



Fall 2015

## Ohio Connection

American Council of the Blind of Ohio  
3805 N. High St., Suite 305  
Columbus, OH 43214  
1-800-835-2226

### THE ADA IN EVERYDAY LIFE

*By Vicky Prahin*

**M**ost of you already know that 25 years ago President George H. W. Bush signed Public Law 336, recognized as the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), into law, an act crafted by the 101st Congress.

In summary, that law says:

- (1) To provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities;
- (2) To provide clear, strong, consistent, enforceable standards addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities;
- (3) To ensure that the Federal Government plays a central role in enforcing the standards established in this Act on behalf of individuals with disabilities; and
- (4) To invoke the sweep of congressional authority, including the power to enforce the fourteenth amendment and to regulate commerce, in order

to address the major areas of discrimination faced day-to-day by people with disabilities.

Prior to 1990 we were “handicapped” rather than disabled. I still haven’t decided which term I prefer, but my philosophy has always been that everyone has some kind of handicap or disability. It might be something obvious like blindness or a missing limb; it might be one of those hidden flaws such as the inability to do math or to draw a straight line. Some flaws just cause more trouble in daily life.

It’s all too easy to focus on the negative, the “I can’t do it” way of life and take the approach that someone else picks up all of the pieces. Harder is finding the strength and determination to try, to try again after failing, and to try a different tactic and succeed. The ADA offers support to get necessary education, to help gain employment, to experience as much of life as possible, but

ultimately you achieve your goals through your own endeavors.

Martina Navratilova, winner of a record nine Wimbledon, said, "Disability is a matter of perception. If you can do just one thing well, you're needed by some-

one." Instead of thinking about all of the things you can't do, focus on what you can and how you can. Make a difference in your own life and affect someone else's at the same time.

## **ACHIEVING A BETTER LIFE EXPERIENCE**

***By Katie Frederick***

In December, 2014, President Obama signed the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act of 2013 (S. 313/ H.R. 647). This legislation allows people with disabilities or their beneficiaries to create savings accounts helping cover disability-related expenses. Incorporated into the IRS's 529 plan for education, the Act allows for tax-advantaged savings, up to a state's 529 plan limit.

Previously, the Social Security Administration stated those who receive assistance, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Medicaid must not exceed a \$2,000 asset limit; however, an ABLE savings account holder is allowed to save up to \$100,000 annually and still maintain their SSI/Medicaid benefits.

Eligible expenses that may be funded through an ABLE account include home modifications, tuition, transportation, and assistive technology. To qualify for

an ABLE account one must have a significant disability prior to age 26. Each state is responsible for implementing the ABLE Act; Ohio HB 155 is state legislation ensuring Ohio effectively handles implementation.

The American Council of the Blind of Ohio participated in a meeting with the state treasurer's office explaining how the Act will benefit Ohioans and answered staff questions about disability-related expenses concerning blindness and visual impairment. The treasurer's office is also seeking public comments on implementing the ABLE Act in Ohio.

Please email comments to [ABLE-comments@tos.ohio.gov](mailto:ABLE-comments@tos.ohio.gov) and visit [www.ohiotreasurer.gov/Ohio\\_able](http://www.ohiotreasurer.gov/Ohio_able) for the most up-to-date information about Ohio's implementation, helping Ohioans with disabilities achieve a better life experience.

# **ACB OHIO & INDIANA STATE CONFERENCE INFORMATION *By Leah Noble***

Look for an exciting convention with Indiana from November 6-8, 2015. Don't delay; make your reservations today! Room reservations must be made on or before October 16<sup>th</sup>.

The conference will be held at the Garfield Suites Hotel located in the heart of downtown Cincinnati at 2 Garfield Place, 45202. To make reservations call 513-421-3355. Room rates are \$89.00 plus tax for a 1 bedroom suite (1 queen bed). For a 2 bedroom suite

room rates are \$119 per night plus tax. The hotel has a shuttle to and from the Greyhound station or the Megabus stop. When you arrive, call **513-421-3355, extension 0**. If you'd like more information about the hotel please visit their web site at [www.garfieldsuiteshotel.com](http://www.garfieldsuiteshotel.com)

If you are bringing items to the auction, please let us know by October 25th (acbo.director@gmail.com or 1-800-835-2226).

## **2015 SLATE OF NOMINEES FOR OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

***By Terry Olandese & Leah Noble, Nominating Committee***

As is the custom of ACBO, each year at our annual conference, we review, nominate and elect our slate of Officers and Directors the Board. Below is the proposed slate of candidates for 2015. We will vote on the morning of November 7, so give these candidates some thought.

### **Officers:**

**Robert Rogers, First Vice-president**  
**Jill Noble, Second Vice-president**  
**Karen Spry, Secretary**

### **Directors to serve a two-year term:**

**Lita Wesley**  
**Mary Ann Donelan**  
**Theresa Carroll**  
**Ann Pimley**  
**Sue Wesley**  
**Deborah Lori Woodall**

# ACBO CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

## UPDATED 7/23/15

This article serves as notice of proposed corrections/changes to ACBO's constitution and bylaws.

*Note: View the full constitution and bylaws on our website: [www.acbohio.org](http://www.acbohio.org) under the "About Us" link.*

These are proposals for changes to the constitution:

### **Article 3.4:**

**Current:** by cooperating in and aiding all worthwhile programs of public and private institutions of and for blind and visually impaired persons;

**Proposed:** by working in close cooperation on programs of mutual interest with other public and private organizations of and for blind and visually impaired persons;

### **Article 3.5:**

**Current:** by conducting programs of education, for blind and visually impaired persons, and for the general public that focuses on improved understanding of capabilities and aspirations of blind and visually impaired persons;

**Proposed:** by conducting educational programs for blind and visually impaired persons and the general public which focus on improved understanding of capabilities and aspirations of blind and visually impaired persons;

### **Article 4: Proposed:**

#### **MEETINGS**

**4.0.** This corporation shall hold an annual membership meeting in conjunction with its annual convention, as well as four quarterly board of directors meetings during the year, all scheduled by the president in consultation with the board and the Convention Committee.

**4.1.** Annual Business Meeting: At the annual business meeting, reports shall be presented to the membership on corporate finances, events during the year, board activities for the year, and corporation policies.

The membership assembled shall elect board members and vote on the corporation's business and policies.

**4.2.** One of the four board meetings shall be held immediately prior to the annual convention for the purpose of fi-

nalizing business before the annual meeting. There may be an additional post-convention meeting in the final hours of the convention to finalize business for the year.

**4.3.** Special meetings of the corporation or the board of directors may be called at any time the president and/or the board deems such necessary. The president shall notify all board members, chapter Presidents, and any others specifically concern, of the date, time and place of any special board meetings at least ten days in advance of such meeting. In the case of a full meeting of the corporation, at least a 30-day notice to the membership is required.

**4.4.** A verifiable affirmative majority vote of the board is necessary for scheduling of special meetings. A vote by telephone will suffice.

**4.5.** Procedure: In the absence of provisions contained herein or in the bylaws, all proceedings of this corporation shall be conducted according to the most recent edition of "Roberts Rules of Order."

**ARTICLE 6.0:** Any person at least 18 years of age and committed to promoting the goals and purposes of ACBO,

upon payment of its dues, may become a voting member of ACBO and also of the national ACB through the appropriate annual payment of dues by ACBO to the national office.

**6.1.** There are 2 types of voting members: chapter members and members at-large.

**6.1.1.** Chapter Members: Chapter members are individuals who actively participate in activities of an ACBO chapter and pay dues to it.

**6.1.2.** Member At-large: A member at-large is one who is unable, for various reasons, including travel restrictions, to actively participate in meetings of a chapter. In such case, one may pay dues directly to the ACBO office.

**6.2.** Member In Good standing: A member in good standing is one whose dues are current and who has no outstanding debts with ACBO.

**6.3.** Any member in good standing with ACBO may vote at the annual meeting, may make and second motions, may serve on committees, and is eligible to serve on the board of directors.

**6.4.** If, for some reason, an individual falls in arrears with dues payments to

ACBO, that individual shall lose the privileges of full participation as designated in article 6.3 of this constitution until some agreement between that individual and the executive director is reached. The treasurer and/or president shall have knowledge of the situation and may choose to intervene.

If such a situation occurs between an individual and a chapter, it is the responsibility of the chapter to work out a solution with that individual. ACBO shall not intervene in such chapter business except that ACBO membership dues for that individual must be kept current.

**Article 12.11:**

**Current:** All having access to the corporate accounts shall be bonded.

**Proposed:** All having access to the corporate accounts shall be bonded at the expense of ACBO.

These are proposals for changes to the bylaws:

**ARTICLE II: CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP RECORDS**

**2.0.** Each chapter may forward its membership information and corresponding dues assessments to the AC-

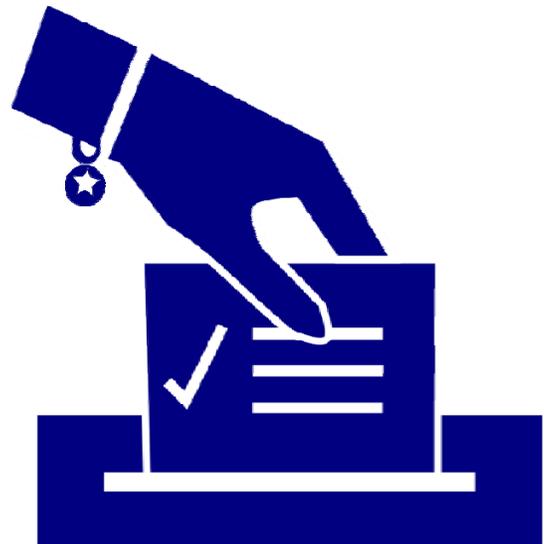
BO Executive Director's office at any time during the year.

**2.1.** If a member is to be represented by ACBO at the ACB national convention, dues and membership information for that member must reach the ACBO office no later than February 15.

**2.2.** If a member is to have full rights of participation at the ACBO annual meeting, that member must be a member of record of ACBO no later than 30 days prior to the annual meeting.

**Article 3.7: Credentials Committee:**

It is proposed that we remove this article, eliminating the Credentials Committee. The duties described are already performed by the Membership Committee.



# ACB CONVENTION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A FIRST TIMER

*By Jenna McCartney*

I was privileged to be chosen as the Alternate Delegate to represent ACBO at the National Convention. I was very excited about the opportunity and wanted to share with you some of my thoughts and experiences while in Dallas. It was impossible for me to attend everything I wished to in a week. I will describe some of the sessions I attended and highlight some decisions made by ACB.

From the moment I stepped off the plane in Texas, a volunteer was there to help if needed, and the hotel staff was great. I got lost many times, and, although I could figure out where I'd gone wrong eventually, it was nice to know that volunteers were around if I needed them. I could also stop at the information desk, where our own president Vicky Prahin practically lived, and ask for directions.

On Sunday, I attended the Scholarship Luncheon and was inspired by the winners, including the winner from Ohio, Cassandra Mendez. It was great to hear all that these students are accomplishing and plan to do in the future. That afternoon, I attended the session

iOS App Swap, where I learned about many useful apps I hadn't known of before and gave my own suggestions of apps I find useful. There was a large variety of apps and topics covered. I recommend that anyone using an iPhone, iPad, or iPod check out the recording of this and other sessions on [www.acb.org](http://www.acb.org).

One very unique session I attended was "Introduction to Laughter Yoga." I'll admit I misread (or misheard) the title of this session when I signed up online and thought it was an introduction to Yoga. This was not the case at all. Laughter Yoga is apparently beneficial if practiced regularly in lowering symptoms of depression and improving overall quality of life. We sat around in a fairly large group and laughed while pretending to perform tasks such as brushing our hair, karate chopping, petting a dog, or swimming. It was admittedly strange, but it was fun, and I'm glad I gave it a try.

I attended a session on the Past, Present, and Future of Guide Dog Harnesses. Lukas Frank from The Seeing

Eye talked about early versions of guide dogs, and not even having a harness as well as how guide dog harnesses have changed over the years. I was able to explore harnesses from different schools, times throughout guide dog history, and even a British guide dog harness. It was very enjoyable and informative.



***93-year-old concentration camp survivor Jack Repp shared his life story at the Dallas Holocaust Museum.***

On Wednesday, I was signed up to go to the Sharkarosa Wildlife Ranch, but this trip was unfortunately canceled due to rain, so I spent my time in the exhibit hall. I will make more time for this next time since I did not get to go to all of the booths. There were so many exhibitors I should have taken an entire afternoon, and not the last day they were open, to go through them all.

During Thursday's general session, Chen Guangcheng, the author of the book [The Barefoot Lawyer](#), told us his story of growing up blind in China and escaping to the United States. All I can say about that, without taking up several pages, is his book is on BARD. Go read it! It is well worth your time.

That afternoon, I went on a trip to the Holocaust Museum, and while I obviously cannot call that a fun experience, it most definitely was a humbling one, and I learned a lot. My fellow ACB members and I heard about the Holocaust from the perspective of a survivor who was kind enough to share his story with us. There was not a dry eye in the room. We also were allowed to touch items such as the wooden shoes worn in the concentration camps and a helmet from a Nazi uniform. I was very moved by the experience and am glad I went. Although I attended general sessions throughout the week, and many topics were discussed and decisions made, I will highlight just a few of those.

## **Low Vision**

This resolution talked about the fact that many devices have speech output, such as Voiceover or Talkback, to help people who use speech to access devices, and some App Developers recognize the need for accessibility with speech in apps. However, the needs of those with low vision are not being as adequately addressed due to not having a document explaining the needs of low vision users. This resolution asked the technology committee to work with CCLVI in order to develop a document that will clearly outline these needs when concerning the accessibility of applications. This document would be available on the ACB website and distributed to whomever the Information Access Committee deemed appropriate.

## **Resolution 1015.11.**

This resolution discussed the fact that there is no current national credential for assistive technology professionals or trainers. In many places around the country, trainers are assumed to be competent in the use of assistive technology because of their visual impairment, informal reputation, or self-proclaimed experience with assistive tech. ACB asked the Academy for Certification and Rehabilitation Education Professionals (ACBREP) to develop

standards to ensure the competence of Assistive Technology Trainers. I hadn't really given this issue much thought before, but was excited that this resolution passed. It will help people all over the country to receive the same level of technology training and certification for trainers.

## **Greyhound**

Greyhound provides transportation throughout the U.S. and Canada, and many of us who are blind, visually impaired, and/or have multiple disabilities use Greyhound to travel independently. It is not currently possible for someone who is blind to make ticket reservations on the website independently because the Greyhound websites are not accessible. Also, when using the phone as an alternative to using the internet, blind people have been charged an administrative fee for the assistance of booking a ride. These charges were not waived as a reasonable accommodation. ACB urged Greyhound to immediately make a plan to make its websites accessible and involve the disability committee, and immediately implement policies that allow people with disabilities who use the telephone to make reservations be given the same opportunities for discounts given to anyone using the websites.

## Proposed ACB Changes

Along with the resolutions discussed above, ACB proposed several changes to ACB documentation. One of these changes involves the Board of Publications and the serving of partial terms. This sentence was added: "Any member of the Board of Publications, whether appointed or elected, who serves more than half of the assigned duration of a term shall have the term counted as a full term served." Terms are two years long.

Another change had to do with the record date for voting at national convention: "Each voting member attending an annual conference and convention shall be entitled to one (1) vote, provided that the person was a member prior to the record date of the conference and convention, which shall be thirty (30) days prior to the opening session." So, if you want to vote at convention, make sure you are a member before the month before convention.

Overall, ACB Convention 2015 was a blast, and I learned a lot. I definitely wish to attend future conventions, and I hope this article has piqued the interest of those of you who have never been to the convention before. I highly recommend you give it a try. Maybe I will see you in Minnesota in 2016!

# SCHOLARSHIP UPDATES

By Katie Frederick

Have you ever wondered what has become of the ACB Ohio scholarship winners? In this edition we shine the spotlight on Jim Debus and Rachel Zeiter.



*Jim Debus, Linwood Walker Scholarship recipient*

James "Jim" Debus received the Linwood Walker scholarship. He started studies towards a Master's in Special Education with an emphasis in Orientation and Mobility; he is an online student at Texas Tech University. Jim has served twice as the USABA Body Mass Index Coordinator, working with blind

and visually impaired athletes across the country. He mentored a student with Asperger's and has worked as a Contract Management Specialist for CABVI and interned for Columbus Recreation and Parks as a Recreation Facilitator. Jim says, "Something I find very gratifying about the profession of O&M is that my daily responsibilities will be changing, depending on the needs and ability levels of my clients."



***Rachel Zeiter, winner of the Nola Webb-McKinney Scholarship***

Rachel Zeiter received the Nola Webb-McKinney scholarship. Attending Cedarville University, majoring in Special Education and minoring in Spanish, Bible, and Youth Ministry, Rachel actively participated in campus and community

activities. She helped at her church, volunteered at Nationwide Children's Hospital, served as a mentor at the Green County Juvenile Detention Center, and served as an officer in Chi Delta Epsilon, a student organization for education majors on campus.

After graduation Rachel hopes to work in an inner city public school, teaching students who may be economically disadvantaged. Rachel chose her minors so she could work at her church during the summer, helping youth and adults during her free time.

Receiving a scholarship during the 2014 National Conference and Convention gave Rachel the chance to learn more about the council, network with other teachers who are blind or visually impaired, learn about assistive technology, and make new friends; she looks forward to becoming more involved with ACB in the future.





# CROSSWALKS TO CIVIL RIGHTS

*By Mary Hiland*

*[The following writer received a cash prize for this contribution to the essay contest which was part of the Columbus celebration of the 25th anniversary of the ADA.]EDITORS NOTE: The second prize winning essay will appear in a future issue.*

In 1963, it was terrifying to cross a street. Unsure if the light had changed, as a blind student; I waited on the curb, drew a deep breath, and took my chances. Audible pedestrian signals had not been invented, and para transit was unheard-of. There were no offices for students with disabilities. Life as a blind student was a constant challenge.

Now I ponder the impact that the Americans with Disabilities Act has had on my life as I wait for the light to change and cross the street into my present life.

I'm on my way to work. I use a computer with a screen-reader that allows me to perform my tasks as efficiently as my sighted co-workers. The elevators in my building are marked with braille. Our restrooms have accessible stalls, large enough for a wheelchair or a ser-

vice dog. Parking spots near the front door of the building are designated for use by those whose disabilities prevent their walking any great distance.

On my lunch hour, I use an ATM to get some cash for lunch. Now, because all ATM's are fully accessible with audio output, nobody else has to know my business. When we get to the restaurant, I'm offered a braille menu. These days, I am never refused entrance to a restaurant with my guide dog. This was not always the case, before the passage of the ADA. Sadly, many cab drivers deny potential passengers with guide dogs. But the ADA puts teeth into the law that anywhere the public is allowed, so also are service animals.

Tonight, after paying some bills, using the brailed utility and credit card statements, I'm going to see a movie. Many theaters are now equipped with technology required to bring audio description to movie patrons who are blind, and closed caption for those who are deaf. The ADA has brought empowerment for the civil rights of Americans with disabilities, from being able to cross a street safely to being able to

fully participate in social activities.

The ADA sets a standard for assuring civil rights that once were considered a dream. Making accessible everything from restrooms to textbooks to technology to TV programs is now a reality. What once were considered special services are now our civil rights.

Today, it's not terrifying to cross a street. I push a button on a pole, which houses the audible pedestrian signal. Then my dog guide and I head to the edge of the street that no longer has a curb. Instead, there are little bumps in the pavement called tactile warnings. Thanks to the ADA, this corner can now be crossed easily by a person in a wheelchair. More importantly to me as a blind person, I am confident that I'm standing in the right spot. Now a clear and loud voice announces, "Walk sign is on," and I give my dog the command to go forward into an even brighter future.



## **BITS & BYTES**

Prevent Blindness and CDC are working to raise awareness about the dangers of smoking relative to one's vision, by providing education, tools and resources to help smokers quit. You'll find additional free information on a variety of eye health topics such as AMD, cataracts, and diabetic retinopathy as well as tips on how leading a healthy lifestyle can help save sight. Find a free to download at:

[www.preventblindness.org/smoking](http://www.preventblindness.org/smoking)

Computers for the Blind offers a variety of free or low-cost technology and software to the visually-impaired community. See details here: <http://www.computersfortheblind.net/weprovide.html>

**ACBO Community Shares  
Campaign Codes**

State of Ohio 19003

City of Columbus 60240

Franklin County 60240

Ohio State University 60240

Columbus State 1061

Did you ever suspect your abilities as a job applicant, particularly if you have a disability? Well then, please read this thought-provoking post addressing any self-doubts: “Dear Hiring Manager: All the Disability-Related Skills I Can’t Put on My Resume”

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sarah-blahovec/dear-hiring-manager-all-the-disability-related-skills-i-cant-put-on-my-resume\\_b\\_6732922.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sarah-blahovec/dear-hiring-manager-all-the-disability-related-skills-i-cant-put-on-my-resume_b_6732922.html)

**Work From Home:** While work is work, this blog gives thoughtful consideration and some great resources for those

<https://usodep.blogs.govdelivery.com/2015/04/03/getting-hired-for-work-at-home-is-a-different-process/>

**Learning Ally:** If you're a college student who is blind or visually impaired, Learning Ally can help you start the next school year strong. In partnership with the Lavelle Fund for the Blind, Learning Ally is piloting The College Success Program, a research-based program designed specifically for college students who are blind or visually impaired. The program offers an online curriculum that includes articles, interviews, podcasts, quizzes and more to help you on the college journey. Start by checking out the resources on [LearningAlly.org/collegesuccess](http://LearningAlly.org/collegesuccess) and

signing up to receive mentoring in the 2015 fall semester. All of our mentors are blind or visually impaired and have recently completed college. They understand the barriers you might be facing and are ready to share their wisdom and advice with you. To learn more about our program, visit [www.learningally.org/collegesuccess](http://www.learningally.org/collegesuccess).

### **"Section 8" Scams Cheat People Looking for Housing Assistance"**

People looking for Housing Choice Voucher Program ("Section 8") housing assistance should know that scammers sometimes use websites that claim to offer registration for public housing waiting lists. The sites may ask you to pay a fee, when no fee is actually required to apply for the Housing Choice Voucher program. Some of these fake websites even ask you to pay the first month's rent up front. Apply for housing assistance through your local U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Public Housing Agency. Need help finding affordable housing or want to learn more about your housing rights? Check out [Disability.gov's Housing Guide](http://Disability.gov'sHousingGuide).

**Blind Ability:** Here is the link to the remarkable video on “Blind Ability” from the ACB National Convention: <https://>

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=5e5payf2QMc&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5e5payf2QMc&feature=youtu.be)

**RespectAbility Report:** This new online publication presents Nonpartisan Political Commentary on 2016 Elections, with a Focus on candidates and Disability issues: [www.TheRespectAbilityReport.org](http://www.TheRespectAbilityReport.org).

**Study Abroad:** As part of the Generation Study Abroad initiative to increase opportunity to study abroad, MIUSA and the study abroad provider CIEE has partnered to offer full scholarships to U.S. college students with disabilities. While Spring scholarships were due September 1, additional scholarships are due October 1 and later. Scholarships are available for 2016 to study abroad on one of CIEE's four-week summer programs or during the spring semester at the new Global Institute in Berlin, Germany. Details here: <http://list-manage.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d39e81314218b930d5315426a&id=a04bdbeb8c&e=hFlk44cJLE> For direct application, see <http://www.ciee.org/study-abroad/miusa/>

**Theresa Carroll**  
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**Assistant Editor**

Thanks to the contributors: **Katie Frederick, Mary Hiland, Jenna McCartney, Leah Noble, Terry Olandese and Vicky Prahin.**

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. Please include your name, address and phone number. Send items for the next issue to [acbo.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:acbo.newsletter@gmail.com) by **November 15.**





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FREE MATTER  
FOR THE BLIND



## ACB-OHIO DATEBOOK

### **NOVEMBER 6-8**

ACBO CONVENTION

GARFIELD SUITES HOTEL, CINCINNATI, OH

DEADLINE TO RESERVE ROOM: OCTOBER 16TH

BRINGING AUCTION ITEMS? LET US KNOW BY OCTOBER 25TH

### **NOVEMBER 15**

ACBO WINTER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

### **JANUARY 8**

ACBO BOARD MEETING

### **JANUARY 15-18**

WINTER SPORTS RETREAT

