

Summer 2021



OHIO CONNECTION

American Council of the Blind of Ohio

MEET OUR SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT FROM WRIGHT STATE

By Vicky Prahin

This year Wright State University (WSU) awarded our scholarship to Matthew Sanders, a sophomore pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering. About himself Matthew says, “My father has worked for the US Air Force, Department of Defense, my whole life, and when I was young, I wanted to be a pilot. However, as I grew up, we realized my eyesight would not allow me to do that, so I began to set my sights on another way to serve my country. I decided to go into the field of cybersecurity. My goal is to earn my Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Engineering, and then to get my master's degree in cybersecurity.



Matthew Sanders

Eventually, I would like to work in a position that would allow me to use my skills to serve my country. The material I covered so far has been challenging, but I am thankful that I have been able to be successful in my classes, having a 4.0 GPA so far—something I could never have done without the accommodations I have in place through the Office of Disability Services at Wright State. The scholarship funds I received allowed me to focus on my academics without needing to take on a lot of outside work to pay my tuition. I appreciate the ACB-Ohio Scholarship award deeply, and I will do my best to honor your investment in my education.”

Congratulations to Matthew. WSU is fortunate to have such an obviously gifted student!

APPLY NOW FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

It's time to apply for an ACB-Ohio scholarship. You can find the general information, application, and reference form on our website, acbohio.org. Send your completed application, eye report, transcripts, and three reference forms by August 1 for consideration.



TWO NEW ACB-OHIO BOARD MEMBERS

By Vicky Prahin

In the last edition of the *Ohio Connection*, you met some of our new board members. Two more new directors are featured below.

Alex Densmore is a member of the Cleveland chapter. He won an ACBO scholarship a few years ago when he was working on a second degree. About himself Alex says:

I taught Latin for several years to middle and high school students, both online and in person. I have also tutored English essay writing online for several years. I just finished a second bachelor's degree in computer science and am currently applying for software development positions. I received a postcard about the ACB national convention in Columbus in 2013 and spontaneously decided to sign up at the last minute and attend since it was in my home state. I really enjoyed that convention and attended the one in Las Vegas in 2014, at which I met several ACB-Ohio members, after which I began attending



Alex Densmore

ACB-Ohio events. I am strong with technology, writing, and editing. I like connecting with new people. I would like to increase awareness among ACB-Ohio members in general of what the board does and how members can become involved, either through board membership or by simply joining specific committees.

Tonya Adams introduces herself:

Hi! My name is Tonya Adams. You may have seen me lingering around at ACBO state conventions, but now is your chance to get to know me better. I was born and raised in North Dakota. I moved to Ohio in August 2003. In October 2004, Brant and I got married, and we have one daughter, Hermione, who is currently an eighth grader. She is looking forward to starting high school in the fall. I have been a licensed practical nurse since 2005. In 2018, after the sudden death of my mother, Brant, Hermione, and I moved to North Dakota. Currently, I work at CHI St. Alexius Health in Bismarck at their urgent care clinic. I have been a member of ACBO since approximately



Bismarck Bobcat Will Magnuson and Tonya Adams (photo by Missy Gerving)

2010. Over the last few years, I have had a desire to become more involved in ACBO and have been involved in several committees. Along with my ACBO activities, I am a member at large of NDAB (North Dakota Association of the Blind), and I am treasurer of our local ND 0319 Bismarck TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) group. In my free time I enjoy attending various events, especially Bismarck Bobcats (NAHL) hockey games. I am looking forward to the coming year and seeing where we can take ACBO! I look forward to getting to know you all better and can't wait to see you in Columbus in October at the state convention!

ACBO/ACBI CONVENTION UPDATE

By Brant Adams

It has been a long time since we have all seen each other, but that will end October 29-31 when we will gather at the Crowne Plaza Columbus North-Worthington! Save the dates and join us! We are planning breakout sessions on technology, health, and both together. (Health does not include anything about the pandemic because we have heard enough about that!)

There will be exhibitors, an auction and all the usual activities. Friday afternoon there will be a hospitality room where we can meet and talk. We already have several fantastic items for the auction on Saturday. We have a great room rate of \$104 per night. Split that in half or thirds and it is even better.

Your old and new friends will all be there—don't be the one who misses the fun! More information will be coming through www.acbohio.org, your email, and in the next *Ohio Connection*. On the website you can also find information on our scholarships for college students and annual awards. Get your applications and/or nominations in early.

There will be streaming options for those who cannot come; stay tuned for more about that.



**ACBO Community Shares
Campaign Codes**
State of Ohio 19003
City of Columbus 60240
Franklin County 60240
Ohio State University 60240
Columbus State 1061

ACB-OHIO SEEKS BOARD NOMINATIONS

By Katie Frederick

The main event Saturday morning during an ACB-Ohio conference and convention is the annual business meeting. Ohio Revised Code requires nonprofit corporations, such as ACBO, to conduct an annual meeting to elect directors and officers to the board and present annual reports to the membership. But, what does "getting elected to the board" mean? The responsibilities of serving as a member of an organization's board of directors vary slightly, based on the governing documents (bylaws) of a corporation. Our organization's board makeup and responsibilities follow.

The president, 1st vice-president, 2nd vice-president, secretary, and treasurer constitute the officers of ACB-Ohio. Individuals in these positions serve two-year terms and may serve up to two terms in the position to which they are elected. The offices of 1st vice-president and secretary are elected during odd-numbered years, so the nominating committee is looking to fill those seats this year.

In the absence of the president, the 1st vice-president is responsible for leading the organization, chairing the board of directors and executive committee meetings, and representing the organization, in addition to the responsibilities of all members of the board. An individual interested in serving as the 1st vice-president must be blind or visually impaired and a member in good standing, meaning he or she has been a member for at least six months prior to seeking election.

The secretary is responsible for keeping minutes of the annual business meeting, board meetings, and any other meetings that may occur. In addition, the secretary works with the ACB-Ohio office, ensuring the board contact list is up to date and board positions and terms of members are correct. The secretary must also be a member in good standing and be able to fulfill all other board-related responsibilities.

There are six two-year director positions to fill this year. If you want to give finances and time, learn more about the organization, enjoy working on projects, help shape the future direction of ACB-Ohio and connect with others who are blind or experiencing vision loss, consider joining the board. Officers and directors are responsible for the wellbeing of ACB-Ohio, and this includes making a financial contribution (no amount is too small), serving on at least one of the organization's committees (see the winter 2020 *Ohio Connection* for a description of the work committees perform), attending quarterly board meetings (in-person or via a conferencing system), and monitoring the operation of the organization and its staff.

If you are interested in learning more about serving on the board or wish to seek an available position, contact nominating committee chair Katie Frederick, phone 419-306-3721 or email katiefred@gmail.com. The fall issue of the *Ohio Connection* will contain the official slate of officers and directors proposed by the nominating committee; however, individuals may be nominated from the floor at the business meeting.

Providing oversight and leadership to an organization is a serious responsibility, but it is enjoyable, too. We hope you will join in this journey and we welcome you.

A LOOK AT ACBO'S SECRETARY POSITION

By Ann Pimley, ACB-Ohio Secretary

Would you like to be more involved in ACB-Ohio? If so, consider running for the secretary position, which I have held for the last four years. The term for the secretary position is two years and you can run a second time for a total of four years. Visually impaired or sighted members in good standing can hold this executive committee-level position.

The secretary's main duties are to take minutes at the quarterly ACBO board meetings, the executive committee meetings, and the annual business meeting. You can use the meeting agenda as an outline and take notes during the meeting, or you can wait until the meeting is over and transcribe from the recording. A recording is always made, so you can listen as many times as you like to make sure you have all the important information written down. After completing the minutes, send them to the board to be checked for accuracy.

All board members are expected to make an annual donation to ACBO and to join one or more committees. There are a few committees to choose from, and you may want to chair one after you feel comfortable with your knowledge of the topic.



NOMINATE SOMEONE YOU ADMIRE FOR AN ACBO AWARD

ACB-Ohio offers seven annual awards to honor those who promote, support, and help those who are blind or have low vision. Award descriptions and nomination information can be found at www.acbohio.org/convention/awards. Nominations are due September 8.

CELEBRATE SUMMER AT THE ANNUAL SPORTS RETREAT

By Katie Frederick

The ACB-Ohio recreation committee is pleased to announce the 2021 summer sports retreat is happening, and it's in person! Dates are August 13-15 at Jody's place in Hockingport, Ohio.

The weekend features an array of outdoor activities: boating, hiking, enjoying the campfire, and socializing with friends old and new. The cost is \$85 for participants who are blind or have vision loss and \$25 for sighted volunteers. The recreation committee will make every effort to assist with transportation to and from the event, but your money will be refunded if we are unable to find transportation. Participation is limited to the first 15 individuals who sign up. If you would like an application or more information about the weekend, call Katie Frederick at 419-306-3721 or email katie-fred@gmail.com. Completed applications are due August 1. We look forward to celebrating summer and hope you can join us at this year's retreat!



MEMBERSHIP CALLS

By Ann Pimley

ACBO's monthly Zoom/phone meetings are a great way to meet new people, learn about topics relevant to the visually impaired, learn about ACBO, and exchange information and ideas with others. We meet the second Sunday of the month at 7:30 p.m. and are done by 9 p.m. For some of these meetings we have a speaker and at other meetings we have a group discussion and share information. We always have a few minutes for people to ask the speakers questions, or to ask for information from other members.

On July 11, a representative from [iBugToday](#), an accessible technology training organization, will talk about the services they provide for people who are visually impaired.

Membership calls will take place August 8, September 12, and October 10 as well. We are hoping to have a librarian from the regional library talk about BARD, as well as guests from Be My Eyes, the Accessible Pharmacy, and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD).

Here's how to join us using Zoom:

Use the link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6142613561>, which will launch Zoom if you have it installed on your computer or mobile device.

Call in on your landline or cell phone using 646-558-8656 or 669-900-9128. Whether you use a computer or a phone, enter the meeting ID 614 261 3561. If calling in, you have plenty of time to enter the meeting ID followed by the pound sign. When asked for a participant ID, press pound again. If you join before the host starts the meeting, you will hear that the meeting has not yet started and hear music.

We hope you will join us and invite others who you think might be interested. Let us know if you have topics that you would like covered. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact me (apomerai548@gmail.com or 440-226-9141) or Shawn Thiel (acbo.director@gmail.com or 614-261-3561).

HOTT PODCASTS #2

By Irwin Hott

I want to tell you about two podcasts that I am familiar with, plus a third one that caught my interest as I was writing this.

The first is “Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me!” My sister, Miki, and I heard this one-hour NPR radio show when we were driving out to Fort Bragg, California, in 1988 to visit our mom. Peter Sagal is the usual host. As you may know, Mr. Sagal will be the banquet speaker at this summer's ACB National Convention. There are several segments in each episode, with a panel of three celebrities and some guests by telephone. “Who's Bill This Time?” with Bill Kurtis gives callers a chance to guess who made a recent quote in the news. “Bluff the Listener” offers a phone guest a chance to pick out a true story coming from one of the three panelists. There are lots of laughs and I suspect the show is highly edited, as it used to be performed in front of a live audience before the pandemic.

The second podcast is “Science Talk” from Scientific American. This weekly podcast recently had at least four segments of National Park tours focusing on the birds and other wildlife. These were recorded in stereo and wonderful to hear. There was also a recent episode with sounds of whales.

As I was writing this, I happened to hear “The Blind Cook” on the BBC. This comes from a program called “The Food Chain,” which is also a podcast. Search for “bbc food chain” to find it. Even though this is from the BBC, there seems to be a lot of U.S. content.

I have not had experience getting podcasts on other devices, but if you need help using your Victor Stream to sign up for a podcast, drop me a line at Ishott263@att.net.

Happy listening!



AFB & ACB APPLAUD REINTRODUCTION OF THE DISABILITY ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION ACT

The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) and the American Council of the Blind (ACB) applaud Representatives Jim Langevin and Dina Titus for reintroducing the Disability Access to Transportation Act (DATA) as H.R. 1697, which would expand and improve transportation, especially paratransit programs, for people with disabilities. The bill was originally introduced in the 116th Congress and included in the House surface transportation legislation in July 2020.

AFB and ACB public policy staff advocated together for the DATA bill before, during, and after the bill's original introduction in 2020. ACB and AFB together met with members of Congress, including Representative Langevin, to raise specific concerns about paratransit services.

"Equal access to transportation persisted as a barrier to full inclusion for people with disabilities well before the COVID-19 pandemic," said ACB Executive Director Eric Bridges. "The American Council of the Blind and our nationwide membership applauds Rep. Langevin for his thoughtful approach to enable all Americans to get up and get moving toward greater independence, and we urge the swift passage of the DATA Act."

"Lack of access to convenient transportation remains one of the biggest barriers to employment, community integration, and healthcare for people who are blind or have low vision," said Stephanie Enyart, Chief Public Policy and Research Officer at AFB. "The DATA bill takes several important steps to eliminate this barrier. For example, many paratransit agencies require riders to schedule separate rides for every stop and to wait a long time between each ride. The paratransit pilot should encourage transit agencies to find ways to make paratransit a more convenient and effective transportation option. AFB is appreciative of the tools this bill provides for improving our transportation systems for people with disabilities."

Having few affordable, efficient transportation options inhibits the job opportunities available to people who are blind or have low vision. At present, over half of working-age blind and low vision adults are not in the labor market, compared to only a quarter of Americans without disabilities. These individuals consistently identify transportation as one of the biggest barriers to obtaining employment, accepting jobs that are offered to them, or remaining employed.

In addition, the experiences of blind and low vision adults during the COVID-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated the importance of transportation access for food security, health, and education. Sixty-eight percent of respondents to the



Flatten Inaccessibility study expressed concerns about access to transportation. The DATA bill looks to the future by expanding opportunities for equitable and convenient transportation recovery as the pandemic subsides.

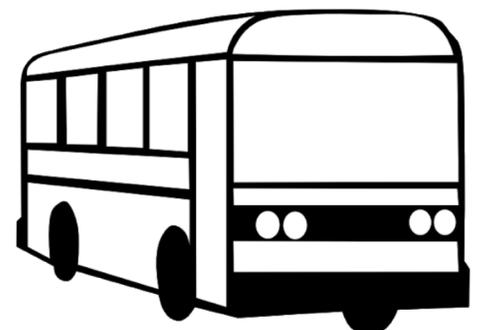
AFB staff worked closely with Congressman Langevin's staff to provide information and feedback on the establishment of a one-stop paratransit pilot program, and ACB members lent their many voices of support during this year's Legislative Seminar to ensure the bill would be reintroduced.

Under the paratransit pilot program, a rider would be allowed one stop for such purposes as dropping off children at childcare, picking-up subscriptions, or using an ATM. Because paratransit agencies are not federally required to schedule rides less than 90 minutes apart, paratransit riders must spend inordinate amounts of time to accomplish simple but necessary errands. The time burden may prevent people with disabilities from getting to work on time or traveling frequently in their community, and alternatives to paratransit may be inaccessible or prohibitively expensive.

In addition to the paratransit pilot, the bill also addresses other systemic transportation barriers affecting people with disabilities:

- The requirement to implement minimum standards for pedestrian facilities in the public right-of-way, including shared use paths, would eliminate physical barriers in sidewalk and other pedestrian infrastructure design.
- The increase in funding for the Section 5310 grants would expand opportunities to provide transportation services for people with disabilities and older adults.
- Improving Americans with Disabilities Act complaint reporting would ensure people with disabilities can easily report discrimination and facilitate the Department of Transportation taking action to resolve outstanding issues.
- The accessibility data pilot program would improve transportation planning by measuring existing transportation access for people with disabilities and evaluating the result of changes to the transportation system.

AFB and ACB are strongly committed to improving transportation access for blind and low vision Americans. We thank Representatives Langevin and Titus for introducing this bill and urge swift passage.



GET ON THE AIR WITH A HOBBY THAT EVERYONE CAN DO!

By Jeffrey A. Meyer

Picture yourself having a conversation with a skipper of a pleasure boat in the Caribbean or helping the National Weather Service when bad weather strikes close by. If you think you need to be able to hear or see in order to do these things, you're wrong.



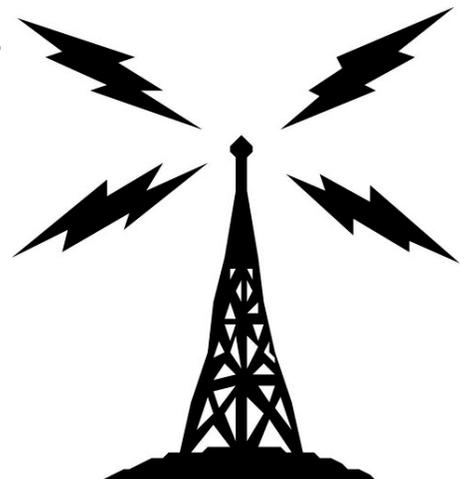
Pandemic or not, many of us are looking for hobbies that are interesting, multifaceted, and offer us new experiences. I think amateur radio does that better than any other hobby out there and can easily change your life.

First and foremost, amateur radio offers the unique opportunity for all of us to assume a new identity, one where age and appearance doesn't matter. You are simply are a product of your on-the-air presence, which effectively levels the playing field, so everyone can successfully participate. No more worrying about what you look like, or whether you can be successful, just come as you are, pure and simple. Even kids, as young as five and as old as 93, have done it, so age doesn't matter either.

Socially, hams really don't care how much money you have, what zip code you reside in, and how often you grace the cover of the society pages. If you share our common interest, you're in. Your limitations are only the ones you impose on yourself.

Amateur radio is one of the few hobbies that consistently remains on the cutting edge of technology. Today, our radios talk to us and even permit you to have a conversation with stations that you can't even hear! Additionally, you can compete in contests that match your operating skills with others, or just simply kibbutz. You can travel anywhere your signal takes you, earn operating awards, such as working all continents, pass radio messages for people, participate in public service events, play chess over the air or contact new countries any time of the day or night.

If you are looking for a hobby where you can participate as an equal and affords you an unlimited potential to interact, explore and learn, this is it. I know it holds the same promise and possibilities for you. Let's talk soon and get you started.



Jeffrey A. Meyer, call sign K4DKW
Jeffreymeyer55@gmail.com

INTRODUCING TWO NEW ACB EMPLOYEES

The American Council of the Blind is proud to announce the newest members of its team, Jennifer Flatt and Kolby Garrison.

Jennifer Flatt joined ACB as manager of communications. She supports Tony Stephens, director of development, with overseeing the creation and execution of a content management strategy across all communications channels, designed to maximize cross promotion, expand ACB reach, and increase membership. Jennifer has over 17 years of experience in communications and marketing and has branched across multi-sectoral positions within non-profits, B2B, higher education and public service.

Kolby Garrison joined ACB as membership services administrative assistant. She supports Cindy Hollis, membership services coordinator, with implementing strategies to attract new and retain existing members through the Community Events Program. Most recently, Kolby worked as a website accessibility evaluator for Knowability Inc and UserZoom. There, she evaluated and provided recommendations for websites regarding screenreader compatibility. Prior, Kolby worked at Communications Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing as a real-time translation provider, providing transcription of college level classes. Kolby is an expert in Microsoft Word and Excel from her previous endeavors, skills she is excited to put to use in her new role supporting Cindy and our community. Kolby also earned a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies from University of North Carolina, where she resides.

We are very excited to have Jennifer and Kolby on the team and look forward to their positive contributions!

Michelle Spillan, Editor / Newsletter Committee: Alex Densmore, Katie Frederick, Irwin Hott, Jenna McCartney, Jill Noble, Vicky Prahin

As always, thanks to the contributors: **Brant Adams, Katie Frederick, Irwin Hott, Jeffrey Meyer, Ann Pimley, 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, and include your name, address, and phone number.

E-mail items to **acbo.newsletter@gmail.com** or send them to the address below. The fall issue deadline is **August 15**.

ACB-Ohio, 3805 N. High St., Suite 305, Columbus, Ohio 43214





American Council of the Blind of Ohio
3805 N. High St., Suite 305
Columbus, Ohio 43214

FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND

ACB-OHIO DATEBOOK

JULY 11, MEMBERSHIP CALL, 7:30 P.M.

JULY 12, ACBO ON THE RADIO, 11 A.M., VOICECORPS.ORG

JULY 16–23, ACB NATIONAL CONFERENCE (VIRTUAL)

JULY 31, ACBO BOARD MEETING, 9 A.M.

AUGUST 1, SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS AND SUMMER
SPORTS RETREAT APPLICATIONS DUE

AUGUST 8, MEMBERSHIP CALL, 7:30 P.M.

AUGUST 13–15, SUMMER SPORTS RETREAT, HOCKINGPORT, OH

September 8, ACBO Award Nominations Due

OCTOBER 29–31, ACBO/ACBI CONVENTION, COLUMBUS, OH

