

Winter 2015



Ohio Connection

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

2015—OUR FIRST JOINT CONVENTION

By Vicky Prahin

Last year some of our Indiana neighbors suggested that we hold a joint convention and it sounded like such a good idea that, we did it. Members of ACB-Indiana joined ACB-Ohio folks in Cincinnati during the first weekend of November. How did this affect Ohio and should we do it again?

Having a group of people from another state involved resulted in a different mix of presenters, including a session on the Bioptic device and an audio-described episode of “The Twilight Zone.” One of the best-attended sessions occurred on Saturday afternoon. Brian Miller of Miller Labs described the process of making artificial eyes, passing around many examples of the work he does.

We also had new and different vendors in the exhibit hall. I have not seen such a busy exhibit area in years! Exhibitors often find themselves at loose ends, es-

pecially on Saturday afternoon, and frequently pack up and leave early. This year, there was never a lull in activity, and exhibitors packed up at the very end of exhibit time, with the exception of those who were only present on Friday.

Greg Daniel, our keynote speaker, talked about some of his adventures as part of the OSU marching band. He described how his auditions resulted in his attaining membership while sighted candidates lost out and participating in the Rose Bowl Parade on three occasions.

Kathy Nimmer, Indiana’s 2015 Teacher of the Year, entertained us at the banquet, expressing her conviction that learning, laughter, loss and love form the essence of life. She had the audience alternately howling with laughter and drying tears.

On Friday night, Bill Sparks (Indiana) and Doug Hunsinger (Pennsylvania) entertained everyone with music and fun anecdotes. Their audience was sorry when they had to end. The Saturday evening auction resulted in more than \$2,500, divided among various chapters. Up for bidding were coffee and wine baskets, handmade quilts and throws, candy, a fudge pie made by Ohio's Tom Dimit, honey from the Medina chapter, gift cards, an iPad, and a huge collection of old radio shows.

No matter how well we plan, every convention presents challenges which remind us that perfection just isn't possible. The biggest challenge this year occurred when we found out that the hotel did not have a large enough room for our Saturday meals and auction and

provided us with a room in the Cincinnati Club next door. This proved difficult for some attendees who need assistance in walking or who cannot climb stairs. The ramp left a bit to be desired, and we had to borrow a wheeled desk chair to transport a few people.

We will soon begin planning next year's convention and would appreciate suggestions for speakers, sessions, and venues. Contact the ACBO office at 800-835-2226 or acbo.director@gmail.com with your ideas. We have already heard from our friends in Indiana and some members of the Michigan affiliate that we should consider another joint convention in 2017. This is a different approach, certainly, but this year's experience showed us that it can work and be fun. Let's keep thinking outside the box.



Banquet speaker Kathy Nimmer, Indiana's 2015 Teacher of the Year, expressed that learning, laughter, loss and love are the essence of life.



A FOCUS ON FUNDRAISING

By Katie Frederick

During the joint ACB-Ohio and ACB-Indiana conference and

convention, a unique opportunity to raise funds for ACB-Ohio occurred. Thanks to the generosity of Tom Dimit, Theresa Carroll and Vicky Prahin, 300 fortune cookies were available for purchase. Inside the tasty treats some fortunes read “try again,” while other lucky fortunes awarded cash prize amounts from \$2.00 to \$50.00.

Selling the fortune cookies was a new, creative way ACB-Ohio’s fundraising committee sought to increase funding for the organization in 2015. Plans are underway to hold a dining in the dark event in Toledo during April 2016, providing the opportunity to raise awareness for our organization and solicit donations to fund the programs and services we offer. Stay tuned to future issues of the *Ohio Connection* for more details about this unique 2016 fundraising opportunity.

As we look to innovative methods of securing funding, I want to remind you of some ways you can give to ACB-Ohio, often with little effort on your part.

Online shopping is something many enjoy; the ability to order products from the comfort of an armchair and have the item arrive at your door in a few days is a fantastic modern convenience. A popular site for online shopping is amazon.com; through Amazon, ACB-Ohio participates in AmazonSmile, which donates to us 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases when you order from Amazon. To use AmazonSmile for your shopping needs and help ACB-Ohio in the process, use this direct link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/31-0989044>.

Shopping at Kroger is another easy way to give to ACBO. Create an online account by visiting www.kroger.com/communityrewards, registering your Plus Card, and choosing to donate to #82007. Proceeds from your purchases after swiping your Plus Card will contribute to ACB-Ohio’s account. The Columbus division of stores covering Columbus, north to Toledo, south to Portsmouth, east to Wheeling, and west to Urbana, are the stores able to allow contributions made specifically to ACBO.

Additional easy ways you can give to

ACB-Ohio include giving online via www.acbohio.org, making a check payable to ACB-Ohio and sending it to 3805 North High St. Suite 305, Columbus, OH 43214, or contributing through a workplace giving campaign via Community Shares of Mid Ohio and specifying the American Council of the Blind of Ohio.

Do you appreciate the annual conference and convention we plan? Perhaps

you enjoy the fun and physical activities offered during the summer and winter sports retreats; maybe your educational goals are now a reality, thanks to one of our scholarships. All the programs and services offered through ACB-Ohio need your financial assistance to grow. Remember, no gift is too large or small; we'll graciously accept them all.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE OHIO CONNECTION!

By Vicky Prahin

ACB offers several awards in recognition of the work affiliates do each year. This year Ohio received two of those awards.

The Columbus chapter won an award for its People Helping People program which assists individuals in the Franklin County area who are blind or visually impaired with the purchase of adaptive equipment at up to half the cost to a maximum of \$200 per year. For more information call 614-470-2226 and choose option 3.

Our newsletter won the Hollis K. Liggett Braille Free Press Award. This award promotes best journalistic practices and

excellence in writing in publications of ACB's state and

special-interest affiliates. The following criteria are considered: the number of contributing writers in a single issue, the variety of information included, how well the publication portrays the affiliate, the quality of writing, and the overall layout and presentation. I was delighted to receive the plaque on behalf of ACBO and the Newsletter Committee. Thanks to all who make this an outstanding publication!





2015 HIGHLIGHTS

By Marc Guthrie
Director of Public Outreach

Because my duties with ACBO have reduced, along with my

salary, my activities have progressively lessened over the past three years. It's hard for me to believe that I recently completed my ninth year working with the American Council of the Blind of Ohio; oh, how time flies by. Here are a few highlights that I'd like to share from 2015.

ACBO's three university endowments are growing. I was very pleased that all three of our university scholars attended the ACBO awards lunch this year in Cincinnati. Our University of Toledo endowment continues to lead the way with a strong balance of \$70,780 as of September. As a result of our substantial endowment fund balance, UT was able to award Kelly Roesch \$2,900. Kelly will receive a degree in education of the visually impaired next May. As many of you recall, our 2008 investment to create the UT endowment was \$25,000, so the growth of that fund has been excellent.

The ending balance of our endowed fund at The Ohio State University on

June 30 was \$54,679. Our OSU scholar is Karen Koehler, who works at OSSB and is pursuing an advanced degree in VI education.

I continue to work with Wright State University to increase the value of our endowment, which started with a \$25,000 investment. We had some very good news this summer from WSU Vice-President Bill Shepard. Bill notified me that the WSU Foundation President had placed an unrestricted gift of \$11,000 into ACBO's endowed fund. This is a major achievement toward WSU matching our initial gift. Vice President Shepard has assured me that Wright State will continue to make a \$2,000 award annually in the name of ACB-Ohio. WSU continues to act in good faith with us, and I am very grateful. Our WSU 2015 scholarship award-ee from is Kristy Epperson. Kristy is studying to be a nurse and was very excited to receive our \$2,000 scholarship.

I should note that in September Vicky, Katie and I attended the annual OSU scholarship reception, which was excellent. I was able to talk with the Dean of the College of Education about our

OSU endowment and our involvement with the OSU Sensory Advisory group. Along with Vicky and Katie, I take every opportunity to discuss ACBO's good mission with anyone who will listen.

Though fundraising is no longer a part of my ACBO duties, I'm still in touch with Larry Rodak, our sports items donor, and am hoping to receive some items for us to sell during a spring 2016 auction.

Because of their \$1,000 donation in 2014, I reached out to our Enterprise Foundation contact again this year; however, Enterprise made a decision not to make a 2015 donation to ACBO due to the fact that they want the employee who requests the funds to have some level of hands-on activity with us. I will continue my outreach with the Enterprise employee and hope for another Enterprise contribution in the future.

I represent ACBO on the OSU Sensory Advisory Board. I attended the group's spring meeting and am waiting for a fall meeting to be set. I requested that Katie be added to the group because of her knowledge of blindness and as a person who has been served by VI educators.

In September, I was honored to be the keynote speaker at AER Ohio's annual conference in Columbus, speaking on the topic of advocacy. Katie and Jenna

were in attendance. I tried to emphasize that advocating for VI education is very important, especially if you want to see meaningful results. Providing quality services to students who are blind or VI must be a priority to Ohio's lawmakers and governor. The best kind of outreach with lawmakers and other decision makers is personal, one-on-one advocacy.

Because I don't feel that it's a good use of ACBO's funds to pay for two memberships, Katie will be the regular attendee at AERO meetings in the future, though I'm always willing to advise regarding our relationship with AERO. I believe that our membership with AERO is important because teachers need to know of our ongoing commitment to VI education in Ohio.

I continue to serve on the U.S. Access Board by appointment of President Obama. This year I was appointed by the Access Board Chair to represent the board on the Election Assistance Commission's (EAC) Board of Advisors. I serve on a number of committees concerning voting access and the technology of voting systems. My new assignment is interesting and challenging. As I have said before, though I am not a representative of ACBO on the U.S. Access Board, I certainly am very cognizant of access issues regarding people who are blind and VI..

This summer, I was honored to represent the U.S. Access Board at the 25th ADA celebration at the national headquarters of the Disabled American Veterans. I was pleased to interact with former Senator Bob Dole, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, and Senator John McCain. I was also honored to participate in the ADA celebration at the Kennedy Center where Jean Kennedy-Smith, founder of Very Special Arts and former Ambassador to Ireland, was honored for her long commitment to people with disabilities.

I hope that you'll all plan on attending the ACBO convention next fall; this year's program was very good. Tom Webb, Director of Disability Services at Wright State University, gave an excellent speech at our Saturday breakfast about his involvement in the ADA and his role as an advocate. Tom's insight was thought provoking. The scholarship luncheon was also very inspiring because it's so nice to see the positive impact that our awards are making with blind and VI students and with students who are focused on teaching children who are blind or visually impaired.

Best wishes for a great 2016 to you all and for a wonderful holiday season. Thank you for your continued prayers for my sweet granddaughter Karis, who is now over the halfway mark of her

two-plus years of chemo to treat her leukemia. She is a courageous little three-year-old.

See you next year!

Michelle Spillan, Editor

Thanks to the contributors: **Sue Bramhall, Mary Castor, Katie Frederick, Marc Guthrie, Ann Pimley, Vicky Prahin and Elizabeth Sammons.**

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 by **February 15.**

**ACBO Community Shares
Campaign Codes**

State of Ohio 19003

City of Columbus 60240

Franklin County 60240

Ohio State University 60240

Columbus State 1061

The following is one of two prize-winning essays from the Columbus 25th anniversary of the ADA celebration. The other essay (written by Mary Hiland) appeared in the fall 2015 issue of the Ohio Connection.

INDEPENDENCE WALK

By Elizabeth Sammons

My true independence day arrived with a walk one hot summer day in 1974, a generation before the Americans with Disabilities Act. That spring, my parents had hired a lawyer for \$1 to convince our local school system that it was time to mainstream its first known child with a disability — me, that is. After numerous delays, county officials told us that I needed to take a bus to a one-story school, not the local school where I had expected to join my neighborhood friends. Looking back, I think they were trying to scare my family into keeping me in the blind class I attended in the next county; they didn't know us very well!

My parents began trying to make me use a white cane, but to my eight-year-old mind, the cane meant shouting to the world that I was blind. I remember holding it stiffly in front of me, refusing to let its tip touch the ground. One July day, my mother told me a policeman would be coming the next week to escort me to the bus stop, and if I was



Sammons reads her essay at the ADA 25 Columbus celebration.

judged a “community hazard,” I could kiss my dream of attending local school goodbye. “So you’d better improve your cane technique,” she concluded.

Deciding the two-hour daily commute to my old school was not worth it, I began letting my hand and arm relax. I learned what my cane could show me as it tapped the sidewalk, bumped tree root swells, or slid along the cracks on brick streets.

When the policeman came, I was ready. My ears and cane guided me

through a perfect walk with him. Near the end, he remarked “I am proud of you that you are being so independent. You’re safe to go anywhere you want.” I knew that was my real independence day.

Today this stubborn girl who had to prove that she wasn’t a “community hazard” mentors youth with disabilities, bolstered through integration memories starting with that summer walk with the policeman. Sometimes with wonder, I drink in their optimism, their can-do spirit. I see their life roads and learning, forged through great disability reforms in work life, transportation and social attitudes fostered by the ADA.

In 2000 I returned to the United States after a decade abroad, unaware of many ADA changes, shortly after President George W. Bush twisted ears and consciences with his poignant comment on “The soft bigotry of lowered expectations.” Looking into the USA from the outside, this phrase forced me to come to terms with what we earn, versus what we deserve. I enjoy challenging young people with and without disabilities in discussions about the delicate balance between our rights as all citizens and our responsibilities to merit the respect of friends and colleagues. While I wish everyone wonderful celebrations of this ADA quarter-century In-

dependence Day, I also urge each of us to fan the ambition and creativity to continue forward on our independence walk.

APPLESEED CHAPTER NEWS

By Mary Castor

Our chapter has kept busy with exciting and informative events. Our June meeting offered members the opportunity to learn about assistive technology products through Universal Low Vision Aids. Members were able to try out the products to find the items most suited to their needs.

In July several of our members attended the annual Family Fun and Learning Day at the Ohio Library for the Blind and Disabled in Cleveland. We toured the lovely sensory garden, learned about library services and talking books, listened to guest speaker Joe Tate, met old and new friends, and spoke to various vendors about their services and products. We wish to acknowledge and thank Steve Nemeth and Dan Stotts who drove us to the event and shared the day with us. On August 5 we had our annual picnic sponsored by the Ontario Lions Club. A good time was had by all. Thank you,

Ontario Lions Club members, for the delicious sandwiches and hosting the picnic in your beautiful park. On August 19th our group took a trip to Put-in-Bay that included the ferry ride to the island, a guided tour of the island via train, and lunch. Just a reminder: Our meetings are held the first Wednesday at 3:00 at the Waterford in Mansfield.

Our September Loss of Vision support group meeting was a lot of fun as we learned some basic tai chi moves from our speaker, Krissy Hickey, therapy staff person from Kingston of Ashland, Ohio. Our speaker for our October meeting was Joe Trollian, the Director of the Richland County Mental Health & Recovery Services Board, who spoke about mental health services in the area. Joe has been a great supporter of our group, and it's always a pleasure to have him speak at our meetings. The

November meeting was moderated by Vice President Mary Castor where group members engaged in a lively discussion about various topics such as transportation options and other issues. We are planning our December meeting, which will be our "Christmas Around the World" themed party.

Lastly we want to congratulate Steve Nemeth, a member of our group, who was honored at the ACB-Ohio Convention in Cincinnati this year with the Ruth Davidson award. Our President Brant Adams accepted the award on Steve's behalf. We are looking forward to great things in 2016.

Editor's Note: Any and all chapters are welcome to send submissions to the newsletter by e-mailing articles to acbo.newsletter@gmail.com.





THE NEW ADA CIRCULAR ON TRANSPORTATION

The Federal Transit Administration has announced the availability of the new Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Circular, which can be downloaded in pdf and Word formats at http://www.fta.dot.gov/legislation_law/12349_16591.html.

The ADA circular provides guidance to recipients and subrecipients of FTA financial assistance necessary to carry out provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the U.S. Department of Transportation's implementing regulations at 49 CFR Parts 27, 37, 38, and 39.

The final circular, FTA C 4710.1, is effective as of November 4, 2015. The circular's purpose is to provide an outline of ADA requirements with reference to applicable regulatory sections and example practices to meet the ADA requirements.

More information is available in the Federal Register notice along with an overview of comments received.

Key aspects of ADA Circular Federal Register notice:

- ADA Circular "does not alter, amend or otherwise affect the U.S. DOT ADA regulations themselves or replace the need for detailed information in the regulations."
- No new requirements are included in the circular.
- An introduction, explanation of requirement, discussion and good practices examples are provided for each primary topic. Developed in coordination with the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Access Board, the circular's chapters address many issues including bus and rail facilities, paratransit eligibility and service, reasonable modification and service animals.



CRUISES FOR PEOPLE WHO DON'T LIKE CRUISES

By Sue Bramhall, Mind's Eye Travel

We're just home after back-to-back river excursions through Europe—down the Rhine from Amsterdam to Basel, Switzerland, and then the Danube River from Passau, Germany, to Budapest in Hungary. These were our first experiences with Viking River Cruises, and they were so positive and enjoyable that I have to tell you about them. Even our guide dogs were enthused!

First, Viking's spacious new long ships could almost have been designed for us. With fewer than 200 passengers, everything happens on three decks, which are easily reached by wide, well-marked staircases or an elevator, and oversize glass doors that open and close automatically. Stability is never a concern either, as these ships are on calm rivers. The staterooms are well laid out, with large flat-screen TVs and fixtures that would suit a good hotel. In the dining room and the lounges, the food was simply superb.

Our shore excursions were flawlessly planned, managed and hosted, with professional local guides and drivers, and the best in-ear sound systems we've ever used. Each day we docked

right in our destination cities, so we spent less time on buses and more time on the ground. With so few passengers, there's no huge scrum getting on or off the ships, either.

Viking owns most of the docks where its ships tie up, as well as the luxury coaches that ferried us around, so everything was clean, safe and meticulously maintained and operated. Access and mobility were very good, and our day trips were low-impact. Viking even made sure that we could move at our own pace.

Unlike many ocean-cruise operations, Viking includes its shore excursions in the overall price, so there's no 'sticker shock' at the end of the trip. In a few places the ships offered optional activities at extra cost, but these were special things like bicycle trips and were fairly priced. Overall, the pace of each cruise was perfect—a very comfortable mix of activity and relaxation.

Our fellow passengers were American, British, Canadian and Australian; everyone (the crew, too) spoke English. Many told us that they much preferred

this to ocean cruises on enormous ships with thousands of people. Some were re-connecting with their families' European roots. On the Rhine, two days before his Medicare birthday, my husband found himself in Strasbourg, the lovely French-German city where he was born. (As he told our guide that day, 'I come back every 65 years.')

Finally, three words about Viking service: The Very Best. Everyone on both our ships, Viking *Hlin* and Viking *Njord*—mâitre d's and waiters, chefs, bartenders, chambermaids, receptionists, deckhands and officers—was not only highly professional but also extremely helpful and unfailingly considerate of us and our special needs. We can't wait to go back!

And we are going back. Next April, Mind's Eye will travel with Viking on the River Seine, from the center of Paris up to the beaches of Normandy. If you're interested in joining us, please let me know. With 63 ships (and counting), Viking now cruises throughout Europe and Asia, with North America coming soon. If Mind's Eye Travel can assist you in planning one of these wonderful adventures . . . well, that's what we're here for.

Mind's Eye Travel
www.mindseyetravel.com
Phone: 207-236-2188

BITS & BYTES



Open enrollment for a health insurance plan purchased through the Affordable Care Act (ACA Marketplace) runs from now through January 31. Review open enrollment materials on www.HealthCare.gov and at <https://marketplace.cms.gov/>. Inquirers may also access the ACA 24/7 Consumer Call Center: 1-800-318-2596.

Hadley School for the Blind offers various iFocus instructional tutorials for sight-impaired users wanting to know more about iPhone access; no enrollment requirement. At about 20 minutes each, these include: [Typing on Your iDevice](#), [Using the Zoom Features](#) and [Searching and Downloading from the App Store](#).

Webinar Recording Now Available! - Facebook.com: Using Window-Eyes and the new Web Application Mode. Download the MP3 recording as well as the corresponding study guide worksheet and hot key reference by visiting the website, below the heading titled "Facebook.com: Using Window-Eyes and the new Web Application Mode."

Don't forget to check out the rest of the webinar training archive, all here: <http://www.gwmicro.com/webinars>.

Don't see a book that you need in the Bookshare library? No problem. Learn how to request a book. <http://cts.vresp.com/c/?Benetech/3b18faf776/db5d303e8a/97fb043a16>

Mobility International USA has created a podcast series for the #BlindAbroad campaign about people with visual impairments traveling internationally. (Now transcripts are available for all podcasts): <http://www.miusa.org/podcast>

A.T. Ohio's mission is to help Ohioans with disabilities learn about or acquire assistive technology. Housed at OSU, the organization now has a new website. Learn details of AT activities, how you can help or benefit here: <https://atohio.engineering.osu.edu/#main-content>

Information on working with students who are blind or visually impaired is now available online. The document provides decision-makers and families with a set of guidelines and information regarding services to meet the educational needs of students who are blind

or visually impaired, and highlights recommended standards and guidelines found in high-quality programming. <http://cisam.ossb.oh.gov/docs/VIGuidance/VIGuidance.pdf>

Youth Leadership Forum July 31 – August 4, 2016 now open for applications!
Are you a high school junior or senior with a disability interested in self-advocacy and community involvement? Would you like to fully develop your skills, abilities and self-awareness and become one of Ohio's future leaders? The Ohio Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) is a five-day leadership training program held in Columbus each August for current 11th and 12th grade high school students with disabilities. The forum prepares you to face challenges and take advantage of unprecedented opportunities to become a leader in your community. At YLF, you will get involved in choosing a career, learning the history of disability as a culture, meeting professionals with disabilities, developing a "Personal Leadership Plan" and much more. Applications for the August, 2016 program are due at the end of March. For more information or to get an application, contact Donna Foster at donna.foster@ood.ohio.gov or 614-438-1394 or 800-282-4536. See also <http://gcpd.ohio.gov/YLF>.

Broaden your reading options by going to Learn Out Loud on You-Tube and hear a variety of audio books and essays that you can access free:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/learnoutloud>



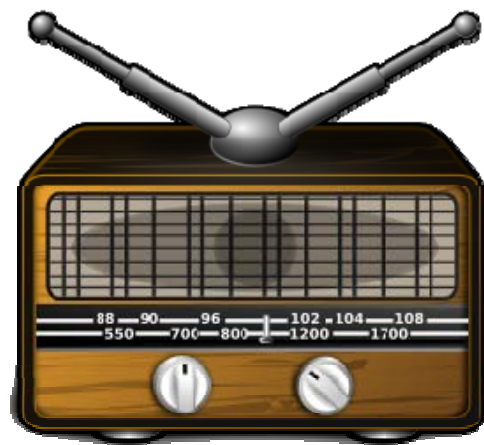
G-Technology Group has released a new assistive product to increase mobility independence for the blind and visually impaired called Sonar Glasses.

Sonar Glasses complement white canes and guide dogs by detecting obstacles above waist level (such as tree limbs, signs, walls, vehicles, people, etc.). They work based on echolocation, the glasses emit sound waves and measure the time to receive the sound reflected by nearby objects. The detection range of the glasses is up to 6 feet. A subtle vibration in the temple alerts the user when a nearby object is detected. If the object is closer than 3 feet, the temple vibrates more rapidly. For more information on the Sonar Glasses, please contact Jeff Shad at

ishad@g-technologygroup.com or by calling 571-297-4756.

Ed Walker, radio legend and ardent audio description enthusiast, passed away in October at the age of 83. The link below will take you to a very special audio file from ACB's 2003 convention banquet, during which Ed received the Durward McDaniel Award, named for the Father of ACB. The excerpt is just under 20 minutes and well worth a listen. (File made available by Chris Gray, Executive Director, Missouri Council of the Blind)

http://acbradio.org/sites/default/files/archives/ed-walker/ed_walker_dkm_award_2003.mp3





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FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND



ACB-OHIO DATEBOOK

JANUARY 8

ACBO BOARD MEETING
CONFERENCE CALL

JANUARY 15-18

WINTER SPORTS RETREAT

FEBRUARY 15

ACBO SPRING NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 1

MID-YEAR PRESIDENT'S MEETING AND LEGISLATIVE SEMINAR
WASHINGTON, DC

