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 2018

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From Your Editor, by Amanda Wilson

Hello, GCB Family. We thank each one who has submitted articles in this issue of our magazine. If you have any change of address, telephone number, email address or desired change of format, please inform the GCB Digest newsletter editor, Amanda Wilson at 770-547-4700, or via email at moonrocks@bellsouth.net. We would like to thank everyone who makes our GCB Digest such a big success. In particular, I want to thank our new GCB Digest newsletter committee for all of the hard work they have done on the magazine, as well as thanking our president, Alice Ritchhart, for her presidential message with information about important events, legislation and projects. In addition, I appreciate the contributions from all of GCB members who sent articles and who made some excellent suggestions.

GCB Presidential Message, by Alice Ritchhart

I hope that you all are enjoying your summer and staying cool. I wanted to start my message by giving a heartfelt thanks to our immediate past President Keith Morris for his service this past 4 years. Keith stepped in to the office when things were a little uncertain and helped to pull the organization and its membership back together. During his tenure, he also helped initiate several new projects, such as our leadership and first timer scholarship that will help GCB to grow, and flourish in the future. I also want to thank each one of you for your dedication to the organization, and to the blind and low vision community of Georgia. Whether you are involved at the state level or in your local community, your membership represents a commitment to the organization and our community of blindness.

 In the next two years I hope to continue the work and goals that have been set forth by GCB to improve the lives of Georgians with vision loss, and to help through our projects such as the leadership scholarship. Other training opportunities may give each of you the chance to learn, and possibly be willing to take on a more active role in the organization. This could include running for office at the local or state level of our organization. At the same time, I will continue to advocate for systems change to make sure we have full independence and equal access, so we all may enjoy our community as do our sighted peers.

I am here, and if you would like me to talk with your affiliate, or you just want some, one on one, time with me feel free to reach out to me by phone or e mail. Be assured, I look forward to getting to know each of you a little better. Therefore, I can be reached at (912) 996-4213 or E-mail at alice.ritchhart@comcast.net

At times, I know I can be a little overwhelming, but it is because I am a passionate, dedicated person who truly believes in the mission of the GCB. Maybe my favorite quote, which I have tried to live my life by, will help you to know me a little better. This quote came from John F. Kennedy; “Some men see things as they are and say why; I dream things that never were, and say, why not?”

 So, my hope for each and every one of you is to dream and take the risk to make those dreams come true!

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

Georgia Council of the Blind Board Meeting

Ramada Inn, Gainesville, GA May 5, 2018

Call to order:

President Keith Morris called the meeting to order at 4:17 PM. Chaplain Fred McDade led us in prayer.

Roll Call:

 Those present were: President, Keith Morris; First Vice-President, Phil Jones; Second vice-President, Fred McDade; Secretary, Betsy Grenevitch; Treasurer, Marsha Farrow; Athens, Jerrie Toney; Augusta, Deborah Lovell; East Georgia, Cecily Nipper; Greater Hall, Judy Presley; Northwest, Charles Stubblefield; Rome, Tonia Clayton; Savannah, Marj Schneider; South Metro, Lisa Jones; GGDU, DJ McIntyre; Member-at-Large Representative, Alice Ritchhart; Parliamentarian, Roderick Parker; Webmaster, Steve Longmire; and Digest Editor, Amanda Wilson.

Other members present were: Rosetta Brown, Lilianna Hanley, Tiyah Fowlkes-Mansah, Robin Oliver, Evan Bradford, Ernest Bowles-Dean, Todd Turansky, Kathy Morris, and Cecily Nipper.

Approval of Minutes, Betsy Grenevitch:

Deborah Lovell made a motion seconded by Marsha Farrow that the minutes of the last board meeting be accepted as emailed. The motion was unanimously approved.

Swearing in of Officers, Betsy Grenevitch and Kathy Morris:

Betsy Grenevitch asked Kathy Morris to read the oath for all the new officers, so that it could be read only one time. Kathy Morris read the oath and all officers for 2018 responded. The new officers for 2018 are: President, Alice Ritchhart; First Vice-President, Phil Jones, Second vice President, Jamaica Miller; Secretary, Betsy Grenevitch; and Treasurer, Marsha Farrow.

Unfinished Business:

There was no unfinished business.

New Business:

President Alice Ritchhart told us that she will be working on new committees. She will be reaching out to members and asked the presidents to let their chapter members know that if they want to serve on any committees to let her know.

Next Board Meeting:

Betsy Grenevitch made a motion and it was seconded by Cecily Nipper that we make the July board meeting a phone conference meeting. The motion was unanimously carried.

The New Chapter: Because of the decision to have a July, phone call board meeting, our discussion earlier at the annual business meeting, asking the new chapter to send a representative to the July board meeting, for the board to approve its charter was again up for debate. Marsha Farrow suggested that some of the Board officers could meet them in a central location to make it a special time for the new chapter. Deborah Lovell made a motion which was seconded by Judy Presley that the executive committee meet and decide how the pending new chapter be presented, their information, and their charter. The motion passed unanimously.

We adjourned at 4:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Betsy Grenevitch, Secretary

GCB Member Profile: Steve Longmire

Originally from the Columbus area, Steve spent his entire life being visually impaired. Always having been interested in technology and computers, Steve has obtained a degree in Electrical Engineering. Before retiring, for some 20 years he worked in a wide variety of jobs in the tech sector. Now, Steve makes use of his skills as a volunteer at GLASS (Georgia Library for Accessible Services). Here, Steve teaches computers and technology to visually impaired patrons. In his free time, Steve also has developed accessible websites for those disabled. Though he has been a longtime listener of GARR’S, in the last few years, Steve has become more involved in the service. Although he can see some print, he says it is nice to be able to simply turn on the radio and listen. Since he loves to cook, Steve says he listens to food-ads, so he knows what is on sale. Other favorites are, Kathleen Clemmons's Kitchen Kapers, on Saturday morning, and Friday night with tunes in for Radio's Golden Years. He is also a fan of the comics, Community News, Out & About and enjoyed this month's visit with Moving in the Spirit (above.) Steve listens to the program on his smart phone via the TuneIn app, or on a standard radio. The best part, says Steve, is how easy it is to, tune in, whenever and wherever I would like to enjoy the programs.

GCB Chapter News

The Athens chapter reported that we held our annual picnic on Saturday June 2nd. Members of the chapter enjoyed food, fellowship, and happy recollections of the past year's holiday lunch in December 2017. We held our music night fundraiser in March. We attended the GCB conference and convention in May. At the GCB Conference and Convention which was held from May 3rd through May 6th, 2018 at the Ramada Inn, located in Gainesville, Georgia, Jerrie Toney gave out presidential certificates to Robin Oliver, Evan Bradford, Jamaica Miller, and to Jamaica Miller’s mother Diane Miller. Jerrie Toney gave out Loving Cups to Robin Oliver, Evan Bradford, and to Ernest Bowles-Dean. The Athens chapter officers are Jerrie Toney, president; Jamie Teal, first vice-president; Ernest Bowles-Dean, second vice-president; Evan Bradford, secretary; and 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 has several projects in the works. We are exploring venues for our next technology seminar. WE will be meeting for a dinner social on Friday, August 17, 2018. Our chapter will be sponsoring a party for the inpatient veterans at the Charlie Norwood VAMC, Blind Rehabilitation unit on Saturday, September 29, 2018.  We are compiling a list of resources to share with restaurants in the area on working with individuals with visual impairments. Chapter Officers are Deborah Lovell, president; Stanley Lopez, vice-president; Ron Worley Secretary; Kathy Morris treasurer. Meetings are held at the Friedman Branch Library, 1447 Jackson Road, Augusta, Georgia, on the second Saturday at 1:00. For more information, please contact Deborah Lovell at 706-726-4054, or via email at lovell.d2000@gmail.com.

The East Georgia chapter reported that Rita Harris, a member, of The East Georgia Chapter has been selected by The Georgia Lions to receive its prestigious “Outstanding Blind Award”. Rita states “I am extremely honored to be thought of in this capacity”. She is the Founder and CEO of Living Life Team. Meetings are the second Thursday of each month at 11 a.m. at the Morgan County Library. Rita will be traveling to Ghana West Africa July 20, 2018 on her first missionary journey. She feels privileged to have the opportunity to visit the school for the blind. She will be distributing eye glasses donated by the Lions of Georgia and White Canes given by other organizations.

Congratulations, along with our prayers, Rita. Arthur and Patricia Ganger have become the parents of Ada. Congratulations. President Nipper presented the East Georgia Chapter Presidential Certificate to Linda Cox. The Loving Cup Award, voted on by the membership, was presented to Cecily Nipper Sr. Congratulations ladies. Andrew Pregenzer, TVI with the Newton County Schools was our Keynote speaker. He and Ann Summerson, the other TVI, serve students kindergarten to twelfth grade with all degrees of vision loss, low vision to legally blind. He talked about different techniques used to teach braille. Mr. Pregenzer then had sighted attendees use different goggles to experience several levels of vision loss. Elizabeth Cantrell, Our newest member introduced herself. She works for Newton County Schools and has recently become a certified TBI through the Middle Georgia RISA endorsement program. Neb Houston is recovering. Your prayers are sincerely appreciated.

The East Georgia Chapter thanks all of you for purchasing raffle tickets for The Focus 14 Braille Display. The ticket proceeds will go into the Brandy Jones Memorial Fund to purchase assistive technology. The raffle was held on June 9, at noon in the lovely home of Carle Cox Wahyudi. Janet Hardin was Mistress of Ceremony, and Barbara Brooks drew the winning ticket. The winner is Tory Slade. You can watch the drawing on the East Georgia Chapter Facebook page.”

Our annual picnic was held on July 14 at the Covington United Methodist Church. Chapter officers are Cecily Nipper, President; Ann Wheeler, First vice-president; Phil Jones, Second vice-president; Linda Williams, Secretary; Linda Cox, Treasurer; Elsie Aguilar, Brenda Maddox, and Rosetta Brown, Board Members. Meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month at 10:00 AM at the Covington First United Methodist Church, 1113 Conyers Street in Covington. For more information, contact Cecily Nipper at 770-786-1551, or via email at roses828@comcast.net.

The Greater Hall County Chapter reported that Dianne Roberts wishes to express her gratitude for all the well wishes and cards that were sent to her mother.  Her mother very much appreciated them and displayed them on her mantel. She has completed all her treatments and is starting a series of rehabilitation. The Greater Hall chapter of GCB held our end of the year luncheon on Saturday June 9, 2018. The First Presbyterian Church of Gainesville allowed us to use their beautiful dining hall.  Bobby Free served us pork barbecue, which he smoked all night.  We also enjoyed Jane Free’s, “to die for”, coconut cake, Hoyal Presley’s world famous baked beans and other covered dishes. We were entertained by the beautiful piano accompaniment of Timothy Jones. We are excited to start out our September meeting with guest speaker Stephanie Pizza, from CVI in Atlanta.  She will give us an overview of their summer camp program.  We were happy that we were able to give monetary support to one of her campers this year.  We are also looking forward to holding a White Cane Day at the library in Flowery Branch in October.  Keep an ear open for more about that project in the fall Digest. Chapter officers are Diane Roberts, president; Judy Presley, vice-president; Sue Heskett, secretary; Roy Carder, treasurer. Their board members are Don Linnartz, Bob McGarry and Harvey Roberts. Meetings are held at the Smokey Springs Retirement Residence, 940 South Enota Drive in Gainesville on the second Saturday at 10:00. For more information about the Chapter, please contact Diane Roberts at 770-932-1112, or via email at harveyroberts2@att.net.

The Georgia Council of the Blind has some new kids on the block and their names are the North Central Georgia Chapter of the Blind, NCGC, and they are quite excited to be one of the council’s newest chapters. NCGC was started last year with the help of Amanda Wilson, Editor of the Digest in Cartersville; however, after great thought and discussion, Amanda decided that it would be best (due to other obligations) if someone else took over her role as president, and she asked her dear friend and GCB member Bronwyn [Brie] Rumery if she would consider taking the job, and she graciously accepted. Since Bronwyn lives in Jasper (Pickens County), it was decided that the meetings would be moved to her home town but would reach out to the surrounding counties around Jasper, including Bartow and Cherokee. The mission of NCGC is to provide those individuals who are blind or visually impaired with peer support, resources, advocacy, community outreach and much more. It is very important to Bronwyn and the members of her chapter to let others, especially newly blinded individuals, that though you may be losing your sight it is not the end of the world and you can live a productive and independent life and have some fun along the way. The North Central Georgia Chapter, NCGC, meets on the 4th Wednesday of the month from 11:00 AM until 1:00 PM at the Pickens County Chamber of Commerce in Jasper. Come to one of our meetings and bring a friend with you as well! Please contact Bronwyn Rumery, at 706-669-2115, or via email at northcentral.ga.chapter@gmail.com. If you use Twitter, then you can follow the chapter at @NCGAChapter or like us on FaceBook at North Central Georgia Chapter of the Blind.

The Northwest Chapter reported that their May meeting speaker was from the Signal Center. We heard about the new equipment available for individuals with visual impairments like script talk screen readers and other gadgets. Signal Center stated that they offer computer training and training for Daily living skills. Chapter officers are Ron Burgess, president; Fred McDade, vice-president; Bethany Leigh, secretary; Charles Stubblefield, treasurer; Robert Sprayberry, Chaplain. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month at the Bank of Lafayette Community Room, 104 North Main Street in Lafayette, Georgia at 1:00 pm. For more information, please contact Ron Burgess at 706-638-1132, or via email at ronburgess1132@gmail.com.

The Rome Floyd County chapter reported that at the April meeting, Donna Calhoun, who is a member of the Lion’s club, did a presentation over the phone. She told us about how the Lion clubs are assisting individuals with visual impairments to attend the Lion’s camp for the blind in Waycross, Georgia. The May meeting was held at the Roma Mia restaurant. Paige Griffith, Bethany Kinsley-Leigh’s son played the guitar and sang different songs for us. Some of the members that attended the GCB state conference and convention talked about what they liked most about the GCB conference. At the June meeting, Alice Ritchhart, the GCB state president gave a presentation over the phone. She discussed her vision for GCB and answered questions from the entire group of members who attended the meeting. The Rome Floyd County chapter officers are Marsha Farrow, president; Dr. Philip Dillard, vice-president; Tonia Clayton, secretary; Suzanne Jackson, treasurer; Martha Craig, Chaplain; Tracey Estill, Quinn Smith and Mark Kinsley board members. Meetings are held at the Rome Floyd County Library, 205 Riverside Parkway, Rome, Georgia, on the third Tuesday, at 11:00 am. For further information, please contact Marsha Farrow at 706-859-2624 or via email at marshafarrow@windstream.net.

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

The South Atlanta Chapter officers are Lisa Jones, president; Brent Reynolds, vice-President; Chris Baldridge, secretary; Steve Longmire, treasurer. Meetings are held at the Piccadilly Cafeteria, 1715 Howell Mill Road in Atlanta on the second Thursday from 4:00 until 6:00 pm. For more information, please contact Lisa Jones at 404-556-8987.

Georgia Guide Dog Users, GDDU News:

The Georgia Guide Dog Users had their last meeting on Friday, May 4, 2018. This meeting was in Gainesville, Georgia, at the Georgia Council of the Blind conference and convention. Their speaker was Dr. Ira Roth who teaches at the University of Georgia Veterinarian School. He spoke to us about maintaining the weight for our guide dogs. Betsy Grenevitch is attending the ADA committee meetings at the Atlanta airport. Some highlights from the latest meeting that took place in May are below. The airport had a Wings for Autism Day in April. The attendees were able to experience what it would be like to get ready to fly. There will be a Wings for All Day in 2019. It will take place on the international side of the airport. Between January and the beginning of May the airport received two official complaints. These complaints were from wheelchair users. They are trying to get more facilities and technologies in the airport to help various disabilities. Steve Mayers is currently working on two different projects. One of the projects will help blind/visually impaired passengers. In March, Steve

Mayers did an online training session with 300 different organizations concerning disabilities in the airport. There is now a multisensory room on Concourse F that was sponsored by Delta. The Center for the Visually Impaired (CVI) does tours of the airport for their students at least once a month. Ernest brings four people on each tour. The airport recently did a self-inspection of 30 different items at the airport. There will be another self-assessment with ADA in July. They have modified restrooms and applied striping in parking lots for people with disabilities. Rita Harris was chosen to represent the guide dogs at the service relief areas in the airport. Her picture and story will be on a plaque at these areas. Steve Mayers is checking into the possibility of offering AIRA glasses to someone who is blind/visually impaired while they are at the airport. Construction will begin in August on the south terminal, and this will require drop-offs to take place at the north terminal. The Georgia Guide Dog Users officers are Betsy Grenevitch, Interim president, Teresa Brenner, vice-president, Marj Schneider, secretary, Alice Ritchhart, treasurer, Dottie Langham, Director. For more information about the Georgia guide Dog Users group please contact Betsy Grenevitch at 770-464-0450, or via email at blindangel@joimail.com. Web site: www.georgiaguidedogusers.org.

GCB In Memory of Donna Culver

Donna C. Culver 64, wife of Robert Culver, passed away on Monday, June 4, 2018. Her funeral service was held on Wednesday, June 6, 2018; at 12:00 pm. Rev. Lionel Marjolijn officiated. Visitation was on Wednesday, June 6, 2018, at 10:00 am. Her interment service was Forest Lawn Memory Gardens. Reposing and service was at Bonaventure Funeral Chapel which is located at 2520 Bonaventure Road in Savannah, Georgia. On August 22, 1953, Donna Jean made her grand entrance into the world. She was a premature baby and was not expected to survive but proved everyone wrong. At age 5, she was lovingly adopted by James and Helen Clay (both deceased). Donna attended Georgia Academy for the Blind and went on to acquire her GED and an Associate’s Degree in Communications from Savannah State
College. She put her degree to work by working in this field, with Chatham Answering Service, for 30 years. She married the love of her life, Robert Culver, in 1976. They
celebrated their 42nd anniversary June 1, 2018. This union was blessed with two sons.

A faithful member of Central Christian Church, Donna’s other memberships include the Lions Club, NFB (National Federation of the Blind), GAB (Georgia Academy for the Blind), GCB (Georgia Council of the Blind), and Leader Dogs. Her hobbies were music, swimming, walking and telephones. She passionately loved her guide dog “Martha.” Although she was a fighter from day one,

Donna answered her Heavenly Father’s call on June 4, 2018 and peacefully departed this life. She leaves to cherish her memory a devoted and loving husband, Robert, sons Thomas Daniel Culver (Nichole) and Jonathan Israel Culver (Laura); an adopted son, Kenneth L. Allen; four grandchildren; two brothers: Pastor Charles “Gene” Clay, II (Betty); Thomas E. Marston (Cathy); Charles Williamson (deceased); James H. Clay, Jr. (deceased); and a host of loving friends.

Richard Robinson 53, Shirley Robinson’s husband **left** us here on earth to be with his mother Carolyn and father Clarence in heaven on Sunday, July 12, 2018. He leaves his wife of 16 years, Shirley Robinson and his daughters Megan Allen and Lorynn Ashley.  Richard was a native of Georgia and ran a successful medical imaging company for 18 years, as well as taking over his father’s residential security company, Robinson Services Incorporated.  He will be missed by his family including his brothers Timothy and Joel Robinson and numerous nieces and nephews.  We will all remember Richard for his humor, big heart, and sometimes shocking comments.

You can send your condolences to Shirley Robinson, 2310 Hamilton Parc Lane, Buford GA 30519, 404-783-3545, shirley.robinson@gvs.ga.gov.

GCB Georgia Libraries for Accessible Statewide Services (GLASS) Oral History Project

Georgia Libraries for Accessible Statewide Services (GLASS) is recording and collecting oral history interviews for the following project: Our Stories, Our Lives: Oral Histories of the Disability Experience in conjunction with the Russell Library’s Oral History Project. People with print disabilities can tell all or part of their story about their experience as a person with a print disability. We’re going to begin with local patrons -- or those willing to travel to Atlanta -- who can come to GLASS Atlanta and record their story in the recording booth. The patrons can be of any age if they have a print disability. For more information, Please contact Vanessa at 404-675-1452, or Stephanie Irving, project manager at 404-235-7157.

GCB Tribute to Ann Sims

My lengthy tribute to my mom, Ann Sims,

by Susan Randall

The first thing I want you to know about my mom is that she IS my mom. The second thing is that she is blind. The third thing is she adopted me. In fact, my mom was the first blind person allowed to adopt children in the state of Georgia. The fourth thing is that the second and third things don't matter. Her being blind is as natural to us, my brother and me, as anyone else's mom being sighted. There were times I wish she weren't blind; we would have gotten away with so much more! Everyone knew us, and everyone watched us! No, we couldn't get away with anything. It didn't matter on what side of town we lived, and I grew up in Atlanta. She always had the advantage at hide-and -seeks. We didn't understand that sound travelled, and she had bells on our shoes that were cheat number one. Cheat number two was when we no longer had the bells. She would just tell Paula, her four-legged eyes, to find us. And cheat number three was prayer. I remember one time she couldn't find me because I had fallen asleep between the bed and the wall. When she couldn't find me, she sat on my bed praying. I know this because I woke up as she was praying. I crawled up on my bed and got the biggest hug.

She always won hide-and-seek.

I remember people telling me how nice it was for my mom to have me there to help her. I would have to look at them and ask what they meant. You see she was there to help me. She was/ is my mom. She has never been limited. My mom did everything any other mom does. She read me stories when she tucked me in (and she didn't have to have the lights on!). I remember her playing basketball, putt-putt, bowling, and other sports with me. She took me on my first roller-coaster, the Scream Machine, and we have been riding them ever since together as often as we can. We have camped, canoed, biked, fished, and walked. Boy, did we walk!
She is a thrill-seeker and daredevil. She is up for any challenge. She tackles new technologies that come out and she conquers them. True her computer doesn't have a monitor, but why does she need one? I honestly don't know what my mom can't do. I have never viewed my mom different from any other mom. But now as I am older, and I reflect, I realize the discrimination my mom faced. I remember as a child, when people realized my mom was blind, they would start talking to me with her there, as if she were no longer a person. I remember my mom having to stand up for herself and letting people know she can speak and think for herself. I look back and see the strength my mom had. She had to prove to the state of Georgia she was capable of being a mom, all because she couldn't have natural children. She has had to overcome people's unjustified stereotype to get them to see her as an able person. She has had to put up with people's ignorance and unnecessary pity. My mom is a mom. She has taught me the lessons that all moms teach their kids. But, being biased, I believe she has taught me, maybe, a little more.

What my mom has taught me...

1. If you have limitations it is because you limit yourself.
2. One is not disabled, one is just abled differently and there isn't anything one can't do; one just does it differently. And if one is abled differently and can do it then nothing should hold me back.
3. A mom isn't someone who gave birth to you. She is the one who was there through the good, bad, and ugly of your childhood and loved you through it all.
4. We are not all created equal; God has given us all different talents and we need to use those talents to the fullest for His Glory. We are all created equal in God's eyes. We are all sinners that need His gift of salvation.
5. Don't worry about what others think of you; just be the best you can be.
6. Always be up to new adventures and challenges. Never stop learning and working.
7. There is always more than one way to accomplish a task. If plan A doesn't work, move on to plan B, C, D, F, etc. Don't give up. You will be amazed at what you will accomplish.
8. Just because someone does a task differently doesn't make them wrong; it is just different.
9. Helping others is its own reward.
10. GOD DOESN'T MAKE MISTAKES! It wasn't a mistake that my mom was born blind and it wasn't a mistake that I was put up for adoption. Just because I wasn't born into my family doesn't make me less of a family member. I just joined my family differently.
11. Being different is normal and what makes us all special.
12. Get to know people because or despite their differences. They will enrich your life.

GCB Seeing Eye Letter on behalf of Ann Sims

Marj Schneider

212 Oxford Dr.

Savannah, GA 31405

June 16, 2018

Dear Seeing Eye,

Enclosed please find two checks totaling $300 in memory of Seeing Eye graduate, Ann Sims, who passed away at her home in Hapeville, Georgia on April 16, 2018.

Members of the Georgia Council of the Blind held our annual conference and convention in early May 2018 and collected these contributions to honor Ann. She was a long-time, dedicated member of GCB who will always be missed. We know how much freedom and independence she gained over the years with her Seeing Eye dogs.

Ann was guided by five dogs from the Seeing Eye, beginning in 1970 when she was matched with Raisin in class with Seeing Eye’s CEO Jim Kutsch. There were four other matches, Paula, Obo, Vim and Nickie. Ann had nothing but praise for the work of the Seeing Eye and the dedication of its staff and especially the trainers.

As her daughter Susan recently wrote to me, “I think it is wonderful to hear about the contribution that was raised for Seeing Eye! Momma loved and counted on her ‘four-legged eyes.’ She told me how much of a difference her guide dogs made in her life. I remember her recounting what it was like the first time she went out with her dog. The independence she felt was life altering. I can’t imagine what life would have been like without a guide dog in our home. Each one made as much of an impact in my life as they did in Momma’s.”

Please accept these contributions in memory of our beloved Ann Sims towards your continuing work to train Seeing Eye dogs for those of us who are blind.

Marj Schneider, Seeing Eye graduate, on behalf of the Georgia Council of the Blind

GCB Update and Thank you from Timothy Jones

I cannot thank you enough for the generous gift you gave me at your end-of-year picnic Saturday!  I had not expected that at all! I was happy to just be with you all again and it was just a spur-of-the-moment idea to play for you during the picnic, so it was a true and unexpected blessing to be given this gift to help with my college costs.  Thank you so very much!

Speaking of college, I wanted to give you all a “catch-up” on what’s been going on in my life.  As you know, I’m attending Mercer University in Macon, working toward a Bachelor of Music degree in organ performance (organ primarily, but with piano concentration also). I’ve completed my junior year and will be beginning my senior year August 21.  I can’t believe I’ve nearly reached the summit—it seems like I was just a freshman yesterday!  I’ll be undertaking some rigorous non-music coursework that I’ve put off till my senior year this fall—Statistics and Spanish---so I would appreciate your prayers!

I’ve been fortunate to be able to study under Dr. Jack Mitchener at Mercer, who is a well-respected concert organist and instructor/clinician throughout the US and abroad.  He gives his students every possibility of performance both at Mercer and at local Macon and Atlanta churches, so I’ve had the opportunity to play at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, Mulberry United Methodist Church, Christ Church Episcopal, Newton Chapel at Mercer, and First Presbyterian in Macon, and Peachtree Road United Methodist in Atlanta.  I also play twice every Sunday and on Wednesdays as organist / assistant pianist at Gilead Baptist Church in Macon.  It’s a volunteer position, so I don’t get paid, but I look on it as a great Apprenticeship opportunity, and the church has been very supportive of me and has provided free transportation to and from the church for services and rehearsals.

I am also a member of the Mercer University Choir, and as such perform with them in their three major concerts a year together with the Choral Society of Middle Georgia and the Mercer Singers and Orchestra.  We give an annual Christmas concert, (Handel’s Messiah), as well as major programs in fall and spring, such as our last performance of Mozart’s Requiem in April and last fall of “All Angels Cry Aloud.”

One huge advantage of being a music student at Mercer is the opportunity to attend, without cost, concerts of major professional music groups given at Fickling Recital Hall.  To date, I have attended 241 of these concerts, (my goal is to make it an even 300 before I graduate. That is twice the minimum number required of music majors) and have heard guest artists from the US and worldwide such as Ken Medema (who is a blind composer / performer of contemporary Christian music and a personal friend of the Dean of Mercer’s Townsend School of Music, Dr. David Keith), Andre Watts (classical pianist), Jasmine Haversham (soprano opera singer), David Finkel and his wife Wu Han (cello and piano), and Uriel Tsachor (piano).  In addition, there has been a multitude of faculty guest concerts and many student Junior- and Senior-recitals. I gave my own Junior Recital October 3, 2017, at Newton Chapel, and highlights from my performance are up on my You Tube channel (Timothy Raymond Jones at You Tube <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCo1FjEsXMB8kbiJc87rLGQ> --look for the 3 movements of the Bach Trio Sonata in C major).  My “biggie”—the Senior Recital—is planned for spring 2018 (no date set yet) and if any of you can manage to come down to Macon to attend, I’d be thrilled!  (I will announce date and location in October). I had hoped to attend this year’s ACB convention in St. Louis and came SO close—I was among the finalists and am first “Alternate” for one of the scholarships “if” the recipient decides for any reason she can’t come to the convention.  I didn’t try out for the Atlanta Guild of Organists scholarship this year because I’d won it every year for the past 7 years and decided to step aside and give younger organ students a chance.  I did apply for several other scholarships and won one of them—the Mu Phi Epsilon (music fraternity) scholarship of $1000—which is a blessing!  I am a member of two Honor societies---Sigma Alpha Pi (also known as the Society for Leadership and Success) and Phi Beta Sigma—and applied for scholarships from them, but the competition for those is fierce (as they are nationwide organizations) so I did not receive scholarships from them.  This is another reason your gift to me is so much appreciated, as it will help me financially.  I am also doing as many “gigs” as possible while home this summer to help raise money.

I am busy also this summer taking an online college course (as I have done also the past two summers). Although Mercer offered to allow me to “graduate late” since (as a Braille-reading student) it’s very hard for me to take as many courses / semester hours as sighted students every semester, but I wanted to graduate at the end of the normal four-year period like all my peers.  Therefore, I’ve done online courses since my Freshman year to make up some of those core-curriculum courses; in 2016 I took a religion course (New Testament Survey, from Liberty University online), in 2017 Psychology (from Liberty University) and Speech (from Gwinnett Tech); and this summer Biology and Biology Lab (two separate courses from Liberty University). Since Biology is so visually-oriented, it’s been a challenge, but my greatest challenge was persuading the (very reluctant) Disabilities Coordinator at Liberty to obtain my book in electronic Braille files, rather than merely providing me PDF’s—even though either version was free from the publisher.  After months of negotiations and self-advocacy, higher officials at Liberty finally helped me get my full textbook in Braille, although I still have “only” the text—no charts, graphs, diagrams, etc.  So, it’s been a challenge---especially for the labs—but I was given permission to have my mom be my “lab assistant” so we’re working on it together; she describes the videos / pictures / etc., helps conduct lab experiments, and reads questions aloud to me on pages I can’t access online, and I give her the answers to input for me.

My future at present includes the desire to go for a master’s Degree, preferably in some area of Music Education.  I am strongly considering Bob Jones University in Greenville, SC, as they have a Master’s in

Piano Pedagogy which I think would be perfect.  I can see myself working as a piano, music, or Braille music instructor in a school for the blind, a community services outlet for the blind (such as CVI—the Center for the Visually Impaired in Atlanta), or privately, teaching general students and especially blind students piano (or organ), how to read Braille music, and even music transcription programs such as Good feel!  I also continue to hope I’ll eventually work as an organ/piano accompanist for a church (in addition to instruction), and to work in an IT Support capacity for companies such as VFO (formerly Freedom Scientific) or Enabling Technologies—or maybe even for Dancing Dots as well! I wish I could attend more GCB meetings / conventions, but unfortunately am in school from mid-August through (usually) mid-May, so that is not possible for me at present.  I also don’t get out for Christmas break (usually) until a week before the holiday.  So – if I don’t see you all at an event later this summer, I hope to see you next summer!  Please know that I do “keep in touch” with you in my heart, through the newsletters from the State GCB organization, and your support and encouragement have opened the door for my current and future education and employment opportunities! God bless you all!

Sincerely, Timothy Raymond Jones

GCB K9 Korner

A Few Summer Time Reminders

By Bronwyn Rumery- NCGC Chapter)

Summer has finally arrived and if it was up to my retired Fidelco guide dog Jadyn, we would be sitting pool side sipping on long Island Ice Teas. However, even though she is no longer a working dog, we have several friends and acquaintances that are and she, I mean we, just want to give you all a few reminders on how to keep your guide nice and cool during all of this Georgia heat.

•Check the Temperature. If it’s too hot for you to be outside, then it is too hot for your guide dog. If you need to be out and about, try to go first thing in the morning or early evening when the temperatures might be a bit cooler. Take walks in temperature-controlled environments such as malls shopping centers, etc.

•Water. It is important to keep our guides hydrated always but especially during the summer months. So, before you put your dog’s harness on and walk out the door, make sure you have plenty of water on hand for both you and your guide. From collapsible dog bowls to one-in-all water bottles, there are plenty of choices to choose from and no excuse for you not to have water on hand!

•Black Top. Ouch! We all know that stepping barefoot on hot pavement can really hurt, so just imagine how it must feel on the feet of our beloved guides. Therefore, when possible, try to have your guide walk through the grass or a shaded area to give those poor feet a chance to cool off.

•Pesky Bugs. The worst thing about summer, for me that is, is the bugs! During summer, the opportunity for our guides to obtain flea and ticks rises and that is why it so important to make sure that we treat our guides for these pesky and potentially harmful creatures. There are several types of flea and tick medications available so consult your vet to see what the best for your dog might be. Also, periodically check your dog’s body for ticks and give him/her their monthly heart worm treatment as well.

These are just a few tips to remind us all how to take care of our guides, working and retired, how to stay nice and cool during the sweltering heat associated with summer. And if by chance you are reading this pool side enjoying a nice refreshing drink or dangling your feet in the water, make sure to include your dog as well.

GCB Newsletter announcement

The GCB Digest committee wishes to announce some new topics for articles for our newsletter.

Please feel free to pick one of the following topics and write an article about it and then send it to us. Recipes that is easy to make in a few minutes. I-phone Apps that are voiceover friendly. K9 Korner which could be about pets or guide dogs. Ponder this could include a question about blindness related issues. Trends Things you use in your everyday life. Travel could include traveling around your community, your state, your nation, or abroad. Riddles, brain Teasers or trivia trivia about GCB or other subjects. Fundraising could include activities in your chapter, in your community, or in the state. Older Blind could include activities or equipment for people over the age of fifty-five. Fun Stuff could include Hobbies, crafts, or leisure activities. Helpful Hints Anything you use in your house. Essay contest Write an essay. Janet Parmenter will read it and give recognition to the winner.