

The



Advocate

Spring Edition 2023

**PCB- A Peer Network for All Impacted
by Vision Loss**

PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF THE BLIND

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MISSION

To promote independence and opportunities for all people with vision impairments.

VISION

To continue to be recognized as the leading advocacy organization for people with vision impairments in Pennsylvania. The aim of all our efforts is to encourage and assist people in achieving their potential as valued members

of society. PCB assistance, advocacy, and encouragement will be carried out in such areas as, but not limited to, all aspects of accessibility, transportation, education, employment, entertainment, recreation, and quality of life.

The PCB Advocate is available in large print, braille, audio cartridge, and email. Send changes of address or format preference to the PCB office. Contents are available to the public via pcb1.org and the PCB Information Line at 773-572-6314.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Articles in this publication reflect the views of the individual writers. They do not necessarily represent the views and policy of PCB.

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**If you wish to submit articles for consideration,
submission deadlines are:**

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June 1, Summer

September 1, Fall

November 20, Winter

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You Don't Need a Compass
By Conference Planning and Program Team

It's Chris Hunsinger from the Conference Planning and Program Team with a question for you: What will you be doing from Oct. 26 to Oct. 29, 2023?

The PCB Conference Planning and Program Team hopes that you will be spending part of the time "Exploring New Pathways" virtually with us at the PCB Conference and Convention, and you won't need a compass or a GPS!

We will be following a similar time schedule as in the past several years. We expect to have some Audio Description, entertainment, and games; and, to end the weekend, our much-anticipated PCB auction.

The theme of “Exploring New Pathways” gives us endless possibilities for presentations. It is true that we don’t yet know anything about who will be presenting topics of interest, but the ideas are nearly limitless.

Did you ever think that the hearing aid business would have so many choices?

How many hobbies and what kind of recreation have you thought were not available or accessible?

What options are out there for people with low vision using magnification to help with things not computer-related?

Did you ever think that you could have an artificial Intelligence make-up assistant to help you look special without counting on a sighted friend, family member, or paid make-up artist?

Even if you are not a Social Media user, how does the buzz in social media around particular topics, particular interest groups, and breaking news affect your information quotient?

Did you ever think that we would be so close to being able to get around in unfamiliar indoor environments?

How can we teach the rest of the world about the limitations that are disappearing because of new technologies?

For those who don't choose to use a touch-screen phone, how will the button-based Smart phone improve their accessibility?

These are some of the ideas that the Conference Planning and Program Team is thinking about, but you, as peers or members of PCB teams, can help us with the theme of “Exploring New Pathways” by making proposals for the conference programming or by getting us in touch with someone you think would be an interesting presenter along these lines.

The Request for presentation cover letter is available in Appendix 1 of this publication and

the Request for Publication form is available in Appendix 2 of this publication; both will be available online. You can spread it far and wide. If you have ideas for the team to pursue, you can also submit them to presentations@pcb1.org

The deadline for submitting proposals is June 15, 2023.

Although the examples I sited are technology-based, we are not limiting our presentations to technology. Your proposal could be new cooking experiences because there are so many more appetizing and different accessible cookbooks out there than 20 years ago. IT could be “better Health through Better Living” because so much more lifestyle information is available than in the past. It could be a panel on genre fiction because there are so many more accessible books out there than we ever thought we could read.

It could be something that you always wanted to try but need a nudge to get out there and do it, like skydiving or being a tourist in a foreign country.

Registration for the Conference and Convention won't be available until later in the summer, but you can tell your friends, co-workers, and others who you think would be interested so that they can add ideas and participants to the conference.

Please join us both at the conference and in building the conference presentations by helping us along a road to “Exploring New Pathways.”

**PCB Is Looking for an Outreach and
Engagement Specialist
By Pennsylvania Council of the Blind**

The Pennsylvania Council of the Blind (PCB) is a grassroots organization of individuals with vision loss. As a peer network PCB strives to promote the independence of and opportunities for all individuals with vision loss by advocating for legislative change, accessible technology solutions, and inclusive social and business practices. At the heart of its efforts is providing mutual support through peer sharing and encouragement.

PCB currently seeks a part-time Outreach and Engagement Specialist.

The position will be an hourly position for twenty to thirty-two hours a week at a pay rate of between \$20.00 and \$23.00 an hour with availability on at least three days a week and during the annual PCB Convention and Conference.

The Outreach and Engagement Specialist will work with PCB Teams and Chapters/Affiliates, and the PCB Office to take on the following responsibilities:

- **Develop and maintain relationships with legislators, policy changemakers, service providers, and disability stakeholders (e.g., BBVS, Area agencies on aging, PABs, Cils, Educational Intermediate units and higher education facilities)**
- **Work with affiliate chapters and individual volunteers to promote advocacy efforts and to develop outreach opportunities (also, giving chapters tips on retaining those who they get to be members for the first time and assisting chapters in working with local senior communities and nursing facilities to bring awareness of and solutions for people losing vision)**
- **Monitor and report on current and potential issues of relevance to the vision loss community (as well as placing positive articles in local publications that would present a positive image of people with vision loss, using Social Media to highlight what we have accomplished or hope to accomplish, and helping PCB devise information packets or at**

least a campaign with vision loss professionals in mind like optometrists and ophthalmologists, giving their customers or clients a place to go for peer support)

- **Serve as the organization's voice at public meetings and outreach events**

Key Competencies:

- **Strong interpersonal and organizational skills**
- **Ability to initiate, prioritize, and complete projects with little oversight**
- **Ability to work with and report back to PCB leadership**
- **Good writing, oral, social media, and phone communication skills**
- **Familiarity with blindness/disability-related issues and the provision of services**
- **Competency in basic Microsoft office products and ability to effectively utilize the internet and software applications**

- **Proficiency with basic office equipment**
- **Familiarity with and results-oriented use of social media to reach groups we are not currently reaching effectively**
- **Demonstration of an overall professional work ethic and demeanor**

Background/Educational Requirements:

Bachelor's Degree in Human Services, Public Administration, community Outreach or related field

Five years of experience in corporate or non-profit setting may be substituted for education

Additional Details:

This is a Virtual position, but travel to the Harrisburg area may well be necessary once organizations use fewer virtual platforms for meetings and return to more in-person events.

Compensation will be commensurate with experience.

PCB is an equal opportunity employer.

Interested applicants should post a cover letter expressing their interest in the position as well as a resume to:

hr@pcb1.org by March 18, 2023.

Fund Development – Come browse our offerings!

By Mary Ann Grignon

Has it been a while since you've visited the Fund Development emporium? Well, grab a

virtual shopping cart and let's explore together!

Here, in aisle one, we have opportunities to win money for yourself and for your chapter with our calendar raffle. Simply grab some tickets for yourself for \$20 each or a bunch to grow your chapter's coffers. There's a chance to win every night between April 1 and September 30. The winning numbers are drawn each night from the PA state lottery, evening pick 3. Each ticket is valid throughout the six-month contest. That's right, your ticket can win as many times as the number is drawn during the contest period. If your ticket is drawn on a holiday – Easter, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Father's Day, Independence Day, or Labor Day, you'll win \$125. If your ticket is drawn on the 1st or 15th of the month, your winnings will be \$75, and, any other day, you'll win \$30. In any case, you come out ahead!

So, just call the PCB Virtual office at 717-920-9999 or toll-free at 877-617-7407 and ask our fabulous Administrative Secretary, Autumn, to send you tickets. Good luck!

In aisle two, you can browse items from Loving Touch Connection and, while purchasing something lovely, decorated with tactile paint and embossed in both braille and print, you automatically donate 10% of the cost of your item choice to PCB! If you want to purchase a great gift for someone with vision loss, get in touch with the owner, Kathy Keck, for some great ideas. Her email is lovingtouchconnection@gmail.com or call her directly at 610-657-9869.

In aisle three, we have the opportunity to donate to PCB and ACB through the Monthly Monetary Support (MMS) program. You look a bit confused about how you personally benefit from this aisle. Well, allow me to explain. First,

PCB can provide all of our offerings in part because of the money we raise each year and who benefits from PCB offerings? That's right, you do. But that's not all. Just by signing up for the MMS program, you will be entered into a couple of different drawings for prizes offered by ACB at the Leadership Conference and following the national conference. All you need to do is to pledge a monthly commitment of \$10 or if you are already donating, you need only increase your commitment by \$5.

Simply call the ACB office in Minneapolis at (612) 332-3242 and they'll help you fill out the necessary forms to get you started. If you are an MMS donor, the Fund Development team urges you to contact ACB to be sure your donations are being properly processed. Oh, yes, your donations are always tax deductible.

In aisle 4, let's get cooking! Pick up a No Measure Cookbook in digital format for just a ridiculously low price of \$5. Again, if you're

interested, just call Autumn in our virtual office at 717-920-9999 or toll-free at 877-617-7407.

Now let's hear it for aisle five, the sweetest aisle of all! Here you can purchase tasty treats from Terrilynn.com. Whether you prefer healthy foods like unsalted trail mix or roasted nuts of all kinds, or you have a sweet tooth for things like chocolate covered cranberries, pecan clusters, dark chocolate nuts and other sweet and delicious treats, Terrilynn is your place to shop. In addition to enjoying these fabulous foods, PCB will receive 20% of the total cost of your order. With the spring holidays just around the corner, shop soon and shop often. Just go to the PCB store at:

[https ://tinyurl.com/PCBTREATS](https://tinyurl.com/PCBTREATS) or if this link fails, to:

<https://pennsylvania-council-of-the-blind.terryllynn.com/>

or call them toll-free at:

800-323-0775

and let your customer service representative know that you are part of the Pennsylvania Council of the Blind fundraiser.

While aisle six is empty right now, it will start to fill up with items to be purchased at our virtual auction. Once again, the theme for our auction will be “Great things come in small packages”. The team hopes you’ll send in your offerings to fill this aisle sooner than later so folks can start to browse long before our auction, which will be held on October 29, 2023 at the close of our virtual conference. This year, we will need to have your donations no later than September 15, so we can prepare for the event and so we can put the item lists in alternative formats and have them delivered to all of you in a timely fashion. Last year, the Virtual auction raised over \$4,200, one of our best years ever. We hope this year we can top this number. The Fund Development team thanks all of you in advance for your donations, since there would be no auction without your

generosity. Please contact me at maryanna0407@gmail.com or by calling me at 570-807-1276 to let me know what you or your chapter will be donating. We will be posting lists of contributed items often this year to avoid getting too many duplicates.

The Fund Development team continues to look for ideas from you, PCB peers, for new ways to raise funds so we can grow our offerings. Every new idea presented will be given serious consideration, so share your thoughts!

Like anything else in PCB, fund development only makes sense if we all collaborate to find ways to grow our funds with the most participation possible. In order to accomplish this, we need your input, talents, ideas, and, ultimately, you!

**Contact Mary Ann Grignon (570) 807-1276 or
maryanna0407@gmail.com with your questions,
ideas, and input.**

A Look Forward Into the past

By Tony Swartz, Technology Team

I'm often bemused by my morning perusal of national newspapers by headlines like "Newly Invented Device Will at Last Allow the Blind to Travel Independently". To get to my point, we'll just put aside the fact that many of us have spent our lives traveling independently with cane or dog. Of late, it seems that a number of these devices have a bit of gimmickry about them, and, more often than not, I'm left wondering how much input has been gathered from those of us who, through life experience, are the true experts of independent travel.

A case in point: the vibrating shoes invented to direct and guide our path and warn us of obstacles and hazards. Just how fashionable are those shoes? Is there a High-heeled model?

Through the years, though, there have been a number of electronic travel aids (ETA) as they are known in the Orientation and Mobility field, which could have perhaps provided a revolutionary advancement in independent travel, but for the technology of the time preventing them from catching on.

I'd like to tell you about one such device that I had the opportunity to train with during the mid-1970s: the Sonicguide, a sonar-based device.

It's inventor, Dr. Leslie Kay of New Zealand, an engineer by trade, developed his expertise in specialized sonar in the British Royal Navy during the 1950s. Extrapolating from his studies of how bats navigate through echolocation, he would go on to develop this sonar-based ETA. Beginning work in 1959, by 1966 Kay would have a fully functioning model ready for evaluation in Australia and New

Zealand. Eventually, the device would be marketed by Wormald International, a forerunner of today's Humanware.

The various parts of the guidance system were housed in a slightly bulky pair of spectacles connected by cable to a power battery-pack worn on the belt. A thin hollow plastic tube descending from each arm of the spectacles carried the auditory signal to attached fitted ear molds resting in the pinna of each ear.

Three nickel sized transducers were housed in the nose bridge of the spectacles. The central transducer transmitted a cone shaped pulsing ultrasonic beam forward into the environment. The transducers on either side received the beam reflected back from objects within 20 feet forward and to the sides of the user. The reflected signals were then converted into the human auditory hearing range. The device provided three pieces of information: distance from, position within, and reflection pattern of an object within the user's path.

Distance: The Sonicguide omitted a four-per-second ultrasonic pulsing tone reflected back, converted, and heard by the user. An object twenty feet from the user would first be detected by a roughly 18 KHZ frequency tone, nearly at the top range of a human's hearing range. As the user approached the object, the frequency of the tones would descend. One of the exercises in my training was to learn to approach an object and stop within an arm's-length.

Position: because the receiving transducers were splayed about 30 degrees to the left and right, the received signals could therefore be heard stereophonically, allowing the user to discern the position of an object. For example, an object to the left would sound louder in the left ear and softer in the right. One of my training exercises was to locate an object in the environment, approaching it, and placing myself just to the right of the object. Another,

was to slalom to the left and right through a series of vertical poles.

Reflection pattern: the characteristics of a sonar signal reflected back from an object are governed by the surface of the object. A converted reflecting-signal from a plate glass window, possessing a single surface, would sound through the Sonicguide as a pulsing pure tone. On the other hand, a hedge, with many reflecting surfaces, would reflect back as a very mushy tone. A brick wall, with a solid but porous surface, would reflect back with a signal somewhere between pure and mushy. One of my training exercises was to walk through a room and attempt to locate a large object from a given list of possibilities.

As an ETA, while providing significant object detection information, the Sonicguide was developed and intended as an adjunct outdoor and large indoor venue orientation and mobility

travel aid and not a replacement for the long cane or guide dog. Its coverage was from a bit above head height to slightly below the waist, and, of course, it couldn't detect drop offs.

The device had three significant detractions: price, steep learning curve, and, most importantly, the partial occlusion of ambient sound.

In the mid-1970s, the Sonicguide was marketed in the United States for about \$1,850, just under \$10,300 in today's prices — certainly a prohibitive expense for an adjunct mobility device. A proficiency in the use of a long cane and independent travel skills and the ability to translate signals to spatial orientation was a prerequisite for the sixty-to-ninety-hour training course. Though ear molds, which conducted the sound directly into the ear, were custom fit to rest in the pinna, they nevertheless altered and partially occluded

auditory environmental clues. I found myself either turning off or lowering the sound of the device when approaching intersections.

While I appreciated the vast obstacle-detection-and-orientation information provided by the device, after completing training, I used the Sonicguide sparingly. The necessity to continuously adjust the volume of the device when traveling became an intolerable impediment, and, on occasion, even a safety concern. Yet, I still look back on the Sonicguide with some fondness. I can't help but wonder with the advancements in electronics, miniaturization, auditory bone conduction, and object identification technology, today's version of the Sonicguide, providing so much additional information about our travel environment, could be a great adjunct travel device, regardless of one's shoe style or size!

How Do You Communicate? By Communications Team

In its never-ending quest to best serve the peers of PCB and the vision loss community, the PCB Communications Team continues to investigate how PCB can best communicate within and outside of, the organization.

To this end, the Team has been working closely with the Technology Team to revamp the PCB website. It still needs some work, but we invite you to go to the website, noodle around, and report back to us about what you liked and did not like about the site. Your feedback is invaluable because we are trying to design and implement a website that is navigable, accessible, and usable by a wide variety of users – not just experienced screen reader users. So, if you are new to JAWS or use a program like Zoom-Text or have enough vision to see the screen with the built-in

magnification options, please take a peek and let us know what you think.

The Team also maintains the PCB Information Line at 773-572-6314 and sends out organizational notices via email to our announce-only list. We provide toll-free access to the line for peers without a long-distance calling plan. You may contact the PCB office to acquire the toll-free number or to sign up for announcement-only emails from PCB.

PCB also has a small social media presence at [Facebook.com/PACounciloftheBlind](https://www.facebook.com/PACounciloftheBlind) and on Twitter @PCB_Advocate. We do not know how many peers use Face Book and/or Twitter, so contact us and let us know if/how you use these media. Also let us know if there are other social media platforms you prefer.

The Keystone chapter does a good job using good old-fashion phone calling to contact

members and to convey information. Is getting a phone call from PCB something you would be interested in? If so, how frequently would you like to be called and what kind of content would you want in such calls?

Any discussion of communication necessarily involves two big issues facing PCB.

First, PCB is getting older – with very few “younger” members joining. This dynamic presents at least two further issues. How do we reach out and connect with younger persons with vision loss, i.e., what new communication strategies and technologies would work best with this target demographic? How do we continue to serve our aging population who might not be enthusiastic about embracing new technologies? Are the two mutually exclusive and counter-productive? Can a two-pronged approach

work? If so, what would such a strategy look like?

Second, PCB is getting smaller – with fewer and fewer dues-paying peers each year. This fact forces us to ask how we can grow (or at least maintain), what communication strategies and technologies can support growth, and is PCB facing the same socio-cultural phenomena that are confronting almost all other similar organizations, i.e., aging, shrinkage, and almost no participation from younger people? Perhaps the issues facing PCB are too big, too deep, and too intractable to “fix” with a better communication strategy or a fancier communication technology. But this is something peers and the Board have to discuss and decide.

Our focus is communications and how we can improve communications inside and outside

PCB. Hiring an Outreach and Engagement Specialist should go some way towards facilitating improved communications in both directions, but one person might not be able to move mountains if the organization and many of its members are reluctant to explore and embrace new ideas and better tools.

You are invited to send your ideas, comments, and/or suggestions to the Communications Team Chair, Will Grignon, at wgrignon13@gmail.com or 727-564-9759.

PCB is only as strong as you, its peers: your imagination, your energy, and your willingness to take on new challenges!

Who Deserves A PCB Award? By PCB Awards Team

PCB seeks to reward excellence at its upcoming virtual Conference and Convention (October 26-29, 2023) with four prestigious awards: John A. Horst Champion of Independence, TheReImage Leadership Award, Anthony B. Swartz PCB Peer Excellence Award, and PCB Community Impact Award.

Anyone, a PCB peer or not, can make a nomination. Send your contact info, the name and contact info of the person/entity you are nominating, which award you would like them to receive, and an explanation on why you think they deserve the award. The deadline is September 1, 2023. Email nominations to awards@pcb1.org. Current members of the PCB Board are not eligible for these awards.

Here are the four PCB Awards:

John A. Horst Champion of Independence

The award will be given to an individual who has performed at least 20 years of professional service in fields related to the rehabilitation or the education of people who are blind or visually impaired or has Dedicated more than 20 years of service to collective advocacy and public awareness efforts that promote independence and opportunity for people with blindness or vision loss, and the recipient's service contributions must be well recognized in the community in which they live or throughout the state or nation as significant to the betterment of the lives of those with vision loss.

TheReImage Leadership Award

The recipient must have overcome both the real and perceived challenges of blindness or vision loss to achieve an active, multi-faceted life, have proven him/herself as a role model

and leader within the blindness community through service, perseverance, empowerment, or achievement, and have demonstrated to the world, through his/her independence and action, The ReImage of people with vision loss.

Anthony B. Swartz PCB Peer Excellence Award

The recipient must be or have been a member of the Pennsylvania Council of the Blind for more than 10 years, have provided a long history of volunteer service to PCB's events, projects, or chapters, and have demonstrated distinguished service by taking on leadership roles within PCB or regularly going beyond expectations in service to PCB and fellow peers.

PCB Community Impact Award

The recipient of this award shall have made a significant difference in the lives of people with blindness or vision loss through a product, a service, or an employment practice that

leads to greater independence and opportunity. This award may be presented to a corporation, agency, or foundation that has provided significant support to the mission or projects of PCB.

**Reminders from the Parliamentary Team
By Carla Hayes**

It's hard to believe that it's March and two months of 2023 are history! Plans are being made for the PCB Annual Virtual Convention (October 26-29, 2023). If you have any proposed amendments to the PCB Bylaws or resolutions that you would like to be considered at the PCB convention, or if your chapter or special interest affiliate plans to vote at the convention, here are three important deadlines that you will need to know.

First, the deadline for submitting proposed bylaw changes is July 26, 2023. THIS IS A FINAL DEADLINE AND IT CANNOT BE

EXTENDED!

Remember that any individual PCB member, committee, chapter or group within PCB can propose changes to the PCB Bylaws.

An organization's bylaws should be a living document which can be changed when circumstances make it necessary. As a member of PCB, it is a good idea to read over the PCB bylaws periodically so that you will be familiar with the structure of PCB and the procedures that we follow. The PCB Bylaws can also serve as a guide to local chapters as they write or revise their own bylaws.

Second, September 26, 2023 is the deadline for submitting resolutions if you want them to be presented at the PCB Convention. THIS DEADLINE WILL BE ENFORCED! Only emergency resolutions of an extremely time-sensitive nature will be considered after this date and very few resolutions would fall into this category! DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO SUBMIT YOUR RESOLUTIONS!

As with bylaws, resolutions can be written and submitted by any individual member of PCB, or any committee, chapter or group within PCB. Allow time during chapter and committee meetings to discuss and work on resolutions.

In past columns, I have discussed "WHEREAS" and "RESOLVE" clauses and guidelines for crafting an effective resolution. This information will be reviewed in future columns. For now, use PCB and ACB resolutions as models when writing your resolutions and feel free to call on the Parliamentary Team for help.

Finally, chapters and special interest affiliates who plan to have delegates present at the convention should submit the names of their delegates to the PCB Office by October 21st.

Delegates will be authorized by the Parliamentary Team during the convention.

All proposed bylaw changes and resolutions can be submitted by email to me at

lengual@verizon.net. Alternatively, they can be mailed to me in any format (braille preferred) at:

**Carla Hayes
230 Robinhood Lane
McMurray, PA 15317.**

If you have any questions or if you need help writing your bylaws amendments or resolutions, please feel free to call me at (724) 941-8184.

Presidential Pups down the Years

By PAGDUS

In honor of the recently-celebrated Presidents' Day, we present the history of White House canine companions, although, technically, George Washington, who did have many dogs and was a recognized breeder, did not have dogs in the White House because, well, it wasn't built yet!

The vast majority of Presidents had dogs, some only one dog, others as many as a dozen; here's the list:

George Washington – had 10 hound dogs, the most famous of whom was Sweet Lips, who used to accompany him to the Continental Congress;

John Adams – 3 dogs of unknown breeds named Juno, Mark, and Satan - first dogs to live in the White House;

Thomas Jefferson – 2 Briards named Begere and Frizzle;

James Monroe – a Siberian husky named Sebastian, and a spaniel named Buddy

John Tyler – a Greyhound named Le Beau;

Franklin Pierce –7 teacup dogs from Japan;

James Buchanan – a Newfoundland named Lara and a Toy Terrier named Punch;

Abraham Lincoln – a mixed Toy Poodle named Jip, who used to sit in Lincoln’s lap during meetings and meals, and seemed to give the depressive President much comfort;

Ulysses S Grant – a Newfoundland named Faithful and a mixed breed black and yellow dog named Rosie (Grant would eat his dinners in the barn, talking to Rosie and his horses);

Rutherford B. Hayes – a dozen dogs, including a mutt named Jet;

James Garfield – a Black Newfoundland named Veto (and who said Garfield didn’t have a sense of humor!);

Grover Cleveland – 5 dogs;

Benjamin Harrison – built a doghouse next to the White House for his Collie named Dash, also had alligators;

Teddy Roosevelt –8 dogs and a lion and a laughing hyena;

William Taft – a mixed breed named Caruso, gifted from the opera star by the same name;

Woodrow Wilson – an Airedale Terrier named Davie, a Bull Terrier named Bruce, and 48 sheep;

Warren Harding – an Airedale Terrier named Laddie Boy and an English Bulldog named Old Boy;

Calvin Coolidge –a dozen dogs and a Pigmy Hippopotamus named Billie;

Herbert Hoover – 8 dogs, the most famous of whom was King Tut, a Belgian Shepherd, credited with humanizing the otherwise humorless Hoover;

Franklin D. Roosevelt – had 7 dogs during his long White House tenure, the most famous of whom was Fala, a Scottish Terrier;

Harry S Truman – an Irish Setter named Mike and a Cocker Spaniel named Feller;

Dwight D. Eisenhower – a Weimaraner named Heidi;

John F. Kennedy – 6 dogs, including 2 mixed breeds named Pushinka and Wolf, offspring from a Soviet dog who had gone into orbit;

Lyndon B. Johnson – 7 dogs, the most famous of whom were two Beagles named Him and Her, who LBJ was infamously photographed picking up by their ears;

Richard Nixon – Checkers the Cocker Spaniel (of the famous 1952 TV speech) and 3 other dogs;

Gerald Ford – a Golden Retriever named Liberty, who had a litter of puppies while at the White House;

Jimmy Carter – an Afghan Hound named Lewis Brown and a Border Collie named Grits;

Ronald Reagan – Rex, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel;

George HW Bush – Millie, a Springer Spaniel – the only First Pet to write a book - she had puppies while living in the White House;

Bill Clinton – a Chocolate Labrador Retriever named Buddy;

George W Bush – Spot, a Springer Spaniel (one of Millie’s litter), Miss Beazely, a Scottish Terrier, and Barney, another Scottish Terrier;

Barack Obama – 2 Portuguese Water Dogs named Bo and Sunny; and

Joe Biden –3 German Shepherds named Chief, Commander and Major.

Here is the list of Presidents who didn’t have dogs but who had animals (pets and otherwise) in the White House:

James Madison – a parrot named Polly, who outlived both James and his wife Dolly;

John Q Adams – an alligator and silkworms;

Andrew Jackson – a parrot named Polly who learned to swear and who later attended Jackson's funeral but had to be removed due to loud and persistent profanity;

Martin Van Buren – horses and tigers;

William Harrison – a goat and a cow named Sukey;

Zachary Taylor – Apollo the pony and Old Whitey his warhorse;

Millard Fillmore – 2 ponies named Mason and Dixon – he was a founding member of the Buffalo chapter of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals;

Chester Arthur – 2 “perfectly-matched” reddish-brown horses; and

William McKinley – a rooster and a parrot named Washington Post, who could whistle “Yankee Doodle” (What’s up with the Presidential parrots?).

There have been three Presidents who have not have dogs or any other kind of animal while in the White House: James Polk, Andrew Johnson, and Donald Trump.

One last word about a remarkable presidential pup.

Sully H. W. Bush, a Yellow Lab, was born in 2016. He is named after former U.S. Air Force officer and US Airways pilot Chesley Sullenberger III (hero pilot who safely ditched US Airways flight 1549 on the Hudson River on January 15, 2009). He was trained by the charity, America's VetDogs to perform a two-page list of commands, which included fetching items, answering a telephone, and summoning help in an emergency.

In 2018, he was assigned to assist George H. W. Bush.

After President Bush died, Sully accompanied the 41st president's remains to Washington, DC for the state funeral. A photo posted to

Twitter by Bush spokesperson Jim McGrath showing Sully sleeping next to Bush's coffin went viral. Sully also visited the Capitol rotunda where Bush was lying in state and it is reported that he refused to leave his master's side.

In 2019, pursuant to President Bush's wishes, Sully joined the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center's Facility Dog Program in Bethesda, Maryland, where he visits injured veterans and their families, giving them comfort during very stressful times.

A life-size bronze statue of Sully, created by Susan Bahary, stands at the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum at Texas A&M University.

**Strange Situation: What to Do?
By Cynthia Gibbs-Pratt (CGP)**

Traveling from New York back home to Pennsylvania, I use Paratransit to commute to the Am-Trak station.

Normally, I do not travel alone because my family and extended family have concerns that something might happen to me. Me being me, I still wanted to be independent, so, I scheduled my return trip home when neither of my bodyguards, my big cousin Mike nor my best friend Bruce were available to travel with me. I don't think that I'll make that mistake again!

My ride arrived to pick me up. He got out of the car and called my name, I answered "Yes, it's me." I stated my destination, "Penn Station, Manhattan" he confirmed and began to load my luggage into the trunk.

A strange, unnerving feeling came over me and I was reluctant to get in the vehicle because the driver was wearing a hooded sweatshirt

and the passenger side of the vehicle had no door handle, but I was grateful because the driver was on time, and I knew I had to catch my train.

I remarked to the driver, “There is no door handle.”

He quietly pushed open the door from the inside and, against my better judgement, I stepped in the car, fastened my seatbelt, and sat back.

I was drained from lack of sleep for nearly two weeks. My best friend, one of my bodyguards, texted me to ask if my driver had arrived, and I responded, “Yes, I’m already heading over the bridge into Manhattan.”

We got across the bridge into Chinatown. I was excited that I would get to the station in

enough time to get my breakfast and a hot cup of tea, so that I could rest peacefully on the train.

In most cases, depending on traffic, it should have taken 15 to 20 minutes to get to Penn Station once we got across the bridge. However, I looked out the window and didn't see any of my usual landmarks. That unnerving feeling returned, and my anxiety heightened.

I asked the driver, "Where are we?"

The driver answered, "Manhattan."

I said, "Where in Manhattan, and why did you come this route? When you came across the bridge, you should have followed 14th Street into 34th Street, then crossed over to 8th Avenue."

The driver didn't respond. I noticed some weird buildings and train tracks, so I knew something was really wrong.

Still trying not to panic, I thought that maybe he was lost so I asked, "What's the ETA?" No response from the driver.

He kept his hood on his head looking straight ahead, then kept looking at the two cell phones I observed on the dashboard. He kept reaching down as if he was typing and/or reading something. By now, my nerves were screaming. My phone rang. It was my best friend checking in.

He said, "Are you at the station yet?"

I said, "No, I don't know where I am."

He was alarmed and asked if I could see the street signs. I looked out the window and saw the large green and white sign for Lincoln Tunnel. My friend Bruce said, “Why is he going to the Lincoln Tunnel?”

I said that I had no idea. Bruce asked me to confirm my destination with the driver. “Driver, why are we going to the Lincoln Tunnel? You’re going the wrong way.”

The driver didn’t respond.

As we entered the Lincoln Tunnel, Bruce said, “Something’s wrong...”

The phone went dead, and we proceeded deeper into the Lincoln Tunnel. I felt like I was being kidnapped by a terrorist!

No phone to call anyone, the driver not responsive, and I didn't have my mobility cane on my person to protect myself. I had forgotten to take it out of my bag before the driver threw the bag into the trunk with my suitcases, along with the backpack.

We finally exited the Lincoln Tunnel. I called Bruce back and told him that I did not know where I was and explained that we were in a place I did not know. There were train tracks, and the driver did not even stop to see if any trains were approaching. There were strange abandoned looking buildings with graffiti on them. There was a huge parking garage, and the driver tried to enter, but a big security guard came running over to ask him, "Where are you going, Sir? You're going the wrong way. Make a U-turn."

The driver did not respond. I unhooked my seatbelt, opened my window, and began

explaining to the security guard that the driver was supposed to be taking me to Penn Station on 34th Street.

The security guard was now annoyed with the driver because he was still driving nearly into the gates that would allow you to enter the parking area. The security guard screamed, “Turn around, make a U-turn. You’re going the wrong way!”

The driver finally turned the vehicle around and proceeded down a strange back road.

Bruce was still on the phone asking me, “What is he doing?”

I said, “I have no idea.”

He said, “Ask the driver where you are.”

I again asked the driver where we were. He still did not respond. I tapped his shoulder, and screamed, “WHERE ARE WE?”

He finally responded, “Manhattan.”

I asked, “Where in Manhattan, this is not familiar to me.”

He didn’t respond. I couldn’t get a look at his face because he never removed the hooded sweatshirt from his head.

Bruce was unnerved and worried. He said, “I don’t like this, this is not normal. You should call dispatch.”

I hung up and immediately called dispatch. I explained my dilemma and told dispatch that I

had been riding for over 30 minutes and didn't know where I was. Dispatch told me to give the driver the phone. I complied.

Dispatch asked the driver if he had the drop-off location, but there was no response from the driver.

Dispatch asked again, a little firmer, "Sir, do you know the drop-off location?" I heard no answer from the driver. The driver kept touching the phones that were on the dash, but he didn't respond.

Dispatch said, "I don't like this."

I told dispatch, "See, he's not responsive and I have no idea where I am. When we got into Chinatown, it should have taken no more than 15 to 20 minutes to get to 34th Street, Penn Station. I've been running around in weird

places and even went through the Lincoln Tunnel, which would have taken me into Jersey.”

While I was talking to dispatch, a text came through which said, “Your Ride has Arrived with CTG.” Now, that made me really frazzled because I’d been in this vehicle for over 40 minutes already. I told dispatch about the text message and asked, “Can’t you track this vehicle?”

Dispatch said, “Yes, but where are you?”

I explained I couldn’t read the street signs because I am legally blind and only have partial vision in my left eye. In the meantime, I was straining hard to try to make heads or tails of any sign. Finally, I saw 9th Avenue. I told dispatch of my observation. I asked dispatch if he could stay on the phone with me until I reached my destination. He agreed. Over an

hour after entering the vehicle, I saw the familiar landmark of Madison Square Garden, which is directly across the street from the new Moynihan Station of Amtrak. I was so relieved but shook up because I had never experienced anything like this since I've been riding Access A Ride for over 13 years.

The driver stopped the car and got out. I told dispatch that I was getting out of the car, but I would undoubtedly file a complaint. Dispatch agreed and told me to have a safe trip and was thankful I made it safely to my destination. I hung up the phone and got out of the vehicle shakily.

The driver, still with the hooded sweatshirt on his head, dragged my luggage out of the trunk and threw it on the sidewalk.

I turned to the driver and asked, "How long have you been driving with Access A Ride?"

He turned to me with a creepy grin and said, “Two weeks.”

I got on the sidewalk and said to him, “You need to find a better GPS system and learn to speak a little more English.”

Relieved that I was at my destination, I stood at the curb, thanking God that I made it safely. Surprisingly, I still had an hour or so before I was to board my train.

I called Bruce to let him know that I had finally made it, got my breakfast, and sat in the redcap area waiting to board my train. As I sat, I thought to myself, “Why didn’t I have my mobility cane in my hand? Why didn’t I put on my GPS/Maps, and why did I even get into the vehicle that had no door handle on the passenger’s side? What was this driver’s real issue? Why wasn’t he responsive?”

I thought about all the women that were missing over the holidays. My Auntie, whom I had been visiting, watched the news every day that I was there, and all I kept hearing on the news was, “Have you seen this person?”

Bruce suggested that in the future I take a picture of the vehicles’ license plate and of the driver, and send them to family and friends if I ever had to travel alone.

Normally, I would schedule trips to arrive and/or depart NY on a Thursday or Saturday because either my cousin or Bruce (my best friend) would always be available to ensure I made it to and from the train safely. Lesson learned!!

When I was safely home in Pennsylvania, I thanked God for getting me home safely without any harm. I didn’t have the energy on

that day, however, the very next day, I called Access A Ride, described my ordeal, and filed a complaint. I don't know how far the complaint will go, but I did specify that they should be more careful about who they are hiring to drive the vehicles. And, yes, I did tell the Complaint Line that I felt like I was being kidnapped by a terrorist.

Always remember, whether we are visually impaired, have low-vision or are totally blind, we must protect ourselves at any cost. Never be afraid to ask for help or to step outside of your comfort zone to do whatever it is you need to do to protect yourself.

Cleansing Waters
By Jeanette Schmoyer

“This little piggy went to market. This little piggy stayed home.”

**Memories of warm water, soft washcloth,
My mother's voice, soap suds,
Washing away the dirt of the day.
“This little piggy had roast beef. This little
piggy had none.”**

**Twenty-some years later,
Now I held the washcloth,
Repeating the ritual,
Washing away the dirt of the day.**

**Carcinoma, mastectomy,
Surgery, Recovery.
At thirty-four, a new challenge.
My tears mingled with the shower water,
Washing away the grief of the day.**

**More of life's losses-Death of father and
mother.**

**Tears and rain, baths and oceans,
Mingling and trickling, sobbing and storming,
Washing away the grief of the day.**

**Pain in the joints, a common complaint,
Hot tubs, saunas, aqua aerobics,
The heat of the water,
Washing away the pain of the day.**

**The desert, the cross,
The Red Sea, the Jordan,
Salvation, Redemption,
The struggle, the rejoicing,
Washing away the sins of the day.**

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Appendix 1: Request For Proposals Cover Letter

PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF THE BLIND

PCB – A Peer Network for All Impacted by Vision Loss

P.O. Box 68, Volant, PA 16156

Phone: 717-920-9999 Toll Free: 877-617-7407

Email: pcboffice@pcb1.org.

2023 CALL FOR SESSION PROPOSALS

The Pennsylvania Council of the Blind (PCB), which strives to promote independence and opportunities for people with vision loss, is seeking presentation submissions for its 88th annual statewide conference. The conference will be held virtually via the Zoom platform from Thursday, October 26, through Sunday, October 29, 2023. PCB welcomes session

proposals relevant to this year's theme of "Exploring New Pathways."

As a network of blind and visually impaired peers, PCB recognizes the importance of moving forward in our journeys as productive, independent and thriving individuals with vision loss. Together, as we seek and build our destinies, we offer encouragement to people who are new to vision loss, provide peer support to one another, bring about a more accessible society, and break down attitudinal barriers. Encouraging one another to explore new pathways is what we as peers are charged to do for one another and for the blindness community and, in journeying together, we encourage those around us to exceed the expectations they have imagined for themselves.

So, during this year's annual conference, together we will explore new pathways and boldly go where we haven't been before.

The conference planners seek proposals for presentations, workshops, and activities that will provide attendees with an interactive virtual experience.

Possible session topics such as identifying the stumbling blocks that keep you from looking for new paths, exploring tools, skills, and practices that will strengthen and support you through your exploration creating your personal maps for your journey and discovery, challenging your time, talents, and expanding your comfort zone to reach the next expression of your all-welcoming self, constructing shelters and safe havens for others that mark the progress from where you were to where you long to be, and discovering paths you never imagined.

We welcome practical presentations that are down-to-earth, nuts-and-bolts, and ready-to-use, as well as personal recollections and professional insights that open horizons, point out pitfalls, and beckon to new heights. It's all about how we, in the many, can empower and encourage one another to dare be better individually and collectively.

We welcome session proposals from peers, vision professionals, vendors, community leaders, and subject-matter experts through June 15, 2023.

Please complete and submit the attached Request for Session Proposals form to presentations@pcb1.org. Alternatively, you can find this information online at pcb1.org/conference-and-convention/. Please don't hesitate to contact PCB Conference Coordinator, Chris Hunsinger directly at 412-

881-9328 with any questions. Feel free to forward the information to others who you believe would have an interest in participating in our conference.

Appendix 2: Request For Proposals Form

**Pennsylvania Council of the Blind (PCB)
Conference & Convention
2023 Request for Session Proposals**

Theme: Exploring New Pathways

Location: Virtual Conference on the Zoom platform

Dates: Thursday, October 26 – Sunday, October 29

WHY PCB?

With its virtual platform, this year's PCB Conference promises to be the state's largest conference for people impacted by blindness or vision loss. Attendees will include:

- **Blind Students & Adults of all abilities and interests**
- **Individuals and family members newly adjusting to vision loss.**
- **Professionals in various industries including blindness services and education.**
- **Consumers of both general and blindness specific products**
- **Active and involved members of the community**

Sessions are tentatively scheduled for:

Thursday, October 26, 2023 Afternoon & Evening

Friday, October 27, 2023 Morning, Afternoon, & Evening

Saturday, October 28, 2023 Morning

Sunday, October 29, 2023 Morning

The theme for the 2023 PCB Virtual Conference is

Exploring New Pathways

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

The following items must be included in each submission:

- **Contact Information for the Session Organizer - the session organizer is the person submitting the application and will be the primary contact for all information pertaining to the session.**
- **Brief bios of all session presenters**
- **Proposed Session Title - Titles should quickly describe the content and relevance of your presentation/workshop, i.e., which theme (e.g., tools, resources, information, or people) is addressed by your presentation/workshop**

- **Session Audience - Who will find your session content valuable?**
- **Description of the Proposed Session - The description explains the focus of your presentation. It should be written to market the session and attract attendees.**
- **Three Learning Objectives of the Proposed Session Topic - The objectives should describe what the session attendee will learn and take-away from the discussion.**
- **Proposed length of session: 30, 45, or 60 minutes**
- **Preferred first and second choices of availability**
for the day/time of session.
- **AV Needs**

Proposals should be composed electronically in either .doc or .txt format and submitted by June 15, 2023. Send all proposals to: presentations@pcb1.org.

Selection Criteria

The PCB Conference Planning Team will review the proposals and decide based on the following criteria:

- **Educational Value**
- **Relevance**
- **Practical Application**
- **Overall Quality**
- **Target Audience**
- **Presenter Qualifications and Expertise**
- **Originality and Inventiveness**

Timeline:

- **March 15 2023 Open Call for Presentations**
- **June 15, 2023 Submission Deadline**
- **July 31, 2023 Notifications to Accepted**

Proposers

- **August 15, 2023 Publication of Speakers**

POLICIES GOVERNING ACCEPTED PROPOSALS

- **All sessions may be recorded and used by PCB. This includes internet streaming and downloading.**
- **Speakers must agree that any material presented during their session may be reproduced and that the material presented does not infringe any copyrighted material.**
- **Due to preparation time for alternate formats, all handouts must be provided to PCB in electronic format by September 20, 2023.**
- **If selected, sessions MAY NOT include any promotional material for an individual, a specific company or product.**
- **PCB is a non-denominational, nonpartisan organization. Submissions geared to promote a specific political or religious agenda are prohibited.**

- **Sessions should not be used as a platform to discredit or attack another organization or individual**
- **Sessions are monitored by PCB representatives. PCB reserves the right to terminate broadcast of any session that violates this or any other PCB policy. In addition, any presenter in violation of these policies may not be permitted to present at future PCB programs.**

**Pennsylvania Council of the Blind (PCB)
2023 Virtual Conference and Convention
Session Proposal Form**

All fields must be completed. Only fully completed forms will be reviewed. Email forms to presentations@pcb1.org by June 15, 2023.

Presenter Information

Session proposed by:

Community organization

PCB Chapter/Affiliate

PCB Team

PCB Peer

Private Individual/Professional

Name of session leader:

Address:

Email:

Phone Number:

Bio

Co-Presenter 1 Name:

Email:

Phone:

Bio:

Co-Presenter 2 Name:

Email:

Phone:

Bio:

Session Information

Type: ___Workshop/Breakout Session

Lecture **Panel Discussion**

Time Required: **30 Mins.** **45 Mins.** **60 Mins.**

Session Title:

Target Audience:

Session Summary/description:

Expected Lessons – Provide 3 audience take-aways.

1.

2.

3.

Check all dates/times you would be available to present:

Thursday, October 26, 2023

____ **Afternoon** ____ **Evening**

Friday, October 27, 2023

____ **Morning** ____ **Afternoon** ____ **Evening**

Saturday, October 28, 2023

____ **Morning**

Sunday, October 29, 2023

____ **Morning**

Indicate any A/V requirements (i.e., screen sharing, assistance with pre-recorded audio, etc.):

Will handouts be provided? ___Yes ___No

Please note: Handouts must be emailed to PCB by September 20 in order to make sure they are provided in accessible formats.

Would you like information about becoming an exhibitor? ___Yes ___No

All forms must be submitted electronically by June 15, 2023 in Word or Text. Submit to presentations@pcb1.org.

Underwriting Contributions

Contributions are encouraged to support the accessible formatting of The PCB Advocate in braille, DAISY audio cartridge, large print, and electronic Word file. Donations are tax deductible. Gifts can be made by credit card either online at pcb1.org or by phone to 877-617-7407. Donations by check can be mailed to PCB, PO Box 68, Volant, PA 16156-0068.

PCB TEAMS AND LEADERS

Advocacy: Chris Hunsinger

cs.hunsinger@verizon.net, 412-881-9328

**(Meets Third Monday 7:30 p.m. in odd months
and Advocacy for All Calls in even months.)**

Awards: Will Grignon

wgrignon13@gmail.com, 727-564-9759,

awards@pcb1.org

**(Meets as needed for a couple of months
before a convention)**

Communications: Will Grignon

wgrignon13@gmail.com, 727-564-9759

(Meets Second Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.)

Conference Program and Planning

[Looking for a Team leader.]

(Meets Second Thursday at 7:30 p.m.)

Finance: Michael Zaken

michael.zaken@verizon.net, 412-655-1234

(Meets Third Thursday at 7:30 p.m.)

Fund Development: Mary Ann Grignon

maryanna0407@gmail.com, 570-807-1276

(Meets Third Wednesday 7:30 p.m.)

Peer Engagement: Suzanne Erb

suzerb1@comcast.net, 215-568-5795

(Meets 1st Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.)

Parliamentary: Carla Hayes

lengual@verizon.net, 724-941-8184

(Meets Fourth Tuesday 9:00 p.m.)

Technology Access: Joe Fagnani

joefagnani@atlanticbb.net, 814-940-0270

(Meets First Thursday 8 p.m.)

Vision Loss Resource: Jule Ann Lieberman

juleanni@comcast.net, 610-688-6517

(Meets Third Tuesday 8 p.m.)

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**Lehigh Valley, Elizabeth Oleksa,
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**Philadelphia Regional, Shirley Brotman,
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**Washington County, Carla Hayes,
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Sandy Marsiglia, Director, 717-635-9937

Robert Shingleton, Director, 484-529-4911

Roger Simmons, Director, 717-885-3055

**Free Matter for the Blind
Or Handicapped
(Handle as 1st class Mail)**

Domestic Mail Manual Sec. 135.7

**RETURN TO
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PO Box 68
Volant, PA 16156-0068**

LARGE TYPE EDITION