**The**

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**Advocate**

**Fall Edition 2019**

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

PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF THE BLIND

931 N. Front Street

Harrisburg, PA 17102

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PCB Information Line: 773-572-6314

MISSION

To promote independence and opportunities for 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, and employment.

The PCB Advocate is available by network subscription 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 our 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 the PCB.

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SUBMITTING ARTICLES

If you wish to submit articles for consideration, submission deadlines are March 1, June 1,

September 1 and November 20

Send articles to ADVOCATE,

c/o Sue Lichtenfels Email- advocate@pcb1.org or 96 Robb Hollow Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15243.

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Adjusting Our Lens

By Sue Lichtenfels, PCB President

Peers, I’ll begin this article with my next installment of “Peers Challenging Beliefs” and then wrap up with an administrative update.

Although totally blind now, as a child, I had some usable vision. To make the most of my sight, I visited optometrists at the Feinbloom Low Vision Center in Philadelphia. During these appointments, the professional would change out the lens options until we found the one which would enable me to see the clearest. With the new glasses, I had a fresh view of the world and could function more successfully. Sometimes in life and in organizations, it’s also vital to adjust the lens we use to view the world. It’s beyond that time for PCB. If we truly want to achieve PCB’s purpose, our organizational culture needs to shift its focus from its membership-centric view to a community-wide perspective.

Everything we do within PCB is done through the membership lens. We give the membership the right to have a say in the priorities of the organization. We communicate our advocacy efforts through membership channels and rely on our membership to do the advocating. We primarily fundraise through activities aimed at, or direct appeals to, the membership. We hold programs such as discussion calls and the annual conference to benefit our membership. We publish a quarterly magazine to inform our membership. We spend tons of administrative time trying to figure out how to activate our membership. We rely on volunteers from our membership to carry out the work of the organization. We judge the organization’s success by the size of the membership we reach annually. We believe engaging and empowering the membership is fulfilling our mission.

For a long time we have allowed this narrow focus on our membership to distort our perception of PCB’s purpose. Our support and resources should be targeted outside of the organization, not inward as we have become too accustomed to doing. Here’s a refresher on what our bylaws state about PCB’s purpose.

“The purpose of the Pennsylvania Council of the Blind is to  promote independence for visually impaired persons by:

a. working to improve the economic and social welfare of visually  impaired persons;

b. supporting and monitoring educational and rehabilitation  programs;

c. actively supporting and broadening vocational  opportunities;

d. encouraging all visually impaired persons to  realize their potential and to assume their place as valued  members of their communities;

e. providing a forum for visually  impaired persons throughout the commonwealth;

f. conducting  programs of public education designed to improve understanding of  the problems unique to sight loss and of the capabilities of  visually impaired persons.”

Clearly it is the intent that all of PCB’s efforts are to benefit the community of people who are blind or visually impaired, not just the membership. Sure, as an organization of the blind, the membership, which carries out the purpose, will inherently benefit from its own efforts, but its priority focus in all that it does should be service to the wider community. According to the most recent blindness statistics available from the American Foundation for the Blind (2016 American Communities Study), that community includes 298,935 Pennsylvanians who are blind or visually impaired. We all know from the World Health Organization that those numbers will continue to grow exponentially. With our operating focus on our current membership of 270, the bulk of our efforts is aimed at only 0.09 percent of the people our mission aims to assist. To put it another way, we are reaching less than one-tenth of one percent of individuals in the community of Pennsylvanian’s with vision loss. We don’t even come close to accomplishing our purpose when we are so focused on our membership. It’s even more startling to look at the statistic in reverse and realize that we are missing out on 99.9 percent of our target audience and the potential resources those people could bring to PCB.

Making the adjustment from the membership-centric view to the expansive community perspective certainly won’t happen overnight because it’s an engrained mindset in most of us. We have started moving in the right direction though with early implementation of the peer network concept. We’ve got to retrain our brains to always be thinking “big picture” instead of “micro membership.” Most importantly, we need to address the necessary dissolution of the paid membership model which has separated us from the larger blindness community for too long. It’s important to note that while providing a forum for individuals is included in PCB’s purpose, the practice of enrolling every person we can into a paid membership is not. In my next article, I plan to explore how our organization might function without paid membership.

I’ll wrap up this portion of my article with a vision for a PCB where the focus is on the community of blind and visually impaired people. I hope this description will become reality someday soon.

Everything we do within PCB is done through the community lens. We give the community the right to have a say in the priorities of the organization. We communicate our advocacy efforts through community channels and rely on our community to do the advocating. We primarily fundraise through activities aimed at, or direct appeals to, the community. We hold programs such as discussion calls and the annual conference to benefit our community. We publish a quarterly magazine to inform our community. We spend tons of administrative time trying to figure out how to engage our community. We rely on volunteers from our community to carry out the work of the organization. We judge the organization’s success by the size of the community we reach annually. We believe engaging and empowering the community is fulfilling our mission.

Now, to shift my focus to some administrative matters. If you’ve been reading the monthly calendar, you’ve probably realized two things: it’s September and for several months now an administrative task force has been meeting. With it being September, I have less than four months left as your PCB President. There will be an administrative transition this winter to a new President for which we are planning. We have been taking a close look at Officer duties, team responsibilities, staff roles, organizational processes and the like to find administrative solutions that will help us become more efficient and effective over the coming years. Serving on this task force are PCB Board Members, Mary Ann Grignon and Thomas Reid, along with PCB’s Executive Team: Sue Lichtenfels, Jule Ann Lieberman, Chris Hunsinger, Michael Zaken, Jackie Wissinger, and Tony Swartz.

Regarding another matter, Board Member Suzanne Erb has taken on the compilation of results from our BBVS service trends survey and has drafted the initial summary of findings. Our Executive Team is also giving the data careful consideration for additional points to include in the final report. Once completed, the document will be officially presented to Shannon Austin, Director of OVR, when she comes to present at our conference on Thursday, October 17.

After the conference, the findings document will be distributed to the public on the PCB Information Line at 773-572-6314 within its advocacy section, on the pcb1.org website, and in alternate format by request to the PCB office at 877-617-7407 or pcboffice@pcb1.org.

Also at this year’s conference, we will take another step toward opening our organization to the community by sponsoring SPARK Saturday. We are distributing event flyers throughout the local community to share our great lineup of Saturday morning speakers with the world. The event is free, but registration is requested by visiting pcb1.org/SPARKSat. The announcement with additional details is included later in this issue. Please pass on the invitation far and wide.

On a final note, I extend a heart-felt thank you to the many individuals and groups who work so hard and give so generously to make our annual conference a success. It’s never too late to contribute to our annual conference. Please join me in recognizing the following chapters for their financial sponsorship of specific events at the 2019 PCB Conference and Convention.

Golden Triangle- Friday Morning Entertainment

Hank Bloomberg- Saturday Banquet

Lehigh Valley- First-Timer’s Breakfast

Oil Valley- SPARK Saturday

Philadelphia Metro- Awards Ceremony

Philadelphia Regional- Sunday Breakfast

York- Believe or Bust Trivia

From the Conference Coordinator

By Tom Burgunder

The PCB Conference is fast approaching. The dates are October 17-20, 2019. The event will be held at the Crowne Plaza Harrisburg-Hershey. You must reserve a room at the  hotel by September 16 to obtain the room rates of either $94 or  $104 depending on whether you want a room with one king bed or a  room with two queen beds. The hotel's local telephone number is  717-234-5021.

Registration for the 2019 Conference is now open. Braille, large  print, Daisy audio, and email packets including the registration form have been  sent out. You can register online at pcb1.org/conference/registration/.

The Conference planners have provided programming to interest  everyone. The schedule of events (included in the packet)  describes everything.

Please consider donating auction items. They can be sent to the  PCB office, 931 N. Front Street, Suite B, Harrisburg, PA 17102

Chapters have been asked to provide door prizes and items for the  goody bags. Those items can also be sent ahead of time to the  PCB office at the above address.

I encourage all of you to attend in order to socialize with old and new friends and to learn from the presenters. Elections for  the Executive Board and for several Board of Director seats are  scheduled on Saturday afternoon.

The Officers, Board Members, and Conference Program & Planning Team are looking forward to being with all of you.

 “Peers CHALLENGING BELIEFS”

2019 PCB CONFERENCE

Pennsylvania’s Premier Conference for People Impacted by Vision Loss

THURS, OCTOBER 17 – SUN, OCTOBER 20

CROWNE PLAZA HARRISBURG-HERSHEY

23 S 2ND STREET, HARRISBURG, PA, 17101

Conference Highlights:

* Sign up for our audio darts tournament or enjoy an audio described movie.
* Learn tips for conducting online shopping using assistive technology.
* Brush up on current orientation and mobility techniques to overcome pedestrian challenges whether you use a guide dog or a cane.
* Choose from 3 peer-led breakout sessions including social media basics, converting documents to Daisy format, and an open discussion of how our peers challenge beliefs in their everyday lives.
* Enjoy Saturday morning’s amazing lineup of “Peers Challenging Beliefs,” Thomas Reid, Audio Producer of “Reid My Mind Radio”; Kristin Smedley, author of Thriving Blind; Dr. Andre Watson, Clinical Psychologist and author of Vision in the Dark; and Stephanae McCoy, Founder of Bold Blind Beauty and CAPTIVATING! Magazine.

Don’t Miss the Empowerment & Experience of the PCB Conference & Convention

Come for a Day or Stay for the Entire Weekend!

Why Attend?

* Learn strategies for building and maintaining a positive self-image
* Discover accessible products, services, and activities at our vendor’s exhibit hall
* Find new friends and mentors who also live with vision loss
* Enjoy an accessible weekend that’s free from misperception and stereotype

Who should attend?

* Any person with partial vision, significant vision loss or total blindness
* Friends and family members impacted by a loved one’s sight loss
* Professionals serving people who are vision impaired or those likely to experience vision loss

Emerging Conference Details: [www.pcb1.org/conference/](http://www.pcb1.org/conference/)

Twitter: @PCB\_Advocate,

Facebook: PACounciloftheBlind

Request the Conference Registration Packet Today!

Call 877-617-7407

Email pcboffice@pcb1.org

Register Online! Pcb1.org/conference/registration/

2019 Proposed Bylaw Amendment

From the Parliamentary Team

The following document containing a proposed bylaw amendment has been compiled by the PCB Parliamentary Team, based on suggested revisions received from the Golden Triangle Chapter. Please review this proposed amendment, to be presented for approval by the 2019 convention body in Harrisburg.

Current Bylaw:

Article VII: Powers and Duties of the Convention

Section 2. Voting

Official delegates shall be authorized to vote on behalf of  chapters and special interest affiliates at annual conventions of  the Pennsylvania Council of the Blind. Each Chapter and each  special interest affiliate shall be represented by two (2)  delegates. In addition, each member of a chapter or special interest affiliate who is present at the Convention is entitled  to one (1) vote, provided he/she has paid membership dues in  accordance with these Bylaws on record with the PCB Office for a  minimum of thirty (30) days. This popular vote count shall be  added to the delegate vote count and shall constitute the total  vote for or against any issue. Any business brought before the  Convention shall be decided by a majority vote except as  otherwise stated in these Bylaws.

Proposed Bylaw:

Article VII: Powers and Duties of the Convention

Section 2. Voting

There are two categories of voting at the Convention:  Chapter/Special Interest Affiliate and Individual voting. Only official delegates shall be authorized to cast chapter or affiliate votes at annual conventions of the Pennsylvania Council of the Blind. The names of the Primary Delegate and the Alternate Delegate for each chapter and affiliate shall be reported to the Secretary prior to the close of the first day of the convention. Should neither the Primary Delegate nor the Alternate Delegate be present to cast the votes, the chapter or affiliate shall forfeit its votes on the current issue. Each chapter and special interest affiliate in good standing is automatically entitled to two (2) votes. An additional vote shall be gained when a chapter’s membership exceeds twenty (20) members, and for every increment of twenty (20) members thereafter. Such vote count shall be based on the chapter membership report filed annually on or before March 15. For example, 8-20 members = 2 votes;  21-40 members = 3 votes; 41-60 members = 4 votes, etc.

Each dues-paid member of PCB who is present at the convention is entitled to one (1) individual vote, provided he/she has been a member on record with the PCB office for a minimum of 30 days prior to the opening of the annual convention. This individual vote count shall be added to the chapter/affiliate vote count and shall constitute the total vote for or against any issue. Any business brought before the Convention shall be decided by a majority vote except as otherwise stated in these Bylaws.

Explanation:

This section changes the number of votes to which each chapter or special interest affiliate is entitled, beginning with a minimum of two, and increasing as its membership increases. One vote is added when the membership exceeds 20, and for each additional 20 members thereafter. Membership is determined based on the number of dues-paid members listed in the chapter’s membership report filed annually on or before March 15. The names of the primary delegate and the alternate delegate for each chapter and affiliate must be reported to the Secretary prior to the close of the first day of the Convention.

End of the 2019 proposed bylaw amendment.

This Year's Conference Dart-Throwing Event

The dart planning subcommittee is hosting a duel event on Friday, October 18 beginning at 9am. First from 9 to 10 AM, two very experienced dart throwers will hold a dart throwing clinic for up to twelve attendees who are interested in learning to throw darts using an audio dart board. Those participating in the clinic will be charged $2 to participate and must report to Ballroom D by 8:45 AM.

At 10 AM, those who have participated in the clinic will be asked to leave the room, and a dart tournament will commence with up to 16 competitors. Anyone wishing to participate in the tournament will be required to be an experienced dart thrower. This is defined as an individual who has either participated in a non-PCB related tournament, has been involved in a dart throwing league, or has had some regular experience throwing darts. Tournament participants will be charged a $5 entrance fee to be put towards tournament prizes. To ensure the tournament begins promptly, participants are to report to Ballroom D no later than 10:00 AM.

If sixteen people have not signed up for the tournament, the best throwers from the clinic as measured by how many times an individual throws a scoring dart, minimum of 6 scores out of 9 throws, may be invited to enter the tournament for an additional $5 entry fee.

The tournament event will be up to 8 two-member teams, double elimination, 301 count-down. Prize money for each member of a winning team is as follows: $50 first place, $40 second place, and $30 third place. All tournament participants will be required to wear a blindfold.

Whether participating in the training clinic or tournament, attendees must preregister on the conference registration form. To avoid unnecessary noise and distraction for trainees and tournament participants, those not participating in either the clinic or tournament are kindly asked to not attend the event.

Cast Your Vote on Friday Morning’s Movie

 One of this year’s entertainment options for Friday morning at the 2019 PCB Conference is an audio-described movie. We showed The Martian a few years ago, and it was a hit, so we decided to bring the movie morning back again. After researching recent movies with audio description, we’ve narrowed our selection to five movies that will hopefully appeal to everyone. And the selection of movies is extra cool because each is based on a book available on Bard.

If you’re planning on joining us for the movie, check out the options below, cast your vote and make your voice heard. Submit your vote for the conference movie by Thursday, October 10 to Jackie Wissinger at jbwiss2@verizon.net. Stay tuned for the winning movie announcement on the pcb-l listserv. Thanks for participating, and we look forward to seeing you in Harrisburg!

1. A Dog’s Journey (PG)
Bailey is living the good life on the Michigan farm of his boy, Ethan and Ethan's wife Hannah. He even has a new playmate: Ethan and Hannah's baby granddaughter, CJ. The problem is that CJ's mom, Gloria, decides to take CJ away. As Bailey's soul prepares to leave this life for a new one, he makes a promise to Ethan to find CJ and protect her at any cost. Thus begins Bailey's adventure through many lives filled with love, friendship, and devotion.
A dog's journey DB84104

2. A Dog’s Way Home (PG)
As a puppy, Bella finds her way into the arms of Lucas, a young man who gives her a good home. When Bella becomes separated from Lucas, she soon finds herself on an epic 400-mile journey to reunite with her beloved owner. Along the way, the lost but spirited dog touches the lives of an orphaned mountain lion, a down-on-his-luck veteran and some friendly strangers who cross her path.
A dog's way home DB88104

3. Five Feet Apart (PG)
Seventeen-year-old Stella spends most of her time in the hospital as a cystic fibrosis patient. Her life is full of routines, boundaries and self-control -- all of which get put to the test when she meets Will, an impossibly charming teen who has the same illness. There's an instant flirtation, though restrictions dictate that they must maintain a safe distance between them. As their connection intensifies, so does the temptation to throw the rules out the window and embrace that attraction.
Five feet apart DB94831

4. Wonder (PG)
Born with facial differences that, up until now, have prevented him from going to a mainstream school, Auggie Pullman becomes the most unlikely of heroes when he enters the local fifth grade. As his family, his new classmates, and the larger community all struggle to discover their compassion and acceptance, Auggie's extraordinary journey will unite them and prove you can't blend in when you were born to stand out.
Wonder DB74228

5. A Wrinkle in Time (PG)
A Wrinkle in Time is the story of Meg Murry, a high-school-aged girl who is transported on an adventure through time and space with her younger brother Charles Wallace and her friend Calvin O'Keefe to rescue her father, a gifted scientist, from the evil forces that hold him prisoner on another planet.
A wrinkle in time DB48972

Does Blindness or Low Vision Have Anything to Do with Success?

By Jule Ann Lieberman, First Vice President

As many of you know, I have plenty of stories I tell. Some of which are examples of small successful moments, while others are about meeting larger challenges. Some of my stories reflect my personal experience and other times I relate stories that have been shared with me.

At our upcoming conference, the Vision Loss Resource Team will be holding a breakout session on Sharing Your Successes. The session, held Friday afternoon, October 19, will be a round table discussion giving participants the opportunity to share and hear how, as peers, we have surprised others or even ourselves by facing family, workplace, community, and life challenges. It will be a time for us to reflect on how we, as individuals who just happen to have little or no vision, find success in ways that are meaningful to us.

To get your thinking started I offer a few short insights into some of my own personal successes.

For many years I was the “stay at home Mom” of three active children. Our home was frequently the “hang out” after school or on weekends for a variety of neighborhood children. My oldest son was the neighborhood activity organizer, so it was not uncommon for a group of four or more young boys to be playing video games in our home. On one day, the group, which included the son of a famous baseball player, was getting rowdy playing a sports related video game. I can only assume that the ball player’s son was accustomed to rough locker room talk. The language police were on high attention because my daughter, only five years old, was in the next room in clear ear-shot of the boys. I stepped into the doorway and promptly caught the attention of the boys by stating emphatically, “Gentlemen, and I use this term very loosely here, I ask you to refrain from foul language while in my home.” All heads bowed and each sounded an apology. I added that my son would be quite upset if he heard his little sister spouting those foul words.

As I walked away and down the hall, I heard the baseball player’s son ask my son, “Well Jerre, I know your Mom cannot see much, but does she have radar or something?” My son’s response was, “I know she does not see much, but she does not miss a trick”. I take pride that this was a small but meaningful parenting moment.

Another example of surprising success for me was during a time when I was being overwhelmed with doing graduate schoolwork, keeping my non-profit organization open and tending to family needs. I arrived in one of my lab sessions on Salus campus to find out that one of my fellow classmates was surprised that I had so little vision. Most of our coursework was online, so it was the first time we were meeting face-to-face. She remarked that I always was the first to upload my assignments and join the discussion boards. It was apparent to her that I was earning good grades. She was fully sighted and stated that she had trouble completing the work and keeping up with the discussion board. My response was that I am accustomed to working extra hard because it routinely takes me more time or greater creativity to get tasks done than it typically takes a sighted person to accomplish. I think she left the conversation with a better understanding of the creativity and dedication to work that persons who are blind or have little vision can achieve. That’s a big success in my book!

Please consider joining the Vision Loss Resource Team either in person or consider contacting us to arrange to join us from a distance. We all have success stories. It’s time to shine the light and blow your horn!

Going, Going, Gone!

By Mary Ann Grignon, Auction Coordinator

Can you believe it? the Live auction is only one month away! Once again, the PCB fund Development team and a host of dedicated volunteers will work together in harmony to present this year’s Live Auction at the 2019 PCB Conference and Convention. The auction is being held on Friday evening, October 18, at 8 PM Eastern.

While the majority of the work in planning this fun-filled, fundraising event is shouldered by the Fund Development Team and many other volunteers, there would be no auction without the generous donations made by you, the PCB family and peers.

To spur your imagination and creativity, I have been sending to the PCB-L suggestions from various online resources from which you can choose to purchase auction items. I have also provided an Auction solicitation letter and marketing form for your use when requesting items from community businesses.

If you’re thinking that you don’t really have the funds to contribute but you sure can bake a good bread, knit a lovely scarf or blanket, or, teach a member something at which you excel, we welcome these types of donations as well. In fact, they are some of the items which generate the best bidding and fetch the highest funds.

Once you have obtained an auction item, please inform the Fund Development Team by emailing Tony Swartz at: tbswartz@ptd.net or call: 610-799-4565. Please provide the following information:

1. The name of the Item.

2. A brief description of the item.

3. The value of the item.

4. The contributor of the item.

5. Who and How will the item be delivered to the conference.

In September, we will begin posting the 2019 auction item list on our listservs.

What? You aren’t planning to attend this year’s conference? Well, there’s no reason for you to miss the fun! This year, as in past years, members will have the opportunity to bid on items by phone. To participate, call 515-604-9995 and enter access code 479593 followed by the # sign. Note this is a long-distance call.

Call into the auction line no later than 7:45 to provide your name and contact information to the phone host so we can follow-up if you win the high bid on an item. You'll be listening live over the phone, so when you hear an item you'd like to bid on, just shout out your bid and it will be relayed in the hall.

If you submit the winning bid, you will be contacted either immediately following the auction or on Saturday for your payment information and to discuss mailing options. Payment by checks will be accepted, but the item will not be shipped to you until the check is received. Please note that you will be charged for shipping. Anyone in the greater Harrisburg area may also pick up an item at our office. Please contact the office prior to picking up an item.

If you have any questions regarding participating by phone or making a donation, again you may contact either Tony Swartz or Mary Ann Grignon.

PAGDUS Breakfast Preview: Coffee and Canines

By Rose Martin, PAGDUS President

Ruf’ start to your Saturday morning? We’re here to help! Before the Saturday morning general session, grab a cup of coffee or a bite to eat with members of Pennsylvania Guide Dog Users and Supporters, the newest chapter of PCB. All humans and canines are welcome, even those who are not guide dog handlers.

We’ll meet at our hotel restaurant in the Crowne Plaza at 7 AM. Please remember to register so that we can ensure an accurate reservation count and plenty of space. Because this is not a sponsored event, all individuals are responsible for their restaurant purchases.

And from the experts, the dogs themselves, “10/10, would highly recommend you join us for a barkin’ good time!”

Note: For those wondering, the PAGDUS breakfast will not replace our usual meeting. We’ll meet via conference call at our usual time on Wednesday, October 9, at 7:15 PM ET. Join us then by calling 605-313-4802 and using access code 985255#.

Attn. Teens, Adults, & Parents of Children with Blindness or Vision Loss!!

Find Self-confidence, Peer support, Accessibility, Resources, & Knowledge

SPARK Saturday

October 19 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Crowne Plaza Harrisburg-Hershey 23 S. 2nd St.

FREE Event with Blindness Exhibitors & Presenters

* Thomas Reid, Audio Producer of “Reid My Mind Radio”
* Kristin Smedley, Parent of two blind sons and author of Thriving Blind
* Dr. Andre Watson, Clinical Psychologist and author of Vision in the Dark
* Stephanae McCoy, Founder of Bold Blind Beauty and CAPTIVATING! Magazine

To Register & Get Additional Details

pcb1.org/SPARKSat or 877-617-7407

Loved Ones & Professionals Welcome!

Declaration of 2019 PCB Board and officer Candidates

From the Nominating Team

In the summer edition of The PCB Advocate, the Nominating Team requested members interested in declaring themselves as candidates for election as officers or to the PCB Board of Directors to submit a statement of intent and a biographical note. The Team received a single statement for each officer position and seven statements of declaration for the four original board positions. Two currently serving members of the board in midterm have declared their candidacy for the two vice presidential positions. As a result, should the two current members of the board be successfully elected to the offices they seek, a total of six board positions will be open; four two-year terms and two one-year terms.

Following our current practice, those declaring their interest as candidates were asked to prepare and record a statement based on questions submitted by the Nominating Team.

Those seeking a position as an officer were asked to respond to a mandatory question and to one of three optional questions. Questions posed were:

Mandatory Question-

What do you see as your role in the position for which you are a candidate?

Optional Questions-

1. What do you think is your most important attribute that will assist you in the office for which you are a candidate and why?

2. In what direction would you like to see PCB move during the time you are in office, if you are elected?

3. How would you address financial security and/or membership development for PCB?

those seeking a position as a member of the board of directors were asked to respond to a mandatory question and to one of two optional questions. Questions posed were:

Mandatory Question-

What do you see as your role and your greatest responsibility as a member of the Board of Directors of PCB?

Optional Questions-

1. What do you believe is your most important attribute which will assist you as a member of the Board of Directors of PCB and why?

2. As a member of the Board of Directors of PCB, is there a particular initiative of our organization's mission or administration to which you will dedicate your efforts or expertise?

The declared candidates seeking election to officer positions are:

President: Christine Hunsinger

1st Vice President: Mary Ann Grignon

2nd Vice President: Rosemary Martin

Secretary: Jacqueline Wissinger

Treasurer: Michael Zaken

The declared candidates seeking election to the Board of Directors are:

John Anderson

Michael Gravitt

George Holliday

Jule Ann Lieberman

Robert Shingleton

Scott Stauffer

Please note, one of the initial individuals who submitted a statement of interest for a Board of Director’s position needed to withdraw from candidacy for personal reasons, thus we are left with the six candidates listed above.

Candidates' recorded statements are posted on the pcb1.org website in the conference section. In addition, the candidate statements may also be accessed from the PCB information Line number at: 773-572-6314, select the conference option. For those receiving The PCB Advocate on cartridge, candidate statements will be included as content after the conclusion of this issue. The Nominating Team urges you to take the time to review all candidate statements.

On Monday September 30th, the Nominating Team will publish on PCB's general and leadership listservs its recommended slate of candidates for both officer and board positions. As specified in our bylaws, any member may seek nomination from the floor during the elections, and those declared candidates not on the slate are encouraged to campaign to be nominated from the floor. For those who have declared their candidacy but are unable to attend the conference,

it is necessary that you arrange with a supporter of your candidacy to see that your name is placed in nomination during the elections.

PCBFund Development Team Happenings!

By George S. Holliday, Team Leader

We know that summer is coming to a close once Labor Day weekend is over. The PCB Fund Development Team has been working hard to address the fundraising activities of PCB.

Wine and Iced Tea Glasses:

Now here is a relaxing way to support PCB and enjoy a glass of wine or a glass of your favorite juice or iced tea. Yes, you can purchase a 16-ounce iced tea glass, or a 21-ounce stemless wine/juice glass.

These are PCB Signature Glasses from Loving Touch Connection. Available in two glass styles, this design features the PCB logo and the signature phrase: Peers Challenging Beliefs in print and raised Braille. The conference introductory price is $18.00 each. These glasses can be ordered by indicating your purchase on your conference registration form, stopping by the PCB table in the vendor’s area during the conference, or contacting Kathy from Loving Touch Connection at 610-657-9869. Let her know you are with PCB.

Room-Rate Fund:

Don’t forget your Room-Rate Fund tickets. You can purchase them on your registration for the convention, while you’re at the conference, or over the phone to the PCB office if you will not be attending the conference. Every ticket sold this year assist with the room rate reduction in the future. There must be a minimum of $1,000 in the fund before it can be used again. Remember, the winners don’t need to be present at the pre-banquet drawing, which means you can sell these $5 tickets to friends, family members and fellow chapter members. Call the office for a supply of tickets to sell. Fifty percent of the funds raised goes into the Room-Rate Fund while the other 50% is split among three drawing winners: 25% for first place; 15% for second place; and 10% for third place.

PCB 2019 Calendar Raffle:

On behalf of the Fund Development Team, I want to thank those who participated in making the 2019 PCB Calendar Raffle a success. To those who didn’t win, and to those who did, with you, PCB continues to move forward. There will be a 2020 calendar raffle next year and the team’s goal is to sell every ticket. Tickets will be available in December. Thanks again for your support.

2019 MMS Contest:

For the past two years at the conference, members and friends were introduced to a very simple Monthly Monetary Support (MMS) fundraising contest. It is turning out to be very successful, so the committee is continuing the contest this year.

Join the MMS program to support both the American Council of the Blind (ACB) and the Pennsylvania Council of the Blind (PCB). The MMS fifty-fifty option is quick, easy, and provides a steady source of funds for ACB and PCB.

The contest starts Tuesday, October 1, 2019, and ends Friday, January 17, 2020. There will be a 1st prize of $100 and a 2nd prize of $50. To enter the contest, you contribute a minimum of $10 or more per month, but whatever you give, it will be split 50 - 50 between ACB and PCB. Your initial entry of $10 will place your name in the hat one time, but your name will be entered once for every additional $5. In addition, everyone joining the MMS program will be automatically entered into the annual grand prize drawing after the 2020 ACB Conference and Convention. Since there are several holidays coming up, if you wish, you can enter the contest, but choose to defer your first contribution withdrawal until January 2020. It’s so easy!

Please express your interest in participating in this great opportunity by contacting George Holliday via email to george.holliday@comcast.net, by phone to 215-796-9813, or in-person at the conference. He will forward your name and telephone to the ACB Minnesota office. The staff there will give you a call and ask you how much you want to give each month; how you want ACB to collect the money- either drafted out of your bank account or charged to your credit or debit card; and your full contact information. ACB does all the rest. Every quarter PCB will receive a check from ACB.

Note: This contest is not just for members. Family members and friends are welcome to participate. Members of Lions clubs and other organizations are participating. Remember, all MMS contributions are tax deductible.

PCB and Amazon Smile:

PCB has been a benefiting charity of Amazon Smile for a few years. If you purchase from Amazon Smile, is Pennsylvania Council of the Blind designated as your charity? Amazon Smile will donate .5% from your qualified purchases. It doesn’t cost you anything to sign up. So, what are you waiting for? Follow the steps below and choose Pennsylvania Council of the Blind as your designated charity. When purchasing items for the PCB Auction, gifts for the holidays, birthday gifts or just casually shopping for yourself on Amazon, don’t forget to use Amazon Smile.

Using the web browser on either your phone or computer, go to smile.amazon.com and sign in like you normally would to your Amazon account. Where it asks you what charity you would like to support, type Pennsylvania Council of the Blind and hit enter. (Just typing PCB brings up lots of hits that have nothing to do with our PCB.) When the resulting list of organizations appears, select Pennsylvania Council of the Blind. You will then land on an I accept page that says you agree to use [smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) in order to ensure that PCB gets the .5% donation from your qualified purchases. Hence, every time you go to [smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) and shop for qualified items, you will be donating to PCB. It’s important to note that if you purchase directly through the Amazon app or Alexa, purchases do not qualify for Smile. However, if you use the app or Alexa to place items in your cart, and then log-in to Smile.Amazon.com through an internet browser and purchase the items in your cart, PCB will get the donation. Have fun shopping!

We Need Your Ideas:

Finally, the PCB Fund Development Team is looking for new fundraising ideas and opportunities. If you have any, please consider sharing them with our team. If one of your ideas is selected and implemented by PCB, you will be rewarded with a gift card. Suggestions can be sent to me at george.holliday@comcast.net or 215-796-9813.

The LVCB Leaves of Change

By Liz Oleksa, LVCB President

Like the autumn leaves, our chapter is preparing for some changes. We are looking ahead to the coming year, which will bring with it, changes among our chapter officers.

We will be electing a new President and other officers this November. This year, we are opening our officers to having co-positions. If someone would like to hold an officer position but is not sure that he or she can handle all the duties of the position, we are allowing two members to share in the duties. This sharing of responsibilities will allow more individuals from our chapter to become more involved and prepare them for holding a full position on their own one day. We hope that this will allow for a growth in participation and leadership among all our members.

Our chapter continues to fundraise through Gertrude Hawke Chocolate bar sales. At only $1 per bar, our chapter is still raising funds, earning $0.40 per bar sale. This is a fun and easy fundraiser in which many of our members can participate. Whether you like milk or dark chocolate, we have a variety to sell. This is a fundraiser that we are doing year-round, which allows for plenty of opportunities for sales…Stocking stuffers, Halloween (if you give a full-size candy bar to the kids or even the adults, they will love you forever!), Easter, Valentine’s Day, and the great summer refresher after doing the yard work. Selling these bars are a great way for our chapter to advertise as well, as we include our chapter business cards with the candy. This spreads the word about our chapter, contact info and social media pages.

As this summer wraps up, we are excited for what is yet to come for the rest of the year. LVCB is always in search of new members, and we continue to grow our membership. A huge shout out to Debbie Rozear, our Recording Secretary, for all the sharing and encouragement for recruiting new members. Debbie has the highest recruitment rate in our chapter. So, way to go Debbie!!!

We would like to recognize Gary Dvorshak, Vice-President, for his determination and efforts in our chapter. Gary ran his first meeting for LVCB at our August picnic. Although a bit apprehensive at first, Gary did an excellent job running the meeting in our President’s absence. Gary has been a chapter member since 2016 and has been getting more involved. We all look forward to seeing what more Gary brings to the table for our chapter in the coming years.

As the year progresses, we welcome new faces, personality and enthusiasm into our chapter. From our Junior member at 15, to our most senior member, at 81, we love to see our members grow and change. Since our chapter began in 1993, LVCB has gone from having 6 members to having almost 40 members. Coming up on 27 years of membership, we all look forward to the positive changes and development our chapter can bring to the community of people with blindness and visual impairments.

As LVCB’s 26th summer has passed by with warmth and sunshine, we welcome the shift that comes along with the changing autumn leaves.

Philadelphia Regional Chapter Presents 2019 Service Awards

By Ethel Siegel

Following its monthly chapter meeting on Saturday morning, June 8, The Philadelphia Regional Chapter hosted its 2019 Awards Ceremony and Luncheon at Associated Services for the Blind.

The ceremony opened with PRC member Vivian Williams leading everyone in the singing of “God Bless America.”

Each year, PRC presents two service awards. An awards committee consisting of chapter members determines each year’s recipients.

The Dr. Mae Davidow Community Service Award is presented to those who strive to improve the lives of blind and visually impaired people. This year’s recipient was Mary (May) Davis. She was a founder of the Jenny Beck Chapter of the Braille Revival League, has been a proofreader at Associated Services for the Blind for many years, and is also very active in Guide Dog Users, Inc.

The Francis Williams Volunteer Service Award is presented to individuals who actively volunteer in the community. This year’s recipient was John Luttenberger. He is a singer with the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia chorus, active in his church, Corresponding Secretary of PRC, Vice President of the Jenny Beck Chapter of the Braille Revival League and serves on various other committees and boards in the blind community.

May and John were each presented with a plaque in recognition of their awards.

Following the awards ceremony, everyone enjoyed a delicious box lunch. A good time was had by all.

We all eagerly look forward to this very special event every year at our June meeting.

Turn! Turn! Turn!

By Nancy Scott

On the Saturday before Halloween in 2017, I was scheduled to work with Angel, my computer wizard. And I would get to stay afterwards for pumpkin carving. But the day would hold many surprises.

First, we decided to drive 20 minutes to the pumpkin patch. I had never seen pumpkins growing.

A hayride brought us to the pumpkins. I had climbed into hayrides in my youth, but thankfully, this hay wagon had steps and railings. It was a beautiful 75-degree day and many people wanted to pick perfect pumpkins. The ride was nostalgic, and the tractor moved us quickly, even around corners.

Angel’s husband, Darrell, already had one pumpkin at home. Pumpkins grow from flowers and stay mostly on the ground. The vines are long and strong and capable of tripping careless people. Darrell spied a white pumpkin (who knew they could be white) and decided we needed it for cool artistic expression.

While out near the pumpkin patch, I heard a loud sound sort of like many rain sticks being tipped all at once. It was, Angel said, grain going into a silo. A dump truck poured the grain onto a conveyor belt which forced the grain to the top, a man near the top of the silo looked through a window to make sure the grain fell correctly.

The other really fun highlight was the hay bale maze. It was actually designed for small children. But teen daughter Eva wanted me to go through it with her. Oddly enough, we’d been talking about mazes on the trip up. Darrell said the gaming wisdom was to always follow the left hand wall.

I assumed that mazes were just for sighted people. Eva persuaded, “I’ll be with you.” Angel assured, “We can watch you from outside, because we can see over the top of the maze. If you get into trouble, which you probably won’t, we can get you.”

In we went. I trailed the prickly, shoulder-height left-hand wall with the back of my left hand holding the cane in my right. I didn’t extend the cane much, because of other people and children nearby.

Eva and I talked as we walked. I forget what we talked about, but I was distracted enough that I kept walking into walls as they suddenly turned. The conversation mostly went, “Oh! That was a quick turn!” and Eva walking behind me saying, “Oh! Right! I forgot to warn you about that wall, too.” We laughed and I bounced off hay bales and tried not to knock over any little kids. We never got lost.

So much of life is risk and quick turns and beautiful sunshine and then another unexpected obstacle but that left-hand wall advice worked like a charm.

Later, Angel and I checked markets and sent submissions. Then we went outside for pumpkin carving. Darrell carved the white one and Eva carved the regular one. Darrell’s had big round eyes and teeth (I know carving teeth shows great pumpkin skill). But Eva’s pumpkin had eyebrows.

Darrell didn’t even draw his design first. But he had a trick which he showed me. He didn’t carve all the way through for the first cut. That way, if he got the proportions wrong, he might still fix it.

What a magical transformation—two people, two knives, two big fruit turned to celebration. I hadn’t seen anyone carve pumpkins since I was about ten years old.

I could sort of imagine candles shining through the two pumpkins’ faces. I could certainly imagine people walking by and envying such carving ability.

I still laugh at walking into all those maze walls even though I had a cane and Eva could see. Maybe I have to practice not being distracted.

A Personal Note & Poem

By Liz Oleksa

I wanted to share some exciting news with everyone in addition to giving thanks for all of you.  When I lost my sight almost seven years ago, I was convinced that my life was over.  I ended up meeting and working with Debbie Rozear, who really helped me to regain a new perspective on what my life was going to be as a blind person.  Debbie introduced me to an amazing group of people, who I now call my family.  They were the Lehigh Valley Council of the Blind.

Through LVCB, I grew and became a member of PCB, meeting more incredible people, of whom I also see as my family.  You have all encouraged me to follow my heart and dreams and supported me through my decision of returning to college to pursue a degree in Psychology.  I started at Cedar Crest College in January 2017, as a part-time adult student.  I have greatly enjoyed my educational journey thus far and hope to graduate in May 2021.

This all being said, I take a lot of pride in how hard I work to accomplish my goals, but again, I could not have gotten this far without the support of my family at PCB and LVCB.  I am super proud to announce that in 2018, I was chosen as the local level’s first-place scholarship recipient for Soroptimist International, and second-place scholarship recipient for North-Atlantic Soroptimist International, for a total of $4,500 in scholarship funding.  I was then notified that I was selected as the local first-place scholarship recipient from Executive Woman’s International.  To top it off, I was then selected as the first-place multi-national Corporate Executive Woman’s International scholarship winner, selected from all the US and Canadian applicants.    This award totaled $9,000. It is such an honor to receive such recognition for my accomplishments.

I cannot thank you all enough for your guidance, support, and encouragement. I sincerely appreciate all your technology assistance and tips for remembering info without the use of my sight.  I am so very grateful for the opportunities that my blindness has provided in my life, and for my family who has been a beacon of light in my darkest moments.  Thank you all from the bottom of my heart. Please enjoy this very special poem I’ve written.

The Heart

By Liz Oleksa

When your heart is so full,

yet it still aches.

So thankful for those who are in my life,

who have come into my life and gone,

and for who are still yet to come.

For a season,

for a reason,

through blood or by fate,

for I’ll always love you when you’re with me or away,

and I’ll always miss you from day to day.

For when you are close,

feeling so far yet so near.

I hold you in my heart,

in a place so dear.

I’m grateful for the time we had, have,or is times yet to come.

A part of you stays with me,

breaks through like the sun.

On a cloudy day,

when the world seems so dark,

Your  love lights a spark.

 A Spark deep within me, keeping me safe from harm.

Your love embraces me, holding me close in your arms.

A whisper of support,

no matter how tough the time.

Your light shines within me.

I know it will all be fine.

A memory, a moment, a Polaroid stuck through time.

I am thankful for you being a part of mine.

A part of my life, that will never fade away.

Part of my heart forever to stay.

CHAPTER & AFFILIATE PRESIDENTS 2019

Cumberland County………..………………Bill Davis

Golden Triangle…………………Christine Hunsinger

Hank Bloomberg…………………………Judy Schell

J. F. K………………………………….David Lee Shaw

Keystone………………………….Cathy Long

Lehigh Valley……………………………….Liz Oleksa

Oil Valley……………………………...Eric Schreiber

PA Guide Dog Users & Supporters..Rose Martin

Philadelphia Metro………………..George Holliday

Philadelphia Regional…………..Shirley Brottman

Washington County………………………Diane Krek

York County……………………….Roberta Simmons

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George Holliday………………………..215-796-9813

Cathy Long……………………………….717-732-5265

Rosemary Martin……………………….215-756-1624

Thomas Reid…………………………….570-421-2543

PCB- A Peer Network for All Impacted by Vision Loss

Getting to Know You Survey

Fields with \* are strongly requested.

 Name\*:

 Birth Date:

What is your current age range\*: (please check one)

\_\_\_\_ Over 65

\_\_\_\_ 51-65

\_\_\_\_ 31-50

\_\_\_\_ 18-30

\_\_\_\_ Under 18

Street Address\*:

City/State/Zip\*:

County\*:

Phone #1\*:

Phone #2:

Email:

Please note: All peers will be automatically added to PCB’s email distribution list. Announcements of events, opportunities, and resources are sent out 2 to 3 times each month. For peers without email access, PCB posts monthly updates to the PCB Information Line, available by calling 773-572-6314.

Preferred Format of Material\*: (please check one)

\_\_\_Braille \_\_\_Large Print

\_\_\_Email \_\_\_Audio/NLS Cartridge

Are you a person with vision loss or blindness?\*

\_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_NO

If yes, how long have you experienced vision loss/blindness? (Please check one.)

\_\_\_\_ Since birth

\_\_\_\_ More than 10 years

\_\_\_\_ 5 to 10 years

\_\_\_\_ 2 to 5 years

\_\_\_\_ Less than 2 years

If you are not a person with vision loss, how are you impacted by vision loss?

\_\_\_Family member \_\_\_Friend

\_\_\_Community member \_\_\_Professional

\_\_\_Colleague

If you wish to tell us about any disabilities other than vision loss or blindness, please do so here:

Select your annual network membership type\*:

\_\_\_Individual Adult At-Large $10

\_\_\_Individual Junior (under 18) $5

\_\_\_Chapter/Affiliate Member $TBD

\_\_\_Nonprofit Agency $20

\_\_\_Corporate/For-profit $60

Which of the following PCB offerings are of interest to you?\* (Check all that apply.)

\_\_\_AccessiDocs Conversion Service

\_\_\_American Council of the Blind

\_\_\_Annual Conference

\_\_\_Having/Being a Vision Loss Mentor

\_\_\_iDevices for Independence

\_\_\_Leadership and Volunteer Opportunities

\_\_\_Local Chapters

\_\_\_PCB-Chat Listserv

\_\_\_PCB Telephone Information Line

\_\_\_Public Awareness & Peer Outreach

\_\_\_Public Policy/Advocacy Projects

\_\_\_Quarterly Newsletter

\_\_\_TheReImage Campaign

\_\_\_Topical Discussion Calls

\_\_\_Vision Loss Resources

Are you interested in being listed in a database of individuals who provide peer support to others impacted by vision loss? Please note, your name, email and telephone information will be shared with individuals who contact the PCB office seeking peer guidance.

\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

If yes, what type of experience or expertise might you be comfortable providing? (e.g. assistive technology, parenting, organizing, a specific occupation, language fluency, etc.)

Which of the following topical areas are of interest to you? (Check all that apply.)

\_\_\_Accessible Products/Devices

\_\_\_Adjusting to vision loss

\_\_\_Advocacy

\_\_\_Braille

\_\_\_Education

\_\_\_Employment

\_\_\_Guide Dogs

\_\_\_Health & Fitness

\_\_\_Hobbies

\_\_\_Home Management

\_\_\_Parenting

\_\_\_Personal Development

\_\_\_Sports

\_\_\_Social Media

\_\_\_Technology

\_\_\_Transitioning to Adulthood

\_\_\_Travel

\_\_\_Other (Please list.)

If you are seeking vision loss resources, please tell us more about your needs so we can best offer assistance.

Please note PCB project coordinators will contact you to provide or gather additional information based on your responses to all questions.

Free Matter for the Blind

Or Handicapped

(Handle as 1st class Mail)

Domestic Mail Manual Sec. 135.7

RETURN TO

PA COUNCIL OF THE BLIND

931 N FRONT STREET

SUITE B

HARRISBURG, PA 17102

LARGE TYPE EDITION