

THE RHODODENDRON

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A Publication of:
MOUNTAIN STATE COUNCIL OF THE
BLIND, INC
PO Box 834
Ridgeley, WV 26753
www.msbcwv.org

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Save the date! The Mountain State Council of the Blind 2013 convention will be held September 20-22 at the Holiday Inn, in Martinsburg. The ACB Store has undergone many changes. New and interesting products are being added all the time. You may order online at acb.org or by calling (877) 630-7190. The ACB Board of Publications is

conducting a contest to name the newly added ACB eForum. Submit your entry before midnight on March 31 either by email to contest@acb.org or by calling (877) 651-9560. MSCB has a new phone number through GoogleVoice. When you call this number and if you get the voice-mail, leave a message and someone will get

back to you as soon as possible. The number is (304) 933-9540. Low cost assistive devices may be provided to eligible applicants through MSCB's new Grants for Assistive Technology program. For more information and to obtain an application form, contact Awards Committee at PO. Box 834, Ridgeley, WV 26753.

MSCB OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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President's Message

Dear Friends,

As I write with message, I am sitting on the train returning home from the ACB Affiliate Presidents meeting. As usual, a lot of valuable information was disseminated, and it was refreshing to fellowship with leaders of other state and special interest affiliates.

A lot has happened in the MSCB world since the last newsletter. There was a lot of talk of the possible relocation of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind. As far as I know right now, that is on hold. The much-anticipated Crossroads Leadership Conference is coming

to fruition. Three of our board members are planning to attend this conference in Louisville, KY, March 15-16. The MSCB Awards committee will be distributing our Anna L. Hunt scholarship form, so that we can hopefully award \$500 to a deserving college student at our 2013 state convention in Martinsburg in September. Speaking of the state convention, save the dates! The 2013 MSCB convention will be held at the Holiday Inn, in Martinsburg, September 20-22. The program committee is hard at work planning for this

convention. If you have any program ideas, please contact me.

If you are planning to attend the ACB National Conference and Convention in Columbus, Ohio this summer, begin making your plans now. Be sure to read your ACB Braille Forum for convention information and details.

Until next time, have a nice remainder of the winter, and Happy Spring!

Sincerely,
Donna Brown, MSCB
President

ACB Affiliate Presidents Meeting

By Donna Brown

The annual ACB Affiliate Presidents meeting was held February 23-24 in Arlington, VA. This event was recorded and will be archived on ACB Radio sometime soon.

Following introductions of attendees, Berl Colley reported on the events over the past year of the ACB leadership committee. Carla Ruschival gave an overview of the upcoming Crossroads leadership conference in Louisville, KY, March 15-16. A report about this conference will be in the next newsletter. Ray Campbell shared information about an upcoming Midwest leadership conference. During lunch, we heard from a panel of speakers discussing corporate sponsorships. They emphasized that when seeking corporate sponsorships, be sure to match the mission and objectives of corporations with those of your organization.

The afternoon session begin with a presentation from Sara Conrad,

President of ACB Students. Sara spoke about getting and keeping younger members involved in ACB, and she felt that the major problems for younger members are money, time and resources. This was followed by a presentation about insurance for officers and board members by Lane Waters and Rick Morin. We then heard committee reports and reminders by Jean Mann, chair of the ACB Credentials committee and from Paul Edwards, chair of the Board of Publications. Paul Edward informed us that the Braille Forum and the eForum are available on newslines, and when BARD is ready, they will both be available on BARD site for download. The final presentation on Saturday was given by Joel Snyder, director of the ACB Audio Description Project.

ACB Affiliate Presidents Meeting

By Donna Brown

(con't)

The Sunday morning session began with an enthusiastic overview and update of the new ACB database management system by Carla Ruschival and Lane Waters. They emphasized that with this new program, a person can have access to their affiliate database and the affiliate's information stored in the ACB database at the same time. Led by Melanie Brunson, Executive Director of ACB, a brief discussion was held about the need for advocates from the ACB membership. These people would assist the national office staff when a need arises to work with people throughout the country. AFTER an update on ACB annual fundraisers, the meeting closed with participants having the opportunity to ask questions to the ACB officers. Some of the topics discussed during this time included: ACB's PR presence to the public, the possibility of an ACB app for IOS devices, reaching out to senior citizens who are losing vision, and how the Newline News Channel can be used to publicize what's happening in affiliates.

2013 ACB Legislative Seminar

Due to illness and other circumstances, MSCB had no representative at the 2013 ACB Legislative Seminar. Below is an overview of the topics discussed.

Update on the Access Board's Involvement in Hot-Button Issues in the Blind Community

David Capozzi, Executive Director, U.S. Access Board

The Future of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

David Morrissey, Executive Director, U.S. International Council on Disabilities (USICD)

Update on Accessible Prescription Drug Labeling Efforts after Passage of the FDA Safety and Innovation Act. Mitch Pomerantz, President, ACB

ACB's Legal Advocacy Efforts. Melanie Brunson, Executive Director, ACB

Looking Back on the Legislative Successes that ACB Has Enjoyed in Recent Years

Eric Bridges, Director of Advocacy and Governmental Affairs, ACB

Legislative Imperative I: The Need for Medicare to Cover the Purchase of Certain Low Vision Devices

Eric Bridges, Director of Advocacy and Governmental Affairs, ACB

Mark Richert, Director, Public Policy, American Foundation for the Blind (AFB)

Legislative Imperative II: The Need for Comprehensive Special Education Legislation

Mark Richert, Director, Public Policy, AFB

The Future of Vehicle Donation Legislation in the 113th Congress

Steven C. Schwadron, Sankofa Consulting Strategies

Luncheon Speaker: Karen Peltz Strauss, Deputy Chief, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

The Legislative Agenda of the 113th Congress for the Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee. Andrew Imparato, Senior

Counsel/Disability Policy Director, U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

Knowing your Rights and Working to Find Resolution. Alberto Ruisanchez, Deputy Chief, Disability Rights Section, U.S. Department of Justice

10 Reasons to Have a BARD Account

- 1. Free 24/7 access to as many NLS books as you choose to download!**
- 2. Signing up is easy! You just need a computer with a high-speed internet connection and an email address.**
- 3. Avoid the wait list for that popular digital book you want to read!**
- 4. Bypass any delays in postal delivery!**
- 5. Downloaded books do not need to be returned to the library so there are no due dates!**
- 6. Manage your own "library" collection of downloaded books on your computer. Download and delete books as many times as you want!**
- 7. Download magazines, too!**
- 8. Web-Braille has been added to BARD!**
- 9. We can teach you how to download books from BARD – just contact us!**
- 10. It's OK to have a friend or family member help you download books!**

White House Announces Audio Descriptions for Public Tours

President Obama and the First Lady have long been committed to ensuring that the White House is truly the People's House, and that Americans with disabilities are fully integrated into our society. Today, continuing on that commitment, the White House Visitor's Office is pleased to announce the availability of an audio description for those taking a White House tour. This will give blind and visually impaired Americans and persons with other print disabilities the opportunity to listen to an audio described tour as they visit the historic, public rooms of the White House. The audio tour features welcoming remarks from Mrs. Obama followed by a room-by-room audio description of the highlights and features of the White House. This is just the latest step in the

White House Announces Audio Descriptions for Public Tours (con't)

Obamas' work to make the White House more open and accessible - from [surprising visitors on public tours](#), to welcoming nearly 3 million visitors to the White House for Residence tours, the annual [White House Easter Egg Roll](#), Fall and Spring Garden Tours, State and Official Arrival Ceremonies and White House Kitchen Garden school group tours, to partnering with the [Google Art Project so millions more can take a 360-degree tour of the White House from their computer](#).

The audio tours are only available on MP3 players that will be provided by the White House to those requesting the audio tour. The players must be requested at the time the request for a tour is made through a Member of Congress, and will be available on a first come, first serve basis. Individuals must return the MP3 players at the conclusion of their tour. Information about White House Tours:

Public tours of the White House are currently available and requests must be submitted through your Member of Congress. These self-guided tours are available from 7:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Tuesday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Fridays, and 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Saturdays (excluding federal holidays or unless otherwise noted). Tour hours will be extended when possible based on the official White House schedule. Tours are scheduled on a first come, first served basis. Requests can be submitted up to six months in advance and no less than 21 days in advance. You are encouraged to submit your request as early as possible as a limited number of spaces are available. All White House tours are free of charge. (Please note that White House tours may be subject to last minute cancellation.)

Chapter News

Potomac Valley News

By Carol McGee

The members of the Potomac Valley chapter were physically quiet during the winter months but our brains were full of plans. We held our annual Christmas celebration dinner at Mario's Restaurant on Saturday, December 15. There was a good turnout and everyone enjoyed getting together.

By the time you read this, a hint of spring will be in the air and we will be buzzing with activity. At least three members of the chapter plan to attend the ACB Leadership Crossroads seminar in Louisville, Kentucky the weekend of March 15-17. Several members will be representing MSCB at the Braille Challenge at the School for the Blind on March 22. Plans are underway for our fourth annual blindfold bowlathon fund-raiser which will take place on March 23 at Potomac Lanes in Morefield. Two days later on the evening of March 25, members will again represent MSCB by attending the annual senior dinner at Mario's. Near the end of May, we will sponsor an ice cream social for the students of WWSB at their dormitory.

In the next issue of this newsletter, we will be looking forward to our chapter picnic and our second annual Technology day.

Vandalia Chapter Update

By Debbie Cain

Vandalia Chapter members had our annual Christmas party in Mid-December. A great time of fellowship and enjoying good food was had by all.

Chapter News (con't)

Tri-County Chapter Update

By Kathy Gerhardt

The Tri-County Chapter of MSCB has been busy fund raising and socializing this quarter. On December 1, downtown Martinsburg sponsored a Snowflake Festival on the square, and our chapter participated. Items sold were decorated jars of candy, Christmas ornaments, votive cups with candles, keys, and much more. On December 9, our members celebrated the holidays with our annual dinner. Fifteen members joined all of us at Ryans.

Chris Kleiman had surgery on his legs in January and has now returned to work. Kathy Gerhardt continues her work with the canine rescue efforts in our area. Chris Cook has returned to teaching at Berkeley County on a temporary basis until the new teacher comes on board after maternity leave. Jessie Rayl is completing her doctorate, and that about concludes our chapter news.

WALKING THE DOG

Reportedly, a woman was flying from Seattle to San [Francisco](#). Unexpectedly, the plane was diverted to Sacramento along the way.

The flight attendant explained that there would be a delay and if the passengers wanted to get off the aircraft, the plane would re-board in 50 minutes.

Everybody got off the plane except one lady, who was blind. A man had noticed her as he walked by and could tell the lady was blind because her guide dog lay quietly underneath the seats in front of her throughout the entire flight.

He could also tell she had flown this very flight before because the

pilot approached her, and called her by name, "*Kathy, we are in Sacramento for almost an hour. Would you like to get off and stretch your legs?*"

The blind lady said, "*No thanks, but maybe Buddy would like to stretch his legs.*"

Picture this:



All the people in the gate area came to a complete stand still when they looked up and saw the pilot walk off the plane with a guide dog for the blind!

Even worse, the pilot was wearing sunglasses!

People scattered. They not only tried to change planes, but they were trying to change airlines!

True story.....

Have a great day and remember.....

THINGS AREN'T ALWAYS AS THEY APPEAR.

For Your Information

The announcement of products and services in this column does not represent an endorsement by the Mountain State Council of the Blind or its officers.

"The Rhododendron" cannot be held responsible for the reliability of the products and services mentioned.

There is a public computer with assistive technology with high speed internet access available in every WV Workforce office in the State of West Virginia. The JAWS screen reader and ZoomText are installed on these computers which can be used for job search, job training, resume development, online training, etc. Read more on the WV Workforce site that discusses the WV Broadband Grant that has made it possible to provide this equipment and accessibility.

<http://www.wvcommerce.org/business/workforcewv/wvbpot/default.aspx>

New Microsoft Support Desk for Customers with Disabilities

Microsoft has started a support number for customers with disabilities at 1-800-936-5900. Right now this support is limited to North America. You can read details at <http://support.microsoft.com/contactus/contact-microsoft-accessibility>

ACB Website Update

The ACB website has undergone another major improvement - one that will help strengthen ACB as we seek to expand our work on behalf of people who are blind and visually impaired.

The donation pages on the website have been completely revised, and are now ready for visitors. Thanks to the persistence and hard work of Steven Obremski, ACB's former Director of Development, Annette Carter, ACB Webmaster, and a host of others, the information on the pages, as well as the pages themselves, have a whole new look and updated information about ACB. The donation process is also much more straightforward and easier to use.

Supporters of the American Council of the Blind can now find information on planned giving and donating a vehicle or other property, and sign up for the Monthly Monetary Support (MMS) program on the website. Donations of a general nature can be made through the "Make a Donation Now" link, and contributors can specify that their contribution be directed for a specific purpose. Honorary and memorial donations can also be completed on-line, and acknowledgments for all donations can be requested in a choice of accessible formats.

To visit the new pages, visit

<http://www.acb.org>

and follow the donate link. Or go directly to the donation pages by visiting

<http://donate.acb.org>

MSCB Calendar of Events

The items listed in this calendar include MSCB and ACB events and other dates of interest to blind and visually impaired individuals. Please participate in these events when you can. If anyone has an event to add to this calendar, please contact me at any time.

March 11, 2013, 9:00 PM: MSCB Monthly Conference Call. Call (832) 551-5100 and enter pass code 186679#.

March 15-16, 2013: Crossroads Leadership Conference, Best Western, Louisville, Kentucky.

March 23, 2013: Potomac Valley Chapter Bowlathon.

March 25, 2013, 6:00 p.m: MSCB to host WVSB seniors.

April 8, 2013, 9:00 PM: MSCB Monthly Conference Call. Call (832) 551-5100 and enter pass code 186679#.

May 13, 2013, 9:00 PM: MSCB Monthly Conference Call. Call (832) 551-5100 and enter pass code 186679#.

June 11, 2013, 9:00 PM: MSCB Monthly Conference Call. Call (832) 551-5100 and enter pass code 186679#.

July 4-12, 2013, ACB National Conference and Convention: Hyatt Regency Hotel, Columbus, Ohio.

July 8, 2013, 9:00 PM: MSCB Monthly Conference Call. Call (832) 551-5100 and enter pass code 186679#.

September 20-22, 2013: MSCB state convention, Martinsburg, WV.

**MOUNTAIN STATE COUNCIL OF THE BLIND,
INC PO Box 834
Ridgeley, WV 26753
www.msbcwv.org2012
Membership Form**

Please feel free to make extra copies to share with others.

Please return this form to your local chapter contact, or to Dennis Dennison, MSCB Treasurer, PO Box 834, Ridgeley, WV 26753 or email to ddenison@msbcwv.org. Call Donna Brown, MSCB President, at 304-822-4679 or Dennis at 304-738-8930 for questions or information. Please Print:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS(street): _____

CITY: _____ **STATE:** _____ **ZIP:** _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

I LIVE IN COUNTY _____

PREFERRED FORMAT: (indicate 1st and 2nd choice)

___ Braille, ___ email, ___ large print, ___ cassette

I am: ___ blind, ___ visually impaired, ___ sighted

Please check all that apply:

- MSCB Dues: \$10.00
- Local Chapter Dues: \$5.00
 - Potomac Valley Chapter (Romney and area)
 - Tri-County Chapter (Eastern Panhandle area)
 - Vandalia Chapter (Morgantown and area)

We are in the process of starting a chapter in the Charleston area. If you want to be contacted about joining, please check here:

- MSCB Junior Member (12 to 18): \$5.00
 - Junior Member Local Chapter: \$2.50
- Organization Support: \$25.00
- Donations (please specify): \$_____
 - Barbara Fierst Memorial Technology Scholarship
 - Anna M. Hunt Memorial College Scholarship
 - General Expenses

MSCB is an IRS 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Donations are tax deductible.

TOTAL AMOUNT: \$_____

Please make check or money order payable to MSCB and return as indicated above.

We also accept payment through Paypal at www.msbcwv.org.

Would you like to be included in our members-only (information not released) directory? ___Yes ___No

If you'd like to be contacted by one of the local chapters, check here:

- Potomac Valley
- Tri-County
- Vandalia

Thank you for joining MSCB!