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

Summer 2015

GCB President:

Keith Morris, 3353 White Oak Road, Thomson GA 30824, 706-799-5225, mkumoris@yahoo.com

GCB Vice-President:

Robin Oliver, 690 Fourth Street, Apt. #8201, Athens GA 30601, 706-548-7401, gcbfyi@yahoo.com

GCB Treasurer:

Marsha Farrow, 102 North Elizabeth Street, Summerville GA 30747, 706-859-2624, marshafarrow@windstream.net

GCB Secretary:

Christine O’Brian, 1300 Bethlehem Church Road, Bethlehem GA 30620,

 678-425-2447, jcbethga@windstream.net

GCB Member at Large Representative:

Timothy Kelly, 155 Alabama Avenue, Macon GA 31204, 478-923-2714

GCB Digest Editor:

Casey Owens 42 Amberwood Trail, Rome GA 30165, 706-237-7315, cowens52@aol.com

GCB Assistant Editor:

Suzanne Jackson 131 Cannon Gate Circle, Sharpsburg GA 30277, 678-622-1770, bartonsuzanne2@gmail.com

Table of Contents:

From your Editor, Casey Owens

GCB Presidential Message, Keith Morris

GCB Board Meeting Minutes, Robin Oliver and Christine O’Brien

GCB Treasurer’s Report, Marsha Farrow

GCB Special One Day Event, Marsha Farrow

GCB Awards Guidelines, Judy Presley

GCB Chapter News

Georgia Guide Dog Users News, Betsy Grenevitch

GCB In Memory of:

GCB Celebrations

GCB Announcements

GCB How to Join

From Your Editor: Casey Owens

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, Keith Morris

Hello everyone! I am looking forward to working with everyone as we reach out to each other in the spirit of unity that has been a part of GCB. Let us plan together so that we can accomplish all that we endeavor to do. I am honored that you had enough faith in me to elect me as your President. I will work hard to keep the standards of GCB in which we all believe as we go forth, let us strengthen the membership by doing our part to increase our members in the local chapters and the state. To borrow a slogan from the Lion's Club, we need to "Each One Ask One." There are many people that do not know about our great organization. It takes us sharing the information to get others to come. Tell everyone about your chapter and when you meet. As they hear, they will come and then we can get them involved.
Let's have a great year as we all work to grow our organization.

GCB Board Meeting Minutes

GCB Board Meeting Minutes

Saturday, October 18, 2014

Sara Hightower Library

205 Riverside Parkway

Rome GA 30165

Call to Order:

President Bill Holley welcomed all and called the meeting to order. After a moment of silence, the roll was called. Board members present: President Bill Holley, 2nd Vice Steve Longmire, Secretary Robin Oliver, Treasurer Jerrie Toney, East Georgia Christine O’Brien, representing Greater Hall Vice President Judy Presley, representing South Metro Ann Sims and Rome/Floyd Amanda Wilson. There were only 8 out of 16 present so we did not have a quorum. President Holley stated that there were no major votes pending so we proceeded on with the agenda.

Secretary Report:

The Approval of Minutes - the minutes were disseminated by email. It was motioned, seconded and the board voted to approve them as disseminated.

Technology Report: Steve stated that the tech committee hadn’t met in a while but he thanked all that participated in helping out. We are receiving good feedback about the website, and noted that we should give special attention to the resource section that Jerrie has worked hard on. The tech team will work on maintaining Facebook, Twitter and the GCB brochure. South Metro had young guests from Georgia State visit them because of the website. We are receiving calls who want to know more about GCB due to the internet.  Steve again extended the open invitation to anyone who is interested in tech talk concerning the blind and visually impaired. Amanda had 2 questions: (1) Was Steve was going to continue as Webmaster and Steve answered yes, and (2) Was Cliff going to continue to work on the digest. At this time no one knew what the future plans for the Digest were. There was an online only edition for the summer.

Membership Report: Amanda stated they are waiting to hear back from contacts in Macon, Villa Rica and Carrollton. Augusta picked up 3 new members during their picnic.

Legislative Report: Bill stated that he didn’t have much to say as this is election time. He urged everyone, regardless of their affiliation, to go vote. He stated by going to the polls it makes people aware of us. He stated that we will see a lot of new faces during the next Legislative Session and we need to get our numbers up. Judy added that so few people vote now and our votes count and people notice when you walk in with your dog or cane.

Finance Report:

Jerrie thanked Steve for being the only person who attended the last finance meeting. Jerrie sent the treasury/budget reports out to the chapter presidents and treasurers, and they were attached to the minutes the secretary had disseminated. She asked if there were any questions, Amanda stated it was a good report; Ann thanked Jerrie for her work and Jerrie stated it was her pleasure. Robin moved that the report be filed to audit, it was seconded and the board voted it be filed to audit.

Presidential Report:

Convention debriefing, Bill stated that not only with blind individuals but all disabilities when it comes to this conference/convention. He gathered that most disabled people are impoverished people. Social Security and Pension checks may be enough to sustain the older population, but for those who haven’t reached that stage, employment is important. His focus for this conference/convention was to find persons who could put employment for people with disabilities on the table. The reasoning for being disability inclusive is that just the blind doesn’t put a large number to mind but all disabilities numbers can make the powers that be take notice. Under his investigation he discovered that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) had put out a number of opportunities for disabled impoverished people in rural areas. The USDA rep was disappointed that no one showed up because he was prepared to leave a million dollars to support the efforts. Bill’s only agenda for the conference/convention was to give people the opportunity to give people a chance to go to work. Multiple Choices will continue with its successful pilot program and it is open to blind as well as other disabled persons. A point of concern for Bill is how we handle the business at the local chapter level in the workings of a conference/convention. The local chapters have to get on the bandwagon and let their local community know what’s going on. His hope for his successor is that he remembers that in order to know where you are going you have to know where you been and that you don’t go back to some of those places you been. Concentrate on going forward, and this may be the last time you hear him speak. Bill stated that though at times it has been quite frustrating, that it has been his pleasure to serve as president for the past 4 years and he hopes everyone realizes that it is not about the money but the people. Jesse O’ Brien stated that at one point of time, East Georgia was one the largest chapter (55 members) in the state. When the money was right they bought PCs and JAWS, spending about $2800 a person. The problem was lack of follow up. East Georgia should have designated people to check on the others to see what they needed between the 30 days of meetings. Jesse stated that before we put flyers in doctors’ offices we need to ask some questions; what people want, can we provide transportation to and from, who do they contact (should be a state or local contact). He reminded us that we are supposed to serve the needs of each other and for those who need help. Jesse agreed it is not about money, but it is about people, love and conscience. Bill was glad Jesse spoke and says that’s where our focus should be, on building up our local chapters. The Greater Hall County chapter is a large and busy chapter. Athens is steadily growing but its members are not active on the state level. Membership is not just a local problem; even at the National level there numbers are dropping. Jerrie stated that when people contact her through the website, she puts them in touch with the chapter president. Robin stated that we might need to spend some time learning about each other’s chapters, as she had no idea that East Georgia had been so active in their community, who knows if we could help each other out in their community endeavors. Judy stated that Greater Hall is very excited helping to send kids to the Lions Camp in Waycross and we need to post this stuff on the website. Bill stated that the Council and the Lions need to communicate more with each other as

We have a lot of complimentary efforts.

New Business:

Robin read a Certificate of Appreciation that we are presenting to Miss Macie Wilks for being a spectacular volunteer at our 2014 conference/convention, we gave the certificate to her grandmother Judy Presley to pass on to her. Bill gave a special shout out to Ann Sims and Barbara Graham and he stated he was glad to see them. Lisa Jones (Metro Atlanta) thanked the GCB membership for the support we gave her when her husband Herman Jones passed. Tonia Clayton stated that the Northwest Georgia Center for Independent Living, NWGACIl, found money to keep her employed for another year. Amanda stated the Center for the visually impaired, CVI, would love for us to hold a meeting there any time.

One Day Event:

Bill stated that he feels the Athens Chapter is strong enough to host it and do a good job. If Athens did the One Day Event we would hold it in conjunction with the Al & Cora Camp Scholarship music festival since Athens is a musical town not short of bands. It is on the table if no one else wants to host it. Ann motioned that we adjourn and everyone seconded and voted to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Oliver, GCB secretary

GCB Board Meeting Minutes, Christine O’Brian

January 2015

Board Meeting via Telephone Conference Call 10:00

The GCB January 2015 Board meeting was held by conference call.

Swearing in of officers:

Robin Oliver, outgoing Secretary and newly elected Vice-President, led the Oath of Office for the new GCB officers for 2015-2016. New GCB Officers for 2015-2016 who participated in Swearing-In Ceremony were as follows: Emeritus President, William  Holley; President, Keith Morris;, First Vice-president, Robin Oliver;  Second Vice-President, Fred McDade; ; Secretary, Christine O'Brien, Treasurer, Marsha Farrow; Member-at-large representative, Tim Kelly; Athens, Jerrie Toney, Augusta, Alicia Morris,  East  Georgia  Chapter, Phil Jones; Greater  Columbus  Chapter, Greg  McDuffie;  Greater Hall County  Chapter, Judy Presley; Northwest chapter, Ron Burgess; Rome-Floyd County  chapter, Amanda Wilson; Savannah Chapter, Marj Schneider; South Metro Atlanta Chapter, Lisa Jones. After the Official Swearing in and repeating of the Oath of Office, President Morris called the meeting to order.

Secretary Report:

Several Guests phoned in to the Conference Call and were encouraged to introduce themselves. Note: the following GCB Members Chris Chavous, Tim Kelly, and Daniel Myers had attempted to phone into the October 2014 board meeting but were unable to join the Board Meeting via phone. There were   not enough Board Members present in October 2014 for the Board Meeting held in Rome, Georgia, at the Floyd County Library on Saturday, October 18, 2014. The number of Board Members absent was greater than Board Members present and there was not sufficient attendance to constitute a quorum.   Therefore no official business was conducted at the GCB October 2014 Board Meeting. Marsha Farrow made a motion that newly elected Secretary Christine O’Brian discusses happenings of the October Board Meeting with past Secretary Robin Oliver and jointly compiles the October Minutes and they will be approved at the April 2015 board meeting.

Treasury Report:

Jerrie Toney, outgoing GCB Treasurer reported that she sent Treasurer Marsha Farrow e-mail information regarding the January 2015 treasury statements via e-mail. Jerrie Toney stated she sent via e-mail several other documents for the bank account. Jerrie Toney reported to the Board Members that she had paid the 2015 Secretary of State fees and had also settled the necessary matters with the Charities Commission. Jerrie Toney reported that Board Members are bonded and the Bonding Insurance has been paid and is in effect until April 2017. The new GCB Board Members are automatically covered. Jerrie Toney reported that the Financial Audit is being conducted and the IRS requirements are in process.  Current Treasurer Marsha Farrow will be able to share the Official Audit outcome with the Board and Members when received. Jerrie Toney e-mailed Marsha Farrow the January 2015 GCB Account balances. Jerrie Toney reported that Evan Barnard, student who has been developing a new Braille Trail in cooperation with the Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation Department has some funds remaining in the care of GCB. Evan Barnard has $951 remaining from the $4000 grant. $3,099.49 was spent on Braille signs. Jerrie Toney reported she has GCB documents and a flash drive to pass on to the current GCB Officers. Jerrie Toney reported she also has a GCB computer from Past Treasurer Linda Cox. Jerrie Toney stated that the J key sticks so she has been unable to use this computer. Marj Schneider said she was concerned about the Office in Athens as the Savannah Chapter had sent their Membership Dues check to Multiple Choices and the check was returned undeliverable. Marsha Farrow, Treasurer  shared the history on the GCB Way Financial Investments: AS a result of the Atlanta chapter closing, there had been a fairly large sum of money raised by Bob Willis and others which was intended originally for housing for blind people. But there was not enough funds rose for such a huge project and the funds had been invested in a money market account.  Once the funds were gifted to the GCB Treasury, the decision was made and approved by the GCB Board that the funds be invested in a money-market account. Furthermore, the vote insured that the interest from this account is utilized only for GCB Annual scholarships for visually-impaired college students. The scholarship fund has $2972.42. It was moved to file the treasurer's report to audit. Motion carried.

New Business:

President Keith Morris requested input on the new GCB Office location and phone services in view of the new Officers who live out of the Athens area. Robin Oliver, first-vice-president, stated some years ago there was a motion passed that the GCB address would not be the home address of a GCB Member. Past President William Holley suggested GCB Official address stay at Multiple Choices in Athens. President Keith Morris said he had some options in mind where our items can be stored and the GCB property will remain in Athens for now. Marsha Farrow suggested we form a task force to discuss a GCB Office address and GCB phone number. President Keith Morris would select the task force from Members who volunteer. Jerrie Toney, Amanda Wilson, and Casey Owens offered to help on the Task Force. President Morris will make the announcement regarding the Task Force Members via e-mail and phone to the volunteers and GCB Membership at a later date.

Committees:

President Keith Morris appointed Amanda Wilson as Chair of the membership committee. Amanda Wilson reported someone in Macon invited anyone from GCB to come to their peer-support meeting, and Kay Mc Gill's given Amanda Wilson a list of all the Georgia peer-support groups so we can tell them about GCB and recruit more people. Amanda Wilson also talked to the peer support group in Douglas, Georgia. President Keith Morris said the Augusta Chapter has 3 new members. Marsha Farrow said that some years ago GCB voted to give $100 seed money to a new GCB chapter starting up, to pay at least part of their membership dues. Steve Longmire, head of Technology committee, invited our input on Facebook, Twitter and on updating our GCB Website. Betsy Grenevitch volunteered to head the Legislative Committee. Anyone interested in working on any committee or on GCB Digest is to notify President Keith Morris .Marsha Farrow said she will share info about the Digest with anyone interested. Ann Sims had written GCB Digest Guidelines several years ago.

GCB Convention:

The Rome-Floyd County Chapter is working on plans for the one-day Conference. Marsha Farrow suggested some optional Friday tours in the Cartersville area and she and Amanda Wilson have already been looking into hotels with good food and room prices. Marsha Farrow shared that two transport companies have services from Atlanta to Cartersville. Fred McDade made a motion for Marsha Farrow and Amanda Wilson along with others from the Rome area to continue to move ahead with plans. August one day Conference plans will be shared at the April board meeting. Robin Oliver seconded the Motion and it carried with no opposition. Marsha Farrow suggested we work on somewhere to have a musical event to raise funds for the scholarship fund. We will work on finding signature guides with the GCB logo on them. We must first have an address.

Announcements:

Fred McDade volunteered to be the GCB Chaplain and he stated that anyone in GCB can call him anytime for prayer. Motion carried. Meeting ended with a prayer led by Chaplain, Fred McDade.

Phil Jones, East Georgia Chapter Representative stated that he was encouraged that the Board Meeting was well attended and GCB is starting off with positive goals and plans.

Next Board meeting:

Marj Schneider moved that GCB Board Members meet in April 2015 at the Center for the Visually Impaired. President Keith Morris reported that the only Saturday available is the last Saturday in April. Marj Snyder made the motion to meet at the Center for the Visually Impaired and Motion Seconded by Mr. McDade. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine O’Brian

GCB Treasurer’s Report, Marsha Farrow

Anyone interested in acquiring copies of the 2014-2015, treasurer’s reports, and budget and/or 2014, convention report. Please contact the GCB treasurer, Marsha Farrow at 706-859-2624, or via email at marshafarrow@wndstream.net.,

GCB One Day Event

Georgia Council of the Blind

Mark your calendars for July 31st and August 1, 2015! We, the Georgia Council of the Blind, will be hosting our Pre-Conference Events for 2015 in beautiful Cartersville at the lovely Clarion Hotel. We will have a Pre-Conference fun-filled day riding horses; enjoying a picnic; visiting a local museum; and music featuring our own artists with vision loss. The Hotel Rate is $69 plus Tax and you will enjoy a complimentary breakfast in the Clarion's spacious and comfortable environment. If you have a spare moment you might take a swim in the fabulous outdoor pool! On Saturday, August 1st, we will have our Conference loaded with valuable information for all ages and interests. The luncheon speaker will be inspiring! Throughout the jammed pack day you will have the opportunity to learn and be refreshed to face new opportunities! The Georgia Council of the Blind strives to better the lives of people living, working, and having fun and meeting the challenges of vision loss day by day. The weekend is sure to bring smiles and encouragement that life can be rich and full regardless of any obstacles that may enter our path. Together and step by step we will walk the road to happiness and success! More details to come very soon! You can book your

Rooms now by calling the Clarion hotel which is located at 2336 Highway 411 Northeast, in White Georgia 30184. The phone number is 770-386-0830. When you call to book your rooms, be sure to say that you are with the Georgia Council of the Blind. If you have any questions, please contact Marsha Farrow at 706-859-2624, or via email at marshafarrow@windstream.net.

GCB One-Day Conference/Convention Registration Form:

Your name: \_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_

State: \_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_

Phone #:\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_

Tour preference:

Please check which one you wish to attend.

Horse riding tour: \_\_\_\_\_\_

Beyond Limits Riding: $50.00:\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This fee includes your transportation, the horse ride the hay wagon ride, your lunch.

 The location will be announced at a later date.

Pay Pal price: $52.00

Museum tour: \_\_\_\_

Tellus Museum $10.00:\_\_\_

This includes a hands-on-tour of the museum.

 Theater show Price: $3.00

Pay Pal Price: 15.00

Tellus Museum 100 Tellus Drive, Cartersville, Georgia 30120, 770-606-5700

Registration: \_\_\_\_

Registration fee: $30.00

Pay Pal Price: $32.00

This includes your meal on Friday night, and the sessions on Saturday.

Luncheon: \_\_\_\_

 Luncheon fee: $17.00

Pay Pal Price: $18.00

Please let us know if you have any dietary restrictions.

Donations: \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_

I would like to make a donation to the Georgia Council of the Blind in the amount of \_\_ dollars.

T-shirts: \_\_\_\_

Georgia Council of the blind T-shirts: $2.00

These are from last year.

IPhone Session: \_\_\_\_

 Please let us know if you are planning to attend the iphone session.

Transportation: \_\_\_\_

Please let us know if you need transportation from Atlanta to Cartersville, Georgia.

Total amount: \_\_

GCB Awards Guidelines, Judy Presley

Awards Committee Chair:

Judy Presley P. O. BOX 231, Helen GA 30545-0231, 706 878 2962, hoyal@windstream.net

The Rhoda Walker Award, suggested by Rhoda's sister, Helen Wasileski

The recipient can be a blind or sighted individual

Services rendered must be of non-paying status. Services may be any endeavor in the field of teaching, service, and betterment of life for the blind. The recipient must provide public awareness through speaking, seminars, and/or demonstration. There must be involvement of the educational field/teaching braille. The recipient must push any innovation involving blindness or blind people.

Rhoda Walker chair:

Anne Wheeler, 2199 Floyd Street, Covington GA 30014, 770 786 5778, 678 480 2783, awheel@bellsouth.net

The June Willis Guiding Eyes Award

The recipient can be either sighted or legally blind.
The sighted recipient of the June Willis Guiding Eyes Award (who must be a GCB member) shall be known to GCB members through attendance at GCB state activities, and through his/her willing assistance and service to the blind and visually impaired.

June Willis Guiding Eyes chair:

Keith Morris, 3359 White Oak Road, Thomson GA 30824, 706/595-1465, mkumorris@yahoo.com

The Walter R. McDonald Award

The award shall be presented to an outstanding visually impaired individual who has, through his/her leadership and service, contributed significantly to the betterment of the blind and visually impaired community, and who has demonstrated by deeds and achievements his/her dedication to the principles incident to blindness espoused and practiced by the late Walter R. McDonald. The recipient may or may not be a member of the Georgia Council of the Blind.

Walter R McDonald chair:

Robin Oliver, 90 Fourth Street, Apt. #8201, Athens GA 30601, 706-548-7401, gcbfyi@yahoo.com

The Gerald Pye Community Service Award

The recipient must be an active legally blind member of GCB in good standing. He or she must have demonstrated superior service to his or her community in a number of ways that exemplify the work of Gerald Pye. The candidate must be nominated in writing by a GCB member who knows firsthand of the candidate's community services; innovation involving blindness or blind people. Examples of this service must be included in the written recommendation.

Gerald Pye Community Service Award chair:

Alice Ritchhart 125 Willow Pond Way, Brunswick GA 31525, 912-996-4213, alice.ritchhart@comcast.net

GCB Awards:

All GCB awards shall be presented periodically at a GCB state convention. All awards committees shall be appointed at the January board meeting. Nominations for all awards shall be submitted to the respective award committee chairpersons in writing (including e-mail) no later than June 15, 2015.

Nominations shall include the name of the candidate, plus the reason the candidate deserves the award. Each award committee chairperson shall read to his/her committee members all award nominations. The decision for selecting the award recipient shall be made by all members of that committee.

Scholarship Awards:

The deadline for receipt of scholarship information is June 15, 2015.

 Scholarship applications may be obtained from Debbie Williams or via our web site at <http://www.georgiacounciloftheblind.org>.

Scholarship Award Chair:

Debbie Williams, 1477 Nebo Road, Dallas GA 30157, 770-595-1007, Debbie\_teaches@comcast.net

GCB Committee List

Membership Committee Chair:

Amanda Wilson, 770-547-4700, moonrocks@bellsouth.net

Technology Committee Chair:

Steve Longmire, 404-234-5820, info@sunbright.biz

GC Digest Editor:

Casey Owens, 706-409-2652, cowens226@gmail.com

GCB Digest Assistant Editor:

Suzanne Jackson, 678-622-1770, Bartownsuzaane2@gmail.com

Public Relations Chair:

Steve Longmire, 404-235-5820, info@sunbright.biz

Convention Committee Chair:

Marsha Farrow, 706-859-2624, marshafarrow@windstream.net

Constitution and bylaws Committee Chair:

Alice Ritchhart, 912-996-4213, alice.ritchhart@comcast.net

Legislative Committee Chair:

Betsy Grenevitch 770-464-0450, blindangel@joimail.com

Finance Committee Chair:

Sheila Chavous, 706-737-4341, chavousfolks@bellsouth.net

Sunshine Committee Chair:

Robin Oliver, 706-548-7401, gcbfyi@yahoo.com

Awards Committee Chair:

Judy Presley, 706-878-2962, hoyal@windstream.net

Scholarship Committee Chair:

Debbie Williams, 770-595-1007, Debbie\_teaches@comcast.net

GCB Spot Light – Evan Barnard

Evan Barnard is an outstanding Georgia high school student and fine young man.  Evan is advocating so hard for people who are blind and visually impaired. He is a sighted young man who has a heart for people with vision loss and assisting with enjoyment of the outdoors.

Evan has won the only Award titled the Prudential Spirit of the Community and is the only High School recipient in Georgia to receive this Award in 2015.

Evan has received a Letter of Commendation from President Obama as part of his Prudential Award. The Award was given in recognition of his work on two major Braille Trails in Rome, Georgia and Buford, Georgia. He has risen over $4,000 in Disney and other Grants to complete the Whispering Braille Trail, complete with Braille Signage, of course. The Whispering Woods Braille Trail is located in Buford, Georgia, at the Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation Center near Atlanta, Georgia. The Ribbon Cutting for the Whispering Woods Braille Trail took place on Sunday March 15, at 2 PM. 2015. We are so proud of Evan and his mother Kathy who have worked so hard to enhance the lives of people with vision loss. Evan is a fully sighted young man now in high school who became interested in issues of restoration after the vandalism at our Rome, Georgia Virgin Marshall Forest Braille Trail. For over five years Evan has stayed in the fight for people who are blind and visually impaired as he has strived to create opportunities for individuals who are blind and otherwise challenged to enjoy the great outdoors!

The Whispering Woods Braille Trail:

Four years ago on the Sapelo Island ferry, I saw a man wearing a Nature Conservancy nametag and introduced myself to Mr. Malcolm Hodges, asking how I could get involved with conservation. He suggested working in Marshall Forest, a Nature Conservancy forest in Rome, Georgia, on a Braille trail. A Braille trail is a nature trail with Braille signage and guide ropes so the visually impaired can access the trail. This trail, called the Big Pine Braille Trail, was the only Braille nature trail located in Georgia.

The trail needed a lot of work, as all 15 aluminum Braille signs had been stolen. Who would vandalize a Braille trail? Determined to make the trail useable again, I installed new plastic Braille signs and cleaned up the trail. Unfortunately, the trail was vandalized again and guide ropes were stolen, which I replaced and cleared the trail.

I then attended a local Georgia Council of the Blind (GCB) meeting to make the group aware of the Braille trail and invite them to come and enjoy it. I immediately found myself with a wonderful group of people and decided to get more involved. I have gotten to know a lot of members of GCB and learn about what it is like to be visually impaired and have reduced access to so many things. Simple things like getting to work, using a computer, or even walking outdoors are much more challenging. Some of the GCB members attended a special camp for the visually impaired one time when they were young, but since then have seldom been able to go outside and freely enjoy parks and trails and other areas we take for granted. It means a lot to the visually impaired to have a way to experience nature. Even though they cannot see the birds or trees, they can listen to the birds, hug giant trees to feel their bark and circumference, and touch a variety of surfaces from soft moss to textured rocks. I have now spoken to multiple GCB chapters and at an annual State GCB Conference about the importance of Braille trails and access to nature for the visually impaired. I led a trail hike for 25 members of GCB at the Big Pine Braille Trail, and was featured on Georgia Radio Reading Service’s Eye on Blindness radio show. My work was highlighted on the international Braille blog, and I was contacted by visually impaired from all over the country who wanted to find a way to have a Braille nature trail in their communities. For my work I was awarded the Wint Barton Award for Distinguished Service by the Georgia Council of the Blind.

This experience made me realize that more visually impaired people need better access to the outdoors. What could I do to change their accessibility? I decided to build more Braille trails. Finding locations and funding to start a trail was difficult. Garnering a grant from Disney Friends for Change, I found the perfect place at an environmental center.

Trail construction officially started on Global Youth Service Day. I gathered youth volunteers to map out the path and possible locations for Braille signs. Students led each other blindfolded along the trail, stopping at various trees and evaluating proposed sites. Experiencing the trail without sight gave everyone a new perspective. With sign sites marked, volunteers cleared the path to create one continuous loop for the guide rope, which was donated by a rope company. Home Depot donated 75 guide posts, cement and hardware, even bringing employees and equipment. I held work parties with youth and adult volunteers to install guide posts and ropes. It was very important to me that members of the visually impaired community be part of designing the trail. After I wrote a draft of the Braille signs, Georgia Council of the Blind members, led by student volunteers, experienced the different trees and sign stations and gave feedback. They told me which sign stations they really enjoyed, and which were not as interesting for them. One person commented on how long it had been since he had been anywhere out in nature like this, and how much it meant to him. Although they liked the sign information, they wanted more detailed descriptions of the trees, including colors and scientific information, so they could visualize and enjoy the experience more vividly. I rewrote the signs based on their comments.

The trail is named the Whispering Woods Braille Trail for the many different types of trees lining the path. All the signs include information in Braille and print, and are designed to give sensory and identification information as visitors experience the trail, such as the species of trees and birds they will encounter.

The Braille signs are focused on the trees because they are the most tangible thing to touch and experience. Trees are the heart of the forest. So many characteristics about them are similar yet still unique depending on the type of tree.  For the visually impaired, trees are incredible opportunities for sensory experiences. They can touch the textures and patterns of bark, feel the various shapes of leaves, and compare the different species. They can reach down to feel the roots, and run their hands along the tree trunks to experience the interesting formations of the branches.

The ability for the visually impaired to walk freely along the trail with the guide rope is a special opportunity for those who are not usually able to experience the trees and forest. Trees are usually obstacles for the visually impaired to avoid when walking outdoors. Walking along the Braille trail they can stop and touch the various trees that they pass, including ten different species, such as black gum and sourwood, and even three different species of oaks.

Everyone visually impaired or not, can learn about the forest and nature. The Braille signs also have English print, so the general public can also learn from the signs as they walk along the trail. Local school groups access the trail as part of regular educational programs held at the Center, giving many students the opportunity to learn about the natural environment they are experiencing.

The Braille Trail is hosting educational programs, such as Braille Orienteering. Scavenger hunts and nature programs, funded by a grant I received for the ABC Summer of Service Award. I am using this trail as a prototype to build Braille trails across the U.S. by taking existing nature trails and configuring them for accessibility for the visually impaired and other people with disabilities. I am hoping for the day when visually impaired from all over the U.S. can make walking in the woods a regular part of their lives.

I am also working with legislators to support this project and others to provide better outdoor access to those with disabilities, especially children, and currently serve as the Georgia Youth Ambassador for National Child Awareness Month (NCAM). With support from NCAM and the Festival of Children, I am creating an organization called Nature for all, which will pair youth volunteers with disabled youth to enjoy outside experiences such as nature walks and educational programs. In 2015, for Global Youth Service Day, I will be leading an event on the Braille Trail as part of this effort.  As a member of MARC (Model Atlanta Regional Commission), I have the opportunity to work with other students to learn about environmental, social and other important issues affecting the Atlanta region and propose potential solutions to those challenges. I hope through MARC to be able to encourage conservation and better access to the outdoors for people with disabilities.  I also was honored to give a TEDx talk as part of TEDx Global Youth Day to share my project and encourage youth to lead volunteer projects in their communities.

    Enabling the visually impaired to experience the outdoors has been empowering, improving my leadership skills and fostering a new interest in environmental and social policy. I have learned so much from my visually impaired friends and their contagious humor and positive appreciation of life. The happy expressions on their faces as they embrace trees make every moment worthwhile.

The Whispering Woods Braille Trail Grand Opening Ceremony

On Sunday March 15th at 2:00pm, many of us gathered together with Evan to celebrate the grand opening and dedication of the Whispering Woods Braille Trail.  The Braille trail is located at Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center, 2020 Clean Water Drive, Buford, GA 30519

During the ceremony Evan presented a heartfelt speech detailing his work on the Braille trail.

Appreciation was expressed honoring our volunteers, donors and members of the visually impaired community who helped make this trail a reality.

The Whispering Woods Braille Trail follows a circular path with guide ropes through a wooded area, and includes Braille and print signage about the trail's natural features. Immediately after the ceremony, most who attended participated in a nature walk to explore the Braille trail. WE want to Thank Evan for all of his hard work, sensitivity, and his willingness to provide an opportunity for everyone to explore the outdoors.

GCB Chapter News

The Athens chapter:

The Athens Council of the Blind’s last chapter Meeting was held on March 28th, 2015. Mike Martinson from Visual Enhancements gave a presentation to the group. The Athens Chapter will be having a joint yard sale with the Athens Heritage Lions Club and it will be held on May 16th. We will be having our Annual Picnic on May 30th, this year. The chapter is also working on the annual Music Fun Night that will be on June 22nd, at the Blind Pig. These are just a few of our projects at present. Their 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:

The Augusta chapter enjoyed a luncheon at Pablano's Mexican restaurant in Augusta. We started planning a fundraiser; the dates are still in the works. Their officers are Alicia Morris as president; Deborah Lovell as vice-president; Ann Worley as Secretary Sheila Chavous as treasurer. 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 frrebird1783@yahoo.com.

The East Georgia Chapter:

The East Georgia chapter always enjoys a time of fellowship, business meeting, and informational programs. Programs so far this year have included braille trivia in honor of Louis Braille's birthday, as well as information on the importance of braille literacy. In March and April, representatives of STARS demonstrated some of the latest technology and allowed us to do some hands-on practice. The program for May is scheduled to be a TVI from Cobb County who has started a motivational group for students called Blind Believers. June will be our annual picnic, and August will be convention reports. At Christmas, we were able to provide gifts for an elementary student with a visual impairment in our area. We have also helped a member purchase a Victor Stream and helped another member with her vet bills for her dog guide. Their officers are Neb Houston as president; Phil Jones as first vice-president; Cecily Nipper as second vice-president; Linda Williams as secretary; Anne Wheeler as co-treasurer; Linda Cox as co-treasurer. Their board members are Dot Davis and Elsie Aguilar. Their meetings are held at the Conyers Presbyterian Church at 911 North Main Street in Conyers, Georgia on the second Saturday of each month in Conyers. For more information, Please contact Neb Houston at (770) 784-0236.

The Greater Columbus Chapter:

Their 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 Chaplin. Their meetings are held at the Columbus Public Library at 3000 Macon Road in Columbus, Georgia on the third Friday from 10:30AM until 12: 00 PM. For more information please contact Gregory McDuffie at 706-330-8185, or via email at gregory.mcduffie@yahoo.com.

The Greater Hall County Chapter:

Many of the Hall chapter members have hearing difficulties. This led to the search for an affordable sound system. After a search on amazon.com, one was found that works perfectly for our needs. It is portable with a canvas carrying bag. It has a hand held portable microphone plus a remote head set microphone and a lapel pin remote microphone. The volume is perfect for a large room. The price was only $129.00.

Our Hall chapter again sponsored 2 kids for the Lions Camp for the Blind in Waycross. Last year we sponsored 3 kids but only had 2 applicants this year.

We have had many interesting guest speakers this past year. Our membership has grown to 51 members as of April 11. Their 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 am. For more information, please contact Judy Presley at 706-878-2962, or via email at hoyal@windstream.net.

The Northwest Chapter:

The Northwest chapter is making plans to have a fund raiser to be reported on in our next issue of the Digest. 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, 104 North Main Street, Lafayette Georgia at 7:00 PM. For more information, please contact Ron Burgess at 706-638-1132.

The Rome Floyd County Chapter:

Members of the Rome Floyd County chapter enjoy a great time of fellowshipping, fun and food along with our business meetings. We have lots of good food that is made by loving hands. We discuss many different topics that pertain to individuals with visual, hearing, and physical disabilities. We are planning the state-wide conference/convention in August in Cartersville Georgia. We are having an opportunity drawing to win a gift card worth one -hundred dollars that will be drawn during our July meeting. We are planning field trips for our June and July meeting since the library holds its summer reading program then. Their officers are Amanda Wilson as president; Tonia Clayton as first vice-president; Chris Ingram as second vice-president; Suzanne Jackson as secretary and treasurer; Dale Allen as Chaplain. Their board members are Casey Owens and Misty Ingram. 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 Amanda Wilson at 770-547-4700 or via email at moonrocks@bellsouth.net.

The Savannah Chapter:

The Savannah chapter has continued to meet on the first Thursday evening of every month, usually at our regular location, J. C. Lewis Ford on Abercorn Street, but we received an invitation this winter to meet at Savannah's center for independent living, LIFE, Living Independence for Everyone. The director, Bob McGarry, thought our members would want to check out LIFE's new technology center. We visited the center in April and had a demonstration from Denise Boehner. She showed us all sorts of marvelous devices. Rosie is a talking device that provides verbal alarms and reminders, and there are an ever-increasing number of accessible apps available to users of iPhones and other Apple devices. Denise also showed us Sarah, a stand-alone machine that reads print documents and a track pad that makes an Apple computer operate more like an iPhone. Then there was the Pen Friend, a talking scale and a talking blood pressure meter. Seeing all these machines reminded me of how far we have come in the availability of devices for blind people designed to make our lives easier. The Savannah chapter of GCB is still a small one, but we've gained a couple of new members this year who don't currently live in the area. One of them, Teresa Brenner, has taken on the job of updating our face book page. We post meeting announcements and now have some photos as well. Be sure to visit and like our Savannah Council of the Blind page next time you're on Facebook. Later in April we and other members of the local blind community will be meeting with Chad Reese, director of Chatham Area Transit. While we have many good things to say about our bus system here in Savannah, there are several aspects of it that greatly need improving. Meetings like this have been held before, but we hope this time to be able to follow up on our issues with Mr. Reese to make Savannah's busses easier to ride for residents who are blind and visually impaired. The Savannah Council is an active bunch. I hope you'll come to one of our meetings next time you visit the area. Some of the group goes out for dinner after meetings and you are welcome to join us. Their 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 Council of the Blind holds its meetings normally on the second Friday evening of the month at the Piccadilly Restaurant, 2226 North Druid Hills Road, in Atlanta, from 4:00 until 6:30. The May meeting will be rather unusual because there will be a Tupperware party held before the meeting from 2:00 until 4:00. A portion of the proceeds will go to the CVI Braille Club for travel expenses to Washington, D.C., in June, where the Club plans to visit the Library of Congress, Braille Division. If you cannot attend the party, then you may contact the representative, Faith Sims, John M. and Ann Sims' daughter-in-law, and she will help you order on line. If you cannot come to the party and meeting then, you can pay by check or in cash. Faith's email address is bygracefaith@sbcglobal.net. The regular meeting will follow the party. Their officers are Lisa Jones as President; Sam Howard as vice-president; Chris Baldridge as secretary; Steve Longmire as treasurer. Their board members are Maquatia Dutton, Monica Sheriff and Suzette Wood. Their meetings are held at the Picadilly Cafeteria which is located on 2226 North Druid Hills Road, Atlanta, Georgia on the second Friday from 4:30pm to 7:00pm. For more information, please contact Lisa Jones at 404-556-8987.

Georgia Guide Dog Users (GGDU) News, Betsy Grenevitch

The Georgia guide Dog Users held their spring in-person meeting on Saturday, March 28, 2015, at the Athens Clarke County Library which is located on 2025 Baxter Street, in Athens, Georgia. The President, Betsy Grenevitch, started the meeting by asking us to introduce ourselves.  After the introductions, she asked for any updates from any puppy raisers who were present. Two of the puppy raisers who attend the University of Georgia are going to intern at southeastern guide dog school in Florida. Betsy discussed our fundraiser of selling bar soap to bathe our dogs.  This is an oatmeal-based soap and comes in two different shapes and sizes.  The bone-shaped soap has a lavender scent and the paw-shaped soap has a peppermint scent.  If you would be interested in purchasing any soap for you to either give as a gift to a friend who has a dog or for your own dog the cost is five dollars for each kind of soap. Please contact Betsy Grenevitch at 770-464-0450or via email blindangel@joimail.com. The presentation of the Julie Aichroth Award was given by Judy Presley. Judy told us about how the award was established in memory of a trainer for Southeastern Guide Dogs.  The award was given to a longtime puppy raiser for The Guide Dog Foundation, Ann Devin.  Ann was totally surprised about receiving this award.  She has raised 25 puppies for the school. Ann was also our guest speaker.  She told us about how she had begun raising puppies for GDF because of an article she had read.  At the time she got involved in this program she was living near the school which is located in Smithtown, New York. She told us some funny stories about her puppies. She said that she “enjoyed doing it and that   it was a way to give back to people with visual impairments. The rest of the morning time and a little while in the afternoon we held our business meeting.  Some highlights from the meeting are as follows: Betsy gave a report about Top Dog, which is a conference that is held every other year in January.  It usually rotates between South Carolina, Florida, and Georgia.  Other states in the south are welcome to host it as well. Marj, Alice and Betsy gave legislative updates.  We are working on two different things that could affect guide dogs.  The first one concerns the Freedom of Religion Act.  This Act is supposed to be giving freedom to those who have a business and want to have a choice concerning whom they serve at their place of business.  There is concern that this could affect the access of guide or service dogs since they are not mentioned anywhere in the bill.

The second piece of legislation that we are going to be working on concerns the number of fake service animals that are now going into public places.  We will be hosting a telephone conference on Sunday, April 12, 2015, from 2:00-3:00 PM with the Legislative chair of GDUI concerning this issue.      If you would like to join us on the call please use this phone number. It is 1-605-475-4777 and the pin is 438 pound. WE then walked to Schlotzsky’s Deli for lunch. We are so thankful for the puppy raisers who took their time to walk with us.  Two of the raisers actually stayed with us during lunch and for the remaining part of the meeting.  It was greatly appreciated.  Considering it being the first time that Schlotzsky’s had served a large group of individuals with guide dogs they did a terrific job!  We are also very thankful for the assistance of Connie, Julie, and DJ for handing out the meals and drinks. After we returned to the library we concluded our business meeting.  The highlights from this portion of the meeting are as follows:

It was decided that since Betsy is the only one who will be attending the conference and convention for our national organization  Guide Dog Users, Inc. (GDUI) that she would be our delegate and we would help with some of her expenses to make this trip.  The conference and convention will be taking place on July 5-8, 2015, in Dallas, Texas. We will be eating breakfast together at the Georgia Council of the Blind (GCB) convention on August 1, 2015. In the past interest was shown in having a weekend at the Georgia Lions Camp in Waycross, Georgia.  There is still interest so Betsy will be in touch with the camp about what it would cost to rent some space during a weekend in the fall. We decided we would like to host Top Dog here in Georgia in 2019.  We will be looking into the possibility of hosting it in Cartersville, Georgia, where the GCB convention will be taking place this summer.  A committee will begin working on this conference this summer. If you, or anyone you know would be interested in joining GGDU please have them contact Betsy Grenevitch at 770-464-0450, or via email at Bblindangel@joimail.com.

GCB In Memory of:

Frances Stokes died on November 4th, 2014, at Lanier Village Estates in Gainesville, Georgia. Frances was born to the late Phifer Berry and Claudia Williams Berry on June 20, 1924, in Drexel, North Carolina. She subsequently lived in Pulaski, Virginia and Hickory, North Carolina before moving with her family to Miami, Florida in 1940. She graduated from Miami High School in 1941. Fran married Thomas J. Stokes on March 2, 1946, in Miami, Florida. They remained thereafter residents of Coconut Grove and Coral Gables until moving to Lanier Village Estates in February 2013. Fran is survived by her Husband of 68 years, Thomas J. Stokes and beloved children, Dr. Thomas J. Stokes, Jr. and his wife Dr. D. Byron Stokes of Auburn, Alabama; John M. Stokes and his wife Carolyn Christopher Stokes of Nebo, North Carolina;; and Claudia C. Stokes of O'Brien, Florida. She is also survived by four grandchildren, Anne Gray, Craig David Stokes, Christopher Stokes and Jessica B. Stokes, and one great grandson Craig Gray the third. She is also survived by numerous nieces and nephews with whom she was strongly bonded. Fran was a dedicated and enthusiastic volunteer throughout her adult life and cared greatly about the communities in which she lived. Prior to her move from Miami she was a member of the University of Miami Women's Guild, a 31 year member of the P.E.O. Sisterhood, and has been a devoted member of the Coral Gables Garden Club for 35 years. She was a long time member of Plymouth Congregational Church in Coconut Grove and became a recent member of the First Presbyterian Church in Gainesville Georgia. Her funeral service was held on Saturday, November 22, 2014, at 10:30 am, with refreshments to follow at VAN ORSDEL CORAL GABLES Chappell. Her burial was held at Woodlawn Park Cemetery.

Vivian F. Carstens was born on February 5, 1920and she passed away on December 24, 2014. Vivian Carstens, 94, of Gainesville, GA died Wednesday, December 24, 2014 at Lanier Village Estates.  Vivian had prearrangements in place with the Body Donor Program of Emory University School of Medicine.

The Memorial Service for Vivian Carstens was held at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, December 30, 2014 in the Chapel of Lanier Village Estates, 4000 Village View Drive in Gainesville, Georgia. Vivian was born in Spokane, Washington. She was raised in Pullman, Washington. She married Marion Robert “Bob” Carstens, who was from Spokane, Washington. Vivian was a homemaker and the mother of three sons, Tom, Jeffrey and Chris. Over the course of time, Vivian lived in San Francisco, California; Pullman, Washington; Iowa City, Iowa; Atlanta, Georgia; and Gainesville, Georgia. Vivian and Bob were among the “pioneer” residents of Lanier Village Estates who founded the community in 2001, the year it opened its doors. The Carstens lived in Apartment #1609. Vivian enjoyed walking the common areas for exercise. She was always pleasant and conversant with an uplifting word to share with people. She was an optimist with a positive attitude about life. She liked community life at the Village and was a member of Westminster Church (PCA) in Gainesville, Georgia. She is survived by her devoted husband Bob Carstens of seventy-three years.  Vivian is survived by her three sons, Tom and his wife Cathy in Oregon; Jeffrey and his wife Cici in Gainesville, Georgia; and Chris and his wife Andrea in Atlanta, Georgia. Bob and Vivian have seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Richard “Dick” Jehu, of Gainesville, Georgia, died January 3rd, 2015 with his family by his side. Dick is survived by his wife of 25 years, Phyllis Jehu of Gainesville, Georgia, and five children, Yvonne Hollingsworth of Gainesville, Georgia, Joe Dietlin of Corbin, Kentucky, Lorraine Fradle of Frasier, Michigan, Hugo and wife Kim Dietlin of Gainesville, Georgia, and Mitzi and husband Rod Goldsmith of Ohio.  He is also survived by his Daughter-in law Barbara Jehu of Richmond, Virginia, and 21 Grandchildren, 22 Great grandchildren and 1 Great great grandchild. Richard was preceded in death by his wife of 39 years Arbutus Jehu, daughter Laura Ann Smith and son Richard Lawrence Jehu. Dick was a native of Michigan and received his bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering at Detroit Institute of Technology and was a registered professional engineer in the state of Michigan.  His engineering career culminated after 26 years with Dow Chemical Company where he designed Styrofoam manufacturing plants both here in the United States and abroad.  Dick worked with his son designing Wahoo Boat docks for 18 years. During WWII Dick served in the United States Air Force, as a right waist gunner in a B-29 bomber, based on Tinian Island in the South Pacific. Dick spent many years serving others in his Church, Meals on Wheels, the Hall County Chapter of the Visually Impaired; he was a Fire Warden and sang in the LVE Chorus, he even played “Santa” for local nursing homes. His hobbies included fishing, square dancing and performing in various choirs. Dick will be missed by many and he will be remembered as a loving husband, father and grandfather. The memorial service was held at the Gainesville First Presbyterian Church at 2pm on Wednesday January 7th. In lieu of flowers the family has requested donations to the Hall County Meals on Wheels P.O. Box 2496 Gainesville, GA 30501 and First Presbyterian Church 800 South Enota Drive Gainesville, GA 30501

Memorial Park North Riverside Chapel 989 Riverside Drive Gainesville, GA 30501, 770-297-6200 or for those who desire online condolences at [www.memorialparkfuneralhomes.com](http://memorialparkfuneralhomes.com/).

Grace Christine Wilson was born on September 15, 1951, and passed away on December 4, 2014. Ms. Grace Christine Wilson, age 63, of Cedartown Ga., passed away on Thursday, December 4, 2014. Grace was born on September 15, 1951 in Cedartown to the late Frank C. Wilson & Mary Brown Wilson. She was a 1969 graduate of Cedartown High School. Grace had worked for the Lester C. Litesey Funeral Home for a number of years doing insurance and working in the office. She also had been employed by the State of Georgia working with the Department of Corrections. She was a 1996 graduate of the Georgia Police Academy. She was a proud member of the Bold & Beautiful Red Hatters and a member of the disabled American Vets. She was a dedicated member of Friendly Baptist Church for many years where she was also a member of the WMU. In addition to her parents, she was also preceded in death by her aunts, Jimmie Brown and Herstine "Dee" Maron.

Grace Wilson is survived by her sister; Mary "Tina" Williams, her stepson; Lee Watson, godson, Shad Ayers, Daughter, Marcelle Robinson, Goddaughter Shannon Anderson, special friends; Vera Ramey, Rose Bell, Susan Flores, Marsha Huffsteller and Patricia Smith, grandchildren; Joe Hulsey, Cynthia Hulsey, Benjamin Watson, Jack Watson, Zach Robinson, Noah Robinson, Nikki Anderson, Paige Anderson, Tia Anderson, Kandice Flores, Bobby Ayers & Alexis Ayers. A number of cousins also survive.

Funeral services for Grace Wilson were conducted on Sunday, December 7, 2014 at 2:00p.m., From the Chapel of the Lester C. Litesey Funeral Home with Rev. Jerome Smith officiating. Interment was held in the Buchanan City Cemetery with Rev. Floyd Huffsteller officiating. The family received friends on Sunday, December 7, 2014 from 12:00 noon until the funeral hour at the Litesey Funeral Home.

Pallbearers were Shad Ayers, Joe Hulsey, Jim Crawford, Lonnie Nale & Shane Nale. Honorary Pallbearers were members of the Bold & Beautiful Red Hatters.

Flowers are accepted or those wishing to do so may make memorial contributions to the Friendly Baptist Church in memory of Grace.

Condolences can be made to the family by visiting our website at www.liteseyfh.com and to sign the on line guest book.

Herbert Don Hull, age 92, of Gainesville passed away on Wednesday, June 11, 2014, at his residence following an extended illness. Memorial services were held on Monday, June 16, 2014, at 3 p.m., at the First Presbyterian Church, with Senior Pastor Daniel Hagmaier officiating. A reception followed the service at the church. Mr. Herbert Don Hull was born May 14, 1922, in Wheeling, West Virginia, son of the late Herbert Shepard Hull and Pauline McCoy Hull. He served in the United States Navy and he was retired from Delta Airlines as a pilot. Mr. Hull is survived by his wife, Betty Keirn Hull of Gainesville; three children, David Donald and Margaret Hull of Texas, Christine and Larry Wood of Woodstock, Ga., and Patricia Morelli of Savannah, Ga.; four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Memorial Park Funeral Home, 2030 Memorial Park Road, Gainesville, GA 30504, is in charge of the arrangements.

Send online condolences to www.memorialparkfuneral[homes.com.](http://homes.com/) Funeral Home

Memorial Park Cemetery and Funeral Home 2030 Memorial Park Road Gainesville, GA 30504, 770-287-8227

GCB Celebrations

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

Monica Sheriff 1-1, John Sims 1-2, Christine Holtzclaw 1-7, Patricia Cox 2-4, William Holley 2-10,

Alice Ritchhart 2-11, Jerrie Toney 2-11, Dale and Becky Allen anniversary 2-14, Jonathan Perry 2-15,

Chris Baldrige 2-16, Teresa Brenner 2-16, Misty Ingram 2-19, Katy Cox 2-21, Casey Owens 2-26,

John and Ann Sims anniversary 2-29, Chester Thrash 3-4, David and Christine Holtzclaw anniversary 3-10,

Anne Wheeler 3-14, Jeff and Debbie Williams anniversary 3-18, Tracey Estill 3-20, Debbie Williams 3-23,

Sean Hogue 3-23, Janet Hardin 4-11, Linda Cox 4-166, Daniel Myers 4-19, Sam Howard 4-19,, Jan Elders 4-25, Terecia Standridge 4-30, Sarah Maddox 5-2, Chris Ingram 5-10, Brenda Maddox 5-10, Barbara Graham 5-11, and Betsy Grenevitch 5-20.

GCB Announcements:

Project Independence: Georgia Vision Program for seniors

Web site address: <http://gvra.georgia.gov/vocationalrehab/project-independence>

Are you or is someone you know at least 55 years of age and experiencing vision loss or a combined vision and hearing loss?

Project Independence could help.

This vision program for seniors is administered by the Georgia Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and provides services that can help you remain independent. Services may include:

Comprehensive low vision evaluations by qualified professionals to assess your needs

Skills training in your home community by certified rehabilitation specialists

Mobility training by certified instructors

Support groups that offer opportunities to learn from and interact with peers

Assistive devices such as talking watches, big button phones and magnifiers

The Georgia Division of Vocational Rehabilitation contracts with the following Project Independence Service Providers:

Center for the Visually Impaired

739 West Peachtree Street NW

Atlanta, Georgia 30308

Phone #: 404-875-9011

Toll Free phone #: 1-800-5585451 (for infolink only)

Web site address: [www.cviga.org](http://www.cviga.org/)

Serves Northeast and Central Georgia

Savannah Center for Blind and Low Vision

214 Drayton Street

Savannah, Georgia 31401

Phone #: 912-236-4473

Web site address: [www.SavannahCBLV.org](http://www.savannahcblv.org/)

Email address: info@SavannahCBLV.org

Serves Southeast Georgia

Vision Rehabilitation Services of Georgia

3830 South Cobb Drive SE

Smyrna, Georgia 30080

Phone #: 770-432-7280

Web site address: [www.vrsga.org](http://www.vrsga.org/)

Serves Northwest Georgia

Visually Impaired Foundation of Georgia

6595 Roswell Road #224

Atlanta, Georgia 30328

Phone #: 770-551-8455

Toll free phone #: 1-800-541-7903

Web site address: [www.magnifiers.com](http://www.magnifiers.com/)

Serves Southwest Georgia

Visually Impaired Specialized Training and Advocacy Services (VISTAS)

337 South Milledge Avenue, Suite 114

Athens, Georgia 30605-5662

Phone #: 706-995-2216

Web site address: [www.vistascenter.com](http://www.vistascenter.com/)

Serves Northeast Georgia

Walton Options for Independent Living

948 Walton Way

Augusta, Georgia 30903-0519

Phone #: 706-724-6262

Toll free phone #: 1-877-821-8400

Web site address: [www.waltonoptions.org](http://www.waltonoptions.org/)

Serves East Georgia

For further information contact:

Kay McGill, Project Independence Program Manager

Georgia Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

2187 Northlake Parkway, Suite 112, Building 9

Tucker, Georgia 30084-4110

Phone #: 770-414-2676

Fax: 770-414-2674

Email address: kay.mcgill@gvra.ga.gov

Web site address: [www.gvra.ga.gov](http://www.gvra.ga.gov/)

Paul Raymond, Blindness Services Coordinator

Georgia Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

3586 Riverside Drive, Suite B

Macon GA 31210-6304

Phone #: 770-500-9160,

Fax: 478-757-4391

Email address: paul.raymond@gvra.ga.gov

Web site address: [www.gvra.ga.gov](http://www.gvra.ga.gov/)

GCB Scholarships Questions

How does an individual apply for one of the scholarships offered by GCB?

Just go tour web site at [www.georgiacounciloftheblind.org](http://www.georgiacounciloftheblind.org), and download the application under scholarships. For more information, please contact Keith Morris at 706-79905225, or via email at mkumorris@yahoo.com.

Fun and Leisure

The Georgia Blind Sports Association

Many of us enjoy outdoor sports and recreational activities. The exciting news is that individuals who are blind or visually impaired can participate in a variety of outdoor sports and activities through the Georgia Blind Sports Association.  Located in the Atlanta area, this organization offers a variety of programs. GBSA is a 501c3 non-profit founded in 2011 to promote an active life style for the visually impaired through sports. Included in our various teams are goalball, beep baseball and beep kickball. Tandem biking is our newest effort, started late in 2014 with an initial event with over 50 people participating. We are hoping as the 2015 biking season gets under way to offer regularly scheduled events for the individuals who are blind or visually impaired. They can get on a bike and enjoy the freedom of the open road. Knowing that the interest level and commitment will vary from rider to rider, we will offer a program that will appeal to the novice as well as challenge the more serious rider. The response has been overwhelming confirming my long held belief that the blind seek only an opportunity to participate. We know that not all will want to compete at a serious level, what we have to do is challenge each athlete to strive to compete against them-self always striving to improve.

For more information please contact Hal Simpson

Executive Director

Georgia Blind Sports Association

770-833-2061

Audio Descriptive programming

NetFlix offers a selection of audio descriptive programming for the visually impaired for additional information go to this link.

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/netflix-adds-audio-descriptions-visually-impaired-daredevil-shows/>

The Georgia council of the Blind has a new way to send out news and announcements. You can call in and listen to news and announcements by phone. The new announcements will be posted in this mail box on Mondays. Please use the following Phone Number to listen to announcements. The phone number is 1-641-715-3900 and the pin number is 382293 pound. Please contact Betsy Grenevitch at 770-464-0450, or via email blindangel@joimail.com.

The Georgia Council of the Blind chapter awards:

The Presidential Appreciation Certificates will cost $4.00 with a frame and $2.00 without a frame. The chapter plaques will cost $10.00.WE are asking every chapter to send in $20.00 for the hospitality room and door prizes.

Please send your money and your list of names for chapter awards to Marsha Farrow at the following address.

Marsha Farrow PO Box 381, Trion GA 30753

GCB How to Join

If you wish to join the Georgia council of the Blind, just fill out this form out and mail it to us or go on line to [www.georgiacounciloftheblind.org](http://www.georgiacounciloftheblind.org/).

The Georgia Council of the Blind

P. O. Box 381

Trion GA  30753

Phone #: 706-799-5225

Email address: Info@georgiacounciloftheblind.org

Web site: [www.georgiacounciloftheblind.org](http://www.georgiacounciloftheblind.org/)

Your name:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Phone #:

Email address:

What is your visual status?

Check one of the following:

Legally blind: \_\_\_\_

Totally blind: \_\_\_\_

Sighted: \_\_\_

What format would you want to receive your newsletter?

Check one of the following:

Braille: \_\_\_\_

Large Print: \_\_\_\_

Audio -compact disk: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_