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

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

**GCB Presidential Message, Keith Morris**

Happy New Year!

2017 was a good year. We had a great convention in 2017 and we are looking forward to another good convention in 2018. Let’s work together and get GCB growing. Just think how much we could grow if everyone could ask one person to join us! Let’s strive to grow strong this year by keeping our current members and adding new ones. We have one group that is getting a new chapter started. Look forward to hearing their results. Thank you to everyone who has worked to get us where we are today. I know we can grow as we all work together. We want to give congratulations to DJ and Drew McIntyre on the birth of their baby girl, Rachel Grace. She’s a precious gift from God. I know everyone will enjoy getting to meet her when you get to bring her to a GCB event. I hope to see all of you at our next GCB board meeting. The GCB Board meeting was held on Saturday, January 20, 2018. The GCB board meeting began at 10:30 AM. The GCb board meeting was held at Saint Mark UNITED Methodist church which is located at 2367 Washington Road in Augusta, Georgia 30904. Snacks will be provided during the meeting.

I hope that everyone has a great year in 2018!

**Georgia Council of the Blind Board Meeting Minutes**

Betsy Grenevitch

Georgia Council of the Blind Board Meeting

Centerville Lions Club Meeting Place

612 North Houston Lake Blvd.

Centerville, Ga 31028

Saturday, July 29, 2017

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by President Keith Morris at 11:10 AM.

Invocation:

The invocation was given by Fred McDade, our Chaplin.

Roll Call:

Those present were President, Keith Morris; First Vice-President, Phil Jones; Second Vice-President, Fred McDade; Treasurer, Marsha Farrow; Secretary, Betsy Grenevitch; Member-at-Large Representative, Alice Ritchhart; Athens, Jerrie Toney; Augusta, Deborah Lovell via phone; East Georgia, Cecily Nipper via phone; Hall County, Dianne Roberts; Hall County, Harvey Roberts; Northwest, Ron Burgess via phone; South Atlanta, Lisa Jones via phone; Savannah, Marj Schneider; Webmaster, Steve Longmire. Other members present were: Kathy Morris, Dawn McAllister, Brittany McAllister, Joe James, Charles Stubblefield, Jamaica Miller, Valerie Hester and Michelle Grenevitch.

President’s Report, Keith Morris:

Keith Morris our president did not have anything to report.

Secretary’s Report, Betsy Grenevitch:

Betsy Grenevitch asked for three sets of minutes that were previously sent out to be approved. She explained that she had overlooked asking for the approval of the December 15, 2016 minutes in January and the March 23, 2017 minutes in April. These minutes were the December 15, 2016 special phone meeting concerning the upcoming GCB conference and convention; March 23, 2017 special phone meeting concerning the upcoming GCB conference and convention; and the in-person board meeting held on April 29, 2017. A motion was made by Deborah Lovell and seconded by Fred McDade to approve the December 15, 2016 minutes and the motion passed unanimously. A motion was made to approve the March 23, 2017 minutes by Dianne Roberts and seconded by Fred McDade and the motion passed unanimously. A motion to approve the April 29, 2017 minutes was made by Fred McDade and seconded by Harvey Roberts and the motion was approved unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report, Marsha Farrow:

Marsha Farrow stated that Dr. Philip Dillard had been reached by phone and was going to represent the Rome/Floyd chapter for the remainder of the meeting. The following information was given: The main checking account: $3049.93. The Al and Cora Camp scholarship fund: $3530.03. There will be a check written for $1 thousand to Michael Brown our scholarship recipient. The money Market account: $5740.99. This account accrued $.28 in interest. The Conference account: $1303.07. Evan Barnard’s CD: $901.19. The long-term investment: $17,686.68. It has accrued over $600 since we have invested it. The Way Financial: as of June 2017, $68,702.16. The interest from this account is used to fund our scholarships.). The Older Blind fund is included in the checking account total. We have received $1600 to be used for the older blind. This is for individuals who are 55 and above and is to be spent on devices and services. We have utilized $385 of this total so have $1215 remaining in this fund. Marsha Farrow told us that a letter had been sent out to all six of the agencies in Georgia who serve the older blind through Project Independence. VISTAS, in Athens, used $185 of the $200 that was allotted to them. Vision Rehab Services in Smyrna used their $200 for devices for four people. The treasurer’s report will be filed for audit.

Finance Report, Jerrie Toney:

Jerry Toney stated that our conference and convention made $1634.64 profit. This came from fundraisers and donations. Jerrie Toney mentioned that the committee thinks we no longer need the $1000 we had set aside for the conference and convention, since we now have more than that amount that we raised at the last conference and convention. The funds for the conference and convention would now be a stand-alone fund. A motion was made by Alice Ritchhart and seconded by Fred McDade that we let the convention fund stand on its own and take it out of the main GCB budget. The motion passed unanimously.

Convention Report, Dianne Roberts:

Diane Roberts stated that the dates available for the 2018 convention in Gainesville, Georgia are April 26-29, 2018; May 3-6, 2018; or May 17-20, 2018. It will be $90 per night for the hotel if we guarantee 30 rooms. Alice Ritchhart thought that it is written in the constitution that every even year is a full, three-day conference and convention. She believed it was written that way because we have elections on even numbered years. Because 2018 is an even numbered year then the next conference and convention will be a long one. Alice Ritchhart made a motion and it was second by Marsha Farrow stating that we have the conference and convention the first weekend in May. After some discussion the motion passed unanimously. Judy Presley has already contacted a local music group to present a program. We will have more down time than we did during the previous conference and convention. Phil Jones would like for us to check into the cost of streaming our next conference and convention over ACB radio. Deborah Lovell thanked the Hall County chapter for the great job they did with the short amount of time to prepare the recent conference and convention. Fred McDade commented about how well the volunteers did to help during the conference. Dianne Roberts reminded us that Mary Woodyard and Judy Presley found the volunteers for us.

Fundraising, Valerie Hester:

Valarie Hester and Alice Ritchhart only had two people show up for their last conference call meeting. They do not feel the need for a committee until more people are involved with fundraising. They have fundraising ideas but they need multiple members to participate. Dianne Roberts, Jamaica Miller, Jerrie Toney and Steve Longmire volunteered to serve on this committee. Marj Schneider had also given Keith Morris a name previously and he still needs to contact that person. Marsha Farrow shared with us that some funds have been raised for GCB so far in 2017. The Monthly Monetary support, MMS: $198. Hall County did Belk Charity days, $192.Alice did Split the Pot at a previous meeting, $34.

Technology, Steve Longmire:

Steve Longmire stated that we now have a Bluetooth speaker for GCB to provide more audio clarity when people call into meetings. He wants to get GCB represented in more social media such as streaming on the website. He will be holding a meeting soon for anybody who wants to give feedback about this project.

Status of the Columbus chapter:

Alice Ritchhart called cliff Jones and found out that after they paid their membership dues they lost a couple of members. The president, Dirk Jones, has moved into a nursing home in Albany. Cliff Jones felt that with just three members left they did not have a way to find the required number of five members to be an affiliate. They will become at-large members.

Scholarship, Debbie Williams:

Debbie Williams gave her report via the phone. Debbie thanked the members of her committee for assisting her. The student who will receive a $1000 scholarship this year is Michael Brown who is from Pearson, Georgia. He is attending the Abraham Baldwin Agriculture College to get his Associate’s degree and then will transfer to Florida State to obtain a Bachelor’s degree in education and a Master’s in Visual Impairment and Orientation and Mobility.

Leadership Scholarship, Betsy Grenevitch:

Betsy Grenevitch and Marsha Farrow brought up the topic of the Leadership scholarship. The Scholarship committee had been tasked with putting together guidelines for this scholarship. Debbie Williams and Betsy Grenevitch would prefer that President Keith Morris appoint a committee to work on these guidelines. Marsha Farrow explained that the purpose for the Leadership scholarship is to develop future leaders for GCB. The motion was passed at a previous meeting to use some of the scholarship funds for this purpose. Alice Ritchhart, Marj Schneider and Betsy Grenevitch volunteered to be on this committee. There was some discussion about how to make scholarship candidates accountable in reporting to GCB about their progress. It was stressed that this information needs to be part of the application process as well as reiterated at the time they receive their check.

Liability Insurance, Marsha Farrow:

Marsha Farrow recommended that the president, other key people who have a general understanding of insurance, and herself meet with Mr. Kerry Stevens in Athens at his office to get an understanding of what this insurance would entail. Jerrie Toney says she has the phone number of the person Vashaun Jones recommended we contact about liability insurance. Marsha Farrow recommended that we included our parliamentarian in this meeting if he is willing to attend. Dianne Roberts made a motion to amend a previous motion that was passed at the April 29, 2017 membership meeting. Her motion was to change the amount of the increase of the membership dues from $3 per person down to $1 per person for 2018. This would mean that instead of the current $12 per person that goes to GCB, the amount would be $13 per person, rather than the $15 that had been decided on by members at the annual business meeting. Ron Burgess seconded the motion. After much discussion the motion failed. We resumed our discussion about the liability insurance. Marsha Farrow said she would be contacting the company that Jerrie Toney knows about. Alice Ritchhart made a motion and it was seconded by Betsy Grenevitch that the president, treasurer, parliamentarian and the finance chair attend the meeting in Athens. Roderick explained that the president should appoint the members of the committee and that the motion just needs to state that President Keith Morris would appoint a committee for this purpose. Alice Ritchhart restated the motion and it was seconded by Jerrie toney, “that there be this committee and you four are it.” The motion passed unanimously. President Keith Morris appointed the following people to the committee: Keith Morris, President; Marsha Farrow, Treasurer; Jerrie Toney, Finance chair; and Roderick Parker, parliamentarian.

Website Guidelines, Steve Longmire:

Steve Longmire and Jerrie Toney have been discussing making modifications to the website and putting out guidelines, but the guidelines have not been written yet. Marsha Farrow recommended that Steve and Jerrie get some folks at the national level to look at our website because she feels they would be a great asset. Steve Longmire said he would contact someone on the national level.

Nominating committee, Keith Morris:

Keith Morris has appointed Deborah Lovell as chair of the nominating committee. He will appoint other members on this committee in the near future. He asked anyone who wants to run for office to let Deborah know.

Location of Next board meeting, Betsy Grenevitch:

Bets Grenevitch made a motion that we start holding the majority of our board meetings, if not all except for the one at the conference, on the phone to prevent the kinds of delays we experienced today and at other meetings. Deborah Lovell seconded the motion. After some discussion the motion failed.

Announcements:

Deborah Lovell announced the Tech Seminar on September 30, 2017 being put on by the Augusta chapter. There will be information on our website. There is a $15 charge which includes lunch. It will be focusing on IOS and voiceover.

Leadership and Legislation,

Alice Ritchhart:

Alice Ritchhart emphasized that if GCB is going to continue to exist we have got to get more people involved. She has put together the list of legislators that represent the districts that our respective chapters include. She explained that you can email your representatives from the main Georgia legislature’s website. She assigned each of us to introduce ourselves to our representatives, invite them to a chapter meeting, teach them about GCB and what we do, teach them about blindness, and later on at Christmas send them a Christmas card. Make an appointment when they are out of session and talk to them about your concerns. You can also invite them to the October board meeting so we can possibly talk to them. In future sessions Alice will teach us how to write letters to our legislators and do some role playing concerning how to interact with our representatives for the short amount of time we are given to meet with them.

Lions Camp and Pool Update, Marsha Farrow:

Marsha Farrow is now the at-large member for District L for the camp board. Criminal background checks now have to be done for all volunteers at the camp. There have been a lot of donations given toward the repair costs for the pool and the work has been done. Lions Club International foundation has given the camp around $20 thousand toward the repair of the pool. There will be a Christmas camp and the fee is around $150 for someone to attend the camp.

Older Blind Program, Marsha Farrow:

Marsha Farrow stated that we have a little over $1200 in the Older Blind fund. We are asking those who know of blind individuals over age 55 with unmet needs to contact the Older Blind committee for assistance. Alice Ritchhart suggested that this fund could also be used to send these individuals to Christmas camp. Since only two of the six agencies responded to this committee saying they needed assistance obtaining items for these individuals, the committee wants the flexibility to use the funds creatively, such as providing items with our GCB logo on them. Alice Ritchhart made a motion that we use some of the Older Blind funds to purchase signature guides, 20/20 pens, bold-lined paper, canes, or to pay Lions Camp attendance fee. The committee will take recommendations for people from your chapters who are 55 and older. We would spend up to $200 per individual. The motion was seconded by Jerrie toney. The motion passed unanimously.

Next board meeting, Steve Longmire:

Steve Longmire has spoken with someone at the Decatur recreation Center about holding a board meeting there. It would cost $120 to meet there. You have to pay a $100 deposit before your meeting, but will receive it back after the event. Dianne Roberts suggested that we contact other Lions Clubs to see if we could meet in their locations for our future board meetings. Dianne Roberts made a motion that if the Centerville Lions Club house is available that we come back here for the October meeting and if not the alternate is the Decatur Recreation Center. Alice Ritchhart seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

50/50 Raffle, Marsha Farrow:

Marsha Farrow won this raffle and she donated the $15 back to GCB.

Adjourned, Phil Jones:

Philip Jones moved that we adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 1:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted by

Betsy Grenevitch, Secretary

Georgia Council of the Blind Board Meeting Minutes

Centerville Lions Clubhouse

 612 North Houston Lake Boulevard

 Centerville GA 31028

Saturday, October 21, 2017

Call to Order:

Keith Morris called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM. Keith Morris thanked the Centerville Lions Club for allowing us to meet in their building. Keith Morris e gave Invocation:

The invocation was given by Fred McDade.

Roll Call:

Those present were: Keith Morris, president; Phil Jones, First vice-president; Fred McDade, Second Vice-president, by phone; Marsha Farrow, Treasurer; Betsy Grenevitch, Secretary; Alice Ritchhart, member-at-large representative, by phone; Jerrie Toney, Athens chapter; Jamaica Miller, Athens chapter; Deborah Lovell, Augusta chapter; Cecily Nipper, East Georgia chapter, by phone; Dianne Roberts, Hall County chapter; Judy Presley, Hall County chapter, by phone; Ron Burgess, Northwest chapter, by phone; Amanda Wilson, Rome-Floyd chapter, by phone; Marj Schneider, Savannah chapter, by phone; Rita Harris, GGDU, by phone; Steve Longmire, south Atlanta,, by phone; Roderick Parker, Parliamentarian, by phone. Other members present were Bob Farrow, Harvey Roberts, DJ McIntyre, Todd Turansky, Alicia Morris, Kathy Morris, and Evan Bradford

President’s Report, Keith Morris:

Keith Morris has a nominating committee set up which includes Deborah Lovell, Amanda Wilson, and Judy Presley.

Secretary’s Report, Betsy Grenevitch:

Betsy Grenevitch asked that the minutes be approved as they were sent out. Deborah Lovell made the motion and it was seconded by
Fred McDade. The motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report, Marsha Farrow:

Marsha Farrow gave us the following bank account totals. These totals are as of October 18, 2017. GCB main account: $3072.6, but $1215 of this total is the line item for the older blind device fund. The actual amount for GCB operating expense funds available is $2687.62. Al and Cora Camp account: $3151.18. These funds come from the way investment account. Money market account: $5741.14. Evan Barnard CD: $901.52. This includes $.33 interest. Long-term investment: $17,775.17. This includes year-to-date interest of $261.18. Way Financial Portfolio: As of September 30, 2017, $66,888.87. This account is from Robert Willis and other blinded veterans which we received from the Atlanta chapter when it closed. This account feeds our scholarship account. The treasurer’s report will be filed for audit.

Liability Insurance, Marsha Farrow:

The cost for having a million dollar coverage for our board officers and directors is $892. When we hold conferences or other events and if we think we need coverage we would go onto their website and input some details about the event. It will cost about $300 to cover each event.

Convention Report, Dianne Roberts:

The convention committee has had one meeting. They will have their second meeting on Tuesday, October 24, 2017. The rooms have already been set aside at the Ramada Inn, Gainesville for 2018. The conference and convention will take place on May 3-6, 2018. It is a full conference and convention this year. This will be an election year for GCB. Judy Presley has already arranged to have a locally known bluegrass band to come and does a benefit concert for us as a fundraiser. We are still working out the details as to the exact schedule and whether we will have a buffet lunch or a banquet. Jamaica Miller wanted to know if we were going to vote on our theme suggestions today and Dianne Roberts said that she only received one theme suggestion at this time. The theme was submitted from the Athens chapter by Jamaica Miller and Evan Bradford. The theme suggestion they submitted was “Sharing and Teaching our common Vision in Friendship”. Several people never received the email, so it was decided to extend the deadline and send out the email again. Alice Ritchhart wanted to know when the information would be sent out that contains the hotel information so people can reserve their rooms. Dianne Roberts said that it would most likely be sent out next week. Phil Jones suggested that we stick to the original agenda once it is sent out for the conference and convention.

GCB Digest Report, Amanda Wilson:

 Amanda Wilson told us that the Digest had been sent out. Deborah Lovell asked if the email version of the Digest could be formatted differently so you could find the beginning of each article. Amanda Wilson said that she does not know how to do headings, but if someone could help her to let her know. Cecily Nipper thanked Amanda Wilson for doing a wonderful job with the Digest. She also wanted to know if each chapter was to share something for each Digest and Amanda told her yes. Marj Schneider thanked Amanda Wilson for continuing as an editor for the Digest. She told Amanda that she appreciated her reminders for the chapters to send quarterly submissions for the Digest. Marj Schneider also suggested that Amanda contact Sharon Lovering at the ACB office to find out how she formats the E-Forum. Deborah Lovell thanked Amanda Wilson for the hard work on the digest.

Finance Report, Jerrie Toney:

The finance committee met on October 9, 2017, to go over the updated budget report. If anyone wants to help prepare the budget for 2018 please let her know. Jerrie Toney is willing to share her spreadsheets with anyone who wants to see them. During the finance meeting Marsha Farrow let us know that she had received a message from Maxi Aids requesting our logo to be put on the items for the older blind program. Betsy Grenevitch questioned why the membership amount was so much compared to how much we actually sent to national. Marsha Farrow has the MMS program set up so that it will be direct deposited. In December we will be working on the budget for 2018. Alice Ritchhart wanted to know if we pay our parliamentarian’s expenses for the conference and convention as well as for board meetings. Jerrie Toney explained that all of these expenses are in his dollar amount. They are on her spreadsheet but not on the budget. Alice Ritchhart felt the budget should also state that the expenses included the conference and convention fees.

Fundraising, Alice Ritchhart:

Alice Ritchhart and Valerie Hester have not had a fundraising meeting. They are recommending that each chapter do fundraising in their local areas and a portion would go to the state. Marsha Farrow told us that we received our first check last week from Kroger for $26.65. Steve Longmire suggested that we sign up for the Amazon Smile program. He will help us get signed up for that program. He also mentioned that one of his clients, Buhter Up, will do fundraisers for an organization by having a table at their event and giving an agreed upon portion of the proceeds to the organization.

Georgia Guide Dog Users, GGDU, Rita Harris:

Rita Harris talked about a press conference at the Atlanta airport that took place on August 24, 2017 attended by several GGDU members. The event concerned the recognition of the completion of the final relief area inside the airport. Those who attended were Rita Harris, Judy Presley, Betsy Grenevitch, Dottie Langham, and Marsha Farrow. Rita Harris participated in the filming of the Atlanta Airport media commercial. This commercial was released on Wednesday, October 25, 2017. Rita is now serving on the Airport Aviation committee. They had a meeting on Friday, October 20, 2017. She will share the information given out at this meeting. Rita will be participating in an airport Safety event as well. They will be helping airport personnel learn about how to assist those traveling with disabilities. This event took place on Monday, October 23, 2017. She will go back to the airport on October 25 for the airing of the commercial.

Leadership Scholarship, Marj Schneider:

They have not met as a committee yet, but will be having a meeting soon. The other committee members are Betsy Grenevitch, Alice Ritchhart and Fred McDade. The committee has the document that Betsy Grenevitch began to prepare, but will need to discuss what we would be offering to people regarding leadership training possibilities. They also need to decide when during the course of the year they would offer such a scholarship. Marj Schneider will work on this document and then ask for committee input on the document. They will have something to present to the board at the next meeting. There could also be a first-timer scholarship option to attend a GCB conference and convention for a first time attendee. This seems to be separate from a leadership scholarship. Marj Schneider asked how we should handle this possibility and if we can even offer such a scholarship. Marsha Farrow felt we could utilize our investment portfolio to do some of these things. Jerrie Toney noted that we do have money in our conference and convention account for the first-timer scholarship. There was some discussion about the first-timer scholarship. Marj Schneider explained that most likely it would go to someone who is showing potential for taking on leadership. Roderick Parker said that a person receiving a leadership scholarship would be someone who was already active in the organization but just needs more training. A first-timer scholarship would be someone newly blind, new to a chapter, and still trying to figure out their way. They may not have had an opportunity to show their leadership skills yet.

Liability Insurance, Marsha Farrow:

This subject came up again. The committee had suggested that we take out a million dollar policy on the officers and board members of GCB and also have coverage for the conference and convention. Deborah Lovell wanted to know if this rate is guaranteed for a number of years and Marsha Farrow said no. Alice Ritchhart suggested that a new dues notice go out explaining the increase in the amount for dues and why. Dianne Roberts wanted to confirm that this insurance was for state officers and board directors only and Marsha Farrow said yes. Marsha explained that if a chapter is doing an event that they may want to get an event policy.

Membership, Amanda Wilson:

We now have 185 members because we gained a scholarship recipient member. Every chapter now has a Facebook page and a page on our website. Some chapters need to update their information. If you need help updating your page please contact Amanda Wilson, Steve Longmire, or Jerrie toney. Amanda Wilson is trying to start a chapter in Cartersville once they have five members.

Technology, Steve Longmire:

 At their committee meeting they talked about improvements on the website. They need someone to maintain their Facebook page. Teresa Brenner talked about getting a printable copy of the GCB brochure on the website and a format that could be read by people browsing the site. Jamaica Miller brought up the idea of signing up for the convention on the website. Their next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 2, 2017. Anyone can call in and participate.

Older Blind Fund, Marsha Farrow:

Those on the committee who attended their meeting were robin Oliver, Teresa Brenner, Jerrie Toney and Marsha Farrow. Other members have also given input. They currently have some things at the printer. They are going to have a packet that contains a bold line pad, a bold line pen and a signature guide. All of these items will have the GCB logo, web address, and phone number on them. At least ten of these packets will go to each chapter plus extra signature guides. These are to be given to newly visually impaired individuals or individuals who are not already connected with our organization. These packets are going to cost around $800. This includes 100 notepads, 155 pens, and 500 signature guides. Maxi Aids will be the provider.

They have already met the needs of six blind individuals, four in north Georgia and two in the Athens area. If you know of a person who would be interested in attending the Lions camp at Christmas who needs to be sponsored, the committee can offer a sponsorship through this fund. Please let a committee member know. Alice Ritchhart reminded Marsha Farrow that a sponsored attendee would need to be 55 and older. The committee is also working with Lions clubs to get people sponsored. There is $200 in the account for this fund.

Transportation, Alice Ritchhart:

The ACB transportation committee had a seminar concerning roundabouts. Janet Barlow was the speaker. It was very informative.

**Miscellaneous Topics:**

Dianne Roberts wanted to know if anything was developing with the Macon chapter. Alice Ritchhart said that she did not know anything about the status except that Dawn McAllister was still interested in starting a chapter. Marj Schneider asked Deborah Lovell for an update about the IOS workshop. She said there was interest in doing such a workshop in Savannah. Deborah Lovell said that it went very well. They had 25 participants. The people teaching the classes had a background working with people who are blind and visually impaired using voice over. They are discussing doing another one in the future. They hope to make it an annual event for the chapter.

Sending Information to GARRS: Alice Ritchhart mentioned that Phil Jones, at the membership committee meeting, had suggested that chapters should send their meeting information to Garrs. They need to send GARRS the time, date, and the location of the meeting.

You can send the announcements to Jane Boynton via email at jboynton@garrs.org

Phone: 800-672-6173. Or their mailing address is Georgia Radio Reading Services, 260 14th Street, NW, Atlanta, Georgia 30318. Phil Jones also mentioned contacting Infolink at The Center for the Visually Impaired. Jerrie Toney, Glass: The next meeting of the advisory committee will be held on December 4, 2017, at 11:00 AM at the main library in Atlanta. They will be voting on some changes to the Bylaws and also receive a report. She will bring this report back to GCB. They will also be voting for officers. There will be lunch after the meeting. Anyone who wants to join the GLASS advisory board is welcome. They are always taking applications. Alice Ritchhart wanted to know if members of the board were only from the Atlanta area or from around the state and Jerrie toney said that they were from all around the state. Georgia Blind Lions and ACB Lions, Marsha Farrow: ACB Lions has a monthly meeting on the first Thursday evening of the month at 9:00 PM. The Georgia Blind Lions are meeting on Sunday afternoons at 4:00 PM. For the exact date you may contact Jerrie Toney or Marsha Farrow.

Lions Camp, Marsha Farrow: Marsha Farrow is on the board of the Lions camp for District L. There will be a Christmas camp on December 8-10, 2017. The cost which includes transportation if it is needed is $175 for the weekend. If you do not need transportation the cost is $100. The board is working on different ways to use the camp such as for blinded veterans. They are looking for ways to reach out for blinder and visually impaired people including children, families, and newly blind individuals who want to bring their spouse or support person. Garrick Scott developed a program in conjunction with the Lions called Roar to soar for meeting the needs of young individuals transitioning from high school to college. It is still a work in progress. Paul Raymond, Denine Woodson, and Kay McGill have been giving feedback concerning the camp and how to meet the needs of those who are blind and visually impaired.

White Cane Day, Marj Schneider:

 The Hall County chapter asked Judy Presley and bob McGarry to speak about their recent travels while using their white canes. They also encouraged their members to take their canes out with them on October 15, White Cane Day, to make the cane visible and to spark a conversation. In the past, the Savannah chapter has done a White Cane Day march and more recently smaller activities for White Cane Day. They could not plan anything in September because of the hurricane. They decided to do a repeat of having members go downtown and take their flyers with them to hand out to people while engaging in conversations with them. They had interest expressed from the local NNFB chapter in Savannah to participate as well. They also asked the Savannah Blind and Low Vision Center to participate with them. No one from the NFB or the Center showed up to assist with the event. This event took place on Monday, October 16, 2017. There were three from the Savannah chapter who participated. They made copies of the GCB brochure and plan on using them at future events. They are discussing the possibility of doing an event that would include a picnic and a walk around the lake in a local park. On White Cane Day they also talk about safety. They hand out a flyer that quotes from the Georgia law and talks about penalties to drivers who run us over.

Roderick Parker told us that the new president of NFB in Georgia seems to want to collaborate more with other organizations. He suggested that we contact him when we are doing activities in the community.

Marj Schneider suggested that the other chapters do something out in the community for White Cane Day and be visible to the public.

PA system, Marj Schneider: Marj Schneider is planning a conference in November. They bought a basic system that costs $200. It comes with a speaker that rolls like a suitcase. You can use either wired or wireless microphones with it. It is current technology. They had to buy the microphone stand and something to put the speaker above the ground so it came to about $330. GCB might want to consider purchasing this equipment from her after the conference. If they make enough money on their conference she could offer this equipment to GCB at very little cost. She will let us know after mid-November what the possibilities might be. This equipment also has a blue tooth device that can be purchased which allows two Bluetooth microphones to be used at the same time. This device would cost $150 to purchase.

Announcements:

Amanda Wilson reminded the chapters to send their rosters to Betsy Grenevitch. They are to be sent in by November 15. They have to be into the national office by April 30. Alice Ritchhart requested than an email go out stating the amount of dues, the reason for the increase in dues, and also the deadline for sending in the roster.

Location of next board meeting:

Deborah Lovell suggested that the next board meeting be held in Augusta in January in honor of Keith Morris’s last meeting as president. Deborah Lovell made a motion to meet in Augusta for a January board meeting. The motion was seconded by Jerrie toney. Marsha Farrow asked for an amendment to have a phone meeting if there is inclement weather. Deborah Lovell accepted the amendment. The board meeting would be on January 20, 2018. The location in Augusta will be announced. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn:

We adjourned at 12:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Betsy Grenevitch

GCB Secretary

**GCB Update from Thomas Woodyard**

Tommy Woodyard reported that his fall Classes were very exciting. He took classes in his major. They include International Affairs. His four classes were Introduction to International Relations, Introduction to Comparative Politics, Introduction to Anthropology and Elementary Psychology. Although Psychology was his least favorite class, he did find one part really interesting and that was the Infant Development section. Because his vision impairment is a result of premature birth, it was intriguing to learn more about the development stages and how the growth of the fetus affects development. For his International Affairs major, he has decided to specialize in Comparative Politics with a sub specialization in Community which will give him an overview for some of the skills that he feel will help him in his long term goal of Law School. Tommy had an amazing fall semester and enjoyed going to the football games. Go Dawgs! Tommy had an opportunity to participate in Disability Resource Center Speaker’s Bureau Events where students with disabilities speak to different classes about access issues on campus. Tommy successfully advocated for both a talking crosswalk and another disability parking place in his residence hall parking lot. He continues to represent his hall on the UGA Community Council. He continues to volunteer at his church, Browns Bridge Community Church, in the elementary room doing technical work. Tommy was chosen as a Safety Dawg Emergency Preparedness Ambassador and also as a Study Abroad Ambassador. All in all, it was an amazing semester. Spring classes started January 4, 2018, and he is excited to learn more this semester!

**GCB Chapter News**

**Athens Chapter**

The Athens chapter held their Christmas luncheon on Saturday, December 2, 2017, at 11:00 am. The holiday luncheon was held at the Blind Pig Restaurant which is located at 312 East Washington Street in Athens, Georgia 30601. The Athens Chapter reports that they have gained three new members. We are excited about our activities in 2018. We hope to schedule a speaker who is a nutritionist, have a speaker from GLASS, and have a Georgia professor come speak at our upcoming meetings. The Athens chapter wants to wish everyone a Happy New Year and a successful conference-convention in Gainesville, Georgia. The Athens chapter officers are Jerrie Toney, president; Jamie Teal, first vice-president; Earnest Bowles-Dean, second vice-president; Evan Bradford, secretary; Robin Oliver treasurer. Their 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.

**Augusta Chapter**

The Augusta chapter reported that they held their Christmas party meeting on Saturday, December 16, 2017.The Augusta chapter officers are Deborah Lovell, president; Stanley Lopez, vice-president; Ron Worley Secretary; Kathy Morris treasurer. The Augusta chapter meetings are held at the Friedman Branch Library which is located at 1447 Jackson Road, in Augusta, Georgia, on the second Saturday at 1:00. For more information about the Augusta chapter, please contact Deborah Lovell at 706-726-4054, or via email at lovell.d2000@gmail.com.

**East GA Chapter**

The East Georgia chapter reported that they held their Christmas party meeting on Saturday, December 9 at 10:00 am. The meeting was held at 2160 Church Street in Covington, Georgia 30014. They had fried chicken and side dishes for their mail. They are bringing wrapped ornaments to exchange in a game called "steal". They collected new unwrapped toys to give to “Toys for Tots.” The East Georgia chapter reported that they are going to celebrate Louis Braille’s birthday month in January. Anybody who wants to learn a little more about braille is welcome to attend. Mr. Edward Johnson, a member at large is now a member of The East Georgia Chapter. Mrs. Cecily Nipper Has recently joined our Chapter. As all of you may know, she is Cecily Nippers mother. Mrs. Nipper has been a vital part of our chapter for quite some time assisting wherever and whenever she is needed. We are elated to welcome Mrs. Cecily Nipper Sr. and Mr. Ed Johnson. Both of these new chapter members bring much experience and expertise to The East Georgia Chapter. Christine and Jesse Obrien came back to visit our chapter. They are former East Georgia Chapter members, who have relocated to Florida. It was quite a joyous occasion to share special time and warm friendship with our beloved couple. Jesse brought Christine to visit with us as one of her anniversary gifts. Mr. Rudy Jones has become a volunteer to aid The East Georgia Chapter in our Transportation department. We welcome Rudy on board. He is a Covington Lions Club member. We sincerely appreciate your assistance, Rudy. The East Georgia chapter officers are Cecily Nipper, President; Ann Wheeler, First vice-president; Phil Jones, Second vice-president; Linda Williams, Secretary; Linda Cox, Treasurer; Elsie Aguilar, Brenda Maddox, and Rosetta Brown, Board Members. The East Georgia Chapter meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month at 10:00 AM. The East Georgia chapter meetings are held at the Covington First United Methodist Church which is located at 1113 Conyers Street in Covington, Georgia. For more information about the East Georgia chapter, please contact Cecily Nipper at 770-786-1551, or via email at roses828@comcast.net.

**Greater Hall Chapter**

The Greater Hall County Chapter reported that they have had an active fall schedule. We welcomed returning members Janet Hutts and Mike Hall and new member Jeri Brinkman. Sadly, we lost longtime member, Mrs. Evelyn Rudy on October 6 after a long illness. Jane Free, Harvey and Dianne Roberts participated for their first time in the Belk Charity Day Event on November 4. They served at the Gainesville store. Our November meeting was on Veterans Day, November 11. We commemorated this special day and recognized our Member-Veterans. We voted to keep the same officers and board members for 2018. Member, Jeremy Adams, presented a good technology demonstration of the assistive voting device for use by vision- and print-impaired voters. Jeremy also demonstrated the accessible features and functions of the Apple iphone. In December, we partnered with the Gainesville Lions Club for our Christmas party on Saturday, December 9, 2017. The weather was bad, but the party was great. We collected and donated new children’s toys to the Chattahoochee Baptist Association’s Secret Santa ministry. At the January meeting, they voted on the 2018 GCB Conference and Convention Theme. We are looking forward to the spring conference which will be held in Gainesville May 3-6. The Greater Hall County 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. Their meetings are held at the Smokey Springs Retirement Residence at 940 South Enota Drive in Gainesville, Georgia, on the second Saturday at 10:00. For more information about the Greater Hall County chapter, please contact Diane Roberts at 770-932-1112, or via email at harveyroberts2@att.net.

**Northwest Georgia Chapter**

The Northwest Georgia Chapter held their Christmas Party on Tuesday, December 5, 2017 at 2pm, at the Dari Dip which is located at 302 West Villanow Street, in Lafayette, Georgia. The Northwest chapter officers are Ron Burgess, president; Fred McDade, vice-president; Charles Stubblefield secretary-treasurer; Robert Sprayberry, Chaplain. Chapter meetings are held on the first Tuesday at the Bank of Lafayette Community room, which is located at 104 North Main Street in Lafayette, Georgia at 2:00 pm. For more information about the Northwest chapter please contact Ron Burgess at 706-638-1132.

**Rome Floyd Chapter**

The Rome Floyd County Chapter of the Georgia Council of the Blind had its Christmas luncheon on Tuesday, December 19, 2017, at 11:00 am. The meeting was held at the Rome Floyd County Library which is located at 205 Riverside Parkway in Rome, Georgia. We had chicken and dressing and side dishes. George Barton will be playing Christmas carols for us. The Floyd County chapter officers are Marsha Farrow as president; Carolyn Dillard, vice-president; Suzanne Jackson, treasurer; Martha Craig, Chaplain. Their meetings are held at the Rome Floyd County Library at 205 Riverside Parkway, in Rome, Georgia, on the third Tuesday, at 11:00 am. For further information about the Rome Floyd County Chapter, please contact Marsha Farrow at 706-859-2624, or via email at marshafarrow@windstream.net.

**Savannah Chapter**

The Savannah chapter reported that they have held their first meeting on Thursday, January 4, 2018. They met by conference call because this week has brought an unprecedented number of below freezing days, with inches of snow falling on Wednesday January 3, 2018. Even two days later it has not melted and roads are still icy and dangerous. During our conference call meeting they discussed plans for the year and members were agreed that building our membership needs to be a priority in the coming months. They discussed a number of good ideas, including printing a chapter business card that members could carry with them to hand out, and speakers we might invite to meetings that might attract new attendees. They discussed ideas for doing both fundraising and public education by having a booth at community events where we could share information and sell some sort of item that people would want to buy. These could be opportunities to hand out our GCB brochure, as well as promote our Savannah chapter. At their holiday party in December they collected funds to donate to a project for hurricane relief in Puerto Rico. After hurricane Maria, local pastors Frank and Carla Ruiz began a campaign to collect non-perishable food and personal items they knew people needed in those areas of Puerto Rico where their congregation members had friends and family. In early December eight church members made a mission trip to the island and three large containers of supplies were shipped there as well. By the time SCB members learned of this project, most of the supplies had already been collected, but the shipping cost came to $20,000. We decided our contributions could help a little with paying that shipping cost. We knew our funds would be spent to very directly help people in need. They raised $365 in donations from SCB chapter members and friends at our holiday party and this will be matched by $300 from their chapter, for a total gift of $665. Some of us will be attending a service on January 14 at the church where Frank and Carla serve as pastors and presenting their donation to them and to the congregation. We want to demonstrate that as blind people we can give back to the larger community, and surely those needed supplies that went to Puerto Rico benefited blind and disabled people in the communities where they were distributed. The Savannah Chapter officers are Marj Schneider, president; Bob Walls, vice-president; Teresa Brenner, secretary; Jon Bairnsfather, treasurer. Their board members are Jan Elders and John McMillon. Their meetings are held at the conference room at J. C. Lewis Ford, which is located on 9505 Abercorn Street in Savannah, Georgia. They are still meeting on the first Thursday of every month at 6:00 pm. For more information about the Savannah chapter, please contact Marj Schneider at 912-352-1415, or via email at marjschneider@bellsouth.net.

**South Atlanta Chapter**

The South Atlanta chapter held their Christmas party on Thursday, December 14TH, 2017 FROM 3:30 pm until 6:30 pm. The party will be held at the Piccadilly Cafeteria which is located at 1715 Howell Road in Atlanta, Georgia 30318. The South Metro Atlanta chapter officers are Lisa Jones, president; Brent Reynolds, vice-President; Chris Baldridge, secretary; Steve Longmire, treasurer. The South Metro chapter meetings are held at the Piccadilly Cafeteria, which is located at 1715 Howell Mill Road in Atlanta, Georgia, on the second Thursday from 4:00 until 6:00 pm. For more information about the South Metro Atlanta chapter, please contact Lisa Jones at 404-556-8987.

**Georgia Guide Dogs Users, GGDU News:**

The Georgia Guide Dog Users group is planning on having a lunch meeting during the upcoming Georgia council of the Blind state conference and convention on Friday, May 4, 2018. This is an election year for officers of Georgia Guide Dog Users. More details about this meeting will be coming soon. We hope to see many of you who either have a guide dog or are thinking about getting one attend this meeting. We hope to build our membership up once again. I would like to thank Marj Schneider for taking on the task up putting together, with contributions from our members, a mini newsletter entitled “Tail Waggin’ Briefs”. It will allow us to communicate with our membership more often. Until our elections our current 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. You can visit their web site by going to [www.georgiaguidedogusers.org](http://www.georgiaguidedogusers.org).

**GCB In Memory of:**

Evelyn Rudy

Mrs. Evelyn Rudy was born on October 7, 1925 and passed away on October 6, 2017. She was the daughter of Ernestina and Leopoldo Ottaviano. Born, raised, married and started her married and family life in Brooklyn, NY before moving to Wayne, NJ in 1960. In 1993 she moved to Boca Raton, FL, and then moved to Gainesville, GA in 2011. Her working career started with Dunn & Bradstreet as a Secretary to a Regional Manager. After her children graduated college she earned her Associates Business Degree from Fairleigh Dickerson University while working as an Office Manager and Executive Administrative Assistant to the Regional Manager for the Bailey Controls Division of Babcock & Wilcox Engineering Company. Losing most of her eyesight to macular degeneration, she had to give up her working career. After retiring to FL she became a Board Member for the Lighthouse for the Blind and served as the Vice President and Secretary for the National Federation of the Blind for Palm Beach Regional Chapter. She is predeceased by her first husband of 29 years, Dominick Farruggio, and second husband of 15 years, James Rudy. She is survived by her children, Elizabeth Ferayorni (Dr. Julian) of GA, Stephen Farruggio (Dorothy) of NJ and Linda Shubert (Edward) of GA; seven grandchildren and eight (plus 1 on the way) great grandchildren. Final resting place is with Dominick at Maryrest Cemetery in New Jersey. In lieu of flowers the family asks that donations be made to Samaritan’s Purse ([www.samaritanspurse.org](http://www.samaritanspurse.org/)), Salvation Army ([www.give.salvationarmyusa.org](http://www.give.salvationarmyusa.org/)), or St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital ([www.stjude.org](http://www.stjude.org/)).

Brandy Jones

Mrs. Brandel Lene Ricketts Jones, age 68, of Oakwood, passed away Thursday, November 23, 2017. Brandel was born in Lumpkin County on April 1, 1949 to the late Leon and Ella Ricketts. She was also preceded in death by her brother-in-law Carl W. Jarrard.  Brandel received her Bachelor's degree from North Georgia College and her Master's degree from the University of South Carolina. She pursued a career in Vocational Rehabilitation and Training for the Visually Impaired and Vocationally Challenged. Brandel loved family, flowers and animals.  She was a member of Siloam Baptist Church. Survivors include her sister and brother-in-law Patricia and Roger Brady, Clermont; sister Era Jarrard, Dahlonega; brother and sister-in-law Denver and Dorene Ricketts, Stanton, MI; brother Norman Ricketts, Dahlonega; nephews and nieces, Matt Jarrard, Atlanta; Denny Ricketts, Dawsonville; Lisa Williams, Colorado Springs, CO; Shanda Reichert, Blanchard, MI; Kelly Ricketts, Murrayville; Kimberly Smith, Gainesville; great nieces and nephews and other family and friends. Funeral services were held on Sunday, November 26, 2017 at 2:00 pm, at the Banister Funeral Home Chapel. The Rev. Lyman Caldwell and the Rev. Tony Allison officiated.  Interment followed at Siloam Baptist Church Cemetery.  The family received friends on Saturday November 25, 2017, from 4:00 pm until 9:00 pm, at the Banister Funeral Home.

Jim Parham

Jim Parham, age 71, was born on August 8, 1946 and passed away on Sunday, November 19, 2017. His sservice was held on Tuesday, November 21, 2017, at 2:00 pm, at the Dublin Church of God with burial to follow in Northview Cemetery. Visitation was held at the Dublin Church of God from 2:00 pm until 3:00pm. The Dublin Church of God is located at 2059 Claxton Dairy Road in Dublin, GA 31021.

Virginia Harris of Bainbridge, Georgia, passed away on Tuesday, November 21, 2017.

Gerald Hancock of Athens, Georgia, passed away in November of 2017

**GCB Conference and Convention Announcement**

You are invited to attend the Georgia Council of the Blind Conference and Convention. The GCB conference and convention will be held from Thursday, May 3, until Sunday, May 6, 2018. The GCB conference and convention will be held at the Ramada Inn Lanier Centre which is located at 400 E.E. Butler Parkway in Gainesville Georgia, 30501. The phone number is 770-531-0907. The room rate is $90 per night plus taxes. Please remember to state that you are registering for the GCB conference and convention. We are making plans for sessions and activities that will interest GCB members. Some of the activities or session includes the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services, GVRA, panel, which will allow members to ask questions to our state representatives. We remind wish to remind members that 2018 will be an election year.  Your vote is important, so please make plans to attend and vote for your next state officers.  More details will be posted on the convention page of GCB's website at [www.georgiacounciloftheblind.org.](http://www.georgiacounciloftheblind.org./) WE will have lots of vendors this year. If you know of a company or organization that you would like to meet in the Exhibit Hall, please contact Jerrie Toney at 706-461-1013, or via email at jerriemt2@gmail.com. We are looking forward to a great conference and convention. We hope to see you in Gainesville, Georgia in 2018. If you have any further question please contact Dianne Roberts, The GCB Convention Committee chairperson at 770932-1112, or via email at harveyroberts2@att.net. For more information please visit our web site by going to [www.georgiacounciloftheblind.org](http://www.georgiacounciloftheblind.org).