnosis of ovarian cancer. She is undergoing chemotherapy and is doing as well as could be expected. All are encouraged to remember John and Ann in their thoughts and prayers. They did not have a meeting in April. In May, they began meeting at the Piccadilly Cafeteria, which is located at 1715 Howell Mill Road in Atlanta, Georgia. They will be meeting there from now on. Barbara Graham’s birthday was on May 11. They celebrated her birthday on May 12, 2017, at Fork in the Road Restaurant which is located on 4800 Briarcliff Road, inside the North Lake Mall. They all had a good time. At their June meeting, Karen Parrisha, a visitor from Florida came to Georgia to visit with friends and came to their meeting. At their June meeting, they had two speakers. They were Wendy O’Stein, a registered nurse, who talked about non-24, which is a condition which affects approximately 70 per cent of people who are blind and visually impaired. It affects the circadian rhythms and biological clocks are out of sync when it comes to sleep. She gave out information about this topic. She stated if you have any questions to please call the toll free number, given on the brochure. The telephone number is 1-844-804-2424. IF you have access to the Internet you can visit their web site by going to [www.non24info.com](http://www.non24info.com). Then, Roderick Parker, chairman of the MARTA Accessibility, spoke about MARTA issues. The South Atlanta chapter officers are Lisa Jones, President; Brent Reynolds, Vice-President; Chris Baldridge, Secretary; Steve Longmire, Treasurer; Maquatia Dutton and Sam Howard, Board Members. Meetings are held at the Barbecue Kitchen in College Park, Georgia, on the second Thursday from 4:00 until 6:00 pm. For more information about the South Atlanta chapter, please contact Lisa Jones at 404-556-8987.

Georgia Guide Dogs Users, GGDU News

GGDU is on the move! We had a great meeting in conjunction with the GCB Convention on April 28, 2017 in Gainesville, Ga.

The speaker was Deanna Izzo, a field representative with Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind. She gave a very informative presentation on Puppy Raiser Training. GGDU is planning its upcoming spring meeting to be held in Madison, GA on Sept 9, 2017. We are anticipating a great meeting, along with a fun - filled day of Fantastic Food, Awesome Activities, and Fabulous Fellowship! For more information about the Georgia guide Dog Users group please contact Rita Harris at 706-474-0404, or via email at rita@livinglifeteam.net. Please visit their web site by going to [www.georgiaguidedogusers.org](http://www.georgiaguidedogusers.org).

GCB Advocate by Alice Ritchhart

I from time to time like to reflect on why did I become a member of the Georgia Council of the Blind? The answer is twofold; first I always felt I could and should be given the same opportunities as my sighted peers, and when I was younger that did not seem to be happening. So, I decided I would have to speak out for myself if things were going to change. Also, my father was always politically involved and took me along with him to many of the activities which involved advocating for the blind, and as well advocating and working for the political candidates he believed in. Second it was important to me and this is what still drives me today and that is making sure that that things are better for our young people who are blind, and for those who lose their vision later in life. I strongly believe that it is up to me to advocate and make sure that change happens. Through the Georgia Council of the Blind I believe that change can happen. Also I realize I cannot do it alone, and that it takes the entire organization to make change happen. As a member of GCB, I took an oath as did all of you who serve on the board. I’m placing it here to remind you all of what being a member of the GCB board is all about.

"I solemnly promise that I will, to the best of my ability, faithfully discharge the duties of the office to which I have been elected or appointed, will defend and support the objectives of GCB, and will do all in my power to further the well-being of all blind people within the State, Nation, and throughout the world."

If we want to make change for ourselves and others in Georgia who are blind or low vision then we must be willing to get involved with our state legislators and our federal legislators. I know it is not always possible for us to attend legislative events at the state capitol or go to Washington D.C. due to finances or due to transportation issues. However this does not mean that as leaders you cannot be involved with the legislative process in other ways. After all you’re state and federal legislators are from your home town, and they only go to D.C. and Atlanta to represent you. So there are many ways to get involved and be an advocate for issues concerning people who is blind and low vision right from where you live. The key is to get to know these people from your community, and then you when we need to request their help can do so. For example, every year at Christmas I send a Christmas card with my favorite Christmas music to all my reps. I also at election time help my legislators with their campaign by letting them put a yard sign in my front yard and a bumper sticker on my van. I am sharing this with you here in the digest so that you can start to think about why you joined GCB, and especially why did you become the leader of your chapter. I am asking you to make a true commitment to the organization as a leader to get involved and help engage your members to step up and get involved. I realize many of you are new to the role of leader in your chapter, and even new to the world of being blind or having low vision. So what we are going to do is in the next few months those of us who have been in GCB and in the trenches will be providing you with the tools needed so you can become an active advocate so you can be more involved on the board and a stronger leader for your chapter. Just remember it is because of GCB and the American Council of the Blind that things are a little better for you than they were for those who came before you. So if we want to make sure that we continue to move forward, and provide a better way for those who will come after us we need to get involved now. If we don’t all step up and take an active role there may not be a GCB in the future, and then where will those of us who are blind and low vision be?

GCB Georgia Lions Club Outstanding Blind Award.

Marsha Farrow was awarded the Outstanding Blind Award.  This award was presented at the Opening Ceremonies of the Georgia Lions Clubs State Convention on Friday, May 26, 2017.This event was held in Atlanta, Georgia. There were 350 Lions and guest present at the Delta Museum, Lions District Governor Leslie Miller from Jasper, Georgia, presented the Award to Lion Marsha Farrow. Marsha and her husband Bob were guests of the Lions for the weekend. Marsha was chosen from numerous nominees submitted this year from across the state.

The Outstanding Blind Award was established to recognize and honor a blind or visually impaired individual who goes above and beyond in their everyday life. Marsha is very deserving of this award. She goes above and beyond to help anyone with or without a disability. She is a true font of information and resources. Lion Marsha truly lives the Lions motto “We Serve”.

GCB Repairing Braille Writers in

The Central State Prison Braille Program, in Macon, Georgia, can repair your broken Braille writer. Please call Angie Scott at478-471-2313, before mailing your Braille writer. You can send your broken Braille writer to me at the following address:

Angie Scott, Education Program Specialist, Braille Program, Central State Prison, 4600 Fulton Mill Road, Macon, Georgia, 31208. Please email Angie Scott at angie.scott@gdc.ga.gov if you have any questions. Please include a brief description of what it's doing or not doing and we will clean/repair it and mail it back to you. The fee is $50.00 to clean it, plus the cost of parts if it needs any. They will contact you to let you know if it needs parts and give you an estimate beforehand. Please include your contact information in the box. Make sure the Braille writer is secure in the box with plenty of stuffing, foam, etc. so that it does not get bumped around too much during shipping. They will return it in the same packaging that it comes to us in.

If you need more information about Angie Scott, please contact her at 478-471-2313, or via email at angie.scott@gdc.ga.gov.