

The Rhododendron

A Publication of:

MOUNTAIN STATE COUNCIL OF THE BLIND, INC

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Editors: Public Relations Committee

# President’s Message

Dear MSCB Members,

Welcome to March Madness! Exactly one year ago, March Madness looked quite different. We were just beginning wearing masks, working from home, and attending all sorts of events virtually. The 2020 edition of March Madness lasted much longer than we all anticipated.

Moving forward to March Madness 2021, many people have received Covid vaccines, long-distance travel is minimal, we are still participating in virtual meetings and events, and the men’s NCAA basketball tournament brackets have exploded with upsets.

This Madness has brought some MSCB members to stretch themselves to organize events and participate in meetings that they had never done before. I want to personally thank Carol McGhee and Chris Cook for working with me to meet with staff people from Senators Capito and Manchin’s offices and Congressman Mooney’s office. We shared with them our concerns about transportation in WV, assistance with funding for low vision devices, and the need for accessible exercise equipment, and we encouraged them to either introduce appropriate legislation or sign onto existing legislation.

Our monthly community calls continue. Join us on April 12 as MSCB board member tests our knowledge of birds sounds. Wonderful signs of spring!

Finally, it is not too late to submit ideas for names of our new newsletter. The deadline is April 1.

Take care all, continue to stay safe, and have a Happy Easter.

Sincerely,

Donna Brown, President

## MSCB Moment

This month in MSCB history:

Hurray! The dates for the 2021 MSCB virtual convention have been set. It will be held the weekend of November 5-7, so mark your calendars. As was mentioned before, the convention committee is ready for all programming suggestions. Ideas can be sent to

president@mscbwv.org

It’s 7-Up Time!

Please join us on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 PM for our MSCB community call held on Zoom. Our March event featuring Heather McComas, a basket weaver from Huntington, who happens to be totally blind, was a great success.

On April 12, join us to learn about tweets and twitters, we are talking about spring bird songs, not social media.

Legislative news:

ACB’s 2021 Legislative Seminar continued into March. Chris Cook, Carol McGhee and I had the opportunity to meet virtually with a staffer from Senator Joe Manchin’s office and Congressman Mooney’s office. Congressman Mooney joined our meeting for a short time; long enough to say hello and thank us for reaching out to him. We mainly discussed the need for improved transportation services in West Virginia, the introduction of a bill requiring Medicare assistance for low vision devices, and increased accessibility of exercise equipment. We also expressed with Manchin’s staff our concerns about legislation that has been written pertaining to absentee voting. There is one sentence that refers to the Internet not being able to be used. This would eliminate fully accessible absentee voting for people with disabilities.

### Tech Talk

It is often said that something good comes out of a bad situation. The Lighthouse for the Blind of San Francisco, CA, has experienced that. Before Covid, they offered a monthly technology discussion group and they met in person. That meant you had to live in the area to participate. As a result of Covid, the Access Technology Team at the Lighthouse now holds weekly tech discussion groups via Zoom. They are free for anyone to attend. The event is called Tech Together. Whether you need technological assistance, or if you are just looking for a group of kind, resourceful, AT enthusiasts, I highly recommend checking out Tech Together every Tuesday afternoon from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. RSVP to

AT@lighthouse-sf.org or via voicemail at 415-694-7343.

#### ACB Action

Find Out What’s Happening and Join in at the ACB National Level

By Kathy Gerhardt

This month we’ll highlight the Community Events Media Information. Community calls started about one year ago in response to the pandemic, giving people the ability to connect virtually. There are now more than 80 calls per week. Subjects range from blindness, books, and social networking to Druid study, Sobriety First, and everything in between. The subject matter diversity is amazing! As the saying goes, you can learn something new every day.

To receive up-to-date info on how to join our events, please subscribe to our ACB Community Events email list in one of two ways:

* Fill out the subscription form:

https://acblists.org/g/ACB-Community-Events

Send an email to:

ACB-Community-Events+subscribe@acblists.org

You will receive an email asking you to confirm your subscription by replying to that email. This is an announce only list. Each morning, an email will be sent out with that day’s schedule. We will only post additional emails if there’s time sensitive information to convey. For those without email, or who need to receive the phone, meeting ID, and password for a given call over the phone, please call 800-424-8666 and press 1024.

ACB 2021 National Convention:

The 2021 ACB National Conference and Convention will once again be held virtually July 16-23. Elections for ACB officers and board members will be held, as well as for the members of the Board of Publications. Any dues paying member of MSCB is eligible to vote during this election.

##### Healthy Living

By Mucie Allred

Life Hacks

This phrase of "life hack" appears all over the internet and I use it now instead of hints for living.

This one has to do with the PAUSE that we need to give ourselves during the day.  I downloaded a free app called the Mindfulness Bell. I set it for 40 minutes.  A chime reminds me to stop moving, take a breath and give myself a reminder that all is well. If it isn’t, I can deal with it.

It may be a moment of prayer or a body scan to detect any tension or a mind check for any anxiety.

We all know to pause when a break is needed.  For instance, reading, crocheting, manual labor.  Some experts say every 20 minutes we need to stretch and breathe and look away in contemplation. Maybe I will reset my mindfulness bell for 20 minutes and take my own advice.

Take care everyone and Happy Spring!

### Cook’s Corner

Submissions of recipes, tips for using your favorite kitchen gadget, information about smart kitchen devices and electric kitchen gadgets, etc. is greatly appreciated.

This month’s recipe was submitted by Marcia Springston and is an All-American favorite.

Better than Mother-in-law’s Mac and Cheese

Serves 8

2 tbsp butter

1 tsp salt

1 16 oz. box elbow macaroni

3 cups milk

½ cup shredded Velveeta cheese

1 10.5 oz. can Campbell’s cheese soup

1 cup shredded Colby cheese

2 cups cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Grease a 9x13 inch casserole with 1 tbsp. butter.

Cook macaroni according to box instructions, drain and return to pot. In saucepan over medium heat combine milk, remaining butter, Velveeta cheese, and cheese soup. Cook for 10 to 15 minutes or until cheese is melted, stirring often. Pour cheese sauce over macaroni and add Colby cheese and 1 cup cheddar cheese, stir to combine. Transfer to baking dish and top with remaining cheddar cheese. Bake for 20 minutes.

#### Calendar of Events

Monday, April 12: Monthly MSCB community call. Bird sounds.

Monday, May 10: MSCB community call.

Tuesday, May 11: MSCB board meeting.

Wednesday, June 16: Deadline for paying ACB dues for eligibility to vote at the 2021 national convention.

July 16-23: ACB National Conference and Convention.

November 5-7: MSCB state convention.