The GCB DIGEST

A publication of the Georgia Council of the Blind

An affiliate of the American Council of the Blind

An organization promoting a hand up and not a hand out.

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 From Your Editor, by Amanda Wilson

Hello, GCB Family. We thank each one who has submitted articles in this issue of our magazine. If you have any change of address, telephone number, email address, or desired change of format, please inform our GCB treasurer, Marsha Farrow at 706-859-2624, or via email at marshafarrow@windstream.net. Thanks to everyone who makes our GCB Digest such a big success. I particularly want to thank Suzanne Jackson, assistant editor, for the many hours she has worked on the magazine, for her editing skills and for her outstanding reading of the GCB Digest. I want to thank our president Keith Morris, for his presidential message with information about important events, legislation, and projects. I also appreciate the contributions from each member who sent articles, who made suggestions to make the magazine better, and supported me in so many ways.

GCB Presidential Message, by Keith Morris

Hello Fellow GCB Members,
as we come to the close of my first year serving as your President, I want to thank everyone who has worked hard to accomplish all our goals this year.  Thank you to all the Executive Board members for their service.  Together we can accomplish all we set out to do.  Also, I would like to thank everyone who served on the committees.  A lot of work went into each committee’s efforts to bring the finished products to our attention. During this year, we saw the dedication of the Braille Trail that was built by Evan Barnard.  It is a great resource for blind individuals to be able to experience nature on their own.
The convention we had this year was a success.  We heard from many different people with different experiences.  We learned some history of Cartersville/Bartow County.  We had delicious smoothies prepared by the fundraising committee and a successful basket raffle.  Thank you to each chapter that participated. We are looking forward to the convention next year being held in Savannah.  The chapter has lined up great rates and the plans are coming together for another great convention.
The October Board meeting went very well, with a remarkable 12:30 dismissal.  Thank you to all that helped to ensure the agenda was followed and we kept/exceeded our time line.  Also thanks to Roderick Parker, our Parliamentarian, who is teaching us all the fundamentals of conducting a business meeting? I look forward to another year of serving you as your President and working with everyone to bring about another great year.  If anyone is interested in serving on a committee, please contact me and we will work to get you started. As we enter this holiday season, let us all strive to be a blessing to someone by our words and deeds. Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year to everyone!

GCB Board Meeting Minutes, Christine O’Brien

The Center for the Visually Impaired, CVI, 739 W. Peachtree St., NW, Atlanta GA 30308, Saturday, April 25, 2015, 10:00 am until 3:30 pm

Call to Order:

The Georgia Council of the Blind board meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM By President Keith Morris. The meeting was held at the Center for the Visually Impaired, CVI, in Atlanta, Georgia. We thanked the staff at the Center for the Visually Impaired, CVI, for allowing us to meet there.

Invocation:

Chaplain, Fred Mc Dade led us in a prayer.

Roll call:

The following members were present at the meeting. They include President, Keith Morris; First Vice-president, Robin Oliver; Second vice-president, Fred McDade, Secretary, Christine O’Brien; Treasurer, Marsha Farrow; President Emeritus, Bill Holley; Athens chapter, Jerrie Toney; Augusta chapter, Alicia Morris; representing East Georgia chapter, Jesse O’Brien; Greater Columbus chapter Greg McDuffie; Greater Hall County chapter, Judy Presley and Dianne Roberts; Northwest, Ron Burgess; Rome Floyd County chapter, Amanda Wilson; Savannah chapter, Marj Schneider; South Metro Atlanta chapter, Chris Baldrige; Georgia Guide Dog Users, GGDU, Betsy Grenevitch; Web Master, Steve Longmire. Members who were absent were Tim Kelly, representative of the Members at Large group; and Casey Owens, GCB Digest editor: We had many other members who attended the board meeting. They include Anisio Correia, Kathy Morris, Tonia Clayton, Teresa Brenner, VaShawn Jones, Chester Thrash, Harvey Roberts, Hoyal Presley, Connie Short, DJ Grenevitch, Lane Simmons, Donald Raines, Daniel Myers, Alice Ritchhart, Valerie Hester, John Hester, Sheila Chavous, and Chris Chavous.

Welcome from Kim Charleson:

Kim Charlson, President of the American Council of the Blind, ACB, was on the phone for our board meeting. She welcomed us to ACB. She said that she would listen to our board meeting. She said we could ask her any questions that we might have during the board meeting.

Legislative Report:

Anizio Correia talked about some changes made by the Department of Education and Labor. The Rehabilitation Act was combined with the Workforce Investment Act. Rehabilitation will include the Departments of Labor, Economic Development, and Workforce Investment. We have 60 days from April 16th, to comment on this, (now 51 days). There will not be as many services to the blind as before.

Swearing in:

Neb Houston, the president of the East Georgia chapter will be sworn in at the next East Georgia chapter meeting. Officers who took the Oath of Office were Robin Oliver, First vice president; Betsy Grenevitch, president of the Georgia Guide Dog Users, GGDU, special affiliate; and Diane Roberts, a new representative from the Greater Hall County chapter.

Secretary Report:

Christine O’Brien asked Lane Simmons to read the October 18, 2014, board meeting minutes. Judy Presley made the motion to accept the October board meeting minutes as read. Marsha Farrow seconded the motion. The motion carried with no opposition. Christine O’Brien read the January 17, 2015, board meeting minutes. Two corrections were mentioned. One is to change the amount remaining in Evan Barnard’s account to $900.51. Alice Ritchhart was appointed to be the chairperson of the constitution and bylaws committee. Greg McDuffie moved the minutes be approved, and Judy Presley seconded, motion carried.

Treasury Report:

Before giving the treasurer's report, Marsha Farrow, our new treasurer, introduced Arthur Way, of Way Financial, in Kennesaw, Georgia. We have had our funds there for the past 8 years. He said that as of March 31, 2015, our balance was $68,531.73. This year $900.51 was deposited to the checking account. In the past 4 years, $11,346.06 was deposited. The high-yield funds are earning 7.6 percent. That is most of the money, and $15,000 is earning 1 and a half percent. He informed us that treasury bills are about 1.4 percent, CDs amount 0.25. Interest is low since 2007, and the higher the yield, the higher the risk. Marsha Farrow interjected that this money was already invested in these bonds when it came to GCB. Bob and June Willis, which were part of the Atlanta chapter, made the investments years ago. Arthur Way answered some questions. Marsha Farrow said anyone who has ideas about redistributing funds can share it with the Finance Committee. Then, we can ask Arthur Way’s advice. Marj Schneider asked if a committee could be formed to just work with him concerning the portfolio to see how the money could work harder for us. Marj Schneider made a motion to form this committee. The motion carried with no opposition. Lane Simmons read some more of the treasurer’s report which included the transition into the new treasurer. We spent $990 for audits. The Al Camp scholarship account balance is $2,972.42.The Way Financial investment balance is $65,815.21. The checking account balance is $5,241.99. The Business advantage checking account balance is $5,277. These were January 2015 balances. Marsha Farrow said she brought all of the GCB financial books if anyone would like to see them. Marsha Farrow had talked to Ms. Hazel who was supposed to audit the GCB financial books. Ms. Hazel told Marsha Farrow that she is a bookkeeper and a tax preparer. Ms. Hazel knows Jerrie Toney, but she does not know anyone else in GCB. Ms. Hazel said that she is someone of integrity and would never do an audit for an agency she does not know about. Ms. Hazel said she does not even know the location of GCB, but has dealt with them by mail. Ms. Hazel did the books, but there were no receipts for 2014. This was as of April 8, 2015. Marsha Farrow had invited Ms. Hazel to come to our board meeting, but Ms. Hazel could not attend. Marsha Farrow asked Ms. Hazel to be on the phone for the next board meeting.  Bill Holley asked if Marsha Farrow was implying that there was something dishonest with the books. Marsha Farrow said no. Marsha Farrow was not approved to be on the GCB banking account until March 14, 2015. As of March 14, 2015, the ending balance was $4,775.99. The checking account balance was $3,870.22. The Al Camp Scholarship fund account balance was $11,422.26. The investment savings account balance was $11,358.41. The nine month no-risk cd will mature on December 7, 2015. The ending balance total of all accounts was $41,346.88. The Way Financial account balance was $68,531.23. Financial information for the month of April of 2015, are as follows; checks deposited, $120; total checks written, $60; ending balance, $4,165.99; Evan Barnard grant balance was $900.51; Al Camp Scholarship, $3,820.02; investment saving, $11,422.26; CD, $11,358.80; the 4 accounts total ending balance, $31,467.87; Way Financial, $68,866.11. GCB no longer has a debit card. Marsha Farrow suggested the finance committee discuss making a formal contract with Steve Longmire for his being the web master. Steve Longmire is owed money and is doing us a service. Diane Roberts asked for Marsha Farrow to tell her about pay pal. Marsha Farrow said that pay pal is a way to pay on line. It charges us 2.9% before the items are paid for. Marsha Farrow stated that she had paid for the GCB post office box yearly fee of $74.00. Marsha Farrow stated that GCB no longer has a phone number because it was too expensive. We are using Keith Morris’ cell phone number which is 706-799-5225. Sheila Chavous, the finance chairperson, read the 2015 budget report to us. We collected dues from 208 members. The projected money, $2,496; actual money $1,456; projected donations, $2,521; collected money, $1,456; president's travel expense, estimated $2,500; none spent; estimated operating costs, $350; remaining $224.17; ACB dues allotted, $1,456; spent, $1,040; remaining, $416; awards allotted, $200, $0 spent ; GCB Digest allotted, $600; remaining, $565.89; office items, $300; spent, none; total projected costs, $5,601; remaining $4,216.06

It had been suggested that $500 be set aside for convention costs. Christine O’Brien made a motion to allow the executive board to discuss by phone the convention expenses after the convention. Marsha Farrow announced that she would be changing our bank accounts from Bank of America to Regions Bank because Regions Bank is closer to her. Regions Bank is located all over Georgia. The checking accounts will be free, and it will have better CD rates. We can write up to 75 checks a month for free. Fred McDade made a motion to move the checking, scholarship, and CD accounts to Regions Bank. Christine O’Brien seconded the motion. The motion carried with no opposition. Marsha Farrow reported that Kay McGill gave GCB $100 for the scholarship fund and asked us to please tell Kay McGill that we appreciate her donation. Fred McDade made a motion that we have a raffle for the GCB general fund. Tickets will be one dollar or five dollars for six tickets. The winner will receive a gift card worth two hundred dollars. Jesse O’Brien seconded the motion and the motion carried with no opposition. Robin Oliver made a motion for Marsha Farrow to file the treasurer's report for audit. Christine O’Brien seconded and the motion carried with no opposition.

Committee Reports:

Convention Committee:

 Marsha Farrow, the chairperson of the convention committee, reported that the luncheon fee for Saturday, August 1, 2015, at the One-Day Event Conference/convention will be $17 or $18 through pay pal. The cost of the room at the Clarion Hotel in White, Georgia, will be $69 before taxes. The Registration includes your meal on Friday night and the session on Saturday. The registration fee will be $30 or $32 through pay pal. There will be two tours on Friday, July 31, 2015. The first tour will be at the Beyond Limits Riding facility in Emerson, Georgia. This tour will include a horse ride, a hay wagon ride, and a picnic lunch. If it rains we will have a backup plan. The cost for this tour is $50 or $52 through pay pal. The other tour is at the Tellus Museum, where you will get a tactile hands-on tour of the facility. The cost for this tour is $13 or $15 through pay pal. On Friday night, we will have a snack supper. We will have the Al and Cora Camp Musical Scholarship fundraiser. We will have the live auction with the themed baskets from the chapters. Maya Santamaria will be the hostess for the musical fundraiser. On Saturday, August 1, 2015, Robin Oliver will be the hostess of the Awards luncheon. Fred McDade will give the invocation during the opening ceremony and for the luncheon. Tonia Clayton, will be the hostess of the aging and vision loss panel.

Chris Holtzclaw will be the hostess of the I Can Work panel. Jerrie Toney and many other GCB members will host the Iphone session.

Alice Ritchhart will give a presentation about traveling with or without sight and with or without a guide dog. The Clarion Hotel has breakfast; outdoor pool; bar; relief area for the guide dogs. A Waffle House restaurant is in walking distance of the hotel. The business meeting and the board meetings will be the last sessions of the day. GCB members can then travel home or stay and relax at the Clarion hotel.

Membership Committee:

Amanda Wilson, the chairperson of the membership committee, reported that the membership committee has been meeting on the first Tuesday of every month. The membership committee has been working on a brochure for GCB. We have signature cards in braille that we will give out to anyone who wants one. We have been working on posting our chapter activities on our Facebook page, on our web site, and on our individual chapter Facebook pages.

Technology Committee:

Steve Longmire, the chairperson of the technology committee, reported that the technology committee has been meeting on the second Thursday of every month. Steve is adding an audio podcast on how to use the Iphone and also the PC. You can either download or listen online. He will also be working on Facebook and twitter. He will also update and put the brochure on the web site.

Constitution and By Laws Committee:

Alice Ritchhart, the chairperson of the constitution and bylaws committee, reported that the new GCB constitution and bylaws will go out on the website, email, Google groups and the GCB Digest, so we can see the changes. Alice Ritchhart said that according to articles in the Constitution and Bylaws, if an organization is in conflict with the GCB mission and goals, that we should not be a part of it. She stated that the Georgia Statewide Coalition on Blindness is no longer in compliance with our Constitution and bylaws. Rehabilitation services have regressed ten years within the past two years; Paul Raymond has been disallowed from dealing with GCB. Most of the service providers have left the Georgia State-wide coalition on Blindness, so now it is not a complete coalition. Betsy Grenevitch made a motion for GCB to not be affiliated with the Georgia Statewide Coalition on Blindness. Greg McDuffie said that we should be working together. We started the coalition, but Marsha Farrow had been removed from the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, GVRA, and board. We had a lively and heated discussion before we took a stand up vote. Eight board members voted to not be affiliated with the Coalition. Seven Board members voted to stay affiliated with the Coalition. So, now we are no longer affiliated with the Georgia State-Wide Coalition on Blindness.

Legislative report:

Betsy Grenevitch, the chairperson of the legislative committee, said that not much legislative work was done because the Blind Day at the Capitol was canceled due to weather. She proposed to discuss later with the committee that GCB have our own program at next year's Blind Day. She was happy that our legislative group helped stop the Religious Freedom Bill from going through, as it's so vague, and people of a certain religion would not let guide dogs in their cabs and businesses. One bill to be pursued next year is titled HB66. It involves us forming a group to keep up with the services for blind people to insure that our needs are being met. The braille bills are still being worked on. They have been in the works for many years. Betsy Grenevitch, Alice Ritchhart, and Marsha Farrow talked with the head of the Georgia Special Education department and the Georgia Academy for the Blind. They are willing to work with us and suggested that we should contact the Professional Standards Commission to see that they're also on board with us. They told Betsy Grenevitch to gather a task force from our members to work on this. Betsy Grenevitch is waiting to hear back from a Georgia representative that the commission recommended they contact to work with them. Betsy Grenevitch talked with this representative who told them to call him in November. He said he would find them a sponsor. He said that he knew they had been working on this bill quite a while.

GCB Digest Report:

Casey Owens, the newly appointed GCB Digest editor was not able to come to the GCB board meeting. Amanda Wilson, the past editor, stated that Casey Owens had been very sick this year. Amanda Wilson said that Casey Owens had undergone ear surgery to improve her hearing. Amanda Wilson stated that she was assisting Casey Owens with the GCB Digest and that they hope to produce and mail the GCB Digest out by the first of June.

Georgia Guide Dog Users:

Betsy Grenevitch, the president of the Georgia Guide Dog Users, announced that GGDU met in October of 2014 and in March of 2015. There were some puppy raisers at the March meeting. Two of the puppy raisers will be interning at guide dog schools. GDDU is doing a fundraiser. They are selling bars of homemade dog soap. The bars of soap are selling for five dollars for either the bone shaped bars or the paw print bars. GGDU is planning to have its next meeting at the Clarion Hotel in White, Georgia, in August at 7:30 am. GGDU is planning to meet at the Clarion Hotel in White, Georgia, for the 2019 Top Dog gathering site. GDDU is working on laws concerning fake service animals. They met with the legislative chair of Guide Dog Users Incorporated, GDUI. The Julie Acroft Award went to Ann Davin, who is a friend of Judy Presley. Ann Davin was so excited to receive the award. When Judy Presley presented it to her, she was speechless and emotional.

New business:

Betsy Grenevitch offered to set up a phone number for GCB members to call and listen to GCB announcements.

Next GCB board meeting:

The next GCB board meeting will be at the Clarion Hotel in White, Georgia on Saturday, August 1, 2015.

Adjourn:

The GCB board meeting adjourned at 3:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine O'Brien, GCB Secretary

GCB Treasurer’s Report, by Marsha Farrow

Anyone interested in acquiring copies of the 2015 treasurer’s reports, and budget and/or 2015, convention report, please contact the GCB treasurer, Marsha Farrow at706-859-2624, or via email at marshafarrow@wndstream.net.

GCB Convention Summary, by Amanda Wilson on Friday July 31, 2015, some of the Georgia Council of the Blind members went horseback riding at Beyond Limits Therapeutic Horseback Riding center in Emerson, Georgia. They had fun riding and petting the horses. They enjoyed a picnic lunch. They then went to the Tellus Science Museum where they had a hand on tour of the exhibits. Then, we had the Al and Cora Camp Scholarship Musical Fundraiser. Maia Santamaria served as the Master of Ceremonies. She entertained us with her own unique brand of comedy. The following people entertained us with songs and music: Eddie Davenport, Keith Morris, Amanda Wilson, Tonia Clayton, Betsy Grenevitch, DJ Grenevitch, Michelle Grenevitch, and Timothy Jones.

Drue Collins twirled the baton to music during the musical scholarship fundraiser. Attendees at the Al and Cora Camp Musical Fundraiser had an opportunity to give a donation toward the scholarship program. Refreshments were available throughout the evening, while attendees had opportunities to bid on various themed baskets. We had lots of fun at the live auction that took place during our 2015 conference this year.

The basket that was given by the Georgia Guide Dog Users, stuffed full of cool stuff for both dogs and people, was bought by Ann Sims. The basket that was given by the East Georgia chapter was stuffed full of movies and snacks to eat during a movie and was bought by Omer Tongret. The basket that was given by the Rome Floyd County chapter was stuffed full of bath, body, and kitchen items and was bought by Amanda Wilson. The basket that was given by the Northwest Georgia Chapter was stuffed full of fresh fruit and was bought by Anisio Correia. Kathy Morris’s quilt was bought by Debbie Williams. The basket that was given by the Augusta Chapter was stuffed with Christmas items and was bought by Anisio Correia. Tonia Clayton bought the talking watch which was donated by Steve Longmire. The basket that was given by the Savannah Chapter was stuffed full of items from Savannah and was bought by Kathy Morris. Lisa Jones bought the audio Bible that Stuart Overbee gave to GCB as a donation. The Georgia Council of the Blind live auction raised $475.00. All funds from the live auction will go toward the Georgia Council of the Blind general fund. We want to thank John Hester, Valerie Hester, and Alice Ritchhart for their hard work during our 2015 conference to raise much needed Conference Expense Funds. The grand total for the smoothie fundraiser was $136. On Saturday, August 1, 2015, the Georgia Guide Dog Users had a Breakfast Meeting. They talked about events and issues relating to guide dogs. If you would like to know more about the Georgia Guide Dog Users group, please contact Betsy Grenevitch at 770-464-0450, or via email at blindangel@joimail.com.

The Georgia Council of the Blind One-Day Conference/convention opened when Amanda Wilson introduced the Georgia Council of the Blind officers who are Keith Morris as president; Robin Oliver as first vice-president; Fred McDade as second vice-president; Christine O’Brien as secretary; Marsha Farrow as treasurer; and Timothy Kelly as the member at large representative and Betsy Grenevitch as Georgia Guide Dog Users President. Fred McDade gave the invocation. Chris Allen, Mayor of White welcomed us to Bartow County. During the memorial Service, Judy Presley and Amanda Wilson remembered the following members who passed away--Don Hull, Vivian Carstens, Richard Jehu, and Fran Stokes from the Greater Hall County Chapter; Grace Wilson from the Rome Floyd County Chapter; and Ben Manley, Jr., from the Savannah Chapter; Rob Wade from the East Georgia Chapter; and Jonny Wilson, a former GCB officer. Lilianna Hanley’s dad, Billy C. Keathley passed away back in 2006, who founded the Gospel Light Foundation for the Blind Inc. For more information about the Gospel Light Foundation please contact Lilianna Hanley, at 678-475-7879, or via email at ministries@glfb.org. Due to the fact that Evan Barnard had to leave, we presented him with the June Willis Guiding Eyes Award, which was given by Judy Presley, Chair of the Awards committee. Evan gave a short speech about his work with the Braille nature trails that he has worked on here in Georgia.

We had many interesting speakers. The first speakers were Dana Tarter and Rebecca Cowan-Story, who shared with us how Ushers 3 affects vision and hearing loss. Dana Tarter, who is deaf/blind, shared her story of how Ushers 3 affected her vision and her hearing loss. Dana shared that she is a wife, a mother of four children, a special education teacher, and a woman seeking God's path in her life. Dana grew up an avid ball player and horseback rider. Little did she know she would lose her hearing and her sight later in her life? After college, she worked in the mission field with the Deaf in Venezuela and the Ukraine. Ironically, after returning to America, her first job with the school system was working as a Sign Language Interpreter. Since completing her Master's in Special Education she has taught students with autism for 18 years; the last three of those years she has taught as a Deaf Blind educator. She clings to a verse in Jeremiah, which is in the 29th chapter and the 11th verse. Dana knows that God is not done with her yet. She is now beginning another phase in lifelong learning at Gallaudet University, aiming to help more families with children that are Deaf or Deaf Blind through the Infants, Toddlers, and Families early intervention program. As the president of the Georgia Association of the Deaf Blind, Dana travels around our state and presents information to increase awareness of individuals who are Deaf Blind. After Dana spoke she answered some questions from the floor. Rebecca repeated the questions to Dana by using tactile sign language in Dana’s palm. If you have any further questions about Dana Tarter, you can contact her via email at tarter8101@comcast.net. Rebecca Cowan Story told us about how Usher syndrome affects your vision and your hearing. Ushers can cause you to lose your vision and your hearing later in life. Rebecca started her career in the field of Deafness on her very first day of college when she met someone that she could not carry on a conversation with. She says, “We were both freshmen and terrified alone in the cafeteria, but it was an oddity for me to not to be able to talk to anyone!!” She graduated three years later with an Associate in Human Services and an Interpreters Training Certificate. She then went on to work in that field for eight years as she finished her Bachelor’s degree in Organizational Management and started on her Master’s in Rehabilitation counseling. That led her to a teaching position at the School for the Deaf, where she was miraculously able to last two whole years. After working as a rehabilitation counselor for the Deaf, she completed a graduate certificate from Northern Illinois University specializing in consumers with both a vision and hearing loss. This led her to her current position with vocational rehabilitation as the State Coordinator of Deaf-Blind Services. Rebecca is married to James, and they have Luke, age 11, Mark & Maggie, age 6½. Rebecca truly feels that God has led her to where she is for His cause, no matter how many times she asks, “Why me?”; she is fortunate to wake up in the morning and love going to work with modern day Helen Kellers in our state. After Rebecca told us about Usher syndromes, she answered some questions from the floor. If you have any further questions for Rebecca Cowan-Story, you can contact her at 770-548-8662, or via email at rebecca.cowan-story@gvra.ga.gov.

The first panel was on Aging and Vision Loss. This panel was moderated by Tonia Clayton, who introduced herself and gave a short biography of her vision loss. Panelist Kay McGill talked about senior individuals with vision loss. Panelist Dr. Suma Shankar spoke about how genetics affects vision loss. All panelists answered questions during the session. Tonia Clayton talked about her vision loss. She has Retinitis Pigmentosa, RP. Even though she has lost her vision, she has not allowed it to take over her life. She has two diplomas from Coosa Valley Technical College in Microcomputer specialist & web site design along with a medical transcriptionist certificate. She works at the North West Georgia Center for Independent Living as a certified peer mentor. She helps individuals to work on their goals from wanting to get a service dog to helping them stand up for themselves about Social Security. She is in charge of the Home modifications program which helps individuals get materials to help build ramps, wide doors, or an accessible shower. She has been blind most of her life. Tonia is in a relationship with Sean Hogue. He is blind. They have been together for five years. Tonia had a service dog from Leader Dog named Rebound who led her until he retired, and he has just passed away recently. Tonia has a new service dog from Leader Dog named Jamie, who is a female Labrador. If you have any further questions for Tonia Clayton please contact her at 706-346-4089, or via email at tclayton@nwgacil.org.

Tonia Clayton introduced Kay McGill, who is the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Project Independence: Georgia Vision Program for seniors Program Manager. Kay McGill told us about the program for seniors who have lost their vision later in life. She graduated from the University of Kentucky, UK, with a Bachelor’s degree (cum laude) in Psychology and Master’s degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. She is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor and Certified Public Manager. She has been with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) her entire career, serving as a Rehabilitation Counselor, facility and field supervisor, an Employment Manager, Special Populations Coordinator for the Blind, Deaf, and Deaf-Blind, State Coordinator for the Blind and Older Blind Program Manager. She received awards from the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind, the National Federation of the Blind of Georgia, Georgia Council of the Blind, the Business Enterprise Program, Helen Keller National Center, and the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired, and Vocational Rehabilitation. Although Kay retired from Vocational Rehabilitation December 1, 2006, she continues to work with the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency as the GVRA Older Blind Program Manager and the Project Independence: Georgia Vision Program for seniors. If you have any further questions for Kay McGill, please contact her at her office at 770-414-2676, or via email at kay.mcgill@gvra.ga.gov. Or you can contact Kay McGill at 404-299-8638, or via email at kay1949@comcast.net.

Kay McGill introduced Dr. Suma Shankar. She told us how genetics affect vision loss. She joined Emory University in January, 2010 with joint appointment in the Department of Human Genetics and the Department of Ophthalmology. She received her medical degree from Bangalore Medical College, India. She completed her Ophthalmology residency training and obtained the Membership of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists (London) and Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons (Edinburgh) in the United Kingdom. Following this she came to the United States to study molecular genetics of eye diseases and completed a PhD as well as a fellowship in pediatric ophthalmology at the University of Iowa. Her experience in the blossoming field of genetics captured her attention and she decided to make a career as a medical geneticist. She went on to The University of California in San Francisco to do a medical genetics fellowship in 2007. Her research interests include ophthalmic manifestations in genetic disorders and molecular genetic studies of ophthalmic diseases. During her time in Emory she has been involved actively in the care of genetic disorders with a special emphasis and clinic in ophthalmic genetics. She is on a number of clinical trials and is leading the “Emory Eye Genetics” project with a goal of establishing a data base, DNA bank and gene discovery effort for inherited eye diseases at Emory. Dr. Suma Shankar answered many questions from the floor about how genetics can affect your vision. If you have any further questions for Dr. Suma Shankar MD., PhD, please contact her at 404-778-8560, or via email at suma.shankar@emory.edu. The second panel was on “I want to Work“, Career Development: Overcoming Barriers of Vision Loss, moderated by Marj Schneider. Panelists included Christina Holtzclaw, Vincent Martin, Anisio Correia, and Rodrick Parker. All panelists answered questions after they told their employment story. Marj introduced everyone. After each panelist told us about themselves, Marj asked for questions from the floor. Marj took time to tell us about her employment story. She shared, “I am not a native of Georgia, but my husband, Don Moss, and I have lived in Savannah for the past 12 years. We moved there from Minneapolis, Minnesota in 2003. I grew up in Minneapolis, and though I had very limited partial vision, I attended public schools. Blind children were starting to be mainstreamed in Minneapolis in the early ‘60s, and though I attended neighborhood schools, I wasn’t taught to read Braille. Large print became increasingly difficult for me to read as I got older, but I didn’t learn that Braille could be a viable alternative until I began babysitting for a blind couple in my neighborhood as a teenager. Through them I learned of an opportunity to learn Braille when I was in high school and fortunately had a special education teacher at the time who could accept that I had learned it despite not being taught through school. I started using books in Braille and went on to take Braille notes in college and depend on it heavily. I attended the University of Minnesota, studying home economics and women’s studies. I lost the little remaining vision I had during college and I was matched with my first guide dog in 1986. In high school and college I was active in the local chapter of the National Federation of the Blind, but had a parting of the ways with the organization in my early 20s. I had become an activist during my teens and after I left the NFB, I, along with a small group of blind women in Minneapolis, founded the Women’s Braille Press, an organization that produced feminist literature on tape and in Braille. That project was my calling for a dozen years and I learned a great deal about working with others and developed leadership skills. In the late ‘80s I began doing some adjunct teaching at St. Cloud State University in their human relations program. For nearly 15 years I taught a course annually on disability rights issues there, and I gained confidence in teaching and being in front of groups. Because college-level instructors need to have graduate degrees, I returned to school at the University of Minnesota in the mid ‘90s. While I was working towards my master’s degree in communication studies, I also taught public speaking and courses on disability issues at the U of Minnesota. Because teaching was offering only intermittent employment, I was looking for what else I might do when I finished grad school. By chance, in the fall of 1998, I was offered some transcription typing work, and I found I was good at listening to what people were saying and typing it on the computer. That first project led to others, and by the spring of 1999, my husband and I incorporated what had become a small business that came to occupy us fulltime with both transcribing and editing. In 1997 we discovered Tybee Island, quite by accident while on a coastal road trip, and we decided to come back there to spend the winter. Because of the flexibility in our lives, we lived on Tybee during the winter for six winters, returning to Minneapolis in April, by which time the snow had usually melted. After those years of 1400 mile drives, we decided to live in Georgia fulltime, which for me meant leaving behind family, friends and the place I had called home for 45 years. My transition to life in Savannah was far more painful and difficult than I would have anticipated, but living here has also given me opportunities I didn’t have in Minnesota. We have a good-sized back yard and grow as many of our vegetables and fruits as we can year-round. I’ve gotten involved in my neighborhood’s community association and have come to appreciate the area where we live. I love working from home and our business has grown over the years. Currently, I am president of the Savannah Council of the Blind, secretary of Georgia Guide Dog Users, and I’m always willing to help out with GCB activities when I can. If you have any further questions for Marj Schneider, please contact her at 912-352-1415, or via email at marjschneider@bellsouth.net.

Anisio Correia told us about his employment story. He has a rich and extensive experience in the field of vision rehabilitation spanning a period of nearly 40 years. A teacher at heart, Anisio began his contributions to the field of vision rehabilitation as a Vision Rehabilitation Therapist, providing both center-based and itinerant instruction to blind and visually impaired adults. Since then, Anisio has held numerous senior and executive management positions for small and large nonprofit organizations in the United States. Throughout his long career, Anisio has dedicated himself to increasing the scope and quality of services for people who are blind and visually impaired both in the United States and overseas and changing public attitudes about vision loss. Blind since childhood, Anisio is a user of many of the skills, techniques and assistive technologies which make up the various programs and services he directs. Currently, Anisio is the Vice President for Programs at the Center for the Visually Impaired, CVI, in Atlanta, Georgia. In this capacity, Anisio is responsible for supervising CVI program services in children's programs; BEGIN, STARS, Low Vision Services, and Adult Rehabilitation Services; managing and increasing funding relationships with United Way, state and federal grants and contracts and identifying new funding sources; seeking new opportunities to serve clients and the community and advocating for the needs of blind and visually impaired children and adults. A trilingual speaker in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, Anisio has worked and studied worldwide. He completed a bachelor's degree in Germanic Philology from the University of Lisbon in Portugal, a master's degree in Education and Rehabilitation Teaching from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and has completed graduate coursework toward a degree in Public Administration from Baruch College of the City University of New York. Since moving to Atlanta in 2006, Anisio has been living in the Avondale Estates community with his wife and 19-year-old daughter. If you have any further questions for Anisio Correia, please contact him at 404-539-4521, or via email at ACorreia@cviga.org.

Rodrick Parker told us his employment story. He is the proud owner of The Innervision Neuromuscular Center in College Park where he has been practicing for 11 years. He has 3 staff members who also provide therapies when needed. He has been without sight since 1990.  Roderick has used his practice to serve as a community based work adjustment site for many VR clients readjusting to returning back to work. Through the years Roderick has served on a number of boards and committees, including the Board of Trustees at the Center for the Visually Impaired, where he currently serves as Executive vice Chair for board development. He is a member of the Georgia Association of Parliamentarians where he has been studying parliamentary procedures for the last 3 years. Roderick is single and the proud father of 3 adult children and 5 grandchildren. His passion is leadership development and non-profit governance and long term sustainability of blind consumer/service organizations. If you have any further questions for Rodrick Parker, please contact him at 404.202.5213, or via email at incfounder@innervision4massage.com.

Vincent Martin told us his employment story. He is a totally blind graduate research assistant and a PhD student at Georgia Tech. He has been a member of the Georgia Radio Reading Service Board of Directors for thirteen years and serves as the vice-president. He has worked in a myriad of capacities in the arena of rehabilitation and research the past twenty-five years, including as an Assistive Technology Instructor for private rehabilitation facilities in the State of Georgia and as a rehabilitation engineer for the State of Alabama. He has also worked as a rehabilitation research engineer and health research scientist for the United States Veteran’s Administration. Married to his wife of sixteen years, Jacqueline, he is also a retired United States Paralympic Athlete, having represented the United States at the 1996, 2000, and 2004 Paralympic Games. He is the first blind graduate of Southern Polytechnic State University, SPSU, and he completed his fifth different technical degree back in 2008.Vincent Martin has been a full-time graduate student since August of 2010. He is currently a graduate research assistant for Georgia Tech, which means that he is paid to work twenty hours a week and works anywhere from twenty to fifty! He says, “We call it indentured servitude or graduate slave! We actually get a tuition waiver, so it is well worth it. If it did not exist, then very few people would get a Ph.D.” Vincent also occasionally consults with companies. If you have any further questions for Vincent Martin please contact him at 404-403-4378, or via email at Vincent.martin@gatech.edu or vincentfmartin2020@gmail.com.

Christina Holtzclaw told us her employment story. Christina was born in Rome, Georgia. Christina lost her sight when she was born. She has congenital cataracts and glaucoma. She attended public school and graduated from Model High School in 1988. Throughout school, she was taught Braille and other skills as well as her regular subjects. In 1988, she got her first guide dog, Chloe, from Guiding Eyes for the Blind in New York. She attended and graduated from Shorter University with a B.S. in Psychology. After marrying and seeking employment, she began working at the Center for Independent Living, CIL, for the northwest Georgia area. She began working at the center in 2004 as an Independent Living Coordinator. Today, she is now the Assistant Director. She is married with five children and a new guide dog named Felicia. If you have any further questions for Christina Holtzclaw, you can contact her at 706-314-0008, or via email at choltzclaw@nwgacil.org.

 After we asked the panelists our questions, we broke up to go to our Luncheon. The Gems of Georgia Council of the Blind luncheon was hosted by Robin Oliver, Georgia Council of the Blind First Vice-President. Robin Oliver introduced the key note speaker who was Louise Young Harris. She told us some cool facts and some history about Bartow County. Robin Oliver gave us noise makers and asked us questions about what Louise Young Harris had talked about. The person who blew their noise maker first and answered the question correctly received a door prize.

Louise Young Harris has represented and traveled extensively in the tourism industry for 20+years and has loved every minute of it. Presently she is the Group Tour Coordinator for the Cartersville-Bartow County, Georgia Convention & Visitors Bureau and assists with Marketing and Sales for the Clarence Brown Conference Center in Cartersville, Georgia. For more information about Louise Young Harris, please contact her at the Cartersville-Bartow Convention & Visitors Bureau Cartersville Visitor Center which is located at 5450 GA Highway 20, in Cartersville Georgia, 30121; or call her at 770-387-1357.

Robin Oliver introduced Debbie Williams, chair of the Georgia Council of the Blind Scholarship committee, who told us about the people who had been selected for Georgia Council of the Blind scholarships. Debbie Williams presented Drue Collins, Timothy Jones, Douglas Alt, and Mario Badie with their scholarship checks. Drue Collins and Timothy Jones were there to receive their checks in person. They thanked us and told us where they will be going to college. Mario and Douglas were unable to attend. They will receive their check in the mail before they start college later this month. Drue Collins is attending Clayton State University, and she is majoring in Information Technology. Timothy Jones is attending Mercer University in Macon where he is going to major in music. If you know of anyone who would like to apply for a Georgia Council of the Blind scholarship, please contact Debbie Williams at 770-595-1007,or via email at Debbieteaches@comcast.net. You can go on our web site at [www.georgiacounciloftheblind.org](http://www.georgiacounciloftheblind.org), and download a scholarship application.

Judy Presley, chair of the awards committee, presented a special award to Hal Simpson, of the Georgia Blind Sports Association. The Georgia Blind Sports Association was founded in 2011. It is a 501c3 nonprofit corporation that serves as an advocate for youth and adult visually impaired athletes in Georgia. With his son, Matt Simpson, born visually impaired, Hal Simpson dedicated himself to ensure Matt would not miss out on any opportunity. Founding, and now serving as GBSA’s President, Hal Simpson transferred that passion to include anybody with a visual impairment. If you have any further questions for Hal Simpson, please contact him at 770-833-2061, or go to their web site which is [www.gablindsports.com](http://www.gablindsports.com). Linda Williams from the East Georgia chapter received the Rhoda Walker Award, Marsha Farrow from the Rome Floyd County Chapter received The Gerald Pye Community Service Award, and Amanda Wilson from the Rome Floyd County chapter received The Walter R. McDonald Award. If you want to nominate any Georgia Council of the Blind members for a service award, please contact Judy Presley, at 706 878 2962, or via email at hoyal@windstream.net.

Sonya Saylor told us about the Blind Lions of Georgia and the Lions Camp in Georgia. For more information about Blind Lions or the Lions Camp please contact Sonya Saylor at 912-228-2150, or via email at soniahsaylor@bellsouth.net.

The third panel was on technology. Panelists talked about how technology can assist them to be more effective either at work or at home. The panelists included moderator Jerrie Toney, Vistas and Multiple Choices; Kathy Baker, Steve Longmire,; Dudley Morris, VaShaun Jones, and Stewart Overby. Jerrie Toney was the moderator of this panel. She graduated from Gwinnett Technical College in 2002.  At present, she is employed at the VISTAS Center and Multiple Choices Center for Independent Living in Athens, Georgia. Jerrie is a computer instructor, JAWS trainer and peer advocate.  She shares, “I am a mother of two, grandmother of 7 and a great grandmother of two.  My hobbies are reading, working on web sites, troubleshooting and gardening.” If you have any further questions for Jerrie please contact her at 706-461-1013, or via email at jerriemt2@gmail.com. Jerrie Toney introduced the panelists and took questions from the floor after each panelist told how they use different types of technology, they answered questions from the floor. Kathy Baker told us about some devices that Help People with Disabilities. She said that while many of the devices used by people with disabilities today are advanced, digital or modern, assistive technology has been around for thousands of years. Here at NWGA Center for Independent Living we have partnered with Tools for Life, TFL, to bring our community a wide variety of assistive devices for demonstration at our center. We have over 20 assistive devices to fit a variety of needs and disabilities. Our staff is trained with the use of these items, and we are able to demonstrate how to use them to our consumers and their caregivers. While we do not loan or give out any of these AT devices, we are more than happy to educate you on how to use them, discuss approximate pricing and point you in the right direction to acquire these items. If you have any questions or would like a demonstration of any of our AT devices, please contact Kathy Baker at 706-314-0008 or via email at kbaker@nwgacil.org. Steve Longmire, Sunbright Web Design, told us how he used his android phone to access the internet. Steve is the web master for the Georgia Council of the Blind web site. He has a monthly conference call on the second Tuesday at 8:30 pm. For more information about Steve Longmire please contact him at 404-236-5820, or via email at info@sunbright.biz. Dudley Morris with Vision Rehabilitation Services told us about the services that his organization can teach individuals with visual impairments about accessible technology. Dudley Morris told us that his organization offers access Technology Training that can equips individuals experiencing vision loss with specific skills and technology tools for living and working independently. Taught by certified instructors, clients are provided with individual instruction in basic computer skills as well as instruction in using speech or magnification software programs. Access Technology Training provides: Computer Access for individuals with low vision through screen magnification software, Zoomtex; computer access for those with more significant loss of vision or total blindness through screen reading software or a braille display, JAWS and MAGic; computer access for anyone with vision loss to the software packages most commonly used today in business and for everyday living, such as word processing, spreadsheets, information management, Internet and email. Access to printed materials for anyone with vision loss through Optical Character Recognition, OCR, scanning software combined with screen magnification or screen readers; access to portability for screen reader or braille display users through a note-taker or a personal digital assistant, PDA; access to potential education and employment opportunities through the knowledge and skills gained during instruction; access to a wealth of information - if desired, information about even more Access Technology, such as accessible cell phones, portable scanners, electronic book readers, Talking GPS devices, and more. If you have any further questions for Dudley Morris, please contact him at Vision Rehabilitation Services, 770-432-7280, or visit their web site at [www.VRSGA.org](http://www.VRSGA.org). VaShaun Jones is the Visionary of Fedora Outlier, LLC, the first nationally-recognized firm delivering consulting, teaching and support for Apple’s range of accessible technologies to blind and low vision individuals. The firm was founded in mid-2011. Fedora’s mission is to educate, equip and empower the blind community for success in the workplace, classroom and at play. VaShaun Jones has many hobbies that include playing the saxophone, working with the deaf-blind, and advocating for the rights and responsibilities of the blind. If you have any further questions for VaShaun Jones please contact him at 404.368.8779, or via email at vashaun.jones@gmail.com, or visit his web site at [www.fedoraoutlier.com](http://www.fedoraoutlier.com). Stewart Overbey is the Director of Bartimaeus Bible Institute which is a Bible education, discipleship training ministry to and from the blind and visually impaired. It is our mission to provide the blind student with a quality, affordable, accessible, accountable and interactive biblical education that will enable them to: Like Bartimeus, become a mature, fully functioning and fruitful follower (disciple) of Jesus Christ so the student can help others become mature, fully functioning and fruitful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ; 2 Timothy 2:2. Enable the student to minister in his/her own local church, parachurch, or missionary organization as a trained and contributing part of its ministry team. Provide student with courses in media accessible to the blind and visually impaired including braille, large print, audio and internet. Engage the student with an accessible classroom experience by phone, internet and, where possible, face-to-face. If you have further questions for Stewart Overby please contact him at 706-342-0397, extension: 257, or via email at Stewart@bartimaeusinstitute.org.

Alice Ritchhart talked about traveling the World without sight and enjoying it. Imagine standing in the Caribbean Ocean and a big furry Sea Lion with lots of long whiskers on both sides of her head that feels like and sounds like a person with lots of beaded braids, swims by and stops to take a fish from your hand. The next time the sea lion swims by; she stops and lays a big wet kiss on the side of your cheek. Imagine being in the ocean in Cozumel, Mexico, and a dolphin plays with you in the water. He feels like a big latex balloon that you might see in the Thanksgiving Day parade. Once again, a fish lays a kiss on your face. Try to envision reaching out your hand and touching a piece of an iceberg, or the wall of the Panama Canal, or sampling a glass of rum just bottled from the Bacardi rum factory in Puerto Rico. Maybe you would just like to spend time shopping and dealing with merchants in the markets or shops of a duty free island. If traveling abroad is not your thing, just think about going to the top of the space needle in Seattle and feeling the wind blow through your hair. Maybe your thing is playing the slots in Las Vegas, or getting your picture taken with the Mouse at the House of the Mouse. Just because you’re blind doesn’t mean you have to miss out on all these wonderful experiences. Traveling is one of my favorite things to do, and even though I can no longer see with my eyes, I still enjoy visiting new places and experiencing new things. My favorite though has to be going to places and getting up close and personal with the animals. Most of my travels have been through cruises, and made possible by traveling with a group of my friends with ACB. The American Council of the Blind has been working with Dave Kronk. Every year he plans several different types of cruises or trips to exotic places, and helps to make sure that you get to do and see whatever you want. He even helps to make sure we know that our guide dogs will be able to travel with us, and also makes sure we know what documents and things are required for us and our four-legged pals. Often he helps to make sure it is possible for you to take the trip even though you may be on a fixed income. If you see a cruise you are interested in, you can book and make monthly installments until it is paid off before you go on the cruise. The other way to travel is just by planning to attend our ACB conferences and conventions each year. The conference is held in great places in the United States, and because ACB has great volunteers who help plan tours and events while at the conference, you can tour places you might have always dreamed of visiting. For example, one of my favorite was standing on the glass platform out over the Grand Canyon with mountains all around me and nothing below but a wide valley. Or maybe you might want to shop till you drop at the Mall of America in Minnesota or ride the roller coaster there. These are just a few of the ways you can travel and get the most out of your vacation without sight. There is a great book I would recommend you to read that will help you plan and decide where you might go next time you are thinking about a vacation. The book is called “Sites Unseen Traveling the World without Sight” by Wendy Davis. The book is available on BARD. Also below I am listing the vacations being offered in 2016 and 2017 by Dave Kronk along with his contact information. So maybe I’ll see you some time on the deck of a cruise ship sipping a BahamaMama together, and playing bingo with the Braille cards the cruise ship has. To book your vacation, please contact Dave Kronk at 618-409-0143, or via email at dkronk@htc.net.

GCB business meeting: Christine O’Brien read the minutes from last year’s business meeting. We discussed making changes to the GCB Constitution.

GCB Board Meeting: We ran out of time before we had our GCB board meeting. Keith Morris, GCB president, stated that the next GCB board meeting would be at The Center for the Visually Impaired in Atlanta, Georgia on Saturday, October 17, 2015 at 10:00.

GCB Member Profile: Timothy Jones

Timothy Jones is an accomplished young musician, recognized locally and nationally for his talent in playing both the piano and organ. His first “performance” was at the age of 2, when he picked out Twila Parris’ “Lamb of God” on his home piano. He began formal piano study with Miss Patti Bennett of Music by Patti at the age of 6 and has studied piano for 14 years. He has studied organ under Dr. Graham Purkerson and Dr. Jens Korndoerfer, and currently studies organ with Dr. Jack Mitchener and piano with Dr. Ian Altman, both of Mercer University. He has achieved a number of local, national, and international awards and recognitions, including the Georgia Music Teachers Association State Auditions “Outstanding Performer (2008, 2009, 2011, 2012), “Master Class Level Performer” (2011) and “Conference Recitalist Second Alternate” (2009). His National awards include the 2011 Paderewski Gold Medal in the National Piano Guild Auditions of the American College of Musicians; National Federation of Music Clubs’ Agnes Fowler Award for Blind Performance and the Joyce Walsh Junior Disability Award (both in 2010), and a “National Winner” of The American College of Musicians’ National Guild of Piano Teachers for 12 years’ participation with consistent “Superior Plus” ratings. He recently completed a full 14 years of Superior ratings to earn the prestigious “Irl Allison” Award, a level reached by few students. Locally, Timothy was co-recipient of the Atlanta Music Club’s High School Keyboard Scholarship for 2010, is a recipient of the 2010-2015 annual Scholarships for Organ Performance from the Atlanta Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, was 2nd place winner in the 2012 Gwinnett County Music Teachers Association Junior/Senior Scholarship Auditions, Second Place Medalist at the Champions 2012 High School Piano Competition, and First Place Winner at the North East Georgia Music Teachers Sonatina/Sonata Competition (2011). He also won first place in the Organ category for the Bob Jones University High School Festival for the Arts in October 2012, and Third Place in their Piano category in 2013. Timothy has also performed to benefit local causes, such as playing for the True-Blue-Do Benefit for the Center for the Visually Impaired in Atlanta in 2011 (at the Opera music hall) and 2012 (at the Piedmont Driving Club), and playing for CVI’s 50th Anniversary Reunion in 2013. Timothy was also honored to dedicate his Junior Piano Recital as a Benefit Concert for Tornado Relief in 2011, at which he raised almost $1,500 for the victims of the northeast Georgia tornadoes. In 2015 Timothy gave several volunteer performances to benefit the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra at the Chateau Soleil Decorator’s Showhouse Benefit. He gave his Senior Piano Recital at Berean Baptist Church in June 2014. He is a member of several organizations of professional musicians in Atlanta, including the American Guild of Organists, The Atlanta Music Club, the Pro-Mozart Society, and the Chopin Society. Timothy completed his high school studies and graduated with honors in 2014 from TNT Academy, and has been accepted at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia, where he plans to major in music. When Timothy is not practicing or performing, he stays busy working with Vocational Rehab to master new skills specific to technology for the blind which will aid him in college when he enters in Fall 2015, traveling weekly to Macon to study piano and organ with Dr. Mitchener and Altman at Mercer, studying Music Braille and Music Theory, listening to his favorite recordings (classical and traditional sacred music), and studying with private tutors to further ready himself for college. He attends Berean Baptist Church in Lilburn. Timothy hopes to pursue a dual career in both church music (piano and organ) as well as private performances for event music, senior citizen groups, and sacred concerts. He also hopes to become involved in radio broadcasting, especially in sacred and classical radio. He has also expressed interest in working in the AWT field (Assistive Work Technology) aiding other blind persons in working with or troubleshooting technology for the blind. Regarding his music, Timothy says, “When I hear really good musicians play, they can make me imagine things through their music.  My ultimate goal in my music is to do the same thing—to make people feel and imagine through my music things that will bring them joy, help them improve their lives, overcome their fears and hardships, and give them strength to have a better life.” Timothy’s signature verse has become “By faith, not by sight”, expressing both his personal faith in God and his prayer that others may be inspired by God’s work in his life. It is his joy to share that gift and that faith with you today. If you would like to hear some of Timothy’s piano performances, please visit the website Musical Overture, under the name “By faith not by sight”, at <http://www.musicaloverture.com/videos/by/Byfaithnotbysight>. If you have any further questions for Timothy Jones, you can contact him at 770-448-1511, or via email at casioplayer@bellsouth.net.

GCB Chapter News

The Athens chapter officers are Jerrie Toney as president; Jamaica Miller as first vice-president; Donald Rains as second vice-president; Bonita Peek as secretary; Robin Oliver as treasurer.

Their meetings are held at MULTIPLE Choices at 145 Barrington Drive in Athens, Georgia on the fourth Saturday at 10:30 AM. For further information, please contact Jerrie Toney at 706-461-1013, or via email at jerriemt2@gmail.com.

The Augusta chapter reports that they are doing a community service project for the veterans on Saturday, November 14, 2015. They will be giving goodie bags to blinded veterans. The Augusta chapter will be having their Christmas party on Saturday, December 12, 2015. The Augusta chapter officers are Alicia Morris as president; Deborah Lovell as vice-president; Ann Worley as Secretary. Their board members are Chris Chavous, Kathy Morris, and Ron Worley.  Their meetings are held at the Columbia County Main Library on Evans Town Center Blvd. in Evans, Georgia, on the second Saturday at 1:00. For more information, please contact Alicia Morris at (706) 466-2690 or freebird1783@yahoo.com.

The East Georgia Chapter of GCB continues to meet on the second Saturday of each month at 10:00 AM. The meeting place has changed to the Covington First United Methodist Church. This location is more convenient for transportation for members than the previous location.

 A variety of programs have been presented for the chapter in recent months. In August, Phil Jones reported on the national ACB convention and several members reported on the GCB one-day conference. The September program was presented by Jane Boynton, program outreach and volunteer coordinator for GARRS. Jason Bombelyn explained the iCanConnect program at the October meeting.

 Elections were held in October for next year’s officers. Neb Houston will continue as president. Cecily Nipper will be first vice-president and Phil Jones will be second vice-president. Linda Williams will continue as secretary, and Anne Wheeler and Linda Cox will continue as co-treasurers. Board members will be Elsie Aguilar, Rosetta Brown, Brenda Maddox, and Christine O’Brien. Upcoming activities include a brainstorming session for program ideas and the annual Christmas covered dish luncheon. For more information, please contact Neb Houston at 770-784-0236.

The Greater Columbus chapter officers are Gregory McDuffie as President; Dirk Jones as first vice-president; Clifford Jones as second vice-president; Lisa Brooks as secretary; William Miles as treasurer; Otis Smith as Chaplain. Their meetings are held at the Columbus Public Library at 3000 Macon Road in Columbus, Georgia on the third Friday from 10:30 until 12:00. For more information please contact Gregory McDuffie at 706-330-8185, or via email at gregory.mcduffie@yahoo.com.

The Greater Hall County chapter members had heard of Danial Kish from California, who was blind from birth and taught himself tongue clicks to navigate through his environment. When it was learned that Kish had come to Gainesville to teach seven year old Myles Irvin this technique, we quickly invited Myles to be our guest speaker. Myles was adorable as he took the microphone and proceeded to explain how the batlike sonar system works. We were also delighted to learn that Myles was reading grade 2 Braille by age seven. We sent his thank you letter to him in Braille. The Greater Hall County chapter officers are Judy Presley as president; Vance Barnes as vice-president; Sue Heskett as secretary; Ted Brackett as treasurer. Their board members are Don Linnartz, Dianne Roberts, and Evelyn Rudy. Their meetings are held at the Smokey Springs Retirement Residence at 940 South Enota Drive in Gainesville, Georgia, on the second Saturday at 10:00. For more information, please contact Judy Presley at 706-878-2962, or via email at hoyal@windstream.net.

The Northwest Chapter will be having their Christmas party at the Dairy Dip on Tuesday, December 1, 2015, from 6:30 until 8:00 pm. Their officers are Ron Burgess as president; Fred McDade as vice-president; Mayella McDonald as secretary; Charles Stubblefield as treasurer; Robert Sprayberry as Chaplain. Chapter meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every other month at the Bank of Lafayette Community room, which is located at 104 North Main Street in Lafayette, Georgia at 7:00 pm. For more information, please contact Ron Burgess at 706-638-1132.

The Rome Floyd County chapter members reported that at their June meeting, they heard from Eddie Davenport. He sang a number of songs for us. He told us his story of how he lost his vision and how he started singing. In July, we heard from Marsha Farrow, who told us about her trip to Dallas, Texas, to attend the American Council of the Blind, ACB, national convention. In August, Amanda Wilson and Marsha Farrow reported on the successful Georgia Council for the Blind, GCB, state-wide convention that was held in White, Georgia. In September, Andrea Taylor from the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, GVRA, told us about how they assist individuals with visual impairments who live here in Georgia. In October, Amanda Wilson and Marsha Farrow told us about the successful Georgia Council of the Blind, GCB, state-wide board meeting that was held in Atlanta, Georgia. We discussed our next two meetings for November and December. We are making plans for having a great lunch to celebrate the holidays with each other. The Rome Floyd County chapter elected new officers. The new officers are Marsha Farrow as president; Chris Ingram as vice-president; Suzanne Jackson as secretary/treasurer; Dale Allen as Chaplain; Casey Owens and Misty Ingram as board members. Their meetings are held at the Rome Floyd County Library at 205 Riverside Parkway, in Rome, Georgia, on the third Tuesday, at 11:00 am. For further information, please contact Marsha Farrow at 706-859-2624, or via email at marshafarrow@windstream.net.

The Savannah Chapter reported that this year on Thursday, October 15, White Cane Safety Day, members of the Savannah Council of the Blind met downtown to pass out flyers to passersby who would accept a copy. The weather was beautiful and although only a small number of us participated, we had the chance to interact with a lot of people and we distributed nearly 300 flyers. This was a low-cost event that a few or many members can participate in and it offers the chance to do direct public education. We plan to do something similar next year, hopefully with some media coverage as well. If you would like a copy of our flyer to adapt and use in your community for the observance of White Cane Safety Day next year, contact me at mailto:marjschneider@bellsouth.net and I would be happy to email it to you. The Savannah Chapter officers are Marj Schneider as president; Bob Walls as vice-president; Kim Harrison as secretary; Jon Bairnsfather as treasurer. Their board members are Jan Elders and John McMillon. Their meetings are held in the conference room of J. C. Lewis Ford, 9505 Abercorn Street, in Savannah, Georgia on the first Thursday from 6:00 until 7:15 pm. For more information, please contact Marj Schneider at 912-352-1415, or via email at marjshneider@bellsouth.net.

The South Metro Atlanta chapter: The South Metro Atlanta chapter reports that back in June, Ann Sims went to D.C. with her son, Stephen, daughter, Susan, and grandson, Drew.  Stephen and Drew had never been to D.C., so this was especially interesting for them.  Among the many things they enjoyed was a tour of the Capitol.  Ann was very impressed by all the information the guide and intern, Rachael, gave them, and was especially pleased to be given braille copies of each room they toured.  She will be glad to share them with anyone who would like to read them. In July, the second Tupperware party to raise funds for the chapter was a success with profits of $200.  This money helped the chapter to be able to make a donation of $100 to help pay for the van used to take members from Atlanta to the GCB One Day Event in Cartersville and back.  Those who attended the Event were Lisa Jones, Steve Longmire and Tiyah Fowlkes, John Sims, Ann Sims with Nickie, her Seeing Eye dog, Chester Thrash, Suzette Wood and her two daughters, Tyzia and Madison.  Some of the group went horseback riding, including Madison, the youngest in the crowd at three years old.  Her mother thought she might be afraid of the horse, but she loved it and did not want to get off.  She wanted to take the horse home with her!  Chester, Tyzia and Suzette rode horses, too, and Lisa went to enjoy the outdoors.  Most of the members attending went to the museum and learned a great deal about the moon and were given some tiny moon rocks to keep. On Friday night, the music program and auction were quite enjoyable.  Ann was thrilled to meet up with two of her former students, Timothy and his mother, Nancy Jones.  Timothy graciously furnished his fine keyboard for all to use, and his playing was excellent. The first basket for bidding on was from the Georgia Guide Dog Users, and it was filled to the brim with all kinds of doggy treats, toys, water and food bowls, a t-shirt for the dog owner to wear which said, "I don't need therapy, I have a dog!"  There were also drinks and food for the dog owner, a lighted arm band and a fanny pack with hand sanitizer and doggy "pick-up" bags in it.  Ann Sims and Alice Ritchhart had fun bidding against each other, but Ann finally won out. On Saturday, the bidding continued on some of the auction items, and Lisa Jones got the Voice Audio Bible that Stewart Overbee gave to the GCB auction. Chester Thrash won a door prize, and Steve Longmire donated a talking watch.  The Mayor of White, Georgia, where the hotel is located, gave some prizes, and because Ann Sims holds the longest membership in GCB, she won a $25 gift certificate from Applebee's. On August 12, several members of the CVI Braille Club and friends are going to Washington, D.C., to visit the Library of Congress and to stay in the NFB facilities there.  Steve Longmire of the South Metro Council and two of his friends are going on the trip.  It will be interesting to hear his report when he returns. Member and Past President, Brent Reynolds, informed the members of a program coming soon, which is a group of doctors who now make house calls, like in the olden days.  Members will learn what all this covers and share with readers of The GCB Digest in its next issue. Barbara Graham has a new address and phone number.  She is selling her condo and has moved to an apartment at the following address:

1503 Temple Avenue, Apartment 106, College Park, GA 30337, and phone:  404-600-8433. In October, the chapter will have another fundraiser Tupperware party before the monthly meeting.  About two weeks before the party, Ann Sims will be sending out flyers of the items for sale, and explaining how folks can go on line to look at the catalog items.  Ann and John's daughter-in-law, Faith Sims, is the Tupperware rep, and she will be able to explain the items of interest either via email or phone to anyone interested in ordering. Please notice that our name has changed to South Metro Chapter of GCB.  We had to change our banking to another bank in order to avoid the service charges imposed on us from the old bank.  Somehow, this involved a change in our name as well. We have enjoyed a couple of good fundraisers from Tupperware, and we appreciate everyone who participated in helping us by ordering products.  This last time, we raised $230. For our Christmas celebration, we plan to have our dinner at our regular meeting place, Pickadili, at 2226 North Druid Hills Road, Atlanta, Georgia, from 4:30 until 6:30.  We hope to invite a blind child and parents from the BEGIN program at CVI.  This is always a fun and joyous time for all. We would love for you all to join us any time at our meetings which usually fall on the second Friday in the month.  If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Jones, at 404-556-8987;

GGDU, Georgia Guide Dog Users, by Betsy Grenevitch

You always hear that knowing the right people can get you what you need and Georgia Guide Dog Users has been seeing that take place over the past year. At a Lions Club meeting, the discussion came up about access issues with guide/service dogs. A member who happened to be present became interested in this issue and wanted to do something about it. A state representative for the Loganville, Georgia, area was contacted and asked if he would be willing to work on a law concerning the fake service animal issues that seem to have arisen nationwide. He said that he would be willing to work on this issue for us. The potential law did not get far last session because we asked that some GGDU members be able to give their input and there were some concerns. Now that those concerns have been addressed, the law is being worked on once again. In September, the Loganville Legacy Lions Club actually used their meeting time to bring the fake service animal problem to the forefront. Rep. Tom Kirby, the state representative who is carrying the legislation, Marj Schneider and Alice Ritchhart from their respective homes via telephone, and I also took part in this meeting. We had several key people in attendance at this meeting such as the chief of police for Walton County and also a judge from Loganville. Rep. Kirby gave us an update on the law that is being worked on and says he does not see a problem about it getting passed. We also learned another exciting piece of news at this meeting. He wants to increase the fine if a service animal is attacked to match the fine that takes place if a police dog is attacked. That is great news for guide/service animal handlers. Please stay alert for the number of the bill once it is assigned and contact your state legislators to ask them to support it when it comes to a vote. In preparation for this meeting I contacted the Georgia Restaurant Association and asked if they could send a representative to the meeting. They said they were not able to send anyone but asked if we could do training for their office staff via the telephone. Shortly after this first response, I received an email asking us to do a webinar for the members in the entire state who belong to the Georgia Restaurant Association. Marj and Alice helped me with the phone training for the staff of the association and we are making final preparations to do a live webinar on December 2 for the entire association. There is a good possibility that Alice and Marj will be able to participate from their respective homes in this webinar. I would like to publicly thank the Loganville Legacy Lions Club and Alice Ritchart and Marj Schneider for their assistance in making these presentations. This is only just the beginning of education opportunities that are on the horizon for Georgia Guide Dog Users. For more information about the Georgia Guide Dog Users group please visit their web site at [www.georgiaguidedogusers.org](http://www.georgiaguidedogusers.org).

GCB In Memory of:

Yvonne Barbara Harvey, 64, of Macon, Georgia, died on June 12, 2015. Her funeral services were held on Saturday, June 20, 2015, at 2:00 PM at Crawford County B.O.E. Auditorium with burial in Pleasant Grove Cemetery in Crawford County. If you wish to contact her family, you can do so at the following address: 1014 Pinewood Park Macon Georgia. Her wake will be held on Friday, June 19, 2015 at Bentley’s Funeral Home Chapel in Roberta, Georgia. Her Service is entrusted to Bentley & Sons Funeral Home in Macon, Georgia.

Rob Wade, 69, passed away back in June of this year. Rob Wade was a driver for Anne Wheeler and several other people to the East Georgia chapter meetings in Conyers, Georgia, for many years. He was a member of the Covington Lions Club.

Johnny Lafayette Wilson passed away on Wednesday, July 15, 2015, due to complications from a stroke at age 82. He was born in Gainesville, Georgia. He attended the Georgia Academy of the Blind, Georgia State University, and Atlanta Law School. He was a longtime piano technician, food service entrepreneur, and advocate for the blind. He loved visiting family and friends, woodworking, and reading tales of the Old West. He is survived by his wife, Winona, of 43 years; Son and Daughter-in Law, John and Mireille Wilson of Valencia, California; Daughter and Son-in-Law, Stephanie and Chris Barrios of Stephens City, Virginia; and

grandchildren, Kayleigh, Connor, and Carys Barrios; Sister and Brother-in-Law, Juanita and Melvin Boyd of Gainesville, Georgia; Brother and Sister-in Law, Tom and Dixie Wilson of Lawrenceville, Georgia; Sister, Dianne Cross of Cleveland, Georgia; and numerous nephews and nieces. He was a joyful friend to all. No services are planned.

Ben Manley, Jr., of Chamblee, Georgia, died on Monday, July 27, 2015. He was a 1973 Georgia Academy for the Blind, GAB, graduate and passed away suddenly on Monday July 27, 2015. He was in the hospital with a blood clot in one of his legs. According to his wife, Amy Schwab, he appeared to be doing better and was about to be released when he suffered a massive heart attack. He was cremated. Ben Manley, Jr's Memorial service was held on Sunday, Oct. 4, at 2:00 pm, at the Central DeKalb Senior Center, 1346 McConnell Dr., Decatur, GA 30033, and 770-492-5464. There will be no clergy presiding. No flowers please. We would prefer that you spend your money on a good cause that Ben was passionate about—nutrition and water and food safety. You can go to www.centerforfoodsafety.org. For further information, please contact Amy Manley at 770-986-4189, 770-714-1655 or via email at: schwab\_amy©hotmail.com.

Robin Charlene Walker, 60, of Stone Mountain, GA, passed away on August 7, 2015. Robin recently retired from the IRS office in Atlanta after thirty years of service. Because of her limited eye sight, she was a Braille reader who enjoyed doing her own yard work at her house Robin Walker attended her first alumni meeting this year. She enjoyed the meal at Joy's Country. She enjoyed catching up on other Georgia Academy for the Blind, GAB, and graduates. Robin was a pleasant, happy, sweet woman with a pleasant personality. The funeral service will be held on Saturday, August 15, 2015 at 11:00 am. Services will be conducted by Gregory B. Levett and Sons Funeral Homes and Crematory which is located at the South DeKalb Chapel, on 4347 Flat Shoals Parkway in Decatur, Georgia, 30034, 404-241-5656

Donald Ray McNeal passed away on September 19, 2015. Donald was preceded in death by his first wife, Vicki McNeal and three children, Heather, Daniel and Benjamin McNeal. He is survived by his wife, Paula, his parents, James and Merle McNeal along with brothers, Ron (Wanda) McNeal, Josh (Gilli) McNeal, sisters, Pam (Tony) Patterson, Teresa (Larry) Cross, several nieces and nephews, along with in-laws, Tom and Lisa Bandy and William and Judy Rivers. Donald loved serving his Lord. He sought every opportunity to study, preach and teach God's word. He loved helping others. He was a blessing to so many. The funeral service was held on Tuesday, September 22, 2015, at 1:00 pm, in the chapel of Owen Funeral Home with Rev. Joe Ringwalt officiating. The burial was held in the Sunset Memory Gardens. The family received friends at the funeral home Tuesday morning at 11:30 am until the funeral hour. Brothers and brothers-in-law will serve as pallbearers. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Baptist Global Response, 402 BNA Drive, Suite 411, Nashville, Tennessee 37217, [www.gobgr.org](http://www.gobgr.org). Owen Funeral Home, 12 Collins Drive, Cartersville, Georgia is in charge of the arrangements. Those of us who were at the Georgia

Academy for the Blind, GAB from the late 50s to the early 70s has many fond memories of our beloved twin brothers Donald and Ronald. Ronald was and still is a very talented musician with a winning personality. Ronald McNeal sang at his brother’s funeral. Donald, also with a winning personality, had fairly good vision but had a hearing problem. It was said that when Donald had heard enough in class or with his friends after class, he was sometimes observed removing his hearing aid. Donald graduated in 1971 from the Georgia Academy for the Blind, GAB. He was a fine artist. A picture of the old school which he painted years ago has remained on the wall over the fire place in the faculty dining room in the cafeteria at the Georgia Academy for the Blind. Donald became an evangelist, preaching the word of God not just at one church. He spent several years in North Carolina before returning to Georgia for his final years. Two years ago in 2013, our last year at The Georgia Academy for the Blind, Ronald entertained us on the piano both Saturday and Sunday and Donald presented the sermon during our last chapel service on Sunday morning. Our prayers and thoughts go out to Ronald, Paula and the rest of his family.

Smithey Raeburn "Rae" Stubbs Ingley Vidalia, GA. Mrs. Smithey Raeburn "Rae" Stubbs Ingley, age 97, of Vidalia, died October 14, 2015 at Bethany Nursing Home in Vidalia after a brief illness. She was a native of Tampa, Florida, living most of her life in Macon, Georgia, and the last fifteen years in Vidalia. She was a musician and choral music instructor for the Georgia Academy for the Blind in Macon; and former member of the Wesleyan College faculty (Director of the Chorus, member of the voice faculty). Mrs. Ingley began her musical career as a student of the late Conrad Murphree in Tampa, Florida. After two years as a student at Wesleyan Conservatory in

Macon, Georgia, she transferred to the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, studying under Arthur Kraft and receiving her Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees. Mrs. Ingley was awarded the Artists' Diploma from Eastman, the highest award presented by the school for performance. Mrs. Ingley was preceded in death by her husband, Howard Ingley, Jr.; sisters, Valerie Stubbs McCutchen and Daisy Stubbs Mickler Dickerson; and brother, William Oscar Stubbs. Mrs. Ingley is survived by her sons, Dennis (and Therisa) Ingley of Vidalia, Paul (and Susan) Ingley of Rock Hill, South Carolina, and Alan (and Dawn) Ingley of Atlanta, Georgia; grandchildren, Jared (and Avani) Ingley of Atlanta, Dyson Ingley of Atlanta, Lauren (and Trey) Ellis of Nashville, Tennessee, Cara Ingley of Dawsonville, Georgia, Jon Ross Ingley of Athens, Georgia, and Megan Ingley of Greenville, South Carolina; and great-grandchildren, Simran Ingley and Kieran Ingley. The family requests in lieu of flowers contributions be made to Methodist Home for Children and Youth, PO Box 2525, Macon, Georgia 31203, (478) 751-2800; Georgia Academy for the Blind, 2895 Vineville Avenue, Macon, Georgia 31204, (478) 751-6078; or Sweet Onion Animal Protection Society, PO Box 210, Vidalia, Georgia 30475. The graveside Services for Mrs. Smithey Raeburn "Rae" Stubbs Ingley were held on Sunday, October 18, 2015 at 2:00 PM at the Macon Memorial Cemetery with Reverend Mark Magoni officiating. The family received friends at the Stewart-Rosier Funeral Service Vidalia Chapel Saturday evening from 5:00 until7:00 pm. Stewart-Rosier Funeral Service of Vidalia was in charge of the funeral arrangements.

Margaret “Rusty” Stubblefield, 85, of Rossville, Georgia, passed away on Wednesday, October 7, 2015. The funeral services were held on Monday, October 12, 2015, at 2:00 pm in the South Crest Chapel with Pastor Jim Bennett officiating. Interment was held on Tuesday, October 13, 2015, at 1:00 pm. at the Chattanooga National Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, please make memorial donations to your local Humane Society or Greyhound Rescue Organization.  Her intelligence, passion for life, humor, love of animals and outgoing personality defined her life and will remain with us long after her death.  Her favorite quotation below encapsulates her nature:

"Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend; inside a dog it's too dark to read" - Groucho Marx

The family received friends on Sunday, October 11, 2015, from 3:00 until 8:00 pm and on Monday, October 12, 2015, from 10:00 am until the service hour at the South Crest Chapel of Lane Funeral Home & Crematory, at the end of historic Missionary Ridge, Rossville.

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GCB Celebrations

We want to wish the following people a happy birthday and a happy anniversary.

Geraldine Pye 7-17, Phyllis Edson 7-19, Kim Harrison 7-28, Jamaica Miller 7-31, Ted and Millie Brackett’s anniversary 8-4, Melanie House 8-7, Ronnie Alridge 8-8, Hoyal and Judy Presley’s anniversary 8-9, Keith Morris 8-9, Millie Brackett 8-9, Jamie Teal 8-17, Virginia Morris Smeltz 8-20, Neal and Janet Hardin’s anniversary 8-24, Ann Worley 8-26, Marsha Farrow 8-28, Ann Sims 8-31, Lisa Jones 9-3, Bob and Marsha Farrow’s anniversary 9-6, Michael and Jamie Teal’s anniversary 9-6, Charles Stubblefield 9-9, Pete Hayek 9-14, Clifford Jones 9-16, Deborah Lovell 9-18, Maia Santamaria 9-22, Robert Sprayberry 9-22, Suzanne Jackson 9-25, June Willis 9-29, Kathy Morris 9-30, Chris Chavous 10-3, Maquatia Dutton 10-3, Martha Craig 10-4, Sheila Chavous 10-6, Robin Oliver 10-8, Grady Coursey 10-10, Tom Cook 10-16, George Barton 10-17, Scott and Bronwyn Rumery’s anniversary 10-17, Ted Brackett 10-19, Geraldine Epps 11-1, Brent Reynolds 11-3, Rebecca Cowan-Story 11-3, Lana Carter 11-7, Jacqueline Burkes 11-14, Ron Burgess 11-18, Suzette Wood 11-19, Melvin Turner 11-27, Steve Longmire 11-27, Bronwyn Rumery 12-1, Jimmie Burks 12-1, Alicia Morris 12-3, Carolyn Dillard 12-3, Dana Tarter 12-13, Neal Hardin 12-18, Ron Worley 12-20, Bob Farrow 12-23, Chris and Sheila Chavous’ anniversary 12-24, Audra Morris 12-26, Dr. Philip Dillard 12-28, and Bonita Peek 12-29.

GCB: Georgia Student Wins 1st Place at National Braille Challenge

A Georgia student is one of the top national winners of the Braille Challenge, the Braille Institute announced recently. Christopher Abel, a rising seventh grader at Palmer Middle School (Cobb County Schools), won first place in the sophomore category at the National Braille Challenge, held in Los Angeles June 20 and 21. “I commend Christopher on this extremely significant accomplishment,” State School Superintendent Richard Woods said. “We are all so proud to call him one of our own, and could not ask for a better representative of Georgia at the national level.” The Braille Challenge is a two-stage contest designed to motivate blind students to emphasize their study of Braille, while rewarding their success with fun-filled, but challenging, local and national events. Contest categories include reading comprehension, Braille speed and accuracy, proofreading, spelling and reading tactile charts and graphs. Any visually impaired student who reads raille is eligible to participate in the preliminary contest events, which were held this year from January through March. Christopher Abel was one of the top-scoring 60 contestants invited to Los Angeles in June for a final round.

Learn more about the Braille Challenge at <http://brailleinstitute.org/braille-challenge-homepage> brailleinstitute.org/braille-challenge-homepage.

GCB: Athens Inclusive Recreation and Sports, by Roger G. Keeney

Achieving the goal of independence, a journey that all of us aspire to complete regardless of the obstacles we encounter. Our pathways to such independence are often molded, at least in part, by the advice of those around us, including parents, teachers, and agencies from whom we receive services. For most, such pathways are congested with preparations for work, including education and vocational training. Though honorable and necessary, such leave an enormous gap in achieving a ‘well rounded and fulfilled’ livelihood. Among adults in America 66% of our time is dedicated to leisure, recreation and sports. Preparation for this, the majority of our time, is mostly left to our own unguided imagination. The majority of adapted activities are for the most part unfamiliar even within the visually impaired community.

 One of our better known competitive sports is beep baseball, which has become international in scope. This year the World Series of Beep Baseball drew 24 teams from throughout the world. The last week of July, 2 teams from Tai Wan, one from Canada, and 21 from throughout the United States went to Rochester, New York to compete in the 40th beep baseball ‘World Series’. Every team played at least 8 games, and the championship was decided through a double elimination process, and came down to a best of 3 series between the Tai Wan Home Runs and the Austin Blackhawks. The Blackhawks of Austin Texas were victorious. “Go Blackhawks”

 A great sport, yet how do beep baseball and other adapted sports enhance one’s pathway to independence? Though there exists considerable research in this area, reality through observation demonstrates benefits reaching beyond the objective measures within research. Such include a man in his mid-50’s, who because of his visual impairment had never participated in any team sports. He tried beep baseball and his life changed directions. He was quickly accepted as a team player and fully a member of a competitive team and valued for his contributions to the game. Within the next year he lost 70 pounds, and his blood pressure declined to a point where his doctor discontinued his blood pressure medications. Other players have ventured outside their comfort zones and re-entered school, got new jobs, and made connections, sometimes international, through participation in this sport. Additionally, attitude change, among both those with visual disabilities and those without is commonly observed resulting from the experience of participating in beepball or one of the other adapted activities.

 Here in Georgia beep baseball was introduced by a graduate student at the University of Georgia. After encountering another grad student who is blind, the conversation drifted to leisure opportunities for people who are blind. The question came up, “Where does one play beepball here in Georgia?” The answer from the Georgia native was “Where do we play - what?” Soon after, nearly 20 years ago, the first National Beep Baseball Association (NBBA) style team was formed in Athens. Since then, the individual who started the Athens team was hired to help a team get started in Atlanta, now the Atlanta Eclipse. Also a team in Columbus, the Midnight Stars, was influenced to get started. The Athens organization that sponsors the Timberwolves, Athens Inclusive Recreation and Sports (AIRS) (AIRS-GA.ORG on the web) continues to help teams become established throughout the region, and continues to investigate new recreation opportunities for individuals with many varieties of disabilities. AIRS is the Georgia chapter of Disabled Sports USA, and thus is continually expanding recreation and sports opportunities for everyone.

 Some of the innovations introduced by AIRS include a guidance system to allow individuals who are blind to independently navigate a kayak or canoe on the lake, and a scope that makes archery an auditory sport. We believe that great strides can be accomplished by making the impossible possible, and that the most impenetrable barriers are those we place in our own path. Now it is our mission to proceed into the world and transcend all such barriers. If you want to learn more about Athens inclusion recreational Sports, or AIRS, please contact Roger Keeney, at 706-353-7463, or via email at rgkeeny @gmail.com. You can visit their web site by going to [www.airs-a.org](http://www.airs-a.org).

GCB: Georgia Youth Wins National Award for Heroic Service Activity

Evan Barnard, age 17, of Johns Creek, Georgia, has been named a national winner of the 2015 Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes. Each year, the Barron Prize celebrates 25 inspiring, public-spirited young people from across North America who has made a significant positive difference to people and our planet. The top fifteen winners each receive a $5,000 cash award to support their service work or higher education. Evan creates Braille nature trails to improve access to the outdoors for adults and children who are visually impaired. His trails include guide ropes and Braille signage about the trails’ natural features, allowing the visually impaired to walk and experience nature on their own. Evan began his work five years ago, when he joined forces with the Nature Conservancy to repair a vandalized Braille trail in a Conservancy-maintained forest in Rome, Georgia. After leading a trail walk for members of the Georgia Council of the Blind, he realized that walking outdoors on a trail was a special and rare experience for them and resolved to build more Braille trails. He arranged for donated materials and rallied support from a cadre of volunteers, including dozens from his high school and from Home Depot. He also asked visually impaired members of the Georgia Council of the Blind to help with trail design. He has raised over $4,000 to purchase Braille signage and recently completed a second Braille trail in Buford, Georgia. Passionate about nature since a young age, Evan has volunteered for National Park Service educational programs and founded the Georgia Young Birders club. He conducts scientific research to repair habitats damaged by road construction and helps with a nearby sea turtle nesting project. His newest venture, Nature for All, trains youth volunteers to guide walks for children with visual impairments and other disabilities. Evan is using the trails he’s built as prototypes for more Braille trails in the Atlanta area and across the U.S., and is lobbying legislators to better fund programs for the visually impaired. ”I’ve learned how important it is to speak up for what you believe in for yourself and for others,” says Evan. The Barron Prize was founded in 2001 by author T.A. Barron and was named for his mother, Gloria Barron. Each year’s 25 Barron Prize young heroes are as diverse as their service projects. They are female and male, urban and rural, and from many races and backgrounds. Half of them have focused on helping their communities and fellow human beings; half have focused on protecting the environment. ”Nothing is more inspiring than stories about heroic people who have truly made a difference to the world,” says Barron. ”And we need our heroes today more than ever. Not celebrities, but heroes — people whose character can inspire us all. That is the purpose of the Gloria Barron Prize: to shine the spotlight on these amazing young people so that their stories will inspire others.’

For more information, please visit www.barronprize.org

Contact: Liz Anunirato — liz@callprinc.com, 845/621-2005, or Cathy Callegari Public Relations, Inc., 200 Riverside Blvd., Suite 15N New York, NY 10069, at the Barron Prize, 545 Pearl St., Boulder CO 80302, [www.barronprize.org](http://www.barronprize.org).

GCB: New iPhone App from the American Council of the Blind

The American Council of the Blind (ACB) announced today that its iPhone app, ACB Link, is now available. This app will assist ACB staff, members and friends to readily communicate news of relevance to the blind community. ACB Link will give access to valuable resources offered by ACB, and users will receive push notifications of news relevant to ACB’s work and the blindness community at large. The app will allow each user to be easily and quickly connected with the nearest ACB state affiliate, and be informed and entertained by the wide variety of Internet radio programming offered by ACB Radio. ACB Link will bring blind people, their friends and families together in a new and exciting way. "We are just at the beginning of something big here for ACB," says Jeff Bishop, ACB board member and team leader who directed the effort for ACB Link. "Innovation has always been at the forefront of ACB's vision, and ACB Link takes the organization even farther down the path in building tools and technologies for our members.” Eric Bridges, ACB’s Interim Executive Director, states, “People, whether they are blind or sighted, have the ability to obtain information through multiple platforms. We feel that it is critical for our organization to provide access to valuable resources to our members and the general public in a timely fashion.” For more information about ACB Link, go to link.acb.org. To learn more about ACB Radio, visit acbradio.org. The American Council of the Blind is a national consumer-based advocacy organization working on behalf of blind and visually impaired Americans throughout the country, with members organized through 70 state and special-interest affiliates. ACB is dedicated to improving the quality of life, equality of opportunity and independence of all people who have visual impairments. Its members and affiliated organizations have a long history of commitment to the advancement of policies and programs which will enhance independence for people who are blind and visually impaired. For further information about ACB, visit [www.acb.org](http://www.acb.org). This release can also be viewed at [http://acb.org/ACB-Link](http://mandrillapp.com/track/click/30489975/acb.org?p=eyJzIjoieFF5NjktdU5UNGVoY2FGcFBFdWQ3WllHLU5rIiwidiI6MSwicCI6IntcInVcIjozMDQ4OTk3NSxcInZcIjoxLFwidXJsXCI6XCJodHRwOlxcXC9cXFwvYWNiLm9yZ1xcXC9BQ0ItTGlua1wiLFwiaWRcIjpcIjg2YjI2YWVmYWI3MTQ1M2Q4NWM3NWM5M2E3NjJkM2ZkXCIsXCJ1cmxfaWRzXCI6W1wiNTVkY2ZmYjkxNzk1OTFiMDM5Y2Q0YWI0ZmU0ZjBmMmJmNjY2OWRhNFwiXX0ifQ).

Contact: Eric Bridges, Interim Executive Director, American Council of the blind, 202-467-5081, ebridges@acb.org.

GCB: My Great Love for old-time radio, by Phil Jones

I'm a collector of old-time radios.  There are two reasons I have such a collection.  First and foremost, I have a tremendous love for old-time radio, and secondly, I produce a program for The Georgia Radio Reading Service which features old-time radio shows.  I'll have more to say about my collection and my show later in this article.  What I want to do now is talk about how I got in to that fantastic art form.  When I was a small child in the 1950's, television was in its infancy and radio comedy, drama and variety was still a big thing.  And since we didn't have a television in our home at the time, my family's main form of entertainment was the radio.  I used to listen to all kinds of great programs such as Ma Perkins, The Couple Next Door, Gun Smoke (yes Gun Smoke was on the radio), The Amos and Andy Music Hall, Suspense and many others.  But as television grew, network radio took those shows away, and we eventually got a television, so that kind of radio listening came to end for the most part.  But my interest and love for that kind of radio never ended.  In fact, in the early 1970's, some radio stations started to bring back and air some of the old shows, and even some new programs such as The CBS Radio Mystery Theater, The Sears Radio Theater, and others came along.  I began collecting radio shows around 1980.  It was slow going at first.  In fact until the middle of the 90's, I had only a handful of programs.  But through the help of family and friends, I began to build a good collection.  And in 1999, when I started my program, Radio's Golden Years, on The Georgia Radio Reading Service, my collection really took off.  Today I have a variety of programs.  I have a number of episodes of the Jack Benny Program, all of the Suspense programs, some Westerns, detective shows and a good many others.  I'd say that I have hundreds of old-time radio shows and hopefully I'll be adding more.  I also need to mention that I have something that no old-time radio collection should be without, and that is the 1938 broadcast of the Mercury Theater of the Air episode of The War of The Worlds, which is probably the most famous Radio Broadcast of all time.  As I mentioned earlier, my program is called Radio's Golden Years, and can be heard on Garrs every Friday evening at 9 o’clock and again on Tuesday mornings at 3 o’clock.  It's an hour-long program usually featuring two shows.  Thanks to the internet, the availability and interest in old-time radio is running very high today.  Also, there are many radio theater companies across the nation that are creating new radio programs to keep this kind of radio form alive.  And I'm glad to be doing my part to keep it alive.

GCB Lunch Box Social Fundraiser

Getting to know your fellow GCB family:

Some individuals will either create a themed boxed lunch or provide a meal at a local restaurant. For example, a box may contain wine and cheese, sandwich and chips, or a gift card to Ruby Tuesday, Hooligan’s, McDonald’s, and Cracker Barrel. These are just a few suggestions, be creative and make it your own. Please don’t bring items that require refrigeration if you are traveling a long distance. Transportation will be available before the event for those who will need to shop for their items. Those lunches that were created will be put up for bid. If you create a box, you will not be able to bid on a box, because you will be dining with the individual that purchases your boxed creation. The highest bidder will purchase your box, and then you and that individual will go and dine together while learning about each other. Join us Friday evening of the 2016 conference/convention in order to raise some funds while having a little fun. Plan to bring a list of your members that want to create boxes and a list of members that wish to bid on the boxes to the January board meeting.

GCB: Georgia Academy for the Blind Alumni Meeting

The Georgia Academy for the Blind is holding their 2016 alumni meeting at the La Quinta in Macon, Georgia, on Saturday, May 14, 2016. The room rate will be $72 plus tax for either a double or king-size bed. To reserve a room, call toll-free 1-866-527-1498, and identify yourself as attending the GAB Alumni Association. We are looking forward to a wonderful meeting next year. If you have any questions, please call Robert Culver at 912- 844-1188.

GCB: Blinded Veterans Association, BVA

The Blinded Veterans Association, BVA, history dates back to the end of World War II (1945), in Avon Old Farms Army Convalescent Hospital near Avon, Connecticut. BVA has been helping blinded veterans of any conflict ever since. Chartered by Congress and recognized by both Congress and the Department of VETERANS Affairs, THEY are the only service organization dedicated to serving blind or visually impaired veterans nationwide. BVA is nonpolitical in nature and cannot support any political party or candidate for public office. BVA receives no government funding. Our goal is to promote the welfare of blinded veterans so that, notwithstanding their disabilities, they may take their rightful place in the community and work with their fellow citizens toward the creation of a peaceful world. Each State has Regional Groups with Chapters in most CITIES; Columbus has a strong chapter made up of 45 Blinded Veterans with more in the community who are still dealing with the issue of Blindness. The chapter meets on the last Thursday of every month at the VA Clinic located at 1310 13th AVENUE, in Columbus, Georgia, from 10:00 until 12:00. For more information, please contact Lisa brooks at 706-315-2426, or VIA EMAIL AT 24lisabrooks@gmail.com, or you can visit their website at [www.grgbva.org](http://www.grgbva.org). if you have any questions about your vision conduct this test to see if you qualify to join us. are you a veteran? is your vision 20/200 or worse? do you have diabetes, glaucoma, or being treated for any eye disorder? Is your vision blurry??

Can you recognize people BY THEIR face?? Can you read this ARTICLE, or IS SOMEONE else reading it to you? If You answered yes to any OF THE above questions, then you need to come join us.

GCB Board Meeting Announcement

The Georgia Council of the Blind, GCB, will hold its next board meeting on Saturday, January 16, 2015, at 10:00. The meeting will be held at the Georgia Library for Accessible Statewide Services, GLASS, which is located at One Margaret Mitchell Square, on the 4th Floor, in Atlanta, Georgia, 30303-1089. The phone number is 1-800-248-6701, or 404-657-1452. If you have any questions please contact Keith Morris at 706-799-5225, or via email at mkumorris@yahoo.com.