

The



Advocate

Fall Edition 2026

**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.

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

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President's Message
PCB Planning Update
A Continuing Story of Change
By Debby Hill
PCB President

I am here to continue telling you a story of PCB and change. You may have heard or read parts of the story before, but the PCB Board is working on new chapters, and we want you to know about them.

In the past few years, the board and a Long-range Planning team have been discussing the future of PCB, and in 2025, the board decided to hire a consultant and do some strategic planning. We chose Peggy Outon of Excelsior Consulting in Pittsburgh. Many of you may remember her from the Friday lunch time session at last year's PCB Conference. Also, as the planning process began, Peggy interviewed quite a few people in PCB and

outside of PCB to find out what each knew about PCB and how they felt about what is going on with our organization. She also had the results of a survey of PCB peers we did in 2024.

Since January of this year, the board had several meetings with Peggy where we hashed out a possible path forward for PCB. The plan includes what Peggy calls pillars, and she has organized it so that we could approach each pillar in a consecutive time sequence, but some of the work will probably overlap. Here is a quick look at the work the board will be concentrating on for the next year or so.

Pillar One (1) concerns PCBs finances. The finance team and our investment advisor have done a fine job of prudently handling PCB's funds, but for the future of PCB we need to balance maintaining reserves with money that can be invested and being able to spend some

of our funds on upcoming PCB projects. Assigned time frame September through November 2026.

Pillar Two (2) involves a board decision. It is time for PCB to have a paid Executive Director. The position hasn't completely been defined, but we are hoping to have someone in place that can help PCB with new projects, provide support to peers, and raise funds, including finding new funding especially for our new projects. Assigned time frame December 2026 through February 2027.

Pillar Three (3) focuses on defining PCB's mission, vision, and supporting members needs through new projects. These new projects could include providing technology training or funding for peers to obtain technology or both. Assigned Time frame March through May 2027.

Pillar 4 examines PCB's advocacy work. In this pillar we will be shoring up our advocacy contacts and rediscovering what issues are important to peers. Assigned time frame June through August 2027.

As you can see the story of PCB is moving forward, and the board is hoping that we have your support in this process. As new chapters are written, you will definitely have to stay tuned for updates in the Advocate and on our listservs.

However, like many stories our current PCB narrative has another important plot. This plot started about two years ago. The then ACB Board Member who was the liaison to the PCB Board, Chris Bell, suggested that we needed to have an attorney review our basic organizational documents to make sure that PCB is up-to-date with the documents that have to be submitted to the Pennsylvania

Department of State to maintain our nonprofit status. This document review includes an updating of our Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. Our Articles of Corporation definitely needed to be updated since we have not fully revised them since PCB's founding in 1936. So, we hired an attorney, Jack Owen who is well-versed in nonprofit document needs, and he reviewed and when needed rewrote portions of the Articles of Incorporation and the PCB By-laws.

As you can tell, the board needs your support in this entire story as it unfolds, but for this particular plot line we really need your input because the Articles of Incorporation and the By-laws have to be voted on by you at the PCB Conference business meeting. The meeting will be held virtually on Saturday, October 24, at 1 PM. After our vote, then the new versions of the documents can be submitted to the PA Department of State, and this plot line will wrap up.

So that you have a chance to understand what you will be voting for, the Parliamentary Team has set a schedule of events to occur before the business meeting. Those events are as follows:

Approximately September 15, on our listservs you will receive a copy of the updated Articles of Incorporation and By-laws.

If possible, the documents should be discussed in September or October chapter meetings.

At the beginning of October there will be an open-house session on Zoom where we will review the documents and answer any of your questions.

Then, please be sure to be at the business meeting on October 24 for the vote.

Well, as you can tell one plot line can be resolved soon, but the major plot is nowhere

near its finish. I hope you will stay with us and support PCB through the rest of this exciting story.

I want to thank the board members for all of their input and their willingness to spend their free time working on the chapters of this story. Also, thanks to Peggy Outon for all of her efforts. She continues to work behind the scenes to help us author a story with a positive ending.

Growing Independent, Together
By The Conference Planning and
Program Team

In 2026 the PCB Fall Conference and Convention theme is “Growing Independent, Together!” Therefore, it is appropriate that we have presentations that not only give us ideas about being more independent, but we also

think that these presentations demonstrate the ways in which we do this by coming together as a community with ideas and creative solutions.

The presentations range from financial management to self-advocacy. We will talk about using Artificial Intelligence to solve accessibility issues with the internet, and we will discuss how guide dog schools are bringing Artificial Intelligence to their work both with handlers and in the breeding programs. We will discuss strategies for living well at any age, and in particular, making decisions as we age about where to live. We will look at a day in the life of one of our peers.

We are so used to accepting or requesting help that we don't often think about the time when we help people outside of the blindness community solve problems because of our differing perspectives.

We have a couple of fun Audience participation games for Friday and Saturday evening in which everyone will be able to take part. Friday evening will be hypothetical situations where we can all use our imaginations to deal with the questions involved and entertain one another. Saturday evening, we will be playing with words, and we will all be Word Nerds.

We are planning a Sunday Morning Audio Described movie to be announced closer to the time of the conference. Don't forget your chance of winning prizes throughout the conference and the PCB Auction on Sunday afternoon.

Remember that we are inviting you to join us for a conference packed with information. Please register by Oct. 5 so you can request a program in your preferred alternate format.

You should have received your preliminary schedule and registration form by now, but you can check for updates to the information by going to the website at pcb1.org/conference-and-convention/.

Because last year's Blind Vendor Showcase was so popular, we are arranging one for Thursday evening this year. We hope to schedule some added corporate exhibitors for Thursday afternoon. That schedule will be posted closer to the time of the conference.

The preliminary schedule lists all of the presentations, and the information sheet summarizes them.

After you register, you may want to plan for your favorite personal banquet meal and share it with our banquet speaker, Paul Edwards, a very active member of ACB on both the national and state of Florida level. You hear

Paul every week on Tuesday Topics, and he leads bimonthly discussions on The Braille Buzz and Library Without Walls. We will be presenting several awards and announcing the room rate raffle winners at the banquet as well.

Don't forget our Saturday afternoon PCB business meeting, where we will hear reports, vote on resolutions, bylaw changes, Articles of Incorporation, and elect new officers and board members. We even have door prizes during that meeting. Let's grow Independent, together!

2026 Officer and Board Candidates Declared

By the Nominations Team

During our 2026 PCB Conference and Convention we are electing a 2nd Vice President and a secretary to complete the second year of their respective terms. We will

also be electing Five Board members. One of those positions will be for one year to complete a term. The elections will happen during the PCB business meeting being held via Zoom in the afternoon of October 24th, at 1:00 PM Eastern Time. Although there are seven positions to be filled, only four PCB peers have expressed an interest in running for the positions so far.

We have two declared candidates for the Board of Directors who would be serving a second term, Lisa Busch and Sherri Rodgers. We have one peer who would be running for a first term, Don Dunn. Mervin Keck is running for 2nd Vice President to finish the term that the board appointed him to when the position became open. As you see, we will definitely have to fill two board positions and the secretary's position from the floor.

By the time you receive your copy of The PCB Advocate Each declared candidate will have recorded a statement so you can learn more about them. All candidate statements will be available for listening online at <https://pcb1.org/conference-and-convention/candidate-statements-2026/> or via phone on the information line at 773-572-6314, box five.

Declared candidates will answer one mandatory question and can choose which of the other questions they want to discuss in their recording.

In late September, the Nominations Team will confirm the slate of candidates running for positions.

Individuals can be nominated from the floor for any position, either as a self-nomination or by another person, but they need to be at the

business meeting to accept the nomination and to speak for 3 to 4 minutes on the questions that we had presented to those who have already expressed their interest. Floor nominations require a second.

Keep an eye on the email lists and the information line as well as The PCB Advocate for more information.

Remember, it's not too late for you to throw your hat into the ring. While you've missed the opportunity to officially declare your candidacy and participate in the recorded candidate statements, you can still run for a board position or the secretary's position from the floor.

A note to Chapter presidents, please make sure the PCB office knows who your chapter delegates are no later than a week prior to the conference. Additionally, take the opportunity

to listen to these statements and discuss them during your September chapter meetings so peers can offer feedback into the way your chapter will cast its delegate votes.

We in PCB are fortunate to have peers who agree to be a part of the guiding force for the organization. We've discovered some new untapped talents in recent years, and we hope to find additional new leadership talent in this election.

Please listen to the statements and get to know the candidates better.

Nominating Team members are Chris Hunsinger, Cathy Long, and Jackie Wissinger. If you have any questions about the nominating and election process, please contact Chris Hunsinger at 412-414-1628 or cs.hunsinger@verizon.net.

Proposed Convention Standing Rules

By Debby Hill

PCB President

As mentioned in a previous article, on Saturday October 24 at 1 PM as part of the PCB Conference and Convention we will be having a membership meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to hear reports of PCB's status, vote on our PCB's updated Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, and elect members to the board of directors. (More information about the documents we will be voting on can be found in the Article "PCB Planning Update." This year we have the second vice president position and five board seats open, so the meeting is very important.

But before the business of the meeting can get underway, the members need to approve the standing rules for the meeting. These will be read at the beginning of the meeting, but they are included here, so you can become familiar with them.

Here are the rules:

- 1.Each debatable issue before the convention shall be limited to approximately twenty (20) minutes with a two-minute time limit per speaker, alternating between affirmative and opposing speakers, unless a majority of the members agree to extend debate for an additional period of time. The vote counter will keep track of the time.**
- 2.Recognition to speak will be given to those members who properly address the chair using the “raise hand” feature of the Zoom internet meeting client program and giving their names. A member may speak without**

using the raising hands feature to make a motion that properly may interrupt a speaker.

3.The rules related to voting shall be:

A. Any voting by ballot or counted vote shall be taken by the Zoom “raise hand” feature with the names of the voter obscured, if practicable. Write-in voting shall be prohibited.

B. The language for voice votes shall be “All those in favor of the motion say ‘yes.’ “All those opposed to the motion say ‘yes.’”

C. The vote counter shall report the vote totals when directed by the chair.

4. Each member shall be responsible for his or her own connection with ZOOM. No action shall be invalidated due to an individual member’s poor quality or loss of the member’s Zoom connection.

- 5. All candidates who declared by the deadline their interest in filling open positions on the board this year have had the opportunity to speak to the membership via recorded message. In those recordings they answered questions that the nominating team asked. Therefore, all who are nominated from the floor also have the opportunity to answer these questions. Each additional nominee from the floor will have no more than five minutes to speak. If someone is nominated more than one time, there will be no additional speaking in their behalf.**
- 6. The chair may mute or disconnect any member for actions that would be grounds for removal from a physical meeting or due to excessive noise from that member's connection. The chair shall announce that the action was taken immediately upon muting or disconnecting a member. Such action shall be subject to an undebatable appeal.**

And The Winner Is ...

By the Fund Development Team

The PCB virtual Conference and Convention is almost here! This article will be the last one I am writing for the final event for the conference for the fall edition of the PCB Advocate.

Did you know the auction is one of the top fund-raisers for PCB each year? All of us who participate in the annual PCB Auction are winners. Therefore, the question asked in the title of this article is answered with the statement, “We are all winners, including the auction itself.”

PCB is here to help you be one of those winners, whether it is by donating items, by making suggestions for items to be included in

the auction, by coming to the auction just to watch the rest of us get carried away with our bids for all of the items, by making bids to raise the stakes for the winning bid or being determined to actually snag that one item you have been thinking about on the auction list. It often happens that those who come to watch and listen are swept up in excitement and begin placing bids, remembering that PCB is the biggest winner of all!

The auction will take place on Sunday, October 25th, at 3:00 PM and it is the final event of our virtual PCB Conference and Convention. If you register for the conference, you are registered for the auction. If you do not register for the conference, you can still register for the auction by noon on Saturday, October 24th.

The Auction subcommittee has been sending out updates about the items that have already been turned in for the auction. Chapters,

individuals, companies, and conference sponsors can contribute items. We would like to have our completed list of Auction items and the items themselves by October 5th so that the recorded descriptions, braille lists, and website information will be ready in time for the big event.

As a reminder, please remember to send auction items to Autumn's home address not the Post office box. Some items such as baked goods, items where size and color must be selected, and fragile items will stay with the person donating them until Autumn confirms payment. That person will then ship the item to the address provided by Autumn and can ask the office for reimbursement of those costs.

The description and the cost for the item should also be sent to Sandy Marsiglia, Tony Swartz, and Autumn. The contact information for each of them will be at the end of this article.

Updated lists come out every week or so. You may realize that something you would like to bid on is not yet on the list. If this is the case, you can let Sandy know about the item. She will keep the list of suggested items available for people who just do not know what to contribute to the auction. Those weekly lists can also give you an idea of something you might want to add to the auction.

We already have gift cards, items for your pets or dog guides, baked goods, blindness related items, and much more. Are you excited? Help us make the auction a big winner this year.

Contact information for the auction team:

Sandy Marsiglia, Auction Team Leader, phone: 717-676-2349, email: sdm240@comcast.net

Tony Swartz, phone: 610-360-1732, email: tbswartz@ptd.net

Autumn Imhoff, phone 717-920-9999 or 877-617-7407 Ext 800, email: pcboffice@pcb1.org

Auction items (exceptions noted above) should be sent to: Autumn Imhoff, 993 State Route 956, Volant Pa. 16156-3433.

More Than an Auction
By PCB Fund Development Team

Other than the PCB Auction, what does the PCB Fund Development Team do? Here is some information about a few of our other projects.

We still have half-price raffle tickets, but you have almost missed your chance to win any money because the raffle ends at the end of September. We sold a few more tickets this year than we did last year. No one bought half-price tickets after July 1st, but we sold 548 full price tickets this year.

At the time of writing on August 30th, our Keystone Cane Ables team raised \$1010 which met our \$1000 goal. Chris Hunsinger indeed did “March to the Arch” on July 27th in St. Louis with the temperature at 99 degrees. We thank all who contributed to our team. Half of our contributions come back to PCB.

The Fund Development Team thanks all who contribute to the ACB MMS (Monthly Monetary Support) program and specify that PCB gets part of the contribution. We have not been talking about the ACB MMS program recently here in PCB, but you certainly heard about it each day at the ACB Convention.

We have all seen and many of us have bought Blind Girl Designs t-shirts, hoodies, aprons, sweatshirts, tote bags, and blankets. We expect to run our Blind Girl Designs, Let Independence Ring, campaign for your buying and gifting pleasure at least through the end of

2026. As you already know, this is a four-season list of products because some items will keep you cool in the summer, and others will keep you warm in the winter. The holiday season is coming, and we will all be able to purchase either online or by phone. The design is the Liberty Bell with the statement “Let Independence Ring” above it and “Pennsylvania” below it with stars in an arch and the Keystone in the center of that arch. The words are in print and braille. There is a white cane on either side of the image so you can say that the Liberty Bell, which rang to tell Philadelphia that the Continental Congress had agreed on a Declaration of Independence, is either ringing to celebrate Blind Independence or Pennsylvania Independence. Additionally, there will be at least one item from our product line in the PCB Auction. You can order items by phone at 862-448-1011 or go to the Blind Girl Designs website at blindgirldesigns.com and put “Pennsylvania” in the search field. Or you

can go directly to our items by using the link tinyurl.com/pcbgear.

Now, we are looking for additional fundraising ideas. We have not had a retailer-based fundraising activity involving the purchase of items from a company or the rounding up of the payment amount for items to the nearest dollar since “Amazon Smile” ended. Several retailers either give a fixed percentage of what you spend at their site to a specified charity, or they allow you to add some extra change to your payment that is specified for a particular charity. We have not been able to get PCB enrolled in any of those programs. And once Terri Lynn closed down its fundraising program, we have not been able to find another sales program that is ongoing and long term. Any suggestions for fundraising opportunities from peers would be more than welcome.

As you can see, the PCB Fund Development Team does a lot more than just organizing the PCB Auction at our conference and convention. We hope you and your family and friends will continue to support PCB by participating in our fundraisers and if you have any fundraising ideas, get those to Chris Hunsinger, the Fund Development team leader.

A Letter from the Vision Loss Team

If you are partially sighted or have low vision, the letter below from the Vision Loss team is for you. The team would like your feedback, so that they can understand what support you need.

Dear partially sighted peer:

What benefits have you received from PCB?

What could we do to help you more?

If you recently have experienced sight loss, do you have any questions to ask those who are farther along in their coping journey?

What's the most important thing you want to hold onto if your sight continues to diminish?

We on the Vision Loss Team welcome your responses. Email them to our team leader, at: juleanni@comcast.net or call Autumn at: 717-920-9999 or toll-free 877-617-7407 ext. 800.

We look forward to hearing from you and helping in any way that we can!

The Vision Loss Team

A Special Event for Blind Veterans

By Debby Hill

PCB President

Recently you may have heard about Meta's collaboration with ACB to distribute Meta Ray-Ban glasses to blinded veterans. As part of that project ACB has invited affiliates and chapters to set up events to provide the glasses to veterans. The Golden Triangle Council of the Blind (GTCB) has taken up the challenge and will have an event on November 9th from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at VisAbility in Pittsburgh. During this in-person event blind veterans will receive a pair of Meta glasses and will have assistance setting them up with their smartphones.

Please spread the word about the event to veterans who are legally blind and can make it to Pittsburgh to pick up their glasses. For all of the information about this program and to

register for the event go to
<https://www.acb.org/glasses>. To speak to
someone in Pittsburgh about the event call
Michael at 724-942-5803.

Thanks for any help you can give in getting the
word out about the event!

PCB Mystery Member

By Blair Wissinger

Editor-in-Chief

Beginning with the Spring issue of The PCB Advocate we introduced one of our peers as that issues' Mystery Member with a few, hopefully, lesser-known facts about them. It was then up to the readers to try and figure out the identity of the "Mystery Member." Rules are still open to some minor tweaking, but are essentially as follows:

- 1. Please, DO NOT spoil the fun for everyone else. If you know the identity of the mystery member, PLEASE, DO NOT reveal it to others. If they guess correctly just say you think so too; but please don't just say "Yes."**
- 2. Feel free to discuss your ideas with other peers/members of PCB. Actually, we encourage you to do so. It is a great way to get to know each other better. Talk with members of your chapter, or use PCB-chat list, messages, etc. to reach out to others in the PCB family.**

Suggestions for tweaking rules and ways of connecting with other members can be sent to me at jbwiss2@verizon.net.

Please put "PCB Mystery Member" or "PCBMM" in the subject so I can 'search' emails for these specifically.

Let's review Summer's Mystery Member.

This individual provided me with four interesting facts to their life.

...I now live in my childhood home where I grew up, and my house still has a working rotary phone in the basement.

...I once worked as a board op at a cable TV station.

...When I was in a summer music program, I composed and recorded a concerto for lawn mowers. It featured 40 lawn mowers and a slowed down tractor for percussion. I used the variable speed on my Sony Reel-to-Real tape recorder to vary the speed of one of the lawn mowers to fashion a melody for it. I had to walk several miles to record all the lawn mowers on a Saturday afternoon. By the way, I got an A-minus on the project.

...One of my hobbies is exploring caves. One of my most memorable afternoons was spent in a bat cave in North Carolina.

Did you figure out Summer's Mystery Member was Carla Hayes?

Now let's look at some clues for Fall's Mystery Member.

... I once had to replace a burner on the stove because I set a pan down and turned the burner on forgetting I had earlier left a plastic lid there, ever see a plastic encased burner?

... I once baked a plastic measuring spoon in an apple crisp and didn't find it until we tried cutting that piece and couldn't figure out why it didn't want to cut

... I have lived over 90% of my life, so far, in PA, yet I wasn't born here or married here.

... I never knew the joys of dipping toasted cheese sandwiches into tomato soup until I met my husband.

Have fun everyone and give some thought to your own possible mystery facts. No one knows who will be featured next.

The answer will be revealed in the next issue of The PCB Advocate. HAVE FUN!

More Than just an Email list

By Chris Hunsinger

Have you ever asked the question, “What is ACB doing about ...?”

I’m here to give you an overview of how you can not only learn what ACB is doing to bring issues on a national level to the attention of those who have the ability to act on them but also explain how you as an individual can help in this process. ACB uses its website, podcasts, The Washington Connection, and its Announce list to bring activities and information to members and friends of ACB. I want to briefly discuss each of these ways to get information.

Let’s start with The Washington Connection. ACB states it best. The Washington Connection provides audio recordings of summaries of timely activity taking place

in Washington D.C. and with the federal government.

<https://www.acb.org/washington-connection>

You can also listen to a pre-recorded version of this information by calling the national office number at 202-467-5081 and then entering ext. 1004.

ACB Advocacy Update

The ACB Advocacy Update is the biweekly podcast put out by the advocacy team of ACB. The podcast works to educate listeners about the advocacy work of the national office and activity taking place in Washington, D.C. and with the federal government.

You can use the ACB Link on a Smart Phone and choosing podcasts and finally Advocacy Update. You can also subscribe to it in your usual Pod Catcher.

You can be automatically informed about all of these notices by subscribing with your email to the ACB Announce list. This is an announcement only list where the Advocacy team of ACB, Claire Stanley and Grace Hart, send out announcements about all of the advocacy issues. You won't get conversations from other members of ACB because this is a one-way list to inform all interested parties about Advocacy efforts.

To actually join the announce list or any other ACB list that is available to all, go to acb.org, and then the link you want is ACB discussion lists. You can usually find this quickly by creating a Links list and hitting the letter a on a computer. Under that link is an alphabetical listing of the list that you can join by just subscribing. Each list has a link to the address that you would send your subscription request to, so you just click on that link and send an email.

If you subscribe to the announce list, you will get a biweekly listing of information including bills being supported, bills being opposed, meetings being attended, court activities that could affect us, and agency activities that allow for comment using the Federal Register.

This is where you get links to any new Speak 4 campaigns that ACB has begun. Claire and Grace do the hard work of writing a basic letter for all of us to send, putting links to press releases and the actual bills before Congress, and other information that they think might be helpful. This platform usually allows you to fill in your contact information one time so that when you want to let your Federal Legislators know about a particular bill mentioned in the “Speak 4” links, you won’t have to complete your identifying information every time. You can add your own personal comments to the message for your particular legislators. You also get a confirmation notice from that platform letting you know where your

message went. They can also set up similar links for us to contact our state legislators about Pennsylvania specific issues when we identify them.

I hope that this short article will make it easier for you to become involved with the ACB and PCB advocacy efforts. Once you start advocating, you just can't stop.

Delights of Pittsburgh

By Lisa Busch

On Saturday, April 12th, a dozen Blind Outdoor Leisure Development (BOLD) members visited the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh where Curator Dr. Tim Pearce spent hours of his free time showing us the wonders of shells.

Who knew snails and clams could be so varied in texture: from spiny, so sharp you could make your finger bleed if you pressed on it like the comb snail, to the cowry that was so smooth it seemed polished by an artist, to a ridged shell like the flat disk snails. We touched a carrier snail that took empty shells and incorporated them into its own.

We found out that not only do snails live in seas and rivers, but there are land snails as well. Dr. Tim seemed particularly excited to tell us about left-handed and right-handed snails. The left-handed ones are very rare and no one knows why they exist except their creator who loves variety.

Surprises kept coming when Dr. Tim told us that in the scientific classifications, there are more mollusks in the world than mammals, that octopuses are considered mollusks without shells, and starfish are part of our

scientific family. He said that some snails release toxins to kill their prey, but also some produce painkiller venom that can even help humans.

Facts were far from boring when we touched the subject of Dr. Tim's knowledge.

I wish you had been there because it was truly a tactile delight to touch all those shells.

On another occasion, a warm Sunday afternoon in June, BOLD members were invited to Coati Nectar Flora to Table to learn how to savor honey.

Christina, a connoisseur of honey trained in Italy, instructed us to smell each sample, think about its texture in our mouths and then to explore taste.

That was all fine and good when sweet honeys perked up my tongue like the popsicle with honey drizzled on it. I was reminded of how lilacs or honeysuckles smell, but the taste was pleasant and not overpowering. It was also interesting to coat pretzels and cheese with honey.

Tasting pollen? That was my only regret. It felt like a crumb in my mouth that dissolved into a mild bitter herb, insistent on lingering till the first honey sweetness washed it away.

Christina gave us an extensive amount of information about honeybees as well, but don't ask me to repeat anything she said. What I remember most is sticky hands and laughter.

Soundtrack of Summer: **Audio Described Soccer**

By Rose Martin

For as long as I can remember, soccer has been one of my favorite sports to follow. Most weekends of my childhood were spent on the sidelines of my older siblings' games, and I even participated in a local league for disabled children, and tried blind futbol a few times as well. Between a mock felt field with figures and raised line drawings, my dad taught me all about soccer, the different formations, why a play is offside, and much more. If I wasn't off at the playground, I'd be on another field chasing my soccer ball with bells or my personal life-hack, a soccer ball in a plastic bag to hear the wrinkling. On the sideline, I began soaking in the games, asking my parents or those around me for updates, and generally gaining an understanding of the game's progression, despite not being able to see any of it.

Fast forward to high school, I managed our girls' soccer team with my sister as head coach, and made lifelong friends. I'm a loyal Philadelphia Union fan, as well as both US Men's and Women's national Teams. My first Euro-Trip as an adult was to the Women's World Cup with my sister and brother-in-law in 2019, where we watched both semifinal and final games and witnessed the USWNT become champions and add their 4th star. Though this is a core memory, the biggest barrier then and now remains finding a broadcast of the game with play-by-play description. Sure, there are TV broadcasts, and I've found my favorites like JP Dellacamera who provides more detail than many others on TV, but there were always details lacking. Even at the World Cup final in France, I arrived early and picked up a radio that was supposed to have a broadcast, but the English channel didn't work, and I only spoke enough French to order coffee, beer, and croissants, not to follow a soccer broadcast.

Luckily, my brother-in-law was my personal commentator, providing the honest analysis I needed, to the entertainment (and annoyance) of some loyal USWNT fans around us.

When I found out that Fifa was providing Audio Descriptive Commentary for the 2026 World Cup in early June, I was surprised, but my expectations were low. I believe my exact phrase to my friend was something like: “it’ll just be another simulcast, but I guess they’re looking for some positive publicity trying to spin the accessibility for all”. In the past, I’ve downloaded radio broadcast apps for World Cups, Olympics, and other major tournaments expecting radio commentary and instead finding a simulcast of the same TV broadcast. There have been a few occasions of quality radio commentary, but I typically scroll social media for feedback from writers covering the games, or simulcasts on YouTube of professionals reacting in real-time to games; all providing some more detail, but never the

full picture. To say I was wrong this time is an understatement. From the jump, the audio description was on point. There were teams of broadcasters working together for each game, with some describing the pre- and post-game plus halftime details such as stadium descriptions, the team's uniforms, fan behavior and outfits, as well as general commentary while the others described the games in full. Their ability to describe the run of play, while also sprinkling in visual details such as body language of players and coaches, positioning of the team's formations on the field, and other seemingly minor details was impressive.

After listening to the opening day's games, I was hooked and began texting many blind and visually impaired friends, encouraging them to tune in. One of my closest friends from grade school, Nick, is a devoted sports fan, but not of soccer, despite my best attempts when we were young. The first text I got from him after listening to the USMNT's opening game in

fewer words: “this is amazing.” And in later games: “some of the best description I’ve ever heard”, and he’s listened to countless broadcasts. He had never found description that gave him the full picture of the soccer field, so he just didn’t really understand the game and wasn’t interested. After this summer, he’s looking for teams with radio broadcasts to follow, and asking if and when Fifa will have another tournament with description. We texted throughout many games, debating missed opportunities, shared entertainment after listening to the description of the chest-match between keeper and shooter during penalty shoot-outs, our favorite teams after the US loss and so much more.

I wasn’t just texting Nick though, I was texting sighted friends and family reacting to viral moments such as Cape Verde’s improbable run, agonizing moments of overtime games, and understood the viral moments like the Norway fans rowing and Scotland fans

partying, the lure of Erling Halland, and so much more. While going out to watch the US games, I discovered that the audio description was ahead of the tv broadcast, and after ruining a few moments (payback for years of radio delays), I even snuck some videos of family and friends reacting to USA goals on my Meta glasses. I was fully immersed, and it felt great. Some of my goalball teammates attended a game in Newark, and were able to use the Haptic boards that Fifa was testing and they had a great experience, a summer highlight as they described it.

Indeed, this was a summer of soccer that all fans were able to enjoy, a bigger success than most imagined. Sure, there are suggestions and wrinkles to work out, like if crowd noise can be piped in without interfering, but by choosing accessibility, FIFA allowed both blind and visually impaired fans to be a part of it. Both new fans like Nick, and lifelong fans like myself with a renewed love and clearer

understanding of soccer thanks to their efforts. I can't help but wonder what my experience would have been like 7 years ago in France if these features were available, but I hope that this will become the norm, that there will be the same audio description available for the women's world cup next summer, and during the Olympics in 2028. Beyond that, for local friendly international games or smaller tournaments, club games, and other sports as well. This summer showed that the fans are here and listening, and FIFA delivered. Hopefully others will follow. Thank you to all of those who voiced the audio description, you became the best soundtrack this summer.

HEMMING

By Nancy Scott

**Being short, I thought height
would be practical and adventurous.
But even 29-inch inseams aren't
what they used to be.**

**Bargains should be brilliant
modeling luck and skill
of planning and fit.
Bargains should not cover my shoe-tops.**

**I seek expert hands and wise eyes
to pin down precision; to tuck
sale-priced judgment into fashion.**

**I measure lines of words.
This is adventurous but not
the practicality I need now.**

**I would model skill and luck
with side-pocket gratitude after**

**each of us finishes
required alterations.**

**Nancy Scott's over 1000 essays and poems
have appeared in magazines, literary journals,
anthologies, newspapers, and audio
commentaries. Her latest chapbook appears
on Amazon, The Almost Abecedarian. She won
First Prize in the 2009 International Onkyo
Braille Essay Contest. Recent work appears in
*82 Review, Black Fox Literary Magazine,
Braille Forum, Chrysanthemum, Kaleidoscope,
One Sentence Poems, Persimmon Tree, Pulse
Voices, Shark Reef, Wordgathering, and The
Mighty, which regularly publishes to Yahoo
News.**

Living Room
By Lisa Busch

Would you like to enter my imagined room?

The door when opened chimes the song:

"Let 'em In."

What a bell-like greeting,

Do you hear the fountain too?

It makes me think of warm rain.

**I like to walk barefoot here on this carpet of
different textured leaves and petals that
cannot die in my imagination.**

**Put your hand on this wall and feel velvet, silk,
satin or imitation rabbit fur
from floor to ceiling.**

Breathe in the quiet.

When you're ready to continue, just whisper.

**Oh, so much sunlight pours in
from a balcony door
welcoming us with whistles, trills,
and the odor of pine and cedar.
Take your time before moving on.**

**My third wall holds
braille everywhere
with quotes from poetry,
friends, husbands and God
where I can lose myself in joy.**

**Go ahead. Design your own refuge
because when we leave my imagined place,**

we step beyond minds

where real architects build spaces

that open us up wider,

every sense alive to where we are

and how we belong with each other,

walls expanding in all directions

to let everyone in.

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