



Spring 2012

Ohio Connection

American Council of the Blind Ohio

P.O. Box 307128 Gahanna, OH 43230

ACBO Members Deliver Legislative Directives to Congress — *By Nolan Crabb*

Seven ACB Ohio members were among those who gathered in late February in suburban Washington, D.C., to first learn about initiatives of importance to the national organization and then to deliver those messages to members of the Ohio Congressional delegation.

As was the case last year, two pieces of legislation were the focal point of this year's efforts. Ohio delegates talked to Congress about the value of accessible prescription drug labeling and encouraged the Ohio delegation to support HB 4780, a bill introduced by Rep. Ed Markey, (D-Mass.), which would give the Food and Drug Administration authority to create working groups comprised of representatives from the pharmaceutical industry and consumers, who would devise a set of best practices for creating accessible prescription labels. The working group would provide input to the industry, and eventually Congress itself would receive a report regarding the accessibility of prescription drug labels.

Ohio delegates also expressed gratitude to members of Congress who have

co-sponsored a bill that would relax IRS rules regarding vehicles donated to ACB Ohio and other organizations. The relaxed rules would presumably result in an increase in vehicle donations again. When the rules were tightened in 2005, ACB Ohio's vehicle donation rate fell by something like 85 percent, a number which mirrors the national vehicle donation experience. Ohio delegates urged their representatives to seek a hearing from the House Ways and Means Committee on the bill.

During nearly two days of meetings prior to visiting Congress, ACB Ohio delegates heard from various speakers and panels who provided background on the information that would go to Congress. Additionally, delegates were updated regarding disability policy from the perspective of the executive branch represented by Kareem Dale, special assistant to the President for disability policy. Attendees also got updates on such disparate topics as the future of special education and air travel from the perspective of disabled travelers.

From the President's Desk — *By Nolan Crabb*

Affiliate presidents who feel overwhelmed now by the amount of work they have to do to preserve existing services to blind people need to brace up and realize that the fight will become harder. That's the warning ACB President Mitch Pomerantz extended to the organization's affiliate presidents as he gaveled the opening session of the affiliate presidents meeting in suburban Washington, D.C., in late February.

"There has never been such a serious threat nationally to programs and services to blind people as there is today," Pomerantz asserted. "We will stand firm with you to maintain what you have and to make some effort to expand those programs and services down the road."

The meeting began with a call to ACB leaders everywhere to redouble their efforts. Following introductions, the group got a sneak preview of an upcoming leadership institute—a day-long training session designed to help the organization train new leaders. Slated for a July 6 presentation in Louisville, the institute will provide training on committee organization, Robert's Rules, the creation of constitution and bylaw amendments, membership recruitment and retention, and much more.

The meeting was electrified as lunchtime drew near when attendees were given a free two-ounce sample bag of ACB Ohio Eye Opener Blend coffee. On a day when everyone else was

selling tickets for this or that, the Ohio approach of building anticipation for our upcoming convention in Columbus and this summer's gathering at Louisville in which ACB Ohio coffee will be sold, was a unique approach that made the Ohio affiliate stand out.

The lunchtime panel was a session on the concept of structured negotiation—something the national organization uses frequently. Essentially, structured negotiations enable attorneys representing ACB to negotiate with companies whose practices are out of compliance with federal and state accessibility laws. The negotiations result in websites that are more user-friendly and information provided in alternative formats. These negotiations replace the more costly lawsuit approach.

An afternoon panel focused on pedestrian safety and the release of a new pedestrian safety handbook available on the ACB website for use by members in their communities. The value of this new book is that it has technical sections that will be helpful to traffic engineers as they plan and revamp intersections that include accessible signals. Unlike previous editions of the book, the latest edition can be easily and quickly updated as necessary.

The group heard from ACB Executive Director Melanie Brunson, who presented an extremely thorough session on how local chapters and state affiliates can and should protect their assets and

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comply with IRS and state regulations. Brunson strongly encouraged chapter leaders to take their jobs more seriously, since the IRS and state agencies are cracking down on charities. She sternly warned leaders that secretaries of state want updated information about ACB affiliates including constitution and by-laws updates.

Affiliate secretaries need to do a more thorough and more formal job of keeping minutes, according to Brunson. She also stressed the importance of completing IRS form 990. She provided a detailed document that is designed to help chapter leaders and affiliate presidents do a better job of conforming to state and federal regulations.

The group was also updated on the activities of the Board of Publications including a brief session on creating and presenting newsletters. Additional panels included such topics as streaming your state convention via the Internet and election accessibility.

Nolan Crabb is President of ACB Ohio.

"Eye Opener" Coffee Still on Sale — *By Carl Kienzle*



ACB Ohio's own special "Eye Opener" blend of coffee continues to be a hot item. If you would like someone from your chapter to bring home some Eye Opener coffee from the April Board of Directors meeting in Columbus, call me at (937) 361-6909 or e-mail me at number1coffeeman@yahoo.com. Please use "coffee" in the e-mail subject heading.

Chapter Matching Grants Available

Does your chapter have ideas for increasing membership? Would you like to send a delegate to Washington, D.C., next year to attend the annual legislative seminar? Could your group develop a program to help members purchase equipment? Your chapter can request a matching grant of up to \$500 from the state office. If interested, contact Vicky Prahin at (614) 268-0380 or by e-mail at prahin@hadley.edu.

Spring into Action — *By Ann Gazelle*

In January, ACB Ohio sponsored its annual Winter Sports Retreat (WSR) near Cleveland at the great Punderson Manor Resort and, admittedly, I haven't attended this event in years. That won't happen again! With the wonderful accommodations and excellent food I had forgotten just how much fun you can have at this event. And even when there isn't enough snow to ski, there are plenty of opportunities for walking, hiking, indoor swimming, and board games, including lively evening Euchre matches. Oh, and did I mention the shopping?

I should have been a little embarrassed to be shopping during a sports retreat, but I wasn't because I wasn't alone! It all started on Saturday after breakfast. Someone mentioned that shopping was an option. I thought, "Why not?" It was just for the morning and left plenty of time in the afternoon to get out and exercise. So off we went and what a great time we had exploring yarn shops, jewelry and antique stores, and natural food grocers. The camaraderie was wonderful.

Then, after lunch, someone mentioned shopping. I was shocked at my behavior as I followed like a lemming off to a disastrous afternoon of helping the economy and having more fun, while disregarding any responsibility no one suggested I had.

Then, there was the Saturday night annual auction, which was a blast! Though not everyone participated, we raised the

most for ACB Ohio ever (\$450) which will help to support future Winter Sports Retreat activities.

Personally, I have no use in my life for a stuffed toy elephant that sings and dances to "Unforgettable." Did I mention it had a little white, female mouse poking out of his left ear? She provides accompaniment including a scissor action of her tiny mouth while tremulously sounding vibrato. It's worse than outrageous. Then, I thought of my chapter friend whose husband died two years ago. He used to buy these obnoxious singing items for her which she loves. I doggedly bid against other strange people and finally scored.

See what I mean? You must seriously consider our Punderson WSR for January 2013. But you don't have to wait! You can attend the ACB Ohio Summer Sports Retreat, held along the Hocking and Ohio rivers in Southern Ohio, August 17-19. See page 11 for details or email me at executivedirector@acbohio.org for more information.

I hope this gives you a glimpse of your new executive director – determined, open-minded and willing to explore old and new ideas. Be bold yourself and spring into action by getting more involved in your chapters and communities.

Ann Gazelle is the new Executive Director of ACB Ohio.

ACBO Scholarships Available — *By Vicky Prahin*

Each academic year, the American Council of the Blind of Ohio offers five scholarships to college students. If you are a student or know one, now is the time to start getting together the materials to submit, choosing references, and filling out the application.

Two \$2,000 scholarships are available for legally blind undergraduate students in any field of study. These scholarships were established by or in honor of Max Edelman and David Newmeyer.

Elmer Fischer established the \$2,500 Joann Fischer Scholarship in honor of his late wife. The money is awarded to a legally blind graduate student in any field of study.

Linwood Walker was active in getting Ohio involved in ACB more than 30 years ago. A \$2,500 scholarship in his name goes to a legally blind graduate student in a service-related field, such as teaching, health or public administration.

The fifth scholarship was established by Nola Webb-McKinney and is presented to a blind or sighted graduate or undergraduate student pursuing a degree in a blindness-related field, such as special education, rehabilitation, teaching or counseling, orientation and mobility, or concentrating in programs serving persons who are blind or visually impaired.

Applicants for any of these scholarships must be an Ohio resident or attend an Ohio college or university, be legally blind (with the exception of the Nola Webb-McKinney scholarship), have a 3.0 or higher GPA on a 4.0 scale, and be willing to attend the ACB Ohio annual state convention's Saturday workshops and Sunday morning breakfast.

Download the application and all related materials from www.acbohio.org. All materials can be sent by e-mail or regular mail.

Check the next *Ohio Connection* for more bios of our 2011 scholarship winners.

Call for Scholarship Award Applications

**Application can be found at
www.acbohio.org.**

Keeping Connected — *By Marc Guthrie*

Things have changed significantly since we last connected. We all know how important it is to educate our communities about vision loss and blindness. I'd like to recognize Deborah Kendrick, former president of ACB Ohio, whose wonderful articles appear every few weeks in *The Columbus Dispatch*. Deborah, who is blind, always writes thought provoking articles and is recognized far and near as a strong advocate for all people with disabilities. Deborah's is the only column in Central Ohio that advocates for individuals with disabilities.

To check out Deborah's recent column regarding accessible features of the iPhone, log on to the *Dispatch's* website and search editorials for her article dated January 8, 2012. If you enjoy Deborah's writing, I encourage you to do as I recently did, and drop a note to Ben Marrison, editor of *The Dispatch*, at bmarrison@dispatch.com.

On another subject, I will soon be meeting with Kay Clark, a well-known advocate for Ohio school students with disabilities, and representatives of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired of Ohio (AERO), to discuss the challenges faced by blind and VI youngsters in Ohio. I'll report on this meeting in the next issue of the *Ohio Connection*.

I also recently participated in a meeting with State Representative Michael Stinziano regarding Ohio House Bill 332 – a measure that would provide a personal Ohio income tax credit for a

homeowner or contractors for renovating a home to improve its accessibility, or purchasing or constructing an accessible home. The meeting included Democratic and Republican legislative staff and I was pleased to be able to represent ACB Ohio. Rep. Stinziano's bill is pending in the Ohio House Ways and Means Committee.

HB 332 can be accessed online on the legislative services commission website at www.lsc.state.oh.us. If you wish to contact your lawmaker about this legislation, or any other, you can do so by calling (800) 282-0253. You can leave a message for your representative or senator at that toll-free number. If you don't know who your lawmaker is, you can give the legislative information person your zip code, and he or she can tell you the name of your representative and senator.

In development news, Ann Gazelle and I are fully engaged in Community Shares. I serve on a committee focused on workplace campaigns by Community Shares-affiliated employers and Ann serves on the Member Relations and Personnel committees.

As you may know, Community Shares is a new partner for us. We are getting our feet wet with all aspects of Community Shares' efforts to raise funds for the many non-profits it supports, including our mission at ACB Ohio.

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If you know anyone whose workplace is affiliated with Community Shares, please encourage them to consider making a payroll deduction in support of ACB Ohio. If you know someone whose workplace is affiliated with only United Way, and not Community Shares, encourage them to ask their United Way coordinator if they can earmark their payroll deduction to ACB Ohio. Several United Way campaigns are now allowing gifts to be earmarked for good non-profits like ACB Ohio. If anyone has a question about Community Shares or earmarking United Way gifts, contact me at marcguthrie@hotmail.com or at (740) 344-6222.

Best wishes until we next connect.

Marc Guthrie is ACB Ohio's Director of Development and Advocacy. His e-mail address is marcguthrie@hotmail.com.

Contributors . . .

Thank you to ACB Ohio members who contributed to this issue of the *Ohio Connection*: **Nolan Crabb, Ann Gazelle, Marc Guthrie, Jill Noble, David Perry, Vicky Prahin, Chris Schumacher, and Linda Wyman.**

Contribute to the Ohio Connection Newsletter — By Terri Kevany, Editor

The *Ohio Connection* is an excellent source of information about the ins and outs and happenings of our great state organization. But readers often tell me how much they enjoy reading articles and personal stories written by members of ACB Ohio and hearing about what's happening in different chapters and throughout the blindness community. There is no limit to the topics that can be covered in the newsletter. Some topic ideas include:

- Member Profiles
- Member Awards or Recognitions
- New Member Bios
- Fundraising News
- Event Recaps (Include Photos)
- Volunteer Features
- New Technology Reviews

Please consider contributing to an upcoming issue of the *Ohio Connection*. Send articles of interest to takevany@roadrunner.com. Articles should be no longer than 500 words. I look forward to hearing from you!

Out and About

Seven ACB Ohio members were among those who attended the annual Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. in late February.



ACB Ohio members Chris Schumacher, Jill Noble, Katie Frederick and Carl Kienzle take a short break from their Congressional visits to pose for a picture near the U.S Capitol building.



Member Jill Noble takes a moment to check out the tactical map of the Capitol before heading off to the next scheduled Congressional meeting.



ACB Ohio President Nolan Crabb, and wife, Valerie, with Congressman Steve Stivers in his Congressional office.



ACB Ohio members Chris Schumacher and Jill Noble pose for a picture with Congresswoman Jean Schmidt.

Call for Award Nominations — *By Linda Wyman*

Each year ACB Ohio presents awards to deserving recipients at our annual convention. It's not too early to think about your nominations for 2012. Do you know someone who should be honored? We present three individual awards as well as a Teacher of the Year award, Employer of the Year Award and Media Award. Following are descriptions of the award criteria.

The KEN MORLOCK AWARD is given to a person who is blind or visually impaired who has worked tirelessly and selflessly for the blind or visually impaired citizens of Ohio.

The RUTH DAVIDSON AWARD is given to a sighted person who has worked to enhance the lives of persons who are blind or visually impaired.

The ARLENE COHEN ART OF TEACHING AWARD is given to a blind or visually impaired teacher or to a sighted teacher who has taught blind or visually impaired students.

The AMBASSADOR AWARD is given to an ACB Ohio member who has worked tirelessly for ACB Ohio and the blind community.

The MEDIA AWARD is given to a person who has written or reported about blindness or issues that concern blind or

visually impaired persons. All nominations for the Media Award must be accompanied by the article, video, or other presentation.

The EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD is given to an Ohio employer who has hired and made accommodations for employees who are blind or visually impaired.

The COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD is presented to a city or town for outstanding efforts it has put forth to enhance the lives of blind or visually impaired people.

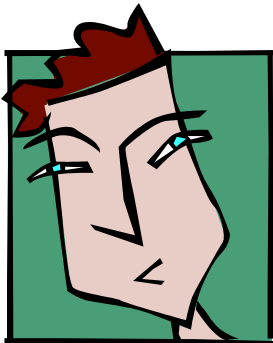
Please send your award nominations to ACB Ohio's Awards Committee at lcwyman@columbus.rr.com.

The **Ohio Connection** is a quarterly publication of The American Council of the Blind of Ohio. Please submit your material in print or through e-mail. The next deadline is May 22, 2012. Please include your name, address and phone number and send to: Terri Kevany, Editor, at takevany@roadrunner.com or call (216) 251-0484.

Getting to Know You! *Get Profiled in the Ohio Connection Newsletter*

ACB Ohio has such a diverse membership made up of interesting individuals from all walks of life and experiences. We would love to get to know you better. Beginning in the summer issue of the newsletter, we will feature member profiles in order to better explore our membership and make connections.

If you would like to be featured or know someone else who should be highlighted from your chapter or community, we'd love to hear from you. Please complete the easy questionnaire on this page and send it to Terri Kevany, editor of the *Ohio Connection*, at take-vany@roadrunner.com. Use the subject line: ACBO Member Profile.



Please attach a photo if you would like it to be included with your profile.

We look forward to getting to know our members better!

ACB Ohio Member Profile Questionnaire

Please answer each of the following questions.

Name:

Age:

Chapter:

Years as ACB Ohio Member:

Employment/Employer:

Level of Visual Impairment:

Hobbies/Interests:

Family (Spouse, Children):

You Would Never Know This About Me, But I...:

Membership Report

— *By David Perry*

ACB Ohio's Membership Committee is off to a great start for 2012. We have several talented and dedicated members who have agreed to join the committee and assist with making our wonderful organization even bigger and brighter than it is today.

Our committee members are Dave Perry, Committee Chair; Rob Rogers, Co-Chair; Nolan Crabb, ACB Ohio President; Ann Gazelle, ACB Ohio Executive Director; Board members Chris Schumacher, Katie Frederick, and Carl Kienzle; and Michelle Hasenstaub, Carolyn Burley, Jamie Davis, Sara Soper, and Troy Sullivan. I am pleased to report that this committee is very engaged and doing lots of good work.

Our goals include revitalizing the Dayton and Toledo chapters in order to maintain representation in every area of Ohio and increasing membership. We are making a concerted effort to reach high school students since they are the future of ACB Ohio. And we are also focused on reaching out to other groups of people who are blind that need support and assistance from members and friends of ACB Ohio.

For more information, or a membership application, contact me at daveperry@fuse.net or call (513) 470-1122.

David Perry is ACB Ohio's Membership Chairman.

Summer Sports Retreat

Don't miss out on one of the most popular events of the summer — ACB Ohio's annual Summer Sports Retreat. Planning is underway for the event, which will take place August 17-19, 2012 in Hockingport, Ohio.



The cost is \$85 per person which does not cover transportation or horseback riding. Space is limited. A \$30 deposit is required. For more information, call (800) 835-2226 or e-mail executivedirector@acbohio.org.

Ohio Connection
American Council of the Blind
Ohio Chapter
P.O. Box 307128
Spring 2012

**Free Matter
for the Blind or
Handicapped
P.O. Manual
Part 138**



2012 ACB Ohio Datebook

ACB Ohio Board Meeting

Columbus, Ohio
April 21, 2012

ACB National Convention

Louisville, Kentucky
July 6-14, 2012

Annual Summer Sports Retreat

Hocking Port, Ohio
August 17-19, 2012

ACB Ohio State Convention

Columbus, Ohio
October 26-28, 2012

For more information on any upcoming ACB Ohio events, call (800) 835-2226 or log on to www.acbohio.org.