THE GCB DIGEST

A Publication of the GEORGIA COUNCIL OF THE BLIND

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An Organization Promoting a Hand Up,

Not a Hand Out

Fall 2011

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From your Editor,

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, Jerrie Toney, at jmt2@bellsouth.net or via telephone at 706-227-6142. I want to say thank you to everyone who makes our GCB digest such a big success. I particularly want to thank Suzanne Jackson, our assistant editor, for the many hours she has worked on the magazine, for her editing skills and for the excellent reading of the cassette tapes. I want to thank our president, William Holley, for his presidential messages, which include information about important events, legislation, and projects. I appreciate the contributions from each member who sent articles, who made suggestions to make the magazine better, and have supported me in so many ways.

President’s Message, William Holley

How to Recruit New Members: Where Do We Start? According to the 2008 American Community Survey, there are 239,169 individuals with vision loss residing in the state of Georgia. This information was copied from the American Foundation for the Blind, Georgia 2008 Prevalence Rates of Vision Loss. (Definition: The term vision loss refers to individuals who reported having difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses as well as those that are blind). Of the 239,169 individuals with vision loss in our state, Georgia Council of the Blind (GCB) membership represents only 282. Our Council represents 0.0001179% of Blind individuals in the state of Georgia. As members of GCB, we must begin recruiting new members. This process begins with each member having or acquiring a good understanding of our organization’s status and needs before we can determine how to grow our organization. According to our mission statement, we want to elevate the social, economic, and cultural levels of the individuals in the Blind community. Additionally, it is stated, to accomplish our mission, we provide peer support to assist individuals in the Blind community. We suggest peer support will help to develop our abilities and potential to become independent and responsible citizens in our communities. After 50 years of providing support and care to our community, do you feel GCB should represent more than 0.0001179% of our community? Recruitment is essential to the growth and development of any organization. This is no less true for GCB. Our recruitment could begin by asking individuals who depend on us for our peer support services, to join us. When was the last time you asked a blind individual seeking information to join our “Let’s Talk GCB” conference call? Some of us meet individuals who are visually impaired or blind every day. Why not tell them about GCB and invite them to our council meetings? The only way to get people involved with GCB is to spread the good word about our mission. GCB is still the best kept secret in the blind community. Let’s expose the secret to other visually impaired or blind people and build our organization so that all of our needs are addressed. The way you can determine if GCB is known to blind individuals is to listen to the response when you mention the name Georgia Council of the Blind (GCB): What’s that?! Remember: Each one reach one. Each one teaches one.

GCB Board Meeting Minutes, Robin Oliver

Georgia Council of the Blind

April 16, 2011

Board Meeting via Phone

President Bill Holley welcomed callers and called the meeting to order. After a moment of silence, the roll was called. Members present: President Bill Holley, 1st Vice Keith Morris, 2nd Vice Steve Longmire, Secretary Robin Oliver, Treasurer Jerrie Toney, Member-At-Large Representative Valerie Leighton, Athens Daniel Myers, Atlanta West Steve Estes, Augusta Chris Chaos, Bainbridge Tonya Wright, Chattooga Marsha Farrow, Columbus Greg McDuffie, representing East GA. Phil Jones, representing Macon Tim Kelly, representing Rome/Floyd Tonia Clayton, representing Savannah Jan Elders, and GGDU Marj Schneider. GCB Editor Amanda Wilson and Parliamentarian Joe McNeil were also present. Members absent: Hall, Metro Atlanta, Northwest, Stephens, and GCBL.

Approval of Minutes – The minutes were sent to the board members. It was stated that the January 22, 2011 Board Minutes should be corrected of typing errors and that the notice of the letter that was to be written to the Georgia Academy be noted. It was motioned by Keith Morris and seconded by Daniel Myers that after the corrections and additions were made, that the minutes be accepted. The motion was carried.

Constitution/By Laws Committee:

Section 5: Board of Directors’ proposed change was read to the board members and emailed to them immediately afterwards, so they can read them to their chapter members and report their vote at the next board meeting. Finance Committee – there was no one able to read the finance report, so the report was tabled.

Banquet Committee:

The Banquet will be held at the Carrollton Cultural Arts Center on August 13, 2011. The costs of using this facility are $200. The center will be hosting the play “Foot Loose”, performed by students, while we are there. We will have our meal at the Little Hawaiian, which is across the street from the Arts Center. The keynote speaker will be announced at a later date. A silent auction was offered as a possible fund raising activity during the banquet.

Leadership/Fundraising Committee:

This committee decided that they would like to see the GCB mission statement on the upcoming brochure. They would like to meet with Annette Bowling to hear her views on the Blind Services versus a Blind Commission, before GCB states its position. On the fundraising front, they want to get together with the Lions and do a duck race. Suggestions such as a Chinese Auction were given.

Treasury report:

After an earlier discussion that having JAWS read the treasury report would be too hard to understand, it was motioned by Tim and seconded by Marsha Farrow to move the report later on the agenda. The motion carried. Keith found a reader and she read the report. There was some discussion about the costs of the upcoming banquet. The bulk of the discussion was whether it was necessary for GCB to spend $96 at the Little Hawaiian to cover the costs of the meals of the members who visited the center, along with their driver. There were no samples of the menu offered. Steve Estes stated that there was a misunderstanding about Joan Estes and him being invited to lunch at the Little Hawaiian, and the touring committee was informed that the Estes had other plans. Bill stated that if $96 was an issue, then remove payment from the general budget. We had an ending checking balance of 8,415.44, ending saving balance of 11,261.99, ending CD balance of 11,265.45, for a total combined balance of 35,422.37. Balance, $11,265.45, for a total combined balance of 35, 422. 37. Keith Morris motioned and Greg McDuffie seconded that the report be filed to audit. The motion carried.

Public Relations/Technology Committee:

Steve Longmire reported that GCB has stepped into the world of Face Book. Face Book has a sub-committee consisting of Greg McDuffie, Tonia Clayton and Tonia’s brother. Brochure has the sub-committee of Amanda Wilson, Tonia Clayton, Mary Huie, and Greg. Cliff Jones is the resource man for the website. Not only will you be able to see pictures on the website but videos are coming. The committee will be setting up Google ads as a means to raise money. Youth Committee – Marsha reported that Sarah Conrad from ACB talks with students on the 4th Monday each month. Keith Roberts is in the process of transitioning. They will have a mentoring program, which any GA student can participate in. They are also planning some social activities for Carrollton.

Legislative/Transportation:

Valerie Leighton has resigned as a co-chair of this committee. Alice stated that she was not invited to join this committee, and Bill stated that members are free to join any committee they wish to participate in. Alice then gave a very thorough report. The Commission Bill did not get introduced. HBC 662 (Braille Literacy) was dropped and will be read next year. Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) funding will most likely be cut. BEEP preference is still being threatened. HB 277 (regional transportation one cent vote of 2012) is working its way down the line. Each region had to present their project list to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) by March 30, 2011, to be placed on their round table. Regions that were successful in getting some requests on the list: Athens, Macon, Augusta, Chatham, Brunswick, and Atlanta. Unsuccessful Regions: Hall (their mayor would rather match local funds), Northwest (no money for operating and maintenance of public transit). It is up to the public to make sure your items remain on the round table.

Membership Committee:

Co-chairs Keith Morris and Phil Jones noted that a way to build membership is by getting the community to know who we are. Each local chapter needs to get the name GCB out in the community. East GA already has Face Book, some other chapters have websites. Don’t be afraid of using your local newspaper to list your activities. Gars and CVI Info link are available for us to use. This committee welcomes any ideas anyone has on how to attract and maintain members. Cruise – Derek, a gentleman who has obtained cruises for ACB, came on the phone to promote a fund raising cruise. You make money on each person who books on the tour. Derek was given the gcbfyi@yahoo.com email to send more information. Chapter Activities - Bill stated that participating in each other’s activities is a good way to fellowship with one another. The people from Metro Atlanta, Chattooga, and Athens had a great time at the Stephens County Chapter Gospel fest. Members-At-Large and members of the Athens chapter got to enjoy a wonderful Saturday afternoon in Atlanta by spending time with the Metro Atlanta Chapter during their fun day.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Robin Oliver, Secretary GCB

Treasury Report, Jerrie Toney

May 1 through May 31, 2011: Beginning Balance: $8,117.91 Total Amount of Deposits: $1,111.91 Total Amount of Checks: $1,063.94 Total Debits: $85.00 Total Checks and Debits: $1,148.94 Ending Balance: $8,080.88 Scholarship Balance: $5,835.65 Savings Account Balance: $11,399.60 Interest Paid: $0.97 Savings Account Balance: $11,400.57 CD Balance: $11,269.28 CD Interest Earned: $3.70 Ending CD Balance: $11,272.98 Total Combined Amounts: $36,590.08 Portfolio: $69,848.03 June 1 through June 30, 2011: Beginning Balance: $8,080.88 Total Deposits: $1,024.00 Total Checks: $420.41 Total Debts: $697.03 Total Checks and Debits: $1,117.44 Ending Balance: $7,987.44 Scholarship Balance: $6,078.05 Savings Account Balance: $11,400.57 Interest Paid: $0.94 Savings Account Balance: $11,401.51 CD Balance: $11,272.98 CD Interest Earned: $3.83 Ending CD Balance: $11,276.81 Total Combined Amounts: $36,743.81 Portfolio: $69,285.21

Helpful Hints, Sheila Rousey

Hello, all GCB members, Sheila Rousey from the Stephens County chapter had this great idea of collecting and sharing some inexpensive helpful household hints and tricks that might help people with visual impairments to be more independent. She hopes that others in our group will send in their helpful household hints and tricks so that we might combine them into a resource booklet that could someday be used as a fund raiser. She said, “Many other organizations create these types of booklets and sell them as a fund raiser for their organizations.” Rousey also commented that we ALL know about the low-vision and adaptive aids from mail-order suppliers. This list is created for the purpose of locating items from LOCAL stores that can be used, and at a much lower cost to visually impaired consumers. Sheila suggested the following format for submitting ideas to this project. Name of contributor: Organization: Category: (such as labeling items) Product information: (where to purchase the materials); Description: (such as how the materials can be used) Here is the helpful hint for the fall issue of the GCB Digest: Name: Sheila Rousey. Organization: Stephens County Area Georgia Council of the Blind Category: High Contrast – Identification Product Location: Ace True Value Hardware Stores Brand: Performed Multi-purpose rubber coating. Price: Package $7.19 Description: This product is a rubber coating in various colors such as black, white, red, green, orange, yellow, and blue. It comes packaged in a re-closeable container (14.6 fluid ounces). The container is about the size of an energy drink. This allows for the user to dip pot handles, spoons, or tools into the container to create a brightly colored, high contrast product. Several coatings do provide a rubberized texture that is more comfortable to grip. Not recommended for direct contact with food. It can also be used to dip wooden stylus into for a more comfortable grip. Marshall Forest Preserve Braille Trail, Evan Barnard I am Evan Barnard, and I will be an eighth grader at Autry Mill Middle School in Johns Creek, Georgia. Thank you for having me here today. For my bar mitzvah project, I worked with The Nature Conservancy, a successful conservation organization that is working all over the world to protect and preserve lands and waters that are ecologically important for nature and people. The focal point of my project is the Marshall Forest Preserve, located in Floyd County near Rome, Georgia. There are several reasons why the Nature Conservancy decided to protect this land. The Marshall Forest is the only virgin forest within the city limits of any city in the United States; it contains an unusual combination of both northern and southern trees, and is one of the few remaining old-growth pine-hardwood forests in northwest Georgia. In addition, the U.S. Department of the Interior designated the Marshall Forest as the first National Natural Landmark in Georgia in 1966, ten years before the original landowner donated the 100-acre forest and an additional 120 acres of property to the Nature Conservancy. What I am doing for my project is working on one of the three trails in the preserve, the Big Pine Braille Trail, as well as educating people about the preserve and the Braille trail, along with their ecological significance. I helped to replace the Braille signs found along the trail, as well as to perform trail maintenance work. Please let me tell you about the trail. On the trail, you walk along a guide rope and there are signs in Braille and English telling history and also information about the trail and preserve. At the beginning of the trail, there is the first sign explaining the signs, guide rope, markers, and other things. As you go along, there are markers on the guide rope for tree roots, the other 14 sign stations, trees that the signs describe, and a small bridge that you cross. Some stations encourage sensory experiences. For example, you get to feel the soft or hard and crispy tree bark, sometimes very smooth and sometimes with deep ridges. At one place on the trail, there is a bench for a chance to relax and enjoy an important part of the outdoors experience--hearing nature, like listening to the trees, insects, and many species of birds. Next along the trail is a very large tree that you get to hug so that you can appreciate its size, so if you’ve ever wanted to be a tree hugger, here’s a chance. Farther on, there is a stream bed, and when it is dry, you can use a short rope and carefully walk I down into it. It’s a great place to visit, and I hope to encourage more people to use the trail. My project is significant because it is helping to preserve the only Braille nature trail available for the sight-impaired in the state of Georgia. To me, the project has special importance. I believe that all people should have the abilities to experience and enjoy the outdoors the same way, regardless of a disabling factor such as vision or hearing impairment. I believe that this project takes one step forward for this cause; therefore it is part of a larger effort of having everyone being able to not only enjoy the Big Pine Braille Trail the same, but the outdoors overall. I have written letters to the ophthalmological community, and I would like to contact schools with sight-impaired students, and others who are visually impaired across the state of Georgia to make them aware of the existence of the preserve’s Big Pine Braille Trail. I hope you will visit the trail. I would also like your help in reaching out to others in the sight-impaired community. Please feel free to contact me for more information about the Braille Trail or my project. Thank you for your support. Evan Barnard 820 Glen Ferry Drive, Johns Creek, GA 30022 770-643-8158 marshallforestbrailleproject@gmail.com Note--The Rome Floyd Chapter has visited the Big Pine Braille Trail several times in the last five years. When we learned of Evan’s project, we invited him to share it with us at our June meeting. He is going to meet us on the Trail when we have our meeting there on October 17. GCB Thank You Letter, Patricia Cox Dear GCB, I would like to thank the Georgia Council of the Blind for selecting me as one of the annual scholarship winners for 2011. I have no words to properly express my gratitude and appreciation for the hard work that goes into raising these funds to aid college students every year. To me, it is one of our most important works as an organization to support continuing education of visually impaired students in any way possible. Your generosity has allowed me to continue to succeed as I begin my senior year at Berry College. I hope to continue my education into graduate school and conduct research into the various ways people with disabilities interact with their environment while at work. Furthering the occupational possibilities for all people with disabilities is important to me but, naturally, people who are visually impaired or blind are of particular interest. I have been close to the GCB and the East Georgia Chapter since I was very young and serving as 2nd Vice President of my chapter has been nothing but the highest honor. It is from this position that I want to express how proud I am of everyone who has ever helped raise funds or selected award winners for the annual scholarship and how thankful I am that these individuals have helped me get closer to achieving my goals. Honestly, thank you. Patricia S. Cox 2nd Vice President East Georgia Chapter My Week at Oral Hull, Judy Presley I became interested in Oral Hull Camp for the Blind because I had never heard of a camp for blind adults that offered such extreme adventure. When I arrived there I was delighted to find that it was more like a resort designed for blind adults than a summer camp. The camp was designed so it was easy to travel from the dormitory to the dining hall and conference building with ease. There was Braille on all of the doors and guide rails in strategic places with staff and volunteers close by when needed. The camp is located in a rural area giving it a safe and relaxed atmosphere. There was a nice heated indoor pool and a hot tub that seated fourteen people. There was a lovely enchanted garden that was maintained by two local garden clubs. The food was really good and served to our tables by volunteers. I couldn’t believe that so many fun filled things could be packed into one week. I got to go white water rafting, jet boating, kayaking, wind surfing, hiking in a temperate rain forest, horseback riding, and sky diving. It would have been nice to have spent another week to just enjoy the lovely camp itself. A blind person of any fitness level can enjoy this camp. The first week is devoted to extreme adventures, the second week is on a high adventure level, the third week is more relaxed camp activities, and the last week is truly a laid back relaxing week. My guide dog, Katie had a fun vacation also. While I was out she was walked, fed, and played with by the staff. Early in the mornings and late in the evenings I took her out to the special fenced in dog playground to chase her ball. When I think about Oral Hull I can smell the lovely fragrance of evergreens and the sound of laughter from new friends I made from all over the US and beyond. GCB Convention Update Aloha GCB August 13, 2011 The Welcome was supposed to be given by Mayor Wayne Garner of Carrollton, but he wasn’t able to attend our wonderful one-day conference. So, our President William Holley welcomed us to Carrollton. We then went around the room and introduced ourselves to let everyone know who was there. WE then had an audio presentation via computer from Mr. Warren Toyanna, President of the Hawaii Association of the Blind. Steve Estes, President of the Atlanta West Chapter gave a grant to a Mrs. Deborah Gabe, of Hawaii, which was made possible by their Vice President, James Holland. Next, Evan Bernard spoke to us about the rejuvenation of the "Braille Trail". This is located in Rome, GA. During the business meeting we heard reports from the five different committees. First were the Leadership and Fund Development Committee. The chairman for this committee is Bill Holley. He reported that we need to come up with some great fund raisers. If you have any ideas or wish to join this committee, please contact Bill Holley at 706-410-4945, or via email at gcbill850@yahoo.com. Keith reported that the Membership Committee was working on membership forms to either be given out in different mediums such as print, Braille, or on the web page. He talked about having GCB put out events and activities on our Face Book page and for each chapter to have their own to encourage people to join GCB. He also talked about the different chapters having fun activities within their communities to allow people to see that we know how to have fun as well. If you have any ideas or want to join this committee, please contact Keith Morris at 706-595-1465, or via email at mkumorris@yahoo.com; or Phil Jones at 678-957-6676 or via email at brilman1952@bellsouth.net. We heard from the Public Relations/Technology Committee. They are working on a lot of things to bring in people of all kinds to allow our awesome group to grow. Some of their projects include adding Google Ad Sense on the GCB website so that the GCB website can generate an income from the advertisements generated by Google, and adding more media pages to the GCB web site where you can post audio and video content for visitors to listen and watch. They ask that everyone visit the web site and make sure all of the information there is up to date. GCB has a face book page. The link can be accessed from the GCB Website or enter “Georgia Council” in the search box of the Face Book website. They reworked the GCB brochure and it is awesome. It is ready to be handed out, if you want some just let us know. They are working on getting it on the web page so you can download it as well. The GCB Digest is going well too. Please send in any articles you want to be included in the next edition. If you have any ideas, or want to join this committee, please contact Steve Longmire at 404-234-5820 or via email at info@sunbright.biz; or Amanda Wilson at 770-547-4700 or via email at moonrocks@bellsouth.net. We heard that the Constitution and Bylaws Committee is hard at work rewriting parts of the GCB constitution so that it will be better than it has ever been. If you wish to join this committee, please contact Robin Oliver at 706-208-7132 or via email at gcbfyi@yahoo.com, or Joe McNeil at 706- 322-3311 E mail: jdmcneil@knology.net. The Finance Committee reported that they are hard at work getting the treasurer’s reports, the budget, and the convention reports ready for anyone who wants a copy. If you wish to join this committee, please contact either Jerrie Toney at 706-227-6142 or via email at jmt2@bellsouth.net, or Kathy Morris at 706-595-1465 or via email at mkumorris@yahoo.com. Finally, we heard from the Legislative/Transportation Committee. They are hard at work to try to keep up to date on all of the upcoming legislative issues that are going to be coming up next year. If you want to join this committee contact Adam Shapiro 404-874-3005 shapiroadam01@gmail.com. The Banquet at the Little Hawaiian was awesome. The invocation was given by Pastor Steve Davis, First Carrollton Baptist Church. Our Key Note Speaker was Ms. Nancy Duncan. Included here is some background information on her. Ms. Duncan is the Executive Director of Disability Resource Group, a non-profit statewide organization dedicated to the inclusion of Georgians with disabilities into all aspects of community life. She has served in this position for over fifteen years. In that capacity Ms. Duncan conducts workshops across Georgia. She conducted over fifty workshops in the last year alone. She serves as the Network Administrator for Georgia under the Southeast ADA Center, and is also a researcher with the Burton Blat Institute of Syracuse University. Ms. Duncan is a technical assistance consultant for a National Disabilities Law hotline. She consults with law firms, architects, state and local government employers, and businesses. As the lead trainer for “Project Implement” sponsored by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, Ms. Duncan conducted Disability Law seminars across the country. Blind herself and the mother of a twenty-eight year old son, who is blind and has autism, she brings personal as well as professional experience to bear on her subject. Ms. Duncan served on the Board of Directors for the Georgia Advocacy Office and the Georgia Council for the Hearing Impaired. She serves as member of the statewide “Transition from School to Work” task force, on the advisory board of Jobs for All as well as on the “Task Force for Improved Health Services to Underserved Populations in the State of Georgia”. She is a trainer with the National Coalition Building Institute. Ms. Duncan holds two Masters Degrees in counseling, has received extensive training from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Department of Justice, and has worked in the disability field for almost thirty years. For more information about Ms. Duncan, visit her agency’s website at Disability Resource Group.org. Presentations: The following received loving cups: Mike Teal, Athens Anne Wheeler, East Georgia Judy Presley, Greater Hall County Chester Thrash, Metro Atlanta Cora Camp, Stephens County President Appreciation Certificate Recipients: Robin Oliver, Athens Keith Morris, Augusta Christine O’Brien, East GA Linda Cox, East GA Millie Brackett, Greater Hall County Ted Brackett, Greater Hall County Don Linnartz, Greater Hall County Mike Avalon, Metro Atlanta Kathy Coursey-Boes, Metro Atlanta Barbara Graham, Metro Atlanta Bill Graham, Stephens County Annie Harris from the Athens chapter received the June Willis Guiding Eyes Award. Sheila Rousey, Stephens County Chapter received the Rhoda W. Walker Award. Everyone enjoyed a lovely meal and fellowship. Afterwards, we discussed going to Savannah for the 2012 convention. All minutes will be in the next issue of the GCB digest. Legislative update: Where we are and Where We Hope to Go, Alice Ritchhart In 2011 the blind community faced a frustrating year during the legislative session. We were unable to find a sponsor for the Commission for the Blind bill, so it was never introduced. We do appear to have a potential sponsor for this year, so are keeping our fingers crossed. The Braille literacy bill also had to be reintroduced in 2011, since it never made it out of committee in 2010. The bill should have been a done deal, as all individuals involved were in agreement, and we could never get a response from Representative Manning as to what the hold-up was. However, right at the end of the session, the bill was dropped in the hopper. It has a new bill number, which is HB662, and will be one of the first bills up for a reading at the beginning of the 2012 session. Finally, the other issue we fought for last year on the Hill was for the state not to reduce state funding for Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Again, we were unsuccessful. The state legislators do not seem to understand that for every state dollar we cut we lose $4.00 in federal funds. Commissioner Butler shared with us just last month that due to cuts last year, we lost $35 million in federal dollars (this is real money that could have been used for services). He also informed us the Governor wants another 2% cut from Doll’s budget this year. Since Vocational Rehabilitation Services is the only part of DOLL that receives state funds, it means more cuts in Vocational Rehabilitation Services. What does this mean? Well, it means we need you. Mark your calendars for January 24, 2012, so that you can join us on the Hill in Atlanta to advocate for the improvement of services for the blind in Georgia. We need to make sure to let the state legislators know that we don’t want any more cuts to VR services, and to put back what they took last year. The main message to them needs to be that for every $1.00, we actually lose $4.00 from federal funds making it a total $5.00 cut, and this would be more than a 2% cut. Also we will advocate for the passing of the Braille literacy and Commission bills. We will provide the room number and more details as we get closer to the January 24th date. In the mean time you could already be meeting with your legislators before they get busy with the new session. Contact them now while they are at home in your communities. The other important legislation is the Transportation special sales tax. By now, most of the regions have voted on the final list of projects that the tax will cover. Most of the regions except for a couple did include public transit on their list. We will go to the polls next July for the vote on this tax. So what we need to be doing is to talk up the tax, and encourage folks to vote for it so we can improve transit in our regions. If your region did not include any kind of funds toward transit, then you may want to send a message and vote no for it. Why should they get money for roads and bridges if you can’t access them? If you do not know for sure if your region included public transit contact I (Alice Ritchhart) and I will tell you. Besides promoting the tax while on the Hill, we will be meeting with the Speaker of the House and the Lt. Governor to make sure that once the tax is a reality and the regions are assigned with the citizen advisory to oversee the projects, that a person with a disability who is knowledgeable in transportation is on this advisory council. The Speaker and Lt. Governor will each be appointing 2 members to this panel. So get out your running shoes, and start gearing up for the 2012 session. See you in Atlanta!

GCB Chapter News

Athens Chapter in August, we had a good representation at the GCB One Day Event that was held in Carrollton, Ga. I believe that we had nine members including myself plus one of our member’s assistants in attending this event. On August 27, we held our usual monthly meeting at Multiple Choices. On Saturday, September 24, we will be holding our annual Picnic at Memorial Park here in Athens from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. From October the first until the fourth, we will be having our Restaurant fund raiser. Also on Saturday, October 22, we will be doing a fund raiser at Multiple Choices which will be a Yard Sale and a Game Day/Game Night. On Saturday, November 19, we will be having our monthly meeting by telephone conference call and the time of it will be announced at a later date. In December we will have a Christmas related event at Multiple Choices; the date and time is to be announced at a later date. For more information about the Athens Chapter please contact Daniel Myers at 706-850-7472 or danielhmyers@live.com Atlanta West Chapter the Atlanta West Chapter thanks everyone in GCB and in Carrollton for the help we received last week, during the one-day conference/convention. We want to recognize the older members that we had not seen recently, and the 4 new ones who came. The enthusiasm of every member has renewed our commitment to work to make our chapter grow, and become more involved in the coming months. Thanks for your hard work. We have been very busy with the One-day Conference, but we are ready to get to work again. They reported that their next meeting will be on Saturday, September 10th, 2011. This meeting will highlight a re- organization program where we will try more fund-raisers, more contacts with the Lions and in general, more focus on inside growth of the chapter. We have three new people who are hopefully going to join soon. We wish everyone a great fall season and many more contacts with other GCB members, those new ones that we met at our recent one day convention, and those we look forward to meeting soon. The Atlanta West Chapter meetings are on the second Saturday at 11:00 A.M. at the Carrollton Regional Library in Carrollton, Georgia. For more information, contact Steve Estes at 770-562-4213 stestes@bellsouth.net. Augusta Chapter the Augusta Chapter’s meetings are at Columbia County Library, 7022 Evans Town Center Boulevard, Evans, Georgia 30809. Phone: 706-863-1946. Meetings start at 1:00. We are planning for our 3rd Annual Picnic at Diamond Lakes Park in October. For more information please contact Christopher Chaos at 706-737-4341 or cccmayo@yahoo.com Bainbridge Chapter the Bainbridge chapter members are still selling raffle tickets. Are meeting are held on the second Saturday of the month at the library. For more information, please contact Tonya Wright at 229-248-0087. Chattooga County Chapter the Chattooga County Chapter reported that at their June Meeting that Barry Vaughn spoke about the use and training of Dog Guides. Barry has a Dog Guide from Pilot Dog Guide School. We had many in attendance and lots of good food for our lunch. At their July meeting they had a big Birthday Celebration for Antonia Mack. . The Party was a surprise. Her ten year old son Malachi wanted to give his Mom a Birthday Bash and the Chattooga Council supplied the food and decorations. Everyone had a great time. At their August meeting they had Saunya Jones; a young home-schooled attendee served as Secretary and provided very good notes. Saunya also enjoyed reading a story to the members. Wendy Wilson and Carmella Avant spoke about the People First Group in North West Georgia which is a disability group for many disabilities in addition to vision loss. Wendi is President of People First and Vice President of the Chattooga Chapter of GCB. For more information about the Chattooga County Chapter Please contact Marsha Farrow at 706-859-2624 or marshafarrow@windstram.net. East Georgia Chapter the East Georgia Chapter meetings are held the second Saturday of each month in Conyers. For more information, please contact Neb Houston at 770-784-0236. Greater Columbus Chapter the Greater Columbus Chapter invites you to the 2013 WORLD SERIES BEEP BASEBALL GAMES TO BE HELD IN COLUMBUS, GA! The National Beep Ball Association has selected Columbus, Georgia, as the location for the 2013 World Series Beep Baseball Games. Local hosts will be Country's Barbecue, who also hosts the annual Country's Midnight Express every August. Players and coaches are being recruited immediately to join the Columbus Beep Baseball Team. Are you blind or visually impaired and would you like to participate in the fun and hard work it takes to be a beep baseball team member? If so, be sure to contact our local organizers, Gregory McDuffie at (706) 565-6050 or Clifford Jones at (706) 569-9881. Start preparing today and maybe the Columbus team will be the 2013 Beep Baseball World Champions! Beep Baseball is the classic American pastime adapted for the blind and visually impaired. The ball used contains a beeping device that is loud enough to aid in sightless location. The six players on the field are helped by a sighted pitcher, who announces "pitch" or "ball" as the toss is made to a sighted catcher. Batters are allowed four strikes and one pass, but the fourth swing must be a clear, defined miss. The game has six innings, the standard three outs per inning, and two bases, not three. Baseball's traditional tile-like bases are replaced with padded cylinders that stand four feet tall and give off a distinct buzz once activated. The batter doesn't know which base will be activated, but must run to whichever sounds, tackling the base before defense has a chance to field the ball. If the runner makes it in time, a run is scored. Two sighted "spotters" also play the field and call out which direction the ball has headed, using a system based on numbers assigned to each outfielder. Spotters can only announce one number, and the outfielders must communicate with each other to locate the ball. Cheering is discouraged because it interferes with play. The Greater Columbus chapter meetings are held the first Saturday of each month at the Columbus Public Library, 3000 Macon Road, from 1PM-3PM. For more information, please contact Gregory McDuffie at 706-570-3695 or greggmcduffie@bellsouth.net. Greater Hall County Chapter the Greater Hall County Chapter will resume our monthly meetings in September after taking off July and August. We will begin our meetings in a new location. Our new location will be at Smokey Springs Retirement Residence, located at 940 South Enota Drive N.E., Gainesville, GA. We are excited about our new location. It is centrally located in Gainesville. We also will be changing our meeting day to the 2nd Saturday of the month. Our chapter sadly experienced the loss of two of our members in August, our immediate past president, Wanda Martin, and Dave O’Kelly, husband of Genie Rae O'Kelley, who also served as president of our chapter before Wanda. We will miss them and share the grief along with their families at their passing. To all of our GCB family, I am very sorry to report that Wanda Martin, the past president of the Greater Hall County chapter passed away on Monday, August 22, 2011. Wanda will be missed by all. She was such a fine lady and a great baker. As President, she spearheaded our bake sale that earned a substantial sum for our chapter and GCB. For more information about the Greater Hall County Chapter please contact Richard Bagley, President, at 770-983-1213 or richardbaggley@bellsouth.net. Macon Chapter the Macon chapter has some members who are very sick and need to be remembered in prayer. These people are Jo Ann Little, Kathy Marsh, Jerrie Pie, and Carolyn Carr. We have not been meeting this summer. Meetings will restart again this month in the basement of the Dempsey Apartments on the second Friday night at 7:30 p.m. For more information, please contact Milton Brown at 478-962-3747. Metro Atlanta Chapter the Metro Atlanta Chapter has had very good programs for the past few months. The most recent one was presented by Ms. Nicole Williams of Bother Up Company. She is a client of Steve Longmire's, and she makes natural soaps, lotions, oils, hair shampoos, etc. She had a booth at our last year's state convention, and some of you may have seen her products and even bought some of them. We were saddened to lose one of our faithful members, Diane Healy, and our prayers are for her beloved husband, Leo, as he and their daughter, Katie, are missing Diane so very much. Several of our GCB family members came to Diane's funeral, and we were so thankful you were there. Our Loving Cup this year was given to Chester Thrash, and it was presented to him at the GCB State Convention in Carrollton. The President's Certificates were presented to: Mike Avalon, Barbara Graham, and Kathy Coursey-Boes. Every member deserves a certificate for the wonderful support and work they do for our chapter, but these three have gone the extra mile this year. We would appreciate your prayers for our daughter, Donna Roper, who lives in Cumming, Georgia. She has Stage 4 colon cancer and was scheduled to have her first chemo treatment on September 12th. Her husband, Steve, lost his job two weeks prior to her surgery in August, and he has not found another job, although he has been looking and applying. Please also remember Barbara Graham as she continues to improve with her eye condition and for Kathy Coursey-Boes as she continues her treatments for cancer. We hope to be involved again in the upcoming Belk Charity Day on Saturday, November 5. It is a good fund raiser, and we usually profit around $400 to $500 each time for our chapter. Our next meeting will be an auction held at the Center for the Visually Impaired. It should be from 4:00 PM until 6:30 PM on Friday, October 14. We would enjoy and encourage any of you from other chapters to come and join us for the fun and fellowship. For more information, please contact Ann Simms at 404-767-1792 or teacherann@bellsouth.net. Northwest Chapter The Northwest Chapter reports that they are still meeting on the second Tuesday every other month at the Bank of Lafayette community room at 7:00pm. Our chapter is looking forward to our Christmas party which is scheduled for Tuesday, December 6, 2011, 6:30 pm at the Dairy Dip in Lafayette. For more information, contact James Howard at 706-996-4417. Rome Floyd County Chapter The Rome Floyd Chapter has been on the road most of the summer, as our regular meeting place, the Rome Library, is busy with Summer Reading Programs. In June, we met at the Landmark Restaurant and welcomed Evan Barnard, who impressed us with his knowledge of the Big Pine Braille Trail. This is located in Rome, so we have met there twice, and plan to go again in October, with Evan joining us. Our July meeting was held at Pan era Bread Company. We were happy to get back to the library in August, but we love to travel, so in September we’ll return to the Tellus Museum, and we’ll walk the Braille Trail in October. Our meetings are at 11AM on third Tuesdays at the Rome Floyd Library. For more information, please contact Amanda Wilson at 770-547-4700 or via email at moonrocks@bellsouth.net. Savannah Chapter The Savannah Chapter has been going strong with lots of community and regional projects. We have been represented at the meetings for the Regional Round Table. The Savannah Chapter is currently involved in the planning for the 2011 White Cane Day event. Our recent fundraising efforts include Belk Charity Days and Macy’s Shop for a Cause. Our meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month except July. Our Annual Christmas Party serves as our December meeting. We meet at the Clews Ford Company on Abercorn Street in the Conference Room. Our meetings begin at 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm. A 30 minute Social Time is held prior to the meeting. For more information, please contact Teresa Brenner at 912-247-0446 or Tabrenner49@gmail.com. Stephens County Chapter The Stephens County chapter meetings are at the Fernside Fire Department on the 3rd Tuesday, 11:00am. For more information, please contact Alfred Camp at 706-886-3894.

Remembering Diane Healy, Marj Schneider

On Saturday, August 27, 2011, we lost one of our long-time members of the Georgia Council of the Blind and Georgia Guide Dog Users, Diane Healy. Diane had been struggling in recent months with several health issues that finally got the better of her fighting spirit. Diane was one of the first members of Georgia Guide Dog Users that I got to know when I moved to Georgia eight years ago. When I became editor of GGDU’s newsletter, Tail Waggin’ News, Diane was definitely one of those members I wanted to profile, to let others know more about her. That profile, from the fall 2007 issue, is reprinted below. But Diane wasn’t only involved with GGDU. For more than 10 years she was active in the Atlanta chapter of GCB, serving as its president twice and chairing its legislative committee. In the Business Enterprises Program she served on the training committee and was involved with various projects. She and Leo usually attended our state GCB conventions and they often went to national ACB conventions and national meetings of vendors as well. If you encountered Diane at a meeting, Leo was usually somewhere near by. The couple had known each other for 41 years, were married 37, and did things together almost all the time. Now Leo and their daughter Katie are grieving, but they also have decades of memories of Diane. Her dog Pete, who is now 11, is still with Leo, and Leo says he’s a great comfort. Leo and Katie hope you will remember them and Diane in your thoughts and prayers. I know for sure that we will miss Diane’s presence, her boisterous laughter, and her contributions to both GCB and GGDU. Gifts in Diane’s memory can be sent to Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc. 4210 77th St. East Palmetto, FL 34221 From Tail Waggin’ News, fall 2007 Member Profile: Diane Healy By Marj Schneider It’s easy to tell right away when you talk to Diane Healy that she’s not a native of Georgia. In fact, a discerning ear can detect her New York accent, and if you really know what to listen for you’ll identify her as being from Long Island. Diane and her family moved to the Atlanta area in 1991 when her husband, Leo, had a job transfer. At the age of 21, Diane got her first dog, a black lab named Amy in 1972. She still lived with her parents at the time, and her mother took some convincing to have a dog in the house. Diane recalls that she contacted Second Sight in Smithtown, Long Island, now called the Guide Dog Foundation. The school’s director at the time, John Byfield, came to the house with a golden retriever in training. “He walked in, told the dog to find a chair, and he found a chair. He sat down, and my mother just sat there and watched the dog and the man. The dog didn’t make a sound, didn’t make a move, and my mother said to me, ‘I can’t believe that dog. He’s not doing anything.’ So her eyes were opened a bit, and after Mr. Byfield came to the house, I had to ask that question again that day. ‘Would it be all right with you if I brought a dog into the house?’ She said to me, ‘if he’s as good as that one is, I don’t mind at all.’” After two years with Amy, Diane and Leo were married and moved to New York City. Amy worked for eight years when she began slowing down. Diane wasn’t attentive at first to what was going on because she was pregnant and then gave birth to her daughter, who was born prematurely. When Diane took Amy to the vet she was diagnosed with stomach cancer, and the diagnosis was confirmed by the vet at Second Sight. The cancer was beyond a level where it could be treated and Amy had to be euthanized. Though she knew she wanted a second dog, Diane didn’t think she could handle a dog with her daughter at such a young age. Once her daughter started to walk, Diane immediately contacted the school about a successor dog. She got her second dog in October of 1979 who, coincidentally, was also named Amy. Diane remembers the phone call she got from John Byfield. “He said, ‘I think I have a good dog for you, but there’s just one thing. Her name is also Amy; would that cause any problems for you?’ I said, ‘absolutely no. It’s still Amy’s dish, it’s still Amy’s everything in this house, so now it will still be Amy’s.’” Amy II was also a black lab, who had a long working life, until Diane had to put her down at age 14. This was right before the family moved to Georgia. Diane has had problems with the veins in her legs that have increased over time, which means she has difficulty walking fast or walking long distances. Before coming to Georgia, the schools Diane contacted told her she had to be able to walk two miles without stopping or that she had to be able to walk long distances. After being turned down by two schools, she didn’t want to be told no again, even though Leo said he had heard of a school in the South that worked with people with other disabilities. Every time Leo would bring up the possibility of another dog, Diane would respond that she knew she couldn’t work with a dog any more. Diane says that she was lost for ten years without a dog. She says she did nothing during those years, except when she and her husband went out. She was not a good cane user, so the dog was her answer. In 2001, Diane heard that Julie Anchoret of Southeastern Guide Dogs was going to be at a meeting of a blind group in Carrolton and she decided to go. During the meeting, Julie came and sat next to Diane, accompanied by a lab in training. Another trainer, also with a lab in training sat on Diane’s other side. For Diane this was heartbreaking, being between two labs and thinking she could never again work with a guide dog. After the meeting, Diane talked to Julie about what her difficulties were, and following a Juno Walk Julie said she thought Southeastern would be able to work with her. Diane attended a class in august of 2002 and was matched with Pete, more familiarly known as Petey, also a black lab. Pete walks slowly, which is just what Diane needs. His puppy raisers told her they were afraid Petey wouldn’t make it into the program because his pace is so slow. Diane replied,” God chose this dog for me because he was exactly what I needed.” With so many years between when Diane trained with Amy II and when she trained with Pete, she definitely noticed differences in some aspects of the training. When she trained with Pete at Southeastern she was able to go at her own pace and wasn’t pushed to do more than she could. The training was more customized at Southeastern to the needs of each student. The commands between the two schools were a bit different as well. Pete has now been working with Diane for five years. He accompanies her to work on her vending route at the Kroger and Century business centers in Chamblee. Diane works part-time, filling the soda machines on her route and providing a valuable part-time income for her and her husband. Pete knows all the locations on the route and does his job well. Of course Pete accompanies Diane other places as well, including on the ACB cruise she and Leo recently took to Alaska. Pete was one of 22 dogs on the ship. He handled shipboard life well, and Diane highly recommends a cruise to Alaska. A highlight for her was the brown bear she came close to, who sniffed the air, wondering about the presence of all those dogs. Another was taking a ride on a sled pulled by huskies and visiting with some husky pups. Diane Healy is certainly one of GGDU’s most active members. She, Pete and Leo rarely miss a meeting and always have important contributions to make. I, for one, am glad that Diane pursued her desire to work with a guide dog again, and that southeastern and a dog like Pete were there to make it possible. http://iris.nowsprouting.com/genesisunitedmethodistchurch/#/nurture-care Condolences may be sent to: [www.BrownWynneCary.com](http://www.BrownWynneCary.com)

Remembering Marjorie Megivern, Marsha Farrow

Marjorie Megivern was a beloved mother, devoted wife, accomplished actress, journalist, and author, died Tuesday night as a result of a car accident in Cary, NC. The 86-year-old grew up in Adam, Oklahoma, the only child of a school teacher. She graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a major in chemistry. She worked as a chemist until she married a Navy pilot and physician, Dr. Emerson Smith, and moved to the small north Texas town of Wolfe City, where she raised a family of four boys and founded the Wolfe City Public Library. A divorce in 1972 ushered in a host of new beginnings--all of them in North Carolina. In Wilmington, she met her husband of 34 years, James Megivern, a professor of religion and philosophy at UNCW. For more than 25 years she and Jim lived in Wilmington. Marjorie worked as a reporter for the Wilmington Star-News and performed in and directed countless community theater productions, and launched a successful children's theater group, Stage works. Upon her husband's retirement from UMC in 2003, they moved to Brevard and the friendly retirement community of College Walk. Just this past year, Cary became their new home. Wherever she lived, Marjorie, in her typically zestful, exuberant fashion, invested her community with the excitement of live theater, most notably an array of fascinating one-woman shows she wrote and performed all over the state, bringing to life characters ranging from Mother Theresa to Eleanor Roosevelt and Florence Nightingale. She also co-authored a book on churches in North Carolina and the history of the blind. Amid this entire creative spark; Marjorie was forever giving to others. She read for the blind, served as an after-school tutor for at-risk kids, volunteered in soup kitchens, and in her final days was getting ready to participate in Cary's Genesis United Methodist Church's Stephen Ministry. As more than one person remarked about Marjorie, "She is a treasure.” She passed on to her children and grandchildren the powerful life lesson that she lived to the fullest: that every day is precious and rich with opportunities to love and learn. Marjorie is survived by her husband Jim; her four sons, Steven, Dan, Stuart, and Bruce; four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. A memorial service will be held 11:00a.m. Saturday, September 3, 2011, at Genesis United Methodist Church in Cary, NC. The family suggests contributions to the Genesis United Methodist Church Stephen Ministry: Condolences: www.WynneCary.com

New Support Group, Bronwyn Rumery

New support group in Pickens County Has Arrived! On Friday, September 9, 2011, a new support group, Blind Horizons, had its very first meeting. Blind Horizons is a monthly support group dedicated to the blind and sight impaired individuals who have recently been diagnosed with a vision loss, family, and friends or individuals interested in learning more about blindness or low vision. Bronwyn Rumery, a long time resident of Pickens County, has a rare, hereditary eye condition known as Retinitis Pigmentosa which leaves her with very limited vision. It has been Bronwyn’s goal for several years now to have a support group for other blind or low vision individuals in the community to meet others with vision loss, share experiences about coping on a daily basis with their loss of sight and to gain knowledge and empowerment that just because you have lost your sight, it does not mean you have lost your vision and that you can lead a productive life with whatever limited sight you may have. Blind Horizons meets on the second Friday of the month from 11:00am until 1:00pm in Room 106 at Jasper United Methodist Church, 85 West Church Street, Jasper, Georgia, and all are welcome to join us. “We are a small group,” Bronwyn said, “but it is my dream for Blind Horizons to grow and prosper and become a community outreach program for Pickens County and eventually surrounding counties as well”. If you would like more information about Blind Horizons please contact Bronwyn Rumery at 404-702-9061 or blindhorizonsgroup@gmail.com

Let’s Talk GCB

We cordially invite you to the GCB conference call on the fourth Tuesdays (listed below) 8:30 PM until 9:30 PM. We extend an open invitation to the public to join us. The phone number is 218-844-3388, and the PIN 58422 (

Let's Talk GCB).

March 22: Rome/Floyd & Augusta

April 26: Athens & East GA

May 24: Chattooga & Youth

June 28: Stephens & Bainbridge

July 26: Columbus & Macon

August 23: Atlanta West & Savannah

September 27: Hall & Northwest

October 25: GGDU and GCBL

November 22: Metro Atlanta & At Large Members