

**Insight: The Voice of
The American Council of the Blind of New York, Inc.**

<http://www.acbny.info>

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The American Council of the Blind of New York is the largest consumer advocacy and support organization of blind and visually impaired people in the state. Your financial contributions help ACB NY's work to promote the educational, vocational and social advancement of blind and visually impaired people in New York. Send your tax-deductible donations to ACB NY Treasurer, 1403 Chadwick Court, Tarrytown, N.Y. 10591 Questions for our treasurer can be sent to: treasurer@acbny.info

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2020 ACB of NY Officers and Directors

President's Message – Karen Blachowicz

I would like to begin by thanking Lori Scharff and all the outgoing officers and directors for all their dedication, hard work and service to the American Council of the Blind of New York. I would also like to welcome all officers and directors that stepped up into their roles on January 1,2020. I look forward to serving and working with all members, chapters and affiliates and board representatives.

January 9,2020 was the first official ACBNY 2020 board meeting

The board of directors and myself clearly hear some of the issue's chapters are expressing to the state. I asked all board directors and officers to bring one goal to the meeting and the one goal that stood out the most is transparency and bringing chapters and the state together.

To that end, the board has decided to begin a Presidents meeting and a member meeting together for all to join in.

I personally want to invite all the chapter presidents to the president's teleconferences; I also want to invite the general membership to the membership meetings being offered via teleconference. Additionally, as part of promoting communication and transparency, all members are welcome to listen to the board meetings. board of directors are inviting all members to be aware and join in board meetings. Board meetings will be announced via the membership email list from this point forward.

Furthermore, I will accept questions from members for the first ten minutes of each open board meeting. If we cannot answer your question at the meeting, I will direct your question to the right person to reach out and answer your question.

A little about me: I have spent most of my life doing mortgage assessments and corporate accounting. I was finding my chosen career to be unstable and unsure as my vision started to diminish. I made a choice to go into the BEP of New York and have been a Blind vender on and off since 2010. I am a mother and a grandmother. My youngest is visually impaired as well and is currently a student of the New York State School for the Blind in Batavia. I am a board member of RSVA, and I also sit on the committee of Blind vendors for the state of NY and secretary for RSVNY.

I have an open-door policy. I am here to serve you -- the members of ACBNY -- to the best of my ability and I need your help to do that. We need open communication and one hundred percent transparency. I am hoping that by working together we can grow ACBNY and its chapters and move forward together in all advocacy efforts.

Editor's Message – Annie Chiappetta

Hello ACBNY and supporters, Happy New Year. It's our year, being 2020 and being our fiftieth year in existence, thanks to folks like us seeing clearly and advocating for change and equality in New York State. We are stronger than ever and being an ACBNY member means strength in numbers, support when we need it, and increased attention from legislators in matters and governance affecting us. It is an exciting time for us, welcoming new officers and directors, being mindful of the individuals who upheld our mission and who have moved on, and memorializing members who have passed from this life. We have all made a difference and will continue to pass the torch.

Change is good, it helps us all focus on the future. This edition is part of the focus on the future; I hope the articles are interesting and thought-provoking. We have another article from the New York State Commission for the Blind, a convention update, legislative update, and much more.

Thanks for reading, contributing to INSIGHT, and being a member or supporter of ACBNY.

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Go for the Gold
join ACBNY for the Big Fifty

The American Council of the blind of Western New York (ACBWN Y) is proud to host the 2020 state convention beginning Thursday, October 15 and ending Sunday, October 18, 2020. The convention hotel is the Buffalo Airport Holiday Inn, 4600 Genesee Street, Cheektowaga, N.Y. 14225. Telephone: [866\) 238-4218](tel:8662384218)

Convention Room rate is \$119.00 per night for up to four guests per room, upon registration. Do not register with the hotel directly, to receive the convention room rate you must register with ACBN Y. Transportation from the airport or the train station will be provided by the hotel.

Registration will be announced via the membership list and Face Book and Twitter, the cost of registration is \$25, \$35 after the registration deadline.

Cochairs for the convention are Ian Foley, President of the western New York chapter and our State President Karen Blachowicz. The entire western New York chapter is excited to host this year's event and promises the convening of the fiftieth conference and convention of ACBN Y will be one to remember.

Fifty years is a monumental milestone; we plan to celebrate it with the traditional ACBN Y activities as well as highlighting our past success and sharing our hope for the future. Stay tuned for more information, announcements for the vendor and exhibit hall, meal costs and registration dates will be made as we get closer to the event.

Thursday, October 15 will begin with a white cane and guide dog walk through one of the local malls. Thursday evening, we are looking forward to another leadership seminar.

Friday morning, we will host the annual Town hall meeting with the New York State commission for the blind, followed by the annual business meeting and lunch. Also, on Friday evening, another entertaining fundraiser dinner for the scholarship will be held.

Saturday will offer attendees workshops hosted by ACBN Y chapters and special interest groups, the popular vendor and exhibit hall, and other interesting events still in the making.

The hospitality suite will be open during the convention offering hot and cold beverages and snacks. The guide dog relief areas are just outside the hotel and offer both hard and grass surfaces.

We are also very pleased to announce that ACB National President, dan Spoon, has agreed to be the banquet speaker to help us celebrate 50 years in existence.

Our traditional board meeting will conclude the ACBN Y 2020 festivities.

Tell Us Your ACBN Y Story

We want to hear how ACB has supported and helped you throughout the years.

The western New York chapter is asking people to submit an essay, no longer than 500 words, to our chapter by September 1, 2020. We are asking for the focus to be, what 50 years of Advocacy within ACBN Y means to you or how it affected your life. Please submit your story in either braille or as an electronic document via email. Volunteers will read these stories throughout the convention.

Please send submissions via Email to ianfoley206@hotmail.com or surface mail to ACBNY story PO Box 304, Depew NY 14043

##

Legislative Update

The Legislative Committee is busy planning for this year's Legislative Seminar in Albany. Registration is now open. To register go to www.acbny.info. The committee has been working on this year's ACBNY legislative priority agenda and lining up guest speakers. The weekend's activities will run from Saturday, April 18 to Monday, April 20th, 2020. As in past years, the Board of Directors meeting will be held Saturday afternoon. Legislative training and speakers will take place all day Sunday, allowing attendees to learn about the issues and gain insight about the process. On Monday, we will travel to the Legislative Office Building (LOB) to attend meetings with your respective members of the Assembly and Senate to discuss our legislative agenda.

We will once again use the Ramada Plaza Hotel, 3 Watervliet Avenue, Albany, NY 12206. Room rates are affordable at \$84 per night, and Sunday lunch will be included. In addition, the hotel offers a free breakfast buffet. If you have never attended a Legislative Seminar weekend before, please join us and see first-hand how ACBNY can change the lives of blind New Yorkers through the legislative process. If you have attended previous events, please join us again and share your experience for the benefit of all. We look forward to a great event this year!

Please watch the ACBNY email list for updates and details.

Meghan Parker & Ian Foley

Legislative Committee Cochairs

###

ACB was in Rochester

By Jean Mann

During the week of July 5-12, 2019, blind and visually impaired people, along with their sighted relatives and friends from all over the country, as well as several foreign countries, made downtown Rochester their home as they attended the 58th Annual Conference and Convention

of the American Council of the Blind. Many of our members attended all or part of the convention.

We used two hotels, the Rochester Riverside and the Hyatt Regency Rochester, as well as the Joseph a Floreano Rochester Riverside Convention Center. There were walkways indoors leading from one place to another, but we found it was much faster to go outside; the hotels were across the street from each other and the convention center was just down the block from the Hyatt Regency. Since we often went back and forth between the three venues there was lots of walking, and I suspect most of us got our ten thousand steps in each day!

Since ACB of New York was the host committee, several of us began working on the convention almost a year before it happened with monthly conference calls. We gathered door prizes and items for the goody bags which were handed out at registration. We arranged for preconvention entertainment for a half hour before each convention session and clergy to handle religious services and invocations each morning. We arranged to have a keyboard which had belonged to a deceased ACBNY member, Sukosh Fearon, in the convention hall to be used during the week. We suggested tour sites and a couple of our members put many miles on their van driving convention personnel around to arrange them. Several of us also arranged for speakers for special interest affiliate meetings.

Finally, the time came. Sighted members and friends from buffalo and Albany loaded up their cars with door prizes, items for the goody bags, sweatshirts to sell, snacks and drinks for our hospitality room, and more. We settled into our hotel and prepared for a busy week.

On July 4, some of our members spent hours putting those goody bags together, and then about a dozen of us who went to school together were treated to a much appreciated picnic with barbecued pork sandwiches, homemade potato salad and baked beans, and cake at the home of one of our Rochester members.

Tours began on Friday morning with a trip to the Genesee Country Village and an evening dinner cruise on the Colonial Belle. That tour sold out the first day registration was open, so those who couldn't get on it had the option of attending the ACB of New York hosted Welcome to Rochester Party, with a disc jockey, snacks, cash bar, and door prizes.

The next six days went by in a flash. The exhibit hall was open every day with vendors like National Braille Press, Vispero (the old Freedom Scientific), HumanWare, AIRA, American Printing House, Vanda Pharmaceuticals, every guide dog school, and so many others. Special

interest groups, including lawyers, teachers, students, people with low vision, library users, braille users, vendors, guide dog users, and others held meetings, workshops and mixers. Companies like JPMorgan Chase, AIRA, Google, and Microsoft held focus groups to show off new products, hold training sessions, and discuss future plans and get feedback from us.

There were tours every day, including one to Cooperstown, the Jell-O Gallery Museum and Historic LeRoy House, the Strong Museum of Play, Laughing Gulch Chocolates, the Susan B. Anthony House, the George Eastman House, the New York State School for the Blind, and on the Friday after convention, a trip to Niagara Falls. There were a couple city bus tours, and a “tasting tour”, which included two wineries, a brewery and a distillery, and I understand a lot of tasting was done!

The evenings were full of activities too. Our opening session was on Saturday night. Other evenings there was trivia, karaoke, a trip to Batavia Downs Casino, the Friends in Art Annual Showcase, ACB’s annual auction, the showing of the movie “Greenbook” with audio description, lots of parties, and of course, our final banquet.

Businesses in and around the hotels made out quite well. Dinosaur BBQ was not far away, and it was a big hit. So was Morton’s Steak House, which was in the Hyatt, although I don’t think many of us went there more than once; the food was delicious but just a bit pricey!

ACB of New York had a suite in the Riverside, which was the hotel where most of us stayed, so at night, when the evening activities were over and we should have gone to bed, many of us gathered there for more refreshment and fellowship.

The week wasn’t all fun and games. We had business to attend to and that’s how our mornings were spent. ACB convention sponsors, like Google, Microsoft, AIRA, Sprint, and JPMorgan chase, spoke to us. So did the executive directors from APH and AFB, Fred Schroeder from the World Blind Union and Karen Keninger from the National Library Services for the Blind and Print Handicapped. We learned about a company called Blindfold Games and ObjectiveEd, which creates accessible computer games for fun and educational purposes. And there were others, too numerous to mention here. ACB officers and staff gave reports and we passed constitutional amendments and resolutions. We also elected new officers.

One of the most touching parts of ACB conventions is our “Angel Wall” presentations. Friends and families of deceased members eulogize them, and their names are placed on what we call our “Angel Wall”, a portable wall which is exhibited at every convention. Names are written in

print and braille, and a book with a short biography and photo of each person on the wall is displayed. Unfortunately, we seem to be adding more and more names to this wall every year, and, having been an ACB member for some 45 years, I know way too many of our “angels”.

Finally, the week ended, and it was time to leave Rochester. We said goodbye to friends old and new, promising to see each other next year in Schaumburg, Illinois. We packed up our stuff and headed back to our homes and our daily lives. As with all conventions, we have memories of this one which we’ll talk about for years to come. We encourage all of you, whether you are a member or not, to attend an ACB Conference and Convention if you ever get the chance. It’s quite an experience!

All ACB sessions, most special interest affiliate programs, and many of the workshops presented at the conference and convention were recorded, and they are all archived on ACB’s website, www.acb.org. Convention morning sessions and many other convention programs are also broadcast on ACB-Radio www.acbradio.org during conventions for those who can’t attend in person.

Chapter Round-Up

Capital district update

By Kathy Casey, President

The Capital District board has Developed a finance committee and is currently working on budgetary goals. We had a guest Speaker from the Albany county sheriff’s office to talk about emergency planning. The topics were explanation of the Disability Access and Functional Needs Committee and how it works with the special need’s registry in times of evacuations or catastrophic events. Because of the presentation, eight new people registered.

Our chapter Members participated in the annual people with disabilities awareness lobby Day coordinated by the New York State Assembly held at the Legislative office building in Albany.

We have Formed our first annual scholarship committee from the dinner in the dark proceeds. The scholarship will award \$1000 to a first-year college student. More information will follow.

Guide Dog Users of the Empire State (GDUES) by Annie Chiappetta

We are continuing to work on developing an outreach program focused on educating restaurants and business owners regarding service dog access laws, in part to help businesses to be aware of pet owners posing their pet as a service animal and to know when the team is legitimate. We plan to print postcards with the relevant information, thanks to a \$1000 Mission Box grant. Next steps are how to organize an outreach plan for 2020. We continue to attract new members and host workshops at the State conventions. We are planning two workshops this year in Buffalo, so stay tuned for more once we confirm the activities.

New York Council of Citizens with Low Vision (NYSCCLV) Update

By Kathy Casey

We are holding Monthly conference calls. We are planning a panel event for the ACBNY State convention about how to manage with low vision using technology. We are also Seeking new members. If you or someone you know is interested in joining the group, contact President Bob Cronin via email: charcro7011@verizon.net.

Westchester Council of the Blind of New York (WCBNY) 2019 – REMEMBERING WHAT WE DID TOGETHER

By Martin Cahill, Membership chair and Maria Samuels, President

Well, folks, it's that time of the year when the Happy Holidays season is in the rear-view mirror and we take some time to reflect on our past year's accomplishments. There is nothing like a review to realize how much you've done and how far you still have to go. For Westchester Council of the Blind of New York (WCBNY) there was work and there was fun and often a mashup of both. So, join WCBNY in looking back at the year that was.

REV UP The Vote Westchester: We actively participated in pursuing the rights of **All People with Disabilities** to vote privately and independently. For us it means making sure the Board of Elections has a working ballot marking device available at all polling stations. We registered new voters, educated many about the importance of voting at the polls and how vital it is for people with disabilities to use the polling sites. In 2020 plans are already underway to make this vital campaign bigger and better. Please feel free to let us know how your voting experience went, good or bad. If something wrong happens to you, it happens to us all.

Apple iPhone/iPad/Apple Watch Accessibility Function Classes: We partnered with the Apple store in White Plains, and they provided two wonderful programs for us on how to use vision accessible features, including Voice Over (VO), available on their devices. Each program ran approximately 6 weeks. We hope to run more classes in 2020, depending on need and interest.

This was an election year not only for ACBNY but for our chapter too. All the officers were reelected including Maria Samuels, President, Annie Chiappetta, Vice President, Jim Pulsoni, Treasurer and Rich Laine, Secretary. Two new Board Members, Martin Cahill and Jim Kiernan joined Rita Pulsoni, and

Dr. Joe Granderson as Directors.

State Convention: At this year's State convention, we proposed a motion from the floor requesting that the State form a committee of state and local chapter members to survey all ACBNY chapters regarding struggles and successes. The goal is to establish the best ways on how the State and local chapters can synchronize efforts to grow and serve our members' needs effectively and efficiently. The motion was passed.

50 plus Technology grant: We presented two visually impaired people with \$500 each to spend on any form of technology they felt would improve their lives. This grant was funded by past Dining in the Dark fundraisers held in partnership with the White Plains Lions Club. Winners were selected by a committee, and we had a wonderful presentation at the White Plains library.

Living with Vision Loss: We met with the Scarsdale and White Plains disability advisory boards, where we discussed daily living with vision loss. This is part of our awareness campaign to help people understand more about what vision loss is, advocate for the disability community, and get the word out that WCBNY is here and growing stronger every year.

Direct Support: We have been getting calls to our chapter phone line from people asking for assistance and some guidance. This is very important as losing vision can be scary and traumatic. The more recognizable we become the more support we can provide.

Westchester County Website: Finally, after years of hard work we were told in writing by the County that all Westchester County websites will be accessible by January 2020. This was no easy task to start and had been advocated for by WCBNY past presidents Mike Golfo and Annie Chiappetta years ago. Maria, Annie and Rich continued the struggle in 2018 and were pleasantly surprised by the County's positive press release last year. We are continuing to

monitor the promise and because ACBNY signed on to this action with Disability Rights Associates (DRA), we will update the ACBNY President on future developments when available.

Summer Picnic: We held our second annual summer picnic in July, what a fun time it was. This year we had to move the festivities indoors as the heat index was over 100 degrees that day. The food and games including a tough trivia were enjoyed by all.

Our Holiday party: This party is always a well-attended event. And once again, a great time was had by all. Music, games, sing along with our special guests from Visions. Visions Center on Blindness is a regional nonprofit that provides services for the local blind including O & M and VRT. One of their many successful programs is their rehab and workforce program for youth who are legally blind. Six young people from the program joined us and even led us in the sing-along. And there was food. So much good food.

So, what's next, you ask? Well, 2020, we hope it will be an exciting year. Now that our membership has grown to over 30 members, we plan on hosting some fun/fundraising events. These are great ways for us to socialize and get to know each other. Nothing is finalized yet, but we have some great ideas currently being explored. We welcome suggestions from our fellow ACBNY members and you are certainly invited to all of them.

And I hope you noticed that not one 2020 pun has been used so far in our newsletter contribution, difficult to avoid considering who we are. But here goes one just for the heck of it. ***WCBNY is looking forward to this year with 2020 vision.*** Pretty punny, right?

ACB of Western New York by Marie Lyons

Publicity Chair

ACB of Western New York (ACBWNKY) has new officers and board members. Our immediate past president, Karen Blachowicz, has assumed the role of president of the New York State affiliate. Our chapter wishes her all the best in her new post. Ian Foley is now our chapter president. He serves with Kathy Lyons, vice president, Karleen Fiorello, secretary and Alex Meister, treasurer. Richard Fiorello, Paul Jorge and Marie Lyons serve as board members. Good luck to all in the coming year.

##

New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB) news – Fall/Early Winter, 2019

The New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB) has held and participated in many events this season.

NYSCB staff attended the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Meeting in Troy on September 18th through the 19th, followed by the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) State Commission of Blind Vendors (SCBV) Annual Meeting on Saturday, September 21st.

Other meetings attended by NYSCB staff include the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) Convention in Buffalo on October 18th and the American Council of the Blind's (ACB) Convention on October 21st in Albany.

On October 16th, 2019, the NYSCB hosted a White Cane Awareness Day at the NYSCB Home Office in Rensselaer. Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Commissioner Sheila J. Poole made the opening remarks and presented a Proclamation for White Cane Awareness Day. Other speakers at the event included Brian Daniels, Associate Commissioner of the NYSCB, who provided a history of White Cane Day, and described the services that NYSCB provides; NYS Trooper Kerra Burns, who spoke about the NYS Law Section 1153 which regulates the Yield to the Blind law at intersections; Christopher Burke from the Northeastern Association of the Blind at Albany (NABA) who spoke about provider services; Mike Honan, NYSCB Orientation and Mobility Instructor, who gave examples of White Cane uses and also outlined the job description of a Mobility Instructor; Meghan Parker of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) spoke about the independence she gained with the White Cane and also with her Guide Dog, Rizzo; Kathy Casey, from American Council of the Blind (ACB), who spoke on the functions of the ACB; Virgil Amaral, a BEP Manager in Albany who spoke on his BEP experience and Ann Gallagher-Sagaas and Madison Near from the NYSCB Albany District office who gave demonstrations on mobility assistance.

On October 3, 2019, NYSCB BEP together with the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL), celebrated the grand re-opening of a newly renovated BEP Express Stop at the AFRL location in Rome, NY. The manager of the Express Stop is Ted Worlock and he has been a BEP Manager for ten years and at the AFRL location in Rome for four years. The Express Stop services over 1,100 employees and contractors at the AFRL.

On October 28, 2019, Paul Geraci, a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Children's Consultant, in NYSCB's Lower Manhattan District Office, received the prestigious Nat Seaman Recognition Award, which was presented by the NYS Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER). This award is presented to a deserving individual who has made outstanding contributions and practices working with individuals who are visually impaired in New York State. Paul was nominated because of his tireless efforts and professionalism for educating children through the NYSCB. Paul received supporting letters

from colleagues and other professionals who shared many wonderful statements about the contributions he brings to the field of visual impairment.

The following day, on October 29th, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor Meeting Award Ceremony was held in East Greenbush, where many awards were presented to deserving NYSCB staff.

On November 7, 2019 the NYSCB participated with an informational booth at the Andrew Heiskell Community Culture and Technology Fair at the NY Public Library in Manhattan. NYSCB staff from the Manhattan, Harlem and Albany offices participated in this event.

NYSCB has also had their radio public service announcement (PSA) run on multiple radio stations throughout New York State. The PSA lists the services that NYSCB provides and includes the toll-free number and website to contact for further information.

On November 20th, 2019, a presentation was made by Julie Hovey, a NYSCB Associate Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, to AmeriCorps employees and participants at their conference in Saratoga. The presentation focused on inclusion and hiring individuals with disabilities. AmeriCorps is a voluntary civil society program supported by the U.S. federal government, foundations, corporations, and other donors engaging adults in public service work with a goal of "helping others and meeting critical needs in the community.

Other news from NYSCB is that their request for the "State Law – Yield to the Blind" signs at intersections where individuals who are blind cross on a regular basis, have been approved and installed in two locations in Manhattan, one location is at the office of the Catholic Guild for the Blind and the other location is at the Visions office. Another location, at the AIM Independent Living Center in Corning, NY has been approved, but not installed yet as of this writing.

And lastly, NYSCB recently found out that OCFS has selected NYSCB to be the featured office for the CDPHP® Workforce Team Challenge t-shirt design. This 3.5-mile race will take place on Thursday, May 21, 2020 at 6:25 p.m. at the Empire State Plaza in Albany. Each year thousands of runners, walkers, and volunteers from hundreds of organizations throughout the area gather with their co-workers to take part in the largest annual road race in the Capital Region. Everyone from the Office of Family and Children Services who participates in the race will wear this t-shirt making this a great outreach opportunity, as there will be thousands of people attending this event, as well as the media. There will also be a t-shirt competition, so we will enter that competition as well. This is exciting news and the t-shirt is currently in the design process with input from the entire NYSCB staff.

###

Potpourri

My Mother Was a Braille Transcriber by Jean Mann

Four years ago, after both of my parents had passed away, my brothers and I began the sad task of cleaning out the house where they had lived for over 40 years. Among the things we found was an old braille slate and stylus, and a print book of braille rules for transcribers from 1958. My mother had learned braille before I started school and was a volunteer transcriber for a group in Buffalo, New York, where we lived at the time.

Before she married my father, my mother taught French and Latin. Since she was the only one in the group who knew French, most of the transcribing she did was high school and college French textbooks. Until an area Lions Club bought me a braille writer when I was in third grade, she did all her work on that old slate and stylus.

I was her proofreader. I, of course, knew no French, so we went through each page, letter by letter, symbol by symbol. It was slow and painstaking, and I remember the frustration when she made a mistake we couldn't fix, and she had to braille a whole page over again. Occasionally she got something in English, and it was a real treat to be able to read words and sentences and know what I was talking about.

When I was young, there were benefits to having my mother know braille. Instead of buying expensive decks of braille cards, she bought regular ones and brailled them herself. I spent hours with family and friends playing War, Go Fish, Hearts, Old Maid, and Uno. I took piano lessons; she'd braille my recital programs so I could follow along and know who was playing what. When I went to summer camp, I got braille letters from home, and she would tape a list of everything I brought with me in the top of my suitcase.

When I entered the ninth grade, I left home to attend the New York State School for the Blind. I took my braille writer with me and wasn't home very much. The group she volunteered for provided her with another braille writer so she could continue transcribing those French books. I never proofread for her after that.

About this time, I wished she had never learned braille. We weren't getting along very well in those years, so when a braille letter arrived, it meant she was angry with me about something. And then I discovered she occasionally read letters I received from my friends, sometimes before I saw them. I guess it was her way of trying to find out what was going on in my life. When I questioned her about it, she said she didn't see anything wrong with it, and she knew mothers who read their daughters' diaries. You can bet I never kept one of those!



Eventually my parents moved to another city because of a change in my father's job. The braille writer went to someone else, and after 14 years, my mother's days of braille transcription were over. The slate and stylus were put in a drawer, and made rare appearances, coming out once or twice so grandchildren could take them to school for show and tell when they were learning about braille. And one year I asked her to braille me a deck of Uno cards for Christmas. She told me later she got that rule book out and it took her three evenings to braille all those cards. I only found one mistake in the whole deck.

I made sure to bring that slate and stylus home with me, although I did get rid of the rule book. They're in a drawer in my desk now. I may never use them, but they remind me of the many hours in those days when I was little, sitting at the kitchen table, proofreading for my mother.

THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12230

TALKING BOOK AND BRAILLE LIBRARY -- NEW YORK STATE LIBRARY
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Greetings!

The New York State Talking Book and Braille Library, NYSTBBL, is thrilled to announce the return of our newsletter, Upstate Update.

This newsletter will be delivered to your email inbox three times a year.

Our newsletter is also available for download on our website. If you are having trouble accessing the newsletter, please contact our office.

The Upstate Update is your source for NYSTBBL news. We will provide information about new and exciting initiatives at our library, best practices to enhance your library experience, and popular reads.

National Library Service, NLS, Changes its Name

The NYSTBBL is a regional library within a network of libraries coordinated by the Library of Congress' National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, NLS. NLS provides audio and braille materials to the NYSTBBL, ensuring that library service is accessible to eligible residents of 55 counties in upstate New York.

On October 1, 2019, the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped officially changed its name to the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled.

The NLS and the Library of Congress made this change based on input and data from various stakeholders and interest groups. The name change replaces outdated language and is more inclusive, focusing on the individuals served by the library.

The National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled will continue to provide the NYSTBBL with books, magazines, and music materials in online, braille, and audio formats.

BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) Security Update

The National Library Service has made important security updates to BARD, Braille and Audio Reading Download. The BARD system now reviews library accounts daily, checking for patron activity. Any account that has not been used within six months will be made inactive.

If your account was made inactive and you would like to continue using BARD, please contact our office for help. We are happy to re-activate your account and reset your password.

Contact our office to request a BARD password re-set:
tbbl@nysed.gov or 1-800-342-3688

Register for BARD - Do You have a BARD account?

Braille and Audio Reading Download, BARD, is a web-based service from NLS that provides immediate access to audio and electronic braille books, magazines, and music scores. There are no waitlists and no books to return!

Reading materials can be downloaded using the BARD Mobile app, available for iOS and Android, or through the BARD website.

Contact our office for registration information!

2020 Census

April 1, 2020 is Census Day. By this date, every household will receive an invitation to participate in the 2020 Census. The census plays an integral role in determining how the seats in our United States House of Representatives are distributed and how government funding is allocated for valuable services in our communities. It is important that all community members participate in the census to ensure that every US resident is counted.

On March 12, the Census Bureau will begin mailing households an invitation to respond to the census. For the first time, households will have three ways to respond to the short questionnaire: online, by calling a toll-free number, or returning the questionnaire by mail. In May, census workers will begin visiting homes that have not responded to the census invitation to make sure everyone is counted.

The Census Bureau creates guides in many languages to help people complete the census. Help guides will be available in braille and large print. When these guides are available, NYSTBBL will notify our patrons through our newsletter or by request.

Although the census questionnaire will not be available in braille, individuals who are blind or visually impaired can utilize the accessible online questionnaire or the phone-in option available. Both the online and phone-in questionnaires will be available in English and 12 additional languages.

As we get closer to Census Day, NYSTBBL will share communications from NLS to help you stay informed about the 2020 Census. We will include information in upcoming newsletters and on our [TBBL Facebook](#) page.

For general census questions, please call 1-800-923-8282, or visit the [federal Census help page](#).

Here are a few helpful links to census resources:

[General Information about the 2020 Census](#) from the Census Bureau

[The 2020 Census is Accessible for Everyone](#), downloadable and printable fact sheet

Did you know? - Spanish Digital Talking Book Player

The NYSTBBL offers a Spanish language digital talking book player by request to Spanish speaking patrons. The player announces machine settings in Spanish. If you are interested in a Spanish language player or you would like to receive Spanish audio titles, please contact our reader advisors.

NYSTBBL can provide books in other languages by special request. Contact our office for more information.

Need more books? Tips from our Reader Advisors

If you do not have enough books to read at home, these suggestions may help!

Call our office and request an increase in your book quota. Patrons in good standing, who return their books regularly, can ask our reader advisors for more books. Reader advisors will increase the number of books being sent to your home address.

When you are finished reading a book, send it back through the mail. Items can take a long time to travel through the mail, so it's best to send books back as you finish them. When a book is returned to our office, we will send out another book.

Call or email our reader advisors with your book requests. Reader advisors can assign available books to you or add titles to your request list.

Consider changing your library account settings so you receive books on an automatic basis. Items will be sent to you automatically based on reading subjects that you enjoy. Please call our office to change your settings.

If you would prefer to receive books that only you select, consider regularly adding titles to your request list. When titles are returned, more titles from your request list will be sent out. The more titles you have on your request list, the better! Please contact our office to add titles to your request list or for directions on how to do this online.

Are you Moving? Let us know!

If you are moving permanently or temporarily, please let us know. We can schedule an address change, so your service goes uninterrupted.

If you are moving out of state, or to New York City or Long Island, we can help transfer your library account to one of our other network libraries. There is no need to re-register with a new library.

If your contact information has changed since registering with our library, please let us know so your library account is up to date.

Donations Made to the NYS Talking Book and Braille Library

When you give to the NYS Talking Book and Braille Library, your donation helps support equal access to reading materials for individuals who are print disabled.

If donations are made in honor of someone special, please include names and addresses of those to be notified. With your permission, we will acknowledge the names of donors and/or honorees in future newsletters.

Please note that the NYSTBBL is only able to accept monetary donations.

Thank you for your generous gifts to the NYS Talking Book and Braille Library.

Your News Source - NFB-NEWSLINE

NFB-NEWSLINE is a free audio news service for anyone who has difficulty reading standard newsprint. NFB- NEWSLINE offers access to more than 500 publications, emergency weather alerts, job listings, TV listings, and more.

Subscribers can access a variety of newspapers and magazines such as the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, The New Yorker, AARP The Magazine, and Harpers just to name a few. Subscribers will also find a variety of local papers, such as The Times Union and Syracuse Post Standard.

Access to the NFB-NEWSLINE service is available in several formats including touch-tone phone, email, the web, or through a mobile app.

If you are interested in NFB-NEWSLINE, please call our office for a subscription or call the National Federation of the Blind at 866-504-7300.

Did you know that NFB-NEWSLINE subscribers can access the service through Amazon's Alexa, Echo, and Echo Dot? NFB-NEWSLINE subscribers can listen to news, articles, and books through voice activated commands. The National Federation of the Blind can help provide instructions through their website or by calling 866-504-7300.

Religious Materials Through the Xavier Society for the Blind

We often receive requests from patrons for religious and spiritual reading materials, so we would like to highlight the offerings from the Xavier Society for the Blind. Xavier Society for the Blind provides Roman Catholic teachings, Mass readings, magazines, and other religious materials to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Materials are available in both braille and audio formats. Audio CDs are available as well as audio cartridges that can be played using NLS' digital talking book player. Materials are free of charge due to generous support from donors. For more information about Xavier, please call their offices at 212-473-7800 or email info@xaviersocietyfortheblind.org.

Talking Book and Braille Library
Cultural Education Center
222 Madison Avenue
Albany, NY 12230-0001

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Passings

Lisa Helen Hoffman - March 30, 1965-September 23, 2019.

Entered heaven on Monday September 23, 2019. The celebration of Lisa's life was held on Saturday, October 5. Mass was at St. Mary's Church in downtown Rochester, followed by a celebration of Lisa's life at the Geva Theater.

Lisa entered this world on March 30, 1965 with a smile on her face and never stopped smiling. At 14 months, she was diagnosed with retinoblastoma causing her blindness by the age of three. This challenge never slowed Lisa down or prevented her from living a life full of adventures. Lisa saw this world through her heart and her hands.

Lisa was a student at the original World of Inquiry School on Moran Street where she made lifelong friends. West Irondequoit school district welcomed Lisa and her love of learning with open arms. Lisa's love for music offered her the opportunity to play her violin in the school orchestra, with Dr. Suzuki and at the Shakespeare plays at Highland Bowl. Lisa loved to dance. She was a member of an English Country Dancing group and looked forward to designing her ball gown for the annual ball. She loved it so much that she went by herself to an English Dance weeklong camp where she once again made lifelong friends.

Lisa earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Buffalo, in psychology and Spanish. While in Buffalo she joined with the Society for Creative Anachronism. Lisa loved participating

in Pennsic. Lisa's proficiency in Spanish was put to the test when the family went on their annual trip to Puerto Vallarta (PVR) and she served as their interpreter. Lisa visited her Mexican family many times and was often complimented on how beautifully she spoke the language. Lisa loved to read braille and had a voracious appetite for learning. She became quite an Anglophile in her early years with the highlight coming in 1976 in New York City when Lisa was introduced to Queen Elizabeth! This was just one of her many adventures.

Lisa embraced so many things and loved all things tactile. Her creativity with jewels and stones inspired her to make her own jewelry. Many of her friends wear her jewelry on a regular basis. Her jewelry has been sold at the Memorial Art Gallery.

Lisa was featured in an episode of the TV show, "That's incredible".

Lisa was a committed advocate for people with disabilities specifically the blind. She was instrumental in the design of the pedestrian bridge over 490 connecting South Clinton with downtown. With a great love of the theatre, Lisa brought audio description to the Geva THEATRE where she worked as a consultant for 25 years. Through her advocacy Lisa received countless honors and accolades, too many to list.

The ripple effect Lisa had on those she touched will her big hugs and infectious laugh will continue for years to come.

Lisa is survived by her Dad (Dan), her "Momma" (Barbara), the "best sister in the world" (Susan), and her four-legged lover from Shakespeare's, "As you like it" (Orlando).

In lieu of flowers, consider donations to the Geva Theatre or the Memorial Art Gallery in Lisa's honor.

Note: Lisa has been memorialized on the ACBNY Remembrances and tributes page at <https://www.acbny.info/remembrances-and-tributes/#content>

Eleanor Eaton FAYE MD

FEBRUARY 15, 1923 – JANUARY 7, 2020

Eleanor Eaton Faye, MD, FACS, an ophthalmologist and a leader in the field of low vision, died on Jan. 7, 2020, in New York City. She was 96 years old. Dr. Faye received her medical degree from Stanford University School of Medicine in 1950, at a time when women in the medical field were still considered a rarity. Dr. Faye was the first woman resident at Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital, and was attending ophthalmic surgeon there for many years. She was Medical Director at Lighthouse Guild in New York until she was 91 years old in 2014, the culmination of an affiliation which spanned 60 years. (Dr. Faye served as Medical Director, Ophthalmological Advisor and Director of Lighthouse Guild Low Vision Services at various points in her career.) Founder and lead instructor with the Lighthouse Guild Continuing Education Program in Low Vision Care, Dr. Faye lectured at universities, hospitals and agencies and was a powerful influence in changing the perception of individuals who were blind or visually impaired with the publication of her first book in 1970 named *The Low Vision Patient: Clinical Experiences with Adults and Children*.

Dr. Faye's leadership during her long and distinguished career played a pivotal role in shaping the field of low vision nationally and internationally. She was quoted in a 2006 New York Times article by Jane Brody titled, "Latest Technology Gives Life a Clearer Focus, Is Low Vision Limiting Your World?" in which she pointed out the challenges facing people with low vision.

One of Dr. Faye's major career achievements was bringing together the professions of optometry and ophthalmology... the bringing together of ophthalmologists and optometrists with vision rehabilitation and occupational therapists... training leaders in low vision in optometry and ophthalmology

Dr. Faye was the author of numerous publications and her book *Clinical Low Vision* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1994) has become a classic text on low vision. Her many accolades and awards include two Merit Awards from the American Academy of Ophthalmology and the Distinguished Service Award from the American Optometric Association. She was a member of the Board of Trustees of the American Foundation for the Blind, Chair of the American Academy of Ophthalmology's Low Vision Standing Committee, and Chair of the Low Vision Clinical Society.

Eleanor Eaton Faye was born in Berkeley, California on Feb. 15, 1923, and in her youth moved to Hawaii, where she attended Punahou School. She also attended the Dana Hall Prep School in Massachusetts. She received her BA from Stanford University in 1945, and her MD from Stanford in 1950. She did her postgraduate training in ophthalmology at New York University and at the Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital.

Dr. Faye's maternal ancestor, Francis Eaton, arrived on the Mayflower as the carpenter 400 years ago in 1620. He was one of 41 people to sign the "The Mayflower Compact", the first governing document of Plymouth Colony. Her grandfather, Hans Peter Faye II, left Norway in 1880 to eventually settle on the island of Kauai, in what was then the Kingdom of Hawaii, where he was a businessman, landowner and developer in the islands' growing sugar industry. (Much of the remaining former sugar growing land has been diversified and is partially a waterfront historic cottage resort.) In 1914, the Norwegian-Hawaiian family moved to Berkeley. Dr. Faye's father, Hans Peter Faye III, met her mother, Charlotte Eaton of Yonkers, NY, during his time at Choate School and Yale, shortly before he left for military service during World War I.

Dr. Faye is survived by two sisters, Margaret Faye Morgan and Charlotte F. Sharp, as well as six nieces, two nephews and many grand- and great-grand nieces and nephews.

American Council of the Blind of New York, Inc.

2020 Officers and Board of Directors Contact List

The following is the most up to date list of members of the 2020 ACB NY Board of Directors. Please contact your President Karen Blachowicz karenablachowicz@gmail.com or Secretary/newsletter editor, Annie Chiappetta at editor@acbny.info

Beginning January 1, 2020

Officers

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Maria Heinlein-gage, 1st Vice President maria.heinlein@gmail.com

Nancy Murray, 2nd Vice President nancy.murray1947@gmail.com

Michael Golfo, Treasurer mssg74@gmail.com

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