

Summer 2011

Ohio Connection

American Council of the Blind Ohio
P.O. Box 307128 Gahanna, OH 43230

1-800-835-2226

ACB Ohio Joins Community Shares of Mid Ohio — *By Mary Hiland*

ACB Ohio recently joined Community Shares of Mid Ohio's coalition of non-profits and will now benefit from donations received through giving campaigns at workplaces throughout central Ohio.

Community Shares of Mid Ohio organizes workplace giving campaigns and allocates a share to member charities on a quarterly basis. In this fall's campaign, donors can specify ACB Ohio as the recipient of their donations and we can earn more from a general fund by participating in Community Shares activities.

With donations through Community Shares, ACB Ohio will be able to continue to enhance the lives of blind or visually impaired Ohioans through scholarships, seminars, advocacy, conferences, recreational opportunities, and information and referral services.

If your employer offers workplace giving campaigns which include Community Shares of Mid Ohio, please consider allocating a donation to ACB Ohio. You

can check the list of participating workplaces at www.communityshares.net to see if your workplace is helping our community. If not, you can contact us at the state office or Community Shares directly to learn how you can have your workplace included. Your efforts would be a tremendous help to ACB Ohio, and you can be proud of your contribution and participation.

Our sincere thanks go to our consultant on advocacy and development, Marc Guthrie, for initiating this collaboration. You may have noticed the Community Shares logo accompanies the new ACB Ohio logo on this issue of the *Ohio Connection* (see page 2).

Our leadership is truly excited about this new collaboration, and we believe there is great potential for this partnership to lead to a reliable and substantial source of income for ACB Ohio.

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

Although we're all familiar with the constant nature of change, that one word could best sum up the events and activities of ACB Ohio these past few months.

One of the more significant areas of change is the way ACB Ohio presents itself to the world. As you remember, a Dayton-based public relations firm chose our organization to receive help with various aspects of our image. As a result, we have been presented with versions of a redesigned logo that can be used in brochures, business cards, and the print versions of this newsletter (see box on this page). It appears that the next steps in this process will include some web site redesign. We will ensure that accessibility remains at the forefront of any redesigning we undertake.

In other matters, I want to thank our Cincinnati chapter for its kindness and hospitality. I was pleased to visit the chapter's April meeting, and I was included in its game night social activity which occurred a few days after the meeting. Both experiences were enriching and rewarding, and I'm most grateful to have been included.

It is my hope to visit all of our chapters throughout the state over the next few months. Some of those visits may be delayed a bit as a result of other changes you'll read about in subsequent articles in this issue, specifically the search

for a new Executive Director, as Mary Hiland has decided to retire. This will be a difficult endeavor as Mary has been a wonderful leader of ACB Ohio over the last few years.

Finally, you should know that plans for the 2011 state conference and convention are moving along nicely. We hope to have a great series of diverse and interesting sessions from which you can choose this year. I very much welcome any suggestions you might have as to sessions you'd like to see.

It's hard to believe that the next time I write something for the *Connection*, summer will be essentially over and we'll be focusing on fall. Here's hoping your summer is memorable for all kinds of positive reasons.

ACB Ohio's New Logo

Thanks to Dayton-based marketing firm Forge, ACB Ohio has a new logo to use to present itself to the world.



The new logo is part of a comprehensive marketing effort by Forge as part of its one-year grant to ACB Ohio.

From the Director's Chair — *By Mary Hiland*

Several times in recent months, I have, partly in jest, mentioned retirement. Many of you have been kind in protesting, which is quite rewarding and affirming. However, it is time for me to stop joking around and admit that the time is right for me to retire.

While I have enjoyed both the blessings and the challenges of holding the position of your executive director, I've noticed that my energy level is not what it used to be. I'm discovering that there are reasons why people in their mid-sixties retire.

I have discussed my decision with our Board of Directors, and, though they are not exactly tap dancing, they are very gracious in understanding my position. Our President, Nolan Crabb, will be appointing a search committee to find my replacement.

Meanwhile, I'm not disappearing in a puff of smoke. There are many obligations I need to meet and much work I want to do before I go. I am not walking away. I will be as involved as I need to be during the transition. I will offer as much guidance and advice to the next executive director as is wanted or needed.

I hope to work closely with the search committee and be as much help as I can. I will miss meeting with my ACB friends four times a year, but I will con-

tinue to attend the Winter Sports Retreat and eventually run for a seat on the Board.

I also intend to serve on consumer advisory boards and committees on disability issues in and around Columbus. And, of course, I'll be seeing you at our annual conference and convention, as well as the national convention in 2013. In other words, I may be stepping down, but I am not stepping away. Best wishes to you all and thank you for all your support in making ACB Ohio a wonderful organization.

Seeking a New Executive Director

If you or someone you know might be interested in interviewing for the Executive Director position, please contact me at mary.hiland@woway.com or Nolan Crabb at nolan.crabb@gmail.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 August 22, 2011. Please include your name, address and phone number and send to: Terri Kevany, Editor, at takevany@roadrunner.com or call (216) 251-0484.

ACB Ohio Board Member Honored by Amateur Radio Community — *By Nolan Crabb*

ACB Ohio Board Member Shirley Roberts has been named Amateur of the Year by the Dayton Amateur Radio Association (DARA). Shirley received her award on May 21 during the Dayton Hamvention®, the world's largest gathering of amateur radio operators, held there annually.

Shirley's voice and call sign (N8LX) are familiar to countless amateurs everywhere for a variety of reasons. Although she was born in Cincinnati, she spent most of her life in the Dayton area. While attending a rehabilitation center for blind people, Shirley got her first close-up look at amateur radio and went on to get her first ham ticket. But it wasn't until 1986 that she began to involve herself deeply in the hobby with the encouragement of friends who were fellow hams.

Many Dayton-area hams think of Shirley as the voice of the Dayton Amateur Radio Association because of her nearly two-decade-long involvement as the voice behind the group's information line. She has been involved with Hamvention® in numerous ways for many years. In addition to serving on various committees, Shirley has supervised the Hamvention® information line for nearly four years.

Whenever visiting hams tuned to the various talk-in and other frequencies associated with Hamvention®, it is often

Shirley's voice and call sign they hear, competently providing directions and other related information. She has also worked as the control operator for a Dayton-area repeater.

Shirley has solid experience in the public service aspects of the hobby. On one occasion, she agreed to serve as net control during a flood—a circumstance that she assumed would be brief, but ultimately lasted some three days. Her training as a net control operator was a hands-on experience. She once spearheaded the efforts of a group of hams to find and assist a truck driver who was rapidly becoming incoherent and increasingly ill. The driver was located in time and assisted to a nearby hospital. Shirley's efforts, along with those who participated with her, were recognized by the American Radio Relay League, ham radio's national organization.

Shirley serves as a Skywarn liaison, which means she works closely with the National Weather Service in handling amateur radio traffic and providing information to the weather service about potential storm threats. She handles preliminary check-ins while net control representatives are en route to the communication command center.

(Continued on page 9.)

ACBO Cincinnati Chapter Member Honored by Careers and Disabled Magazine — *By Nolan Crabb*

Phil Gates, an ACB Ohio member from the Cincinnati area, has been named Employee of the Year by *Careers and the Disabled* magazine. The publication's selection of Phil for the award was completed earlier this year.

Phil was diagnosed with Juvenile Diabetes at age 15, but didn't take the disease seriously early on. By age 30, Phil had lost his sight as a result of Diabetic Retinopathy. Phil had been a successful landscaper for 12 years before losing his sight. He earned a horticulture certificate during that time.

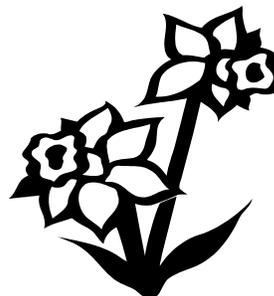
Phil's vision loss sent him into a temporary tailspin. He moved in with his sister and, as he put it, waited for the world to change. When it did not, he recognized that he had to be the one to change. He ultimately learned the basic skills that would enable him to move on with his life. He learned Braille, cane travel, and the skills necessary to move into his own place. He described himself in those early days as someone who was "afraid of the world." It took two years of living independently before he was ready to tackle the world of employment again.

With financial help from the Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired, Phil graduated from Cincinnati State Technical Community College with an associate degree in technology/computer information systems.

He faced a seemingly endless series of misunderstandings and outright discrimination from would-be employers. Ultimately, he learned to take his laptop with him to interviews and demonstrate his screen reader to his interviewers.

Phil joined WellPoint, Inc., in 2008 as a consultant with Bender Consulting Services, and in October 2009 Phil was hired full time by WellPoint as a business systems analyst.

Phil has been a member of ACB Ohio for 15 years, serving as its president and as president of its Cincinnati chapter. Speaking of his job with WellPoint, Phil says "It is so very refreshing and encouraging to find that WellPoint focuses on an individual's abilities and potential, rather than their disabilities. WellPoint has never tried to 'pigeon hole' me into doing tasks that no one else wants to do that are simplistic and repetitive (BORING!) because of my blindness. I'm always being presented with challenging projects and exciting learning opportunities."



A Salute to the Unsung Heroes of ACB Ohio

— *By Joyce Rogers*

Have you ever been in a position where skill, dedication, loyalty, and generosity were important and valued? If you are, or have been, a leader in an organization that depends primarily on volunteers as does The American Council of the Blind at the national, state, or local level, you know how important those qualities are in your members. We at ACB Ohio are fortunate to have just such a member and volunteer in our local Greater Cincinnati Chapter. Her name is Jacquie Sammon, and I salute her for so many wonderful reasons.

Jacquie has been a dedicated teacher of reading for 35 years in public schools, the last eight of those years as a person with a visual impairment. Can you imagine facing a class of rambunctious children each day, children with all kinds of interests and needs, and motivating them, stimulating them, and challenging them to settle down and learn to read?

While teaching was her first career, volunteering for ACB Ohio's Greater Cincinnati Chapter has become like her second career. Jacquie has been a member of ACB Ohio and our local chapter for nearly 20 years. For many years, hers was the cheerful voice members heard over the phone reminding them of monthly meetings. Then, she took on the task of chairing our Good Will Committee, which sends

cards and gifts of remembrances to members on various occasions, including hospitalization or the death of a family member.

Jacquie also chaired our Grants Committee for many years, a rewarding effort that has given donations to worthy organizations, such as the Ohio Association of the Deaf-Blind, the Ohio State School for the Blind Marching Band, and Camp Campbell Gard, a camp for both blind and sighted children who play and learn together.

She has recently taken on the task of chairing our Innovations Committee, which brainstorms ideas on new activities and projects for our chapter, makes recommendations to the membership, and helps to develop some of those new endeavors.

I salute Jacquie Sammon: a delightful person to know, an exceptional volunteer for our local chapter, and a person of dedication and generosity of whom we ACB members can always be proud.

"I am a follower; I am not a leader," said Jacquie when I interviewed her recently. Well, if all of us in ACB followed her lead, I believe our achievements would multiply a hundred-fold.

Miles that Matter — *By Dave Perry*

Over the last 30-plus years, members and friends of the American Council of the Blind of Ohio have been running the race for a better life for all blind and visually impaired Ohioans. Thanks to all of our local chapters, we are able to successfully accomplish our mission.

On Saturday, April 30 and Sunday, May 1, the members of the Greater Cincinnati Chapter of ACB Ohio participated in the Flying Pig Marathon. There were roughly 30,000 people that participated in this event this year. There were numerous volunteers that stood on the side of the course, cheering on the runners and walkers, and providing the athletes with water and Gatorade.

Special thanks to Joyce Rogers, Mary Beth Donelan, Sue Hill, Mary Ann Donegan, Annie Donnelon, Mark Foersterling, Deborah Kendrick, Greg Wilmhoff, Phil Gates, and our treasurer, Joyce Asher, and her family, for helping to make such a wonderful and successful weekend being involved in our community.

On Saturday, May 21, the Cincinnati Chapter participated in the Saint Bernard Block Party and fundraiser to benefit the Hamilton County Special Olympics. Many different vendors participated and it turned into a huge success. Activities included various contests and games, including Texas Hold 'Em and Bingo.

Jacque Perry served on the committee and did a wonderful job helping our

community prepare for this event. Thanks also to Sue Wesley, Teresa Noble, Leah Noble, Terry Olandese, Dana Metcalf, Jamie Davis, and Annie Donnelon for attending this exciting event, and making it a very fun day!

As your ACB Ohio Membership Chairman, I'm very proud of the hard work and dedication of all of our members and friends throughout the state who keep our organization moving forward every day. I look forward to continuing to work together to improve the quality and equality of life for every Ohioan who is blind or visually impaired.

For more information or a membership application, visit our website at www.acbohio.org. If you have any additional questions or ideas, feel free to e-mail me at daveperry@fuse.net.

Again, thank you for all of your hard work and dedication!

Contributors . . .

Thank you to ACB Ohio members who contributed to this issue of the *Ohio Connection*: **Nolan Crabb, Marc Guthrie, Mary Hiland, Dave Perry, Vicky Prahin, and Joyce Rogers.**

Summit and Medina Chapters Work To Install Audible Traffic Signals

(Reprinted from the Medina County Gazette.)

At North Court and West Liberty streets in Medina, a steady beeping like an electronic heartbeat directs the visually impaired down the sidewalk to a black signal box mounted on a post near the corner.

Stow resident Michelle Hasenstaub, one hand gripping the harness of Edge, her guide dog, walked through the park on Public Square, approached the box and ran her other hand lightly around the box to locate the button activating the voice prompts that identify the street by name and tell pedestrians when it is safe to cross.

Hasenstaub, president of Eye on Summit, the Summit County chapter of the American Council of the Blind of Ohio, an advocacy and assistance organization for the visually impaired and blind, visited Medina on Saturday with other members of the group to investigate the installation cost and operation of the audible signals.

“No one had seen one,” Hasenstaub said of this particular audible signal. “There are (devices called) chirpers that let us know when it’s safe to cross, but they don’t indicate direction. You still have to listen for the traffic flow.”

Roger Grabowski, a member of the Medina Lions Club, helped arrange the vis-

it after he talked to Akron Lions Club member Sam Moats, who serves as vice president of Eye on Summit. Providing assistance to the visually impaired and blind is the main focus of the Lions Club, Grabowski said. “We’re probably best known for collecting eyeglasses for Third World countries,” he said. “And we hope to hook up with the class at the vocational school (Medina County Career Center) that provides eye exams, to give them money for lenses.”

Working with Friends-N-Focus, the Medina chapter of the ACB of Ohio, Grabowski said they jumped at the opportunity to invite Eye on Summit members to investigate the crossing signals firsthand and take them for a test drive, so to speak. “Test walk,” said Moats with a hearty laugh before they strolled down Broadway Street past the courthouse toward East Washington, accompanied by sighted members of the group. Some used white canes, sweeping them from side to side across the cement walk, testing for the curb when they halted and waited expectantly to hear the mechanism give them directions to safely cross Broadway and enter the park.

Before the group set off, Mayor Dennis Hanwell met with them briefly to provide information about cost as well as some

(Continued on page 9.)

Audible Signals (*Continued*)

of the technical specifics prepared by Pat Patton, city engineer. The audible signals, funded through a community development block grant at a cost of \$29,700, were part of a citywide traffic signal upgrade about three years ago, Hanwell said, adding the two signals placed at a diagonal on the square give people better access to businesses and restaurants. The two additional signals on North Court Street — one at Northland Drive and one at Reagan Parkway — were placed in proximity to housing for residents with special needs to provide a safer approach for them to shopping areas.

Hanwell said the signals have been modified to be automatic instead of only being activated by pushing a button to help ease traffic congestion. “The challenge is to balance traffic flow with the crosswalk signals, to keep the crosswalks safe but keep traffic moving,” he said.

Chatham Township resident Don Kalman, treasurer of Friends-N-Focus, explained the group approached City Council and former mayor Jane Leaver to encourage installation of the audible signals with CDBG funds. “Mayor Leaver was all for it,” Kalman said, adding the group explained the signals also would be helpful to children who cross the streets on their way to school.

“Tools like the signals help keep us in the mainstream,” said Jean Mello of Brunswick, president of Friends-N-

Focus. “We want mobility, to be able to go out as independently as possible. Don and our former president, Chuck Norman, petitioned the City Council on our behalf, told them our needs in getting around and facing traffic situations.” Kalman encouraged Akron group members to be persistent and not to be discouraged in their own efforts to have similar devices installed in their areas. “It took us about three years,” he said. “You just have to keep showing up.”

Amateur Radio (*Continued from page 4*)

Shirley holds a BA in Social Work from Wright State University, and she is the president of a national organization that provides services to blind and visually impaired people with diabetes. She is an active member of the American Council of the Blind Radio Amateurs and a member of the Quarter Century Wireless Association.

When Shirley met her husband, Lynn, he soon recognized that not only was he gaining a wife, but also a hobby, since she introduced him to amateur radio.

Meet Our Scholarship Winners

— *By Vicky Prahin*

ACB Ohio offers several scholarships each year, and the winners are always amazing students. Those who attend the state convention have opportunities to meet these impressive young people, and we want everyone else to have a chance to get to know a little about them. We continue to introduce our scholarship winners in this issue of the *Ohio Connection*.

The following three people won scholarships in 2010:

Megan Rutschilling, who won the ACB Ohio-OSU Endowed Scholarship last November, lives in Blacklick with her husband and their dog and cat. She has just earned her Master's of Education in the fields of Vision Impairments and Orientation and Mobility. Megan became interested in the field when she worked at Nationwide Children's Hospital. She says, "Many of my patients that had brain injuries went home with new vision impairments. I met a TVI at a back-to-school meeting for a kiddo, and the rest is history!" She hopes to find a position as a TVI and O&M specialist. "I love what I do!" says Megan.

Stephanie Fernandes received the 2010 Max Edelman Scholarship. Stephanie graduated from Boston College in May 2011 with a BA in communication and a philosophy minor. Steph lives with her family in Steubenville. She plans to attend law school in the fall and eventually practice either education law or child

advocacy. She will spend this summer in Washington, D.C., doing a summer internship. "I'll be a public policy intern for the National Disability Rights Network," says Steph. She is very thankful that ACB Ohio awarded her the scholarship. "It was delightful to spend the weekend with such amazing and inspiring people, and scholarships are always so helpful!"

Lindsey Hall won the 2010 Linwood Walker Scholarship. Lindsey graduated in May 2010 with a degree in Psychology. She then took courses toward an Alternative Licensure in Special Education. "I am interested in working with children who have disabilities because of my own visual disability," she said. "I feel that I can relate and thus better assist these types of students." She is currently awaiting receipt of her license and is substitute teaching at local schools in her hometown. Next summer Lindsey plans to take the necessary coursework to become an Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

The time for new scholarship applications is drawing near, so please pass the word to anyone you know and watch the ACB Ohio website at www.acbohio.org or the next issue of the *Ohio Connection* for details.

Keeping Connected — *By Marc Guthrie*

Since we connected last, ACB Ohio has participated in another auction with items donated by Larry Rodack, a long-time supporter of ours. Between the two auctions we have held this year, of items gifted to ACB Ohio by Larry, we have netted nearly \$3,000 that will help us to continue to serve people who are blind and visually impaired in Ohio. As individuals and organizations, sometimes we are not as quick to say thanks as we should be; so I want to take this opportunity to publicly thank Larry for his kindness to ACB Ohio. His generosity over the years has amounted to more than \$10,000 toward our mission.

Speaking of thanking our financial supporters, I recently completed our 2011 request to the Ohio Lions Foundation, seeking their continued support for our Building Blocks for a Brighter Future Family Seminar, which is scheduled to take place at the Ohio State School for the Blind on September 24. If the Ohio Lions Foundation continues its \$1,000 annual funding of our family seminar, it will be the fifth year that they have done so. If you know any Lions Club members, please take a minute to thank them for their support.

Regarding fundraising, I have previously written about our new relationship with Community Shares. In September, state employees will have the option for selecting charities that they would like to support financially via payroll deduction. If you know any state employees who support ACB Ohio's mission, please encourage them to inquire about Commu-

nity Shares through the State's charitable campaign in September. The Community Shares website address is www.communityshares.net. ACB Ohio is prominently listed as a new Community Shares member on its website.

On another note, thousands of Ohioans with disabilities will be impacted by cuts to Medicaid, RSC, Ohio Legal Services, Developmental Disabilities and other important programs, which are targeted for cuts this year. Because we don't have powerful lobbyists representing our interest, we have to be self-advocates. If there is ever a time that people with disabilities need to self-advocate, today is the day.

Because the state budget is now pending in the Ohio Senate, I encourage members to reach out to your state senator by calling (800) 282-0253. When you get hold of your lawmaker's office, ask them to provide you specifics of how the pending budget will impact programs that assist people who are blind and visually impaired. Our obligation as advocates is to communicate, in a respectful manner, with decision makers for ourselves and for others with disabilities. I've communicated with my state senator, have you?

Best wishes until we next connect.

Marc Guthrie provides counsel to ACB Ohio on fundraising and advocacy matters. His e-mail address is marcguthrie@hotmail.com.

Ohio Connection
American Council of the Blind
Ohio Chapter
P.O. Box 307128
Summer 2011

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



2011 ACB Ohio Datebook

Just Another Bike Ride

Wolf Park, Columbus
June 11, 2011

ACB Ohio Board Meeting

Columbus, Ohio
July 30, 2011

Building Blocks for a Brighter Future

Ohio State School for the Blind,
Columbus
September 24, 2011

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