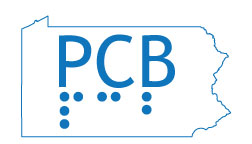
**The**

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**Advocate**

**Summer Edition 2025**

**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.

DISTRIBUTION

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# June and Diversity By Debby Hill, PCB President

Yes, June has arrived with the promise of warm weather, vacations, baseball, and more baseball! But when I got to thinking about the arrival of June, diversity also came to mind. June is Pride month for the LGBTQ+ community, and then there is the celebration of Juneteenth on Thursday, June 19.

Pride month was established by the gay community as a result of the Stonewall riots in June 1969 and after many years of suffering a lack of rights and discrimination. At that time, it was just fine for someone not to be hired or to be fired from a job just because they were gay. Then, there is Juneteenth. On June 19, 1865, federal troops finally arrived in Galveston Texas to tell the slaves in Texas—the last slaves in the country--that they were now free. But, as we all know just because the slaves were freed, it didn’t mean that blacks in America could be assured of safety, housing and of course jobs.

The fight for nondiscrimination still goes on, and with the elimination of many Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility programs, the battle may be even more challenging. And as people with disabilities, we also have to be in the fight. I imagine that many of you have had the experience of not getting a job because of your blindness or low vision. Most of the time, the employer does not say it out loud, but it can be obvious.

Once I inadvertently did an experiment. I applied for a job and included on my resume that I am blind. I got the rejection letter. The job came open again, and I applied without including on my resume that I am blind. I got a call for an interview. By the way, I didn’t get the job because they said I was over qualified, but you’d think they should have gleaned that from my resume? So, when it comes to employment for our community and other diverse communities, it is important that employers have an open-mind and are willing to have a diverse workforce. That is definitely a battle we will need to keep fighting.

However, as PCB peers, while we champion being included in the sighted workplace and other aspects of life, we need to be sure to be inclusive and allow diversity in our own blind and low-vision community. Everyone has subconscious and at times conscious biases—that person’s voice is really gruff, they must be mean—but we need to be sure that when the alarm goes off in our heads that we don’t like someone and don’t want to associate with them, that it isn’t because of their race, gender, being gay, or any other characteristic. If we are asking to be included in the wider world, we have to make sure we practice in our own community what we expect from others.

Enjoy June!

# The 2025 ACB Conference and Convention Big Dreams, Bold Ideas By Debby Hill, President of PCB

It is time for the ACB Convention from June 23 through July 11. The theme of this year’s convention is “Big Dreams, Bold Ideas” which seems appropriate since the in-person part of the convention is being held in Dallas, TX.

As in the past few years, the convention has two parts. The first part is from Monday, June 23 through Saturday June 28 and is all virtual on Zoom and ACB media. That week there will be business meetings from Monday through Friday evenings starting at 8 PM eastern time. Monday’s meeting will be held to adopt the standing rules for the remainder of the convention and an affiliate roll call. There will also be a meeting of the Nominations Committee to adopt the slate of candidates for office that the committee will announce at the Tuesday June 24 virtual meeting. Voting for officers will begin on Saturday, July 5.

Tuesday through Friday evenings are reserved for debate and voting on proposed ACB resolutions and debate on proposed ACB constitution and bylaw amendments. During this week, the resolutions will be voted upon unless a record vote is requested for a particular resolution. See the article in this Advocate entitled “Let’s Support ACB by Voting During the ACB Convention” which provides all you need to know about voting at the ACB convention.

In addition, during each day, starting Wednesday the 26th and lasting through Saturday the 29th there will be many virtual presentations. Some of these will be business meetings for special interest affiliates within ACB, but there are also other presentations on a variety of topics that you might find interesting. Below is a sampling of some of the sessions you can listen to on Zoom or ACB media. Note: the times below are eastern time, but if you look at a schedule from ACB, the times are central time, and you will need to adjust them for the east.

Wednesday, June 25

11:00 am – 2:00 pm, ACB Exhibit Hall Overview

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm Mock Election, practice with your ACB Voting Credentials

Thursday, June 26

10:00 am – 11:00 am How Does Climate Change Affect People with Disabilities

11:00 am – 1:45 pm double session, Guide Dog School Updates

2:00 pm – 3:15 pm LUA Presents the New DA2 Player and the NLS My Talking Books Smart Speaker Skill

3:30 – 4:45 pm LUA Presents the Journey from Print Book to Talking Book

5:00 pm – 6:15 pm Update on Legal Advocacy Impacting People with Disabilities

6:30 pm – 7:45 pm Low Vision Research with Dr. Soltau

Friday, June 27

11:00 am - 12:15 am Getting Started with WhatsApp on Your iPhone (Virtual)

12:30 am - 1:45 pm Audio Description and Sports

2:00 pm - 3:15 pm Solving Your Tech Issues When You Are Not A Wizard

6:30 – 7:45 pm, Match Wits with Next Gen and the Boomers

Have fun listening to the face-off of these diverse generations in a trivia contest.

Saturday, June 28

12:30 am - 1:45 pm Using Your Phone and Smart Glasses to Describe the World Around You

2:00 pm - 3:15 pm When the Road Gets Rough-- There are often challenges on the road to mental health.

2:30 pm - 3:45 pm Using Braille in the Workplace

The second portion of the convention runs from July 4 through July 11, and the format will be hybrid. If you are going to the convention in Dallas TX, then you probably already have registered for the convention, have your transportation arranged, and have your hotel room. But for those of us who will be participating in the convention at home there are still plenty of presentations to tune into. First the ACB business meetings are scheduled as follows:

Saturday, July 5

8:00 pm – 11:30 pm, Opening General Session

Monday, July 7

9:30 am – 1:00 pm, General Session

Tuesday, July 8

9:30 am – 1:00 pm, General Session

Wednesday, July 9

9:30 am – 1:00 pm, General Session

Beyond the business meetings, here is a sampling of sessions that will be both in-person and virtual:

Saturday, July 5

10:00 am - 12:45 am Achieving Unity in the Face of Disagreement

4:30 pm - 5:45 pm Tips for Preventing Identity Theft

5:00 pm - 6:15 pm From Setback to Comeback. Essential Tools for a Successful Career Change After a Job Loss

Sunday, July 6

10:00 am - 11:15 am Blinded Veterans Association (BVA) is Celebrating 80 Years

2:00 pm - 3:15 pm Are We Meeting the Needs of Seniors with Vision Loss

3:30 pm - 4:45 pm Issues in Immigration Today

Monday, July 7

2:00 pm - 3:15 pm The Supreme Court Term in Review

3:30 pm - 4:45 pm Low Vision Tips and Tech with Sandi Owens

6:30 pm - 7:45 pm Prose and Poetry Reading: Share some of your original work or just come listen. FAMILY FRIENDLY, PLEASE.

Tuesday, July 8

8:30 am - 9:15 am BRL Breakfast What's so Great About UEB

2:00 pm - 3:15 pm LUA Presents Up Close and Personal with Talking Book Narrator Gary Tipton

2:30 pm - 3:45 pm LUA Presents a Q and A with the NLS Director, Jason Broughton

5:00 pm - 6:15 pm You May be Missing Out on Services for Seniors

Wednesday, July 9

3:30 PM – 4:45 pm, Advocacy Bootcamp 101

3:30 pm - 4:45 pm Meal Planning for a Healthy Life with Diabetes

5:00 pm - 6:15 pm Improving Membership Outcomes by Bridging the gap between Seniors and Younger Members

Thursday, July 10

8:00 PM – 10:30 pm, Convention Banquet

A few quick notes: If you are registered for the convention and staying at home, then you are all set. If you have Email, you will be getting a convention program and get messages from the ACB Convention listserv and will have all the information you will need to join sessions by Zoom and if you like, listen to them on ACB media. If you chose a hard copy program, remember that it may not have the latest information about events since there is a cut-off date to allow for printing and shipping.

If you are not registered and you would like to be able to join sessions on Zoom, then you have until 11:59 pm on Tuesday, June 17th to register on line at <https://members.acb.org/>. If you prefer to register by phone, call 651-428-5059. Leave a message with your name, phone number, time zone, and whether you plan to attend the convention in-person or virtually. Calls will be returned as quickly as possible. If you don’t register by June 17th, you can register starting July 5th; however, at that point the cost will be higher.

If you don’t register and if you are a member of ACB, you will still be able to vote on the resolutions, the amendments to the constitution and bylaws and the open ACB Board of Directors positions. If you don’t register you can listen to available sessions on ACB Media, but you won’t be able to actively participate in them.

If you do miss a session that you wanted to hear, or you just want to hear a session again, the sessions will be recorded and later be available as podcasts.

And don’t forget that before the convention, there will be the ACB summer auctions. The live auction will be on Saturday June 21 from 6 to 10 pm. But, before the live auction there will be two appetizer auctions. The first is from noon Thursday, June 19 to noon Friday June 20, and the second one is from noon Friday the 20th until noon Saturday the 21st.

Whether you attend in person or virtually, I hope you have a good convention!

# Let’s Support ACB and Have Our PCB Voices Heard by Voting During the ACB Convention By Debby Hill, PCB President

The 2025 ACB Convention is a two-part hybrid event. There will be lots of informative sessions devoted to dealing with low vision or blindness, but in this article my focus will be on the voting process. The first thing to know is you do not have to be registered for the ACB conference and convention in order to vote. You just need to be a dues-paying member of ACB in good standing by May 23, a month before the beginning of the convention.

It’s All Zoom

The first week of the convention is being held virtually using Zoom and will start at 8:00 PM each evening from Monday, June 23 through Friday, June 27. On Monday, June 23, a fairly short session will be held to adopt standing rules for the convention. The sessions beginning on Tuesday, June 24, will focus on the 2025 resolutions and ACB Constitution and Bylaw amendments. The only individual voting done during this time is on the proposed resolutions. Vote by raising your hand on whatever device you are using to access Zoom. Voting to pass or not pass resolutions or amendments to resolutions will start on Tuesday and will most likely be completed Thursday evening. After a resolution has been voted upon, if twenty-five or more people request a record vote, sometimes referred to as a roll call vote, the resolution will be scheduled to be voted upon on June 30.

The proposed ACB Constitution and bylaw amendments will be read on Tuesday, June 24 and Friday, June 27. You have had access to copies of the amendments via podcasts and ACB media as well. Also, on Friday the amendments will be debated and any minor changes to them will be made. The membership, however, won’t vote on them until Monday, June 30, which will also be when any requested record votes will be taken for resolutions. At this point, things will get a bit more complicated.

Individual and Delegate Voting

ACB record voting ballots include both individual votes from ACB members and also delegate votes for each affiliate. On Monday, June 30 from 3 to 7:00 pm. you will be able to cast your individual vote for constitution and bylaw amendments and any resolutions requiring a record vote. Once again, ACB is using the Vote-Now system. To use the system, you will need a link or phone number to use Vote-Now and a unique code used for voting. If you have an email address on file with ACB you will receive an email on Tuesday, June 24 and on Saturday, July 5 containing your unique voting code and the link and phone number used for submitting your vote. Additionally, the subject line of the Vote-Now email will be “Ballot-ACB unique voter code” and the email will be from “ACB ballot code.” If you don’t see the email in your inbox, check your spam or Junk folders. If that email doesn’t show up on June 24, call the ACB Minnesota Office at 612-332-3242 to get the voting information sent to your email.

If you do not have an email address on file with ACB, you should have received the information via regular mail already in a large print and braille letter telling you how to obtain your unique voting code and the information for accessing the Vote-Now system.

As I mentioned earlier, as an affiliate of ACB, PCB gets delegate votes, and based on our membership this year, we get seven votes. I am the delegate to the convention and Michael Zaken is the alternate delegate. On Monday, June 30, we will need to know how you want us to vote by 7:30 on the constitutional and bylaw amendments and any resolutions that require a record vote. If you would like to vote by email, send your choices to [president@pcb1.org](mailto:president@pcb1.org). If you would like to vote by phone or text, contact Michael at 412-613-9185.

Other voting opportunities

The in-person portion of the convention is being held in Dallas and will include hybrid meetings and voting sessions which will be held simultaneously in the hotel and over Zoom. Note, if you look at the ACB website or at any convention emails, the times for events are in central time. For this article I have converted them to eastern time. The general sessions of the convention start at 8 pm on Saturday, July 5. All board officer positions will need to be filled— president, first vice-president, second vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. These positions will be filled starting Saturday, July 5. The nominating committee will have selected a candidate for each of the positions, and if no one is nominated from the floor for a particular position, then the nominee will be elected by acclamation. If any of the positions do have nominations from the floor, meaning they are contested, then we will once again need to put on our voting hats.

Once the officer positions have been filled, there will be at least one vacant board position to be filled with nominations from the floor. Again, if only one person is nominated, the nominee will be elected by acclamation.

As is now published, here are the possible voting times for any contested positions.

First contested election

Individual vote using Vote-Now:

Sunday, July 6 3:00 – 7:00 pm

Delegate Voting by roll call

Monday, July 7th, 10:05 am, during the general session

Michael and I need your vote by 9:00 am

Second contested election

Individual vote by Vote-Now

Monday, July 7 3:00 – 7:00 pm

Delegate Voting by roll call

Tuesday, July 8, 10:05 am, during general session

Michael and I need your vote by 9:00 am

Third contested election

Individual vote by Vote-Now

Tuesday, July 8th, 3:00 – 7:00 pm

Delegate Voting by roll call

Wednesday, July 9, 10:05 am, during general session

Michael and I need your vote by 9:00 am

Fourth contested election

Individual vote by Vote-Now

Wednesday, July 9th, 3:00 – 7:00 pm

Delegate Voting by roll call

Thursday, July 10, 10:05 am, during general session

Michael and I need your vote by 9:00 am

Fifth contested election

Individual vote by Vote-Now

Thursday, July 10 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Delegate Voting by roll call

Thursday, July 10 3:00 - 4:00 pm

Michael and I need your vote by 2:30 pm

I think the easiest thing to do would be for you to remember that each time you cast your vote in the Vote-Now system, email, call, or text your vote to Michael or me. Remember if you want to email your votes send them to [president@pcb1.org](mailto:president@pcb1.org). To phone or text your vote, use 412-613-9185.

To prepare for the voting, current versions of the resolutions, constitution and bylaw changes, a motion to amend the ACB policy for use of text to speech in audio description, as well as standing rules are on ACB Media 2 as well as on demand in a podcast. The Spanish language versions are on ACB Media 8 at least until the ACB Auction has ended. The Auction descriptions are currently running on ACB Media 9. Check ACB Media 8 for English information and ACB Media 9 for Spanish information during the actual convention beginning on June 23.

Keep your peers who may not be paying close attention to the convention aware of any record votes where they can use both their ability to vote as individuals using Vote-Now and their ability to influence our delegate votes.

Thanks for taking part in PCB’s support for ACB by submitting your votes.

# Be a part of the Planning for the PCB Conference By Chris Hunsinger

The PCB Conference and Convention runs from Oct. 16 through Oct. 19 this year. Our Theme is “Harvesting Your Talents and Resources.” The Conference Program and Planning team (CPPT) would like some help from our peers.

Do you know of a presenter or presentation that could fit our theme? Remember that You as an individual, any team or chapter of PCB, or individuals and organizations outside of PCB can be presenters. The form for presenters to fill out is on the PCB website, available for download, and in the spring edition of The PCB Advocate. You can give possible presenters this information, or you can let the CPPT know about your idea so we can contact the possible presenter.

Do you have ideas about evening entertainment, a banquet speaker, products you would like to see demonstrated, or organizations that you think would want to be a sponsor for the conference? Let the CPPT know your thoughts. Sponsorship and vender forms are on the PCB website. You can give the CPPT your suggestions for entertainment and banquet speakers. Contact info is at the end of this article.

Remember that this is a PCB Conference and Convention. We want to make it interesting to those who attend, and we don’t always know of the possibilities that you as peers may want to hear about.

**My personal email address for Conference Program and Planning contact, is** [**cs.hunsinger@verizon.net**](mailto:cs.hunsinger@verizon.net)**.**

# Honor That Special Someone with a PCB Award By Chris Hunsinger

Do you have ideas for people who should receive awards during our Conference and convention? We do have four possible awards, but we don’t necessarily give each of the awards every year.

The titles and criteria for these awards are as follows:

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, TheReImage 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.

Anyone, a PCB peer or not, can make a nomination. The deadline for entries is September 1, 2025. You can send your nomination by email or call with your information. The email addresses for nominations will be at the end of this article. If you don’t get and acknowledgement, please call the office to give us the information again. Current members of the PCB Board are not eligible for these awards.

If you need to contact me about a PCB award nomination, call me **at 412-414-1628. If I don’t answer, just leave me a message to call you back. My personal email address for Award nominations is** [**cs.hunsinger@verizon.net**](mailto:cs.hunsinger@verizon.net)**.**

# It’s Nomination Time for the PCB Board By Chris Hunsinger

The Nominations Team is looking for candidates to recommend to be on the slate of nominees for officer and board positions who will be voted on at our business meeting on Oct. 18. We will have at least four board positions to fill along with all of the officer positions. We’re asking current board members whose terms are ending, past board members who might want to serve again, and peers who want to expand their work within PCB to consider these positions.

All Officer positions must be filled at this business meeting. Debby Hill will have completed her first term as President of PCB and is eligible to run for another term. Rosemary Martin will have completed her first term as First Vice President of PCB and is eligible to run for a second term. Robert Shingleton will have completed his first term as Second Vice President of PCB and is eligible to run for another term. Sandy Marsiglia will have completed her first term as Secretary of PCB. There is no limit to the number of terms a Secretary can serve. Michael Zaken is up for re-election as treasurer. There is also no limit to the number of terms a treasurer can serve.

Nathan Ruggles and Jason Miller will each have completed their first two-year terms on the Board of Directors. They are eligible to run for a second consecutive term. Donald Dunn and Doug Hunsinger will each have completed their second two-year term on the Board of Directors and cannot run for a third term.

Now let’s talk about the qualifications you must meet for these positions. To be a nominee for the board or officer position, you must be a paid member of PCB and ACB with a record of active engagement and an understanding of Council values. Since all work at the state level is done virtually, it is imperative that candidates have access to email.

As an officer or board member, it is expected that you will make a two-year commitment to be a role model among peers and be an ambassador in the community. Attendance at quarterly and ad hoc board meetings via Zoom will be vital. In advance of meetings, you will receive team reports and the organization’s financial summary in the expectation that they will be reviewed. You will work voluntarily on two to three leadership teams and might be asked to lead one. Attendance at your monthly team meetings will also be required. Ideally as a leader, you will participate actively in all aspects of the organization including visiting with changemakers, educating the public, offering a hand to those new to vision loss, promoting PCB events, and supporting fundraising efforts as you are able. You will be eligible to request reimbursement for board-related travel and approved project expenses.

Your name is not in the hat for the approved slate just because you mentioned to a Nominations team member that you would like to run for office. Everyone who is interested in being nominated for either an officer position or an open PCB Board position, including current board members whose terms end this year must do the following. To demonstrate your desire to fill one of these positions, in less than 250 words, share your interests, skills, experiences, and goals. Be sure to tell us how you expect to assist PCB in future activities on the PCB Board of Directors. Send your self-nomination information to the appropriate address at the end of this article by Friday, August 1.

In early August, the Nominating Team will work with each declared candidate to record a three-to-four-minute personal statement which will include answers to several questions which will give your peers who may not know you an idea of who you are and what you stand for.

In early September, the Nominating Team will publish your oral statement on the PCB1.org website, the PCB Information Line, the PCB-L listserv, and cartridge editions of The PCB Advocate. On Wednesday, October 1, the Nominating Team will notify peers of the team’s slate of endorsed candidates. Any other candidates not on the endorsed slate are eligible for nomination from the floor at the business meeting being held on October 18.

If you need to contact me about a board nomination, call me **at 412-414-1628. If I don’t answer, just leave me a message to call you back. My personal email address for board nominations is** [**cs.hunsinger@verizon.net**](mailto:cs.hunsinger@verizon.net)**.**

# Let’s Review the Fun to Be Had In PCB Fundraising By Chris Hunsinger

Let’s talk about our fund-raising efforts.

The PCB Auction

The PCB Auction will be held on the afternoon of Sunday October 19 as part of the PCB Conference. The Fund Development Team has begun the process of requesting your ideas for auction items, making auction suggestions, and asking for auction donations. Keep an eye on your email throughout the summer so that you will know what has been suggested, and what has already been contributed. Sandy Marsiglia is the lead on the Fund Development Team for the auction, so you should pay attention to her communication about the auction.

Some auction reminders: remember that we will need descriptions of your donated items. Items for the auction should be sent to Autumn’s home address, not the PO Box. And we hope that you can get donations from businesses by using our donation letter which you can get from the PCB office.

PCB Calendar Raffle

At this time, at the beginning of June when I am writing this article, we have gone through the first two months in our PCB Calendar raffle. You can still buy or sell those $20 tickets for a chance to win some money. Any ticket can win an amount between $30 and $200 depending on the date. If you belong to a chapter that you credit for the ticket sale, you also help your chapter of PCB. Remember to contact Autumn in the PCB office to make those Raffle ticket arrangements.

Goodbye to Terri Lynn Products

I am sorry to say that we have ended our fund-raising efforts with Terri Lynn. I will miss those dark chocolate covered cranberries. I bet you wish you had more of something you liked from Terri Lynn as well.

The Monthly Monetary Support Program

We also help both PCB and ACB with the ACB Monthly Monetary Support program usually referred to as MMS. This program operates through ACB, but if you donate an amount monthly to ACB, you can designate PCB to receive up to 50 percent of your donation. So, contact ACB using the contact information at the end of this article.

The Keystone Cane-Ables

We also share a fund-raising campaign with ACB every year surrounding the ACB Convention. Our Keystone Cane-Ables page, **as a part of the ACB Brenda Dillon Memorial Walk,**is ready for contributions**! Although the ACB Walk is considered a fundraising event for the ACB Convention, contributions will be accepted through Aug. 31.**

**The theme for this year’s walk is “Step by Step, Together.” The ACB goal is to raise a total of $64,000 in honor of the 64 years that ACB has existed. The PCB goal is to raise $1,000. Help us reach our goal, and you don’t have to lift a foot, pedal a mile, or travel any distance at all. Your contribution will be split equally between ACB and PCB if you use our page. You can contribute to our page in several ways.**

**I have included two links below, one for the PCB Keystone Cane-Ables page and one for the full ACB page. They may sound like the same link, but I placed each of them within the explanation about what each link can accomplish.**

**First, the fastest way to contribute is to use this link that will take you directly to the Keystone Cane-Ables page.**

[**Donation Form**](https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=E144393&id=103&cfifid=80)

**You can fill out your form and you will have helped us raise some funds needed for PCB and ACB.**

**Second, you can also go to the main ACB Walk page to see who all has contributed so far.**

[**Donation Form**](https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=E144393&id=103)

**If you expand Recent Supporters, you get a list of people who have already contributed. If you expand TopFundraisers, you can see which teams have the highest contribution amounts. There are prizes for the teams that have a lot of contributions. If you expand the Top Fund Raisers, you can still get to the Keystone Cane-Ables by looking for our link. We are the second K link if you are using a links list with your screen reader. Once you find and click on Keystone Cane-Ables, you can fill out your form and you will have helped us raise some funds needed for PCB and ACB. If you fill out your form from the main ACB page without going to Keystone Cane-Ables, your contribution will only go to ACB. The PCB Fund Development Team will not be notified of your contribution if it isn’t a part of the Keystone Cane-Ables page.**

**You can also reach that main contribution page for the walk from the acb.org home page. The link on that page is ACB Walk Donations and can be reached with a links list by tapping the letter “a” few times.**

**Third, you can call me, Chris Hunsinger, as the team leader for PCB Fund Development. My contact info is at the end of the article. Be prepared with your credit card information, including the security code and the expiration date, as well as your address and phone number, and I will enter your contribution.**

**Fourth, you can actually send a check to the PCB office made out to PCB with Keystone Cane-Ables in the memo so we can add it to our page.**

**Finally, you can call the ACB office in Minnesota with your credit card information, address, letting them know that you want to contribute to Keystone Cane-Ables, so that they can enter your information on our web page. I presume this would only become an option for someone who can’t contribute online, can’t reach me, or can’t get a check to the PCB office. We at Fund Development hope you contribute and also spread the word.**

Contact information related to this article follows:

To buy tickets for our Calendar Raffle or get a copy of the donation form asking businesses for donations for the auction: Call Autumn in the PCB office at 717-920-9999 ext. 800 or if needed toll free 877-617-7407 ext. 800. You can email her at [pcboffice@pcb1.org](mailto:pcboffice@pcb1.org).

If you have to send a check to the PCB office either for Raffle tickets or for the Keystone Cane-Ables, the mailing address is:

**PCB**

**PO Box 68**

**Volant, PA 16156-0068**

If you need to contact me for filling out your Walk contribution form, call me **at 412-414-1628. If I don’t answer, just leave me a message to call you back. Don’t leave credit card info as a voice mail message.**

**If you have to call the ACB Minnesota office to make a walk donation to the Keystone Cane-Ables, call them at 612-332-3242.**

# What Did We Do There? By Chris Hunsinger, Advocacy Team leader

Did you wonder what Jason Miller, Debby Hill and I did in DC during the ACB Midyear meetings? Well, let me tell you. We had plenty of activities going on. Not only did we talk to the people in the legislative offices about the ACB Imperatives, but we had discussions that we hope can turn into additional good work related to affiliate and membership activities with ACB.

We started off our vacation in Arlington on Friday March 14. On Friday afternoon, there was an inspiring tour of the Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress including an exhibit by NLS. It is stressed throughout the building that this Library of Congress is there for all of us, and it certainly made all of us who went on the tour appreciate the value of this national treasure. The Jefferson Building, built around the turn of the 20th century, used inclusive symbolism as it was represented at that time through the architecture, statues, and carvings in the building depicting many common Americans, not just the rich and powerful.

NLS had a display of older equipment used for Talking books all the way back to the beginning of Talking book production, both production equipment and players. Later that evening I had a chance to go out for dinner and drinks with friends.

On March 15 we had the opportunity to attend the ACB Board meeting and watch the Board in action. It was difficult for me to be at a meeting where all I could do was to watch and listen. That meeting pointed out to me that ACB is a complicated organization to manage with both staff and volunteers to coordinate. Later that evening ACB members and staff got together for drinks and chefs-d’oeuvre.

The presidents’ meeting on March 16 was really a leadership meeting exploring how to build better relationships between affiliates and the national office of ACB. We heard from office staff, ACB officers and members of the Board of Directors, and sponsors of the conference as well as our lunch speaker.

The morning session had two main topics. The first was a summary of member services available to affiliates from ACB. Those of us who don’t work in the national offices frequently forget about the many services ACB offers affiliates in order to make life for the organizations move a little more smoothly. It is important for those of us in the leadership of PCB to be aware of these services to advise our peers and the organization as a whole about their usefulness.

The Second topic was encouragement to take advantage of the major email lists ACB provides for members to stay informed. The primary lists that were discussed included:

Presidents, Leadership, Conversation, and Announce. We can all join Announce and Conversation. Conversation gets a little crowded and contentious on occasion, but it does reflect the thoughts and concerns of many ACB members. The Announce List is far quieter. It is a list where the Advocacy team of ACB places messages about its work, updates to legislative efforts, and requests for us to take action on specific items. There may be a few messages a week on that list, but they are all highly informative. We all got an invitation back in February to join that list, and we were told in March at the presidents’ meeting that ten percent of the members had actually joined the list. The presidents’ list is just what it says. All of the affiliate presidents along with the appropriate officers and staff are on that list which passes appropriate information to and from the presidents and ACB so that affiliate presidents can act within the affiliate where necessary or send a message to ACB as well. The Leadership list is a broader list of leaders because each affiliate has the opportunity to fill three slots on that list and the list also includes heads of committees, task forces, and those getting a taste of leadership through the J.P. Morgan-Chase leadership program and the DKM First Timers.

Our Lunchtime Keynote Speaker was Day Al-Mohamed. She had worked at ACB in the past as the Advocacy expert and then went on to work in the White House, at OSHA, has made films, and is a policy advisor on disability issues. She gave us her thoughts on leadership, trust, making sure that people have the right tools to do a job, storytelling, and empowerment.

The afternoon sessions of the Presidents’ meeting dealt with the concerns around the missions of our affiliates and how those missions align with ACB’s mission and values while allowing affiliates to maintain autonomy.

We really didn’t change anything during that afternoon session, but we all gave staff and officers of ACB something to consider. We hope that this kind of discussion will help us ensure that ACB and affiliates are working towards the same goals and objectives. There must be clear policies that the national organization and all affiliates agree to, with flexibility for affiliates to represent their members even if members don’t agree with the national policies completely. We have to recognize we all don’t agree on everything, and that there are times when we agree to disagree.

ACB leaders were assigned to different restaurants prior to making our food choices. This allowed us an opportunity, later that evening, to choose a restaurant and break bread with an ACB leader. We met in the hotel lobby and each group made its reservation for Uber or Lyft, but Uber had given ACB $50 vouchers that we could add to our Uber App to pay for some of our transportation between the hotel and the restaurant or the hotel and Congress on Tuesday.

We had the Legislative seminar on Monday, March 17. We had experts in the field of each of the Imperatives review the importance of each bill. We even had a presenter from NFB who explained the ins and outs of the Medical Device Nonvisual Accessibility Act since both organizations strongly believe in this bill. Our lunchtime speaker on Monday was Jeff Mittman from Bosma Enterprise, an organization in Indianapolis that provides services for blind and visually impaired individuals. He lost his vision while serving in the military and told us his story of hope and fulfillment. In addition to the usual review of imperatives and updates from federal agencies, we had an afternoon session on Alternative Advocacy methods and additional advocacy partners like American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), Justice in aging, and Alliance for Justice.

We did our role playing, and we checked the Hill Etiquette box, so we were ready for our day on the Hill on Tuesday.

On Tuesday, Jason, Debby, and I only had five visits which we had been able to schedule. Jason’s wife, ACB staff, and volunteer helpers walked with us from office to office, and they even helped us get to the offices where we just wanted to drop off our imperative information. We dropped off information at the rest of the offices of the Pennsylvania House delegation. We sent information by email to both of our senators because we had not been able to schedule with them, and it is a long walk to get from the House office buildings over to Derksen and Russell on the senate side to just drop off a piece of paper.

I hope that you are as tired after reading this article as I was after we finished our day on the Hill.

# The Touchscreen Takeover: Great for Some, Frustrating for Others By Thadeus Graham,

PCB Outreach and Engagement Specialist

Touchscreen kiosks are popping up just about everywhere these days, restaurants, airports, pharmacies, and even doctors' offices. They're promoted as fast, convenient, and high-tech. For many people, they are. You can order food, check in for an appointment, or print a boarding pass without speaking to anyone.

But there’s a growing problem that often gets overlooked: what happens when someone cannot see the screen?

For people who are blind or have low vision, these self-service kiosks can feel more like roadblocks than a helpful tool.

So, What’s the Problem?

The main issue is that most kiosks are built with sighted users in mind. They rely heavily on visual elements like bright screens, icons, and touch-only navigation. For someone who cannot see the screen, or cannot see it well, using these kiosks independently can be nearly impossible.

Imagine walking into a fast-food restaurant and being told you have to use a kiosk. There's no voice guidance, no physical buttons, and no way to know where to tap. Now imagine facing that kind of experience every time you need to check in for a medical visit or pick up a prescription. That’s the daily reality for many people with vision loss.

Aren’t There Accessibility Rules?

Yes, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires public spaces and services to be accessible, but technology tends to move faster than regulation. Some businesses are making progress, but the results are hit or miss. One kiosk might have a headphone jack and voice output. Another might offer no accessibility features at all, not even braille instructions. Since these machines are designed to replace person-to-person service, low vision customers often end up having to ask for help anyway. That defeats the purpose of making things more "convenient."

Why Accessibility Matters

Accessibility isn’t just about following laws. It’s about allowing people to live with dignity and independence. Everyone should be able to manage routine tasks without needing assistance every time. When someone is blocked by a screen they cannot use, it’s not just frustrating. It is a form of exclusion!

Accessible kiosks can also benefit a much broader group. Think about people with limited vision, reading difficulties, or anyone unfamiliar with technology. Features like audio instructions, tactile buttons, and compatibility with screen readers can make kiosks more useful for everyone.

Some companies are starting to recognize the need for change. A few fast-food chains have added audio output and physical navigation buttons. Some healthcare providers and airports are exploring more inclusive options too, but these examples are still the exception rather than the norm.

The real solution is a shift in mindset. Accessibility needs to be baked into the design process from the very beginning. It should not be treated as an optional upgrade!

The truth is that touchscreen kiosks are here to stay. But if we want the future to be fair and inclusive, they must work for everyone. Technology should make life easier, not harder, for people with disabilities. With a little more thought and effort, we can create systems that empower everyone, no matter how they interact with the world.

# Do You NOAA Weather Radio? By Douglas Hunsinger,

Technology Team member

As summer arrives, we eagerly embrace the season’s warm, sunlit days—perfect for backyard barbecues, hiking adventures, and lazy afternoons at the park. But while summer invites us outdoors, it also brings a hidden danger: sudden, severe weather that can turn a blue-sky afternoon into a race for safety within minutes. From powerful thunderstorms to unexpected tornadoes, these dramatic shifts remind us that preparation is just as important as play. In this article, I’ll recommend two weather radios that can help keep you one step ahead of nature’s surprises, ensuring a safer and more enjoyable summer.

For home use, I recommend the Midland WR120B weather radio. This model features the Specific Area Message Encoding (S.A.M.E.) system—a digital protocol that targets alerts and warnings to specific geographic areas, such as a particular county or set of counties. With S.A.M.E., you can program the radio to alert you only for your chosen location. Those who are blind may need sighted assistance to set up S.A.M.E., but the display is clear enough that programming can often be done with apps like Be My Eyes, Aira, or similar services.

When an alert is received, the radio will sound an alarm, broadcast the weather alert, and then return to silent monitoring. Users with vision can also take advantage of the clock and alarm features. The display color-codes the type and severity of alerts for easy identification. The Midland WR120B operates on AC power and has a battery backup using three AA batteries. It is available from Amazon and other retailers for around $50.

Please be aware that if you are blind, you will need sighted assistance to set up this radio. You can’t just power it up and expect to immediately tune in to your weather channels. However, once set up, this radio is a reliable source and can keep you alerted to hazardous weather warnings.

The second weather radio I recommend is the C. Crane CCRadio Solar AM/FM/Weather + Alert Wind-Up Emergency Radio with Bluetooth. This portable and versatile radio receives AM/FM stations as well as all seven NOAA weather radio channels. It also offers Bluetooth connectivity, allowing you to wirelessly connect devices like your Victor Stream and listen through the radio’s speaker. The AM and FM reception is excellent.

For weather broadcasts, this radio has an outstanding tuner and is one of the best portable options for accessing weather bands. If your cell phone needs a quick charge for emergency messaging or calls, the radio includes a USB port for charging. The radio comes with a rechargeable battery that can be charged via the built-in solar panel, a power source, or the hand crank on the back of the unit. It can also operate on four AA batteries.

This radio can alert you to severe weather warnings but does not have the S.A.M.E. alert system found in the Midland model. Most portable weather radios do not include S.A.M.E. When set to monitor for weather alerts, C. Crane recommends keeping the radio plugged in, as monitoring uses significant battery power. The item number is CCRSBT, and it costs $109.95. It is available from C. Crane, Amazon, and other retailers.

There are certainly more budget-friendly weather radios available, but I know these two models have strong track records for reliable performance. Hazardous weather can occur at any time, so I encourage you to consider purchasing a NOAA weather radio.

Finally, thanks to Robin Frost for providing helpful information and resources. And thanks to Perplexity, an AI tool that definitely improved my writing skills. Have a fun and safe summer!

# Draw A Picture, Practice Braille By Tony Swartz, Technology Team member

This article addresses a way to learn and practice braille, and a way to create and communicate images using a low-tech device.

A life-long frustration of mine has been the inability for me to quickly communicate an image in my head to paper and to the sighted world. I'm talking about simple two-dimensional images: house plans, street layouts and the like. I've resorted to using various tactile line drawing devices, plasticine, Wikki Stix, a Braille writer, and even pipe cleaners. While these alternatives have proven effective to a point, they've never been wholly satisfying for me. Oh, just for the freedom of quickly applying pencil to paper the way I have observed sighted individuals do.

I hoped that eventually there would be a high-tech solution, some kind of electronic drawing pad which would produce a raised image. I have heard lots of talk about the product release from APH, the Monarch, ten lines by thirty-two cells with the ability to render graphics? Could this be the elusive substitute for pencil and paper that I've always imagined? At $17,900, I DON'T THINK SO! However, on a couple of mailing lists over the last several years I've heard some talk about a device in the works, BrailleDoodle.

Hmmm, would it come with a rechargeable battery? Would the software be fairly intuitive? On which operating system would it be based? Well just forget the batteries, software, and operating system. We're talking low-tech; It's now available from a number of our favorite access technology vendors, and here is my review.

Created by the Touchpad Pro Foundation, the BrailleDoodle is a two-sided rectangular tablet designed for two specific purposes: tactile image creation on one side and BRAILLE instruction on the other. The device measures 12.8 inches in length, 9.25 inches in width, 1.1 inches in thickness, and weighs 2.94 pounds. Constructed from a durable dark blue plastic, both the front and back surfaces feature an array of tiny holes, which are actually shafts. Each shaft contains a small metal ball resting at the bottom. To create a tactile dot, a magnetic stylus, an ink pen-like device with a rounded magnetic metal tip, tethered to the side of the BrailleDoodle by a spring cord, is used to bring the ball to the top of the shaft. A dot is raised and locked into place by positioning the magnetic tip of the stylus at the top of the shaft. Dots are erased by simply pushing the ball down with a fingertip or by clearing the surface with the triangular flat side of the stylus held sideways and swiped across the dots. As mentioned, each side of the BrailleDoodle serves a distinct purpose, as detailed below.

First, The Image Creation Side:

This side consists of an array of 1,333 tiny holes, which are the opening to shafts, each containing a metal ball resting at the shaft's bottom. Each ball can be raised to the top of the shaft to create a dot. The shafts are arrayed in an evenly spaced grid pattern of thirty-one lines of forty-three dots. On the surface, to provide some assistance with orientation to this wide-open array of shafts, a dotted line appears across the center horizontally left to right on line 16 and vertically from top to bottom on column 22. The dots on these orientation lines are lower and narrower, placed between shafts, and easily distinguishable from the braille dots. If you turned to the image creation side and oriented with the raised printed letters of the word BrailleDoodle at the top, the storage slot for the magnetic stylus, four inches in length, will be located on the right edge of the tablet.

Since I'm an experienced Braille user, it is the image creation or “doodle” side which drew me to this device. With a wide-open Braille drawing surface, it provides me with the opportunity to, for the first time in my life, draw at will. As I move the stylus over the surface, raising the metal balls into place I form dots from which lines can be drawn in any direction to create shapes, two dimensional figures, orientation maps, even graphs.

I've had my BrailleDoodle for about two months and have drawn all sorts of things, including some designs for home modifications and improvements. Most importantly it has allowed me to communicate the ideas and images in my head to the sighted world.

Second, The Braille Learning and Practicing Side: Turning the BrailleDoodle over reveals The BRAILLE Instruction Side. Lying the device flat, with the Braille learning side facing up, the BrailleDoodle should be oriented so that the raised printed letters of the word BrailleDoodle are located at the top and two lines of standard Braille located at the bottom, with the magnetic stylus housed in a storage slot located on the left side edge of the device.

From the top, about two thirds of the Braille learning side consists of four lines of empty paired Braille cells, eight to a line, with Each double cell measuring one and three eighths inches wide by one and a half inches in height and framed by a slightly raised line. Below the four lines of double cells are two lines of nineteen cells where free Braille text may be written. At the bottom of the Braille learning side are two standard lines of Braille, the first line containing the entire Braille alphabet, the second line containing the sentence, "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.", an often used typing course practice sentence containing each letter of the alphabet.

The top four lines of double cells are the Braille instruction area, with each framed double cell dedicated to a specific letter of the alphabet. The top left most cell being dedicated to the letter "a", the next double cell to the right dedicated to the letter "b", and so on. The left side cell of each double cell contains only those balls that, when raised, would form the dot pattern for the letter to which the double cell is dedicated. The right side cell of each framed double cell contains all six balls which can be raised, therefore providing the student with the opportunity to practice forming the letter to which the double cell is dedicated. At the bottom within each of the double cell frames below the holes forming the two cells is a small area containing the raised print and Braille letter to which the cell is dedicated. The first ten double cells also contain the raised printed number, 1 through 0; because in the Braille code the dot pattern for letters "given the context, a" through "j" can also represent numbers. The fourth and bottom most line of double cells includes the last two letters of the alphabet "y" and "z" plus six additional Braille symbols: the capital and number signs, and contraction signs for the words: "and", "for", "of", and "the".

As mentioned previously, beneath the four lines of double cell frames which constitute the Braille instruction area, there are two lines of nineteen cells where text may be written for practice or brief notes. For those of us who are experienced users of Braille, the expanded size of the cells may be a bit disorienting at first, similar to the experience when reading jumbo Braille, but the size may be just the ticket for people using or learning braille for the first time.

Finally, as a kid I remember that there were some toys that my sighted playmates had with one or another visual aspect or component which today we'd classify as inaccessible. I wasn't bothered that much; I just played with the toys that were more or less accessible, but there was one inaccessible toy that I really wanted to play with. I even took one apart thinking that there might be a way to get it to work for me, and what a mess I made of it. But you know what? Though it might have taken more than a half century, I finally got it, I got my Etch A Sketch! With a price tag of as low as $150, it's a much more reasonably priced device when compared to its high-tech competitor.

The BrailleDoodle can be ordered from a number of sites including The TouchPad Pro Foundation, A. T. Guys, and other disability related product sites.

# My Hearing/Vision Loss Journey By Sherri Rodgers,

My journey started with being diagnosed with a hearing loss at age 5. For the parents of the students in the school, my mom made arrangements with the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) to put me on display wearing my hearing aid in a little pocket outside my shirt. Mom explained that I had a hearing loss, and this hearing aid helped me to hear. This way if the student told their parents about the girl wearing a thing called a hearing aid outside her shirt; then they would understand and explain this to their child.

I started out in public elementary school, and then in 1963 I was admitted to DePaul Institute (now DePaul School for Speech and Hearing). This helped me to learn and understand what I was missing in public school. I graduated from DePaul in 1971 and graduated from public high school in 1974 with honors.

When I was 16 and going for my learner’s permit to drive, I was diagnosed with Usher’s Syndrome (hearing loss coupled with Retinitis Pigmentosa blindness). I was very disappointed, but later in life as I continued to lose vision, I realized that even at age 16, my vision hadn’t been good enough to be a competent driver.

In 1989, I got my white cane and used it every morning going to work in the dark; the cane helped me because of my night blindness. Every afternoon leaving with a co-worker I carried my cane folded in my hand. One afternoon my co-worker left work early, and I walked to the bus stop by myself with my cane folded in my hand as usual. Crossing the street, I almost got hit by a car. Looking at my green light and the driver’s red light I said, “You are driving in the bus lane, and you just ran a red light.” He just looked at my cane folded in my hand and took off. I continued onto the corner where a bus friend was waiting for me. He asked if I was ok and I said, “Yes.” He said, “that cane isn’t helping you folded in your hand.” I replied, “I know, and I’ll use it when I get off the bus at home.” Boy! What denial I went through at that time.

In 2017, I received the Cochlear Implant. This really helps with my hearing. I didn’t realize how much I was missing until I got my implant.

What I Saw When I Could See:

Someone asked what shadows and clouds are. A shadow is when the sun is in back of your body and the shape of your body shows on the ground. And when the sun is in front of you the shadow will be behind you. When the sun is on your right or left side the same thing happens. As the seasons change the shadow will get shorter or longer.

Clouds are like puffy cotton balls. Laying on the ground and looking up at the sky, you can use your imagination and picture what the clouds look like. When a storm is coming, the clouds can change from white to dark gray. The darker the cloud the more intense the storm can be.

When we can see stars in the sky, they shine like diamonds twinkling in the night.

Someone recently asked me about rainbows; well, here we go. Rainbows appear in the sky after a rain shower and the sun shining at the same time. Rainbows are in different parts of the sky. The colors are the same in all rainbows, and they follow a beautiful, orderly spectrum: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. Also, there are what’s called double rainbows. The double rainbow is very vivid and follows the same pattern as the normal rainbow. I never saw one; but there was one hovering over the parking lot at the funeral home the night our mom was laid out for viewing because it had rained during the evening. When the family left the funeral home, my nephew said “Wow! There’s a double rainbow!” My sisters and I exclaimed “Mom and Dad together forever!”

I would like to thank Lisa and Christine for their questions.

# You’re Never Too Old to be Taught By Nancy Scott

If similar experiences happen twice in one morning, is the universe teaching you something?

My Monday morning took the turn before breakfast when I lost my room key. Oh, I’d forgotten it a few times, but I always knew where it was. I live in a senior facility. Locking room doors is good practice to keep residents from straying into my space and staff has keys to come in when they need to.

I carry the key in a pocket, but I always put it away in my purse every night. But the key wasn’t in purse or pocket. I looked. Three times because it had to be in one of those places! (I think this is called magical thinking.)

But no magic. I panicked for several minutes. Where was it?

Okay. Stop. I had it last night when I came back from dinner. It must be in this room. I’ve walked around and haven’t stepped on it.

So logically, where? On the bed, because I’d changed into pajamas last night? I felt around in a pattern, but no key. I checked the floor around the bed, too, considering this my morning aerobics.

I was thinking that I’d need a staff person’s eyes, but one more place finally occurred to me. The recliner! Please, please, PLEASE! And yes, the key was lying on my fuzzy recliner blanket.

I was so proud of myself for the first minute or so. Then I remembered the panic and the almost ten minutes it took to find the key.

And then, right after that victory, I lost the laundry bags. My normal staff person is very smart. Jen always puts the cloth laundry bags on a small shelf on the left side of my closet. But when I went to put laundry into the bags, they weren’t there. Again, I panicked and looked. I thought, “They’re gone!” But what might a sighted person do? I finally looked on the right-hand side shelf. And there they were!

Jen just had a distracted moment of her own.

I have such distracted moments all the time. I have something in my hand and the phone rings, so I put it down. Somewhere.

Two such incidents in a row. Panic isn’t always the answer. Next time something is “gone”

will I actually panic less and think faster? I hope so.

# Perfect Description By Nancy Scott

Day after Saint Patrick

and two more ’til calendar spring.

I need fresh air.

I need nothing scheduled or

dauntingly technical for an hour.

I race to escape clouded worry or

terror of television news.

I don’t mention my plan,

not even to the med tech

who will have to hunt me

from my senior facility room

to activity area

to where I really am,

ensconced in a big wicker chair

pulled to the coveted edge

of the front walk

where curing afternoon works wonders.

No one else knows.

It’s sixty-something and the wind,

for once, is calm.

There are always balances

between fragility and tenacity.

When my pill-provider tracks me down,

she says, “You are sitting

in the sun like a cat.”

And I can only grin and say, “Yes.”

# Winning Personality By Lisa Busch

I am a member of a flock—

at least my cockatiel Coconut thinks so.

When I leave the room for any reason,

even to go to the bathroom,

his beeps sound as loud as an insistent siren.

Heaven forbid if I disappear

out into the world and come back,

then, I am severely scolded.

And yet, just in case I thought I was special,

this feathered friend protests

anytime anyone comes and leaves

where he thinks they should be,

convinced he is in charge of us all.

But when he whistles a bit of the

Andy Griffith theme song,

squeaks laughter up and down

his own homemade scale,

or knocks on the cage for more attention,

we play a game,

repeating his words back to him

until his list gets so long,

we can't remember the whole sequence.

What a personality for one so small,

and in a soft but animated voice,

he would say, definitely agreeing:

"Pretty baby big bird, yeah,"

having the last word again.

# Oh! How Retro By Chris Hunsinger

The more things change, the more they stay the same, it would appear. Call them hot pads, potholders, or just counter protecters. I even call the silicone ones that I usually use now potholders, but the companies sometimes calls them trivets.

My first potholder was made in a third-grade craft class on a horrible wood loom with sharp nails to string the loops on. I actually had to pay five cents for the supplies for that potholder with all of its mistakes. When I first wanted to make my own potholders, I made one on my trusty metal loom with loops bought at the nearest G.C. Murphy store. That metal frame got bent through time because some of the loops just were not big enough to go from point A to point B easily, and I was determined to use them. I made potholders for my mom, my aunts, and neighbors. Many of them were made with loops that melted if the item being picked up was hot enough. I have no idea if anyone ever really used those gifts. After all, I gave them out as Christmas presents. I never could master the art of using that funny metal hook to pull the horizontal loops through the vertical loops. I just used my fingers. As time went on and I grew up, those woven potholders evolved into quilted cloth hot pads or thick mitts that we bought at the store. I never thought about those old woven potholders once I started using those commercial items. Gradually, we went to better insulation and more heat protection, and more recently, I have almost always been using Silicone versions of potholders, hot pads, and trivets.

This past year on Easter Sunday, we were having dinner with my sister’s family and her sister-in-law brought presents for all of us. She is back into making potholders. I was really surprised to see the different textures that she achieved with twisted loops and different weaving patterns. She told me that she has a computer program to work out her designs. I filed that information away because I presumed that the program would be quite image oriented and difficult for me to follow. I felt like the potholders she gave me were a small taste of childhood. She even told me that the loops were cotton and not some synthetic fiber that would melt. It was fun to see someone making potholders, and she even had rings attached to hang them by instead of an extra potholder loop. I wonder how the looms have changed since I last touched that metal frame more than 55 years ago.

Now, what do you think appeared in my email about a month after Easter? A blind friend casually mentioned that she had just bought twenty-four bags of potholder loops and was starting on a potholder making binge. I asked her where she got all of her patterns and supplies, and the next thing I knew, I had patterns in my inbox along with the name of a company where I could buy supplies. Now, I have to decide whether I want to buy a modern potholder loom and some loops to make fancier potholders. I may have to ask more about that computer program to see if I can make it work or possibly get instructions using AI. It seems to me that I can remember people making little throw rugs out of potholders stitched together, but that would probably be a tripping hazard for an old lady like me. Could a rug made of potholders be in my stars, or will everyone I know be getting potholders later this year as holiday presents? The looms are kinder and gentler to fingers now, or so I have been told. There are even small looms that can create coasters. I guess that there are also small loops that fit the small looms. I have yet to start shopping or googling or looking for YouTube videos, but the PCB Auction is coming up, and there could be potholders, looms, or loops as a part of my auction item. I wonder if there is a way to work beads into the decorative potholders, not the potholders being used to get the pie out of the oven? I thought that I had figured out that my handwork would only be knitting, but these little looms may change my mind.

## Underwriting Contributions

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