

The Rhododendron

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# President’s Message

Dear MSCB Members,

I hope everyone is well, and that you have a nice Memorial Day weekend.

Pre-registration is now open for the ACB national virtual conference and convention. Read on to learn how MSCB members can attend this convention at no cost. Also, our next 7-up event will feature a discussion about the upcoming ACB convention.

I hope everyone will consider joining our West Virginia Walkers team and join me in seeking donations from family and friends. Half of the money we raise comes back to MSCB. Some of the money we receive is used to help fund our scholarship and technology grant programs. To keep those important programs going, we need to continue to raise money. Read on to learn more about how you can participate in the Walk.

Information and articles for our newsletter can be sent to president@mscbwv.org at any time.

Until next time, stay safe and well.

Sincerely,

Donna Brown, President

## MSCB Moment

This month in MSCB history:

Great news!

The registration for the 2021 ACB National conference and convention opened on May 20. The registration cost for ACB members, which includes each of you, is $25. This registration period ends on Monday, June 28.

Here’s even better news!

The MSCB board has voted to reimburse the $25 registration fee to all members. To receive your $25 reimbursement, you need to do the following:

1. Register for the ACB convention between May 20 and June 28 by either going to Acbconvention.org or call (651) 428-5059. Leave your phone number, your name, (including the spelling of your last name), and your time zone.
2. After registering, you will receive a registration confirmation number.
3. Either email that confirmation number and your name to

president@mscbwv.org or call Donna Brown at (304) 940-0292.

1. As soon as possible, you will receive your reimbursement.

I am hoping many of you will take advantage of this once in a lifetime offer.

Get Moving Together with MSCB and ACB!

The 2021 ACB Brenda Dillon Memorial Walk will once again be held virtually. The actual Walk celebration will be held before the opening General session of the ACB convention on Sunday, July 18.

The West Virginia Walkers team is set to get moving. Please consider joining our team and/or making a donation. MSCB receives 50 percent of the funds we raise. A portion of the money we raise from the Walk goes into our scholarship and technology grant funds.

To join our team or to donate, visit:

https://secure.qgiv.com/event/acbwalk2021/team/874084/

### Tech Talk

**Emergency Broadband Benefit** Program

By Kathy Gerhardt

If you think you or someone you know may qualify for the **Emergency Broadband Benefit** program, please act soon. It sounds like it may be a great help to some of us, but it is temporary. I have compiled information from a few sources.

Starting now, select Americans can apply for agovernment-backed program that will lower the cost of their home internet connection.

The new subsidy program, called the  **Emergency Broadband Benefit** Program will be administered by the Federal Communications Commission.

Those who qualify for the program will receive up to a $50 discount on their monthly internet bill. Additionally, the program provides a one-time device discount of up to $100 for a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet purchased through a participating provider. The one-time discount requires a consumer co-payment of more than $10 and less than $50.

**Do You Qualify?**

The Emergency Broadband Benefit is available only to select Americans who fall below the 135% poverty level, are already on some form of government assistance, or have suffered economic hardship due to Covid-19.

Per the FCC, eligible participants must meet one of the following criteria:

* Have an income that is at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines or participates in specific assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, or Lifeline.

Current 2021 100% poverty levels are $12,880 for 1,
$17,420 for 2, $21,960 for 3, $26,500 for 4, and adding $4540 for each additional person in the household.

* Are Approved to receive benefits under the free and reduced-price school lunch program or the school breakfast program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision in the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school year.
* Have received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year.
* Experienced a substantial loss of income due to job loss or furlough since February 29, 2020 (household total income in 2020 must be at or below $99,000 for single filers and $198,000 for joint filers).
* Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider’s existing low-income or COVID-19 program.

Call 833-511-0311 if you want a mail-in application, and return it along with copies of documents showing proof of eligibility to:

Emergency Broadband Support Center
P.O. Box 7081
London, KY 40742

Customers also must have internet service through an approved provider. Potential applicants can view a list of all providers, organized by state, on the FCC’s website.

**How to Apply**

Applying for the Emergency Broadband Benefit program began on May 12, 2021. Eligible internet customers can sign up using their provider’s website or at the FCC’s GetEmergencyBroadband.org website.

**What Happens Next?**

Customers who are eligible for the subsidy automatically will be enrolled in the program once they apply. Customers will not receive any cash. Instead, recipients will receive a discount on their bill from the Emergency Broadband Benefit program. Customers are then responsible for the remainder of their bill each month.

**Which broadband Internet providers are participating in the EBB program?**

You can find a comprehensive list of all participating providers on the FCC website. Below are some of the broadband Internet providers participating in the program.
**Comcast/Xfinity****Charter/Spectrum****Cox****Optimum****Suddenlink****Mediacom****Sparklight****Atlantic Broadband****GCI****Fidelity Communications****Armstrong****MCTV**

**How will I know the assistance is ending?**Your participating provider must give you notice about the last date or billing cycle that the full benefit will apply to your bill and the date or billing cycle that a partial benefit will apply to your bill, in addition to information about the cost of your broadband service after the program ends.

**Will I get $50 in my bank account?**No. The way the provision works is that customers of a broadband service will receive a credit of $50 per month with their service provider. This is a fair and simple way to provide assistance to each qualified household. Note that many different service providers are participating in the program, including those offering landline and wireless broadband – you may find that there are several in your location.

The assistance is provided *per household, not per individual.*So, an apartment or residential property would receive one $50 discount payment, even if there were several people using the Internet connection.
This program is available to new, existing, and prior customers of each broadband service. Even if you have a debit balance with the service provider you will be eligible.

**How long will the program last?**

The Emergency Broadband Benefit is temporary. It will expire when funds are exhausted or six months after the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) declares the end of the COVID-19 health emergency.

EBB Program.

Currently the program is planned to last until the $3.2B in Federal funding for this program runs out. However, as with many issues related to the pandemic, this is uncertain. The government may decide to extend the program. This is all the information we have at present.

#### ACB Action

**ACB Voting for 2021 National Conference and Convention**

**Recommendations:**

* All Vote-Now procedures apply to the 2021 Conference and Convention only.
* ACB will use Vote-Now for Officers, Board, and BOP elections (13 positions) only.
* ACB plans to adhere to our current voting process as close as possible.
* Anyone registered with the National office as an ACB member before **June 16th** is eligible to vote; the right to vote is **not** tied to registering for the convention.

**Vote-Now System:**

You will be able to access Vote-Now using any of the following methods:

1. Mac, PC, Tablets, iPhone, Android, and Landline Phone
2. By phone with a toll-free number with two voting options:
3. Automated system or
4. Operator assistance

Each member can choose which method they want to use or each election throughout the week and the voting method can vary each time.

We are asking all members to please share a valid email address with ACB so Vote-Now can email your unique voter code to you. This voter code can only be used once per election, but you will use this unique code for all elections throughout the week.

If you do not have a valid email address, your information and code will be mailed to you in both braille and large print. No digital cartridges will be sent out.

About June 1st a unique voter code will be mailed to those who do not have an email address and those with email addresses will receive their code around July 6th.

Vote-Now will provide you the information you will need to know for voting. You will receive a log in link which can be used for voting using the internet and phone instructions for voting by phone; the same unique voter code will be used for both voting methods.

If you misplace your unique voter code, you can receive help from the Vote-Now operators to obtain your code or the Minneapolis office can assist you also. This code can only be provided to the intended ACB member.

**Voting Process**:

July 1st is the deadline for affiliate Presidents to submit their delegate, alternate, and representative for nominating committee to Secretary Denise Colley. Please provide name, phone number and email.

The Nominating Committee will meet Monday July 12th at 8:00 PM EDT to pick the slate of Officers, Board and BOP representatives.

The nominating committee selections will be presented on Sunday night, July 18th at opening general session of ACB’s Conference and Convention.

The voting process will begin on Sunday night with the office of the President and continue through each successive office until a contested election occurs.

If an election is not contested, then the candidate submitted by the nominating committee will be elected by acclamation.

If candidates are nominated from the floor for an election, ACB will have a contested election and the following process will be used.

The next day, each candidate will be allowed a total of five minutes to have up to two speakers endorse their candidate and explain why their candidate should be elected for the position.

Following these speeches, voting will commence. The vote count is comprised of two parts: the individual vote and the affiliate vote.

Each ACB member who received a unique voter code from Vote-Now will be eligible to vote. The voting period will be announced on ACB Radio during general session in the morning. There will not be the ability to write in candidates when voting.

Simultaneously the “affiliate vote” will commence. It is the responsibility of each affiliate to determine how a member can communicate to their affiliate delegate/alternate how they wish their affiliate to vote. The delegates will announce their votes from a separate Zoom room that will be heard during general session at the convention.

A candidate will need to receive a majority of the votes, 50 percent plus 1, to be declared the winner. If this does not happen the top two candidates will need to have a run-off election.

Only one election will be held each day Monday through Thursday. If a run-off is necessary, it will be delayed until the following day.

This process will continue for all 13 positions.

**Assumptions:**

As the week progresses ACB expects voting to become more efficient. By the time Friday comes, ACB expects each election process to take less time. If ACB has a lot of contested elections, then elections will continue Saturday. On Friday and Saturday, the candidates will need to have their speakers identified and ready to present on their behalf. By Friday and Saturday (if needed) the affiliates will need to have a streamlined process in place to identify how they will apportion their votes.

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

Advice to Self

By Mucie Allred

FIRST, ASK YOURSELF IF YOU WANT TO HEAR SOME ADVICE, and if the answer is “yes”, here it is:

Make it a good summer.

Exercise every day.

Pray every day.

Do not overeat.

Get plenty of rest.

Go swimming.

Go on a picnic.

Get on an ACB community call and find out what others are doing.

I am going to take my own advice to HAVE A GOOD SUMMER.

I hope each of you do as well.

Editor’s Note: The below information was recently posted on the ACB Leadership list.

Medicare & You: 2022 is available in a variety of accessible formats and is provided by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS). If you are interested in receiving this publication, you can send an email message to Kim Charlson at the Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library indicating what format you are interested in receiving. You must provide all the following information to be sent the publication when they become available later this summer:

Name:

Mailing Address:

City/State/Zip:

Phone:

Email:

Preferred Format:

Braille:

Large Print:

Audio on Digital Cartridge (must be returned to the library when finished reading it):

Send your email request to:

Kim.charlson@perkins.org

### 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.

Summer Pizza

This recipe is great for a casual summer get-together.

You will need:

2 packages/cans frozen/refrigerator croissant dough (thawed if frozen)

2 8-ounce packages of cream cheese

1/3 cup of good mayonnaise

½ (or more) dairy sour cream

1 envelope dry ranch dressing mix (or make your own spice mix)

Salt and pepper to taste

A variety of very fresh veggies cut into bite-sized pieces.

Note: you can replace the cream cheese, mayonnaise, sour cream, and spices with a quart of your favorite dairy dip, hummus, or pesto.

Directions:

1. Place oven rack to middle position and set oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a 12 by 18-inch rimmed baking sheet.

2. Carefully open and unroll the croissant dough (it should be cool but workable). If using canned refrigerator dough, follow directions for opening. Lay out the squares, so that edges touch. Gently press the seams of the dough squares together to make a smooth bottom crust. Then, press the dough against the sides of the baking sheet to form a slightly raised edge. Prick the dough lightly with a fork all over to prevent puffing. Bake the crust about 15-20 minutes only until the crust is light brown and soft to the touch. Do not over bake as dough will become brittle and can easily burn. Let crust cool in the pan to room temperature (at least one hour) on a rack or cool surface.

3. Combine the cream cheese, mayonnaise, sour cream, and spices in a medium bowl (or use a quart of prepared dip). Spread the mixture evenly over the completely cooled crust. Cover the pan with foil and refrigerate while you prepare the veggies.

4. Wash, drain and pat dry the vegetables as extra moisture will cause sogginess. Depending on the topping you use, choose veggies that go well together. Suggestions such as: broccoli, cauliflower, grated carrots, chopped celery, diced cucumbers, green and red peppers, asparagus, green onions, sliced mushrooms, all work well (the sky’s the limit!). Cherry tomatoes, although tasty, are too heavy and if cut, will discolor the dairy spread. Your favorite shredded cheese can also be added to complete the masterpiece! Arrange the bite-sized veggies on the pizza and top with grated cheese if desired. Then cover again with foil and refrigerate for at least four hours.

5. Cut pizza into squares and serve cold. Note: too many veggies on one pizza can make it soggy and hard to manage. Make two or more pizzas and use different combinations of toppings/veggies to impress your guests. This recipe can be made a day ahead. Enjoy!

From the kitchen of Susan Spicknall

#### Calendar of Events

June 1st - voter code will be mailed out to members that are certified by May 28th and do not have an email address. You will receive both a Large Print and Braille copy.

Monday, June 14: MSCB community call.

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

June 20th - rest of voter codes to be mailed out to members without email.

July 1st - ALL Affiliate Presidents must have their delegate, alternate, and nominating person submitted to Secretary  Denise Colley. Must have name, phone number, and email.

July 6th - voter codes will be emailed to every ACB member with an email address.

July 9th - mock election from 10:00 am - 6:00 pm EDT, individual votes only.

July 12th - Nominating Committee meets at 8:00 pm EDT.

July 16-23: ACB National Conference and Convention.

November 5-7: MSCB state convention.