TRIBUTE TO KEN MORLOCK

By Ed Snively & Story Rex

Ken Morlock served as the first executive director of ACB-Ohio. He and his wife Jan conducted bingo games for several years, raising a substantial amount of money that was invested wisely. ACBO depends on those investments to this day for continuing existence. Thanks to Ed Snively, we have the following.

Ken was born on August 6, 1928, and died on February 7, 2020. He and his wife Janice had one daughter, Pam, who lives in Florida. Ed shared the story below, written by a mutual friend of his and Ken’s.

MR. MORLOCK

By Stori Rex

Just as we never know when an accident or tragedy might take place in our lives, we also don’t know when something extraordinary is going to happen. There is no way to predict when you might be blessed or be burdened with a life-changing event. I’d like to share one of those unexpected ordinary moments that turned into something extraordinary.

Six years ago, I helped to start a Meals on Wheels route that is run by Windermere Elementary students and their parents. We deliver meals to local seniors five days a week, year-round. We were in the second year of delivering to clients in our neighborhood, when, on a beautiful day in June, there was a new name on our delivery list.
My three kids, ages 4, 6, and 8 at the time, joined me at the door, eager to meet this new person on our route. At first the man at the door was skeptical. He called out through his screen door, asking who we were. I explained that we were there to deliver his meal from Meals on Wheels. He opened his door and invited us in. It didn’t take long for me to realize he was blind. It also didn’t take long to realize that this was an extraordinary man. I introduced myself and the kids. He was very interested in the kids and asked them all the right questions to make them feel comfortable. He went on to tell us that he had not asked for this meal-delivery service, but his daughter must have set it up when she was in town for her mother’s funeral. He told me that his wife of more than 50 years passed away just a week before. He had lived in this home with her for more than 45 years and he wasn’t sure how he was going to do it on his own. I don’t know exactly how to describe the feeling that overtook me at that moment, but something told me I was there for a reason. I had been called to help this man. Little did I know he would help me more than I could imagine.

After a much longer than typical delivery, I assured him that every Monday through Friday, from then on, someone from our elementary school would be stopping in to bring food and check on him, and we left. I was confident enough to promise because I knew the type of families and volunteers we had at Windermere Elementary. He assured me that he loved children and he would welcome each visitor.

That night I sent an e-mail to our approximately 20 route volunteers and told them the story. What happened after that was truly something special. Not only did Mr. Morlock have children visiting him daily, we took him in as our school’s unofficial grandparent. We brought him to classrooms, where he sat with kids and showed them how to write their names in braille. He read books to students in braille. He attended musicals, class plays, ukulele concerts, and town-hall meetings. Everyone loved Mr. Morlock, and it is safe to say Mr. Morlock loved his Windermere family. We invited him into our home for dinners and holidays, took him to appointments, picked up groceries when needed, helped him with his technology needs, and made sure that his infamous ice cream treats were well-stocked in his freezer so he could hand his little friends a treat after they delivered him his meal. We had birthday parties for him, and he loved and hugged our kids. He knew all his visitors’ names and all his friends knew Mr. Morlock. You can imagine we were delivering a lot more to that man than just a meal.
After two years with our special friend, it was time for him to move in with his daughter in Orlando. Thankfully, his daughter and family are absolutely delightful. This made it easier to say goodbye. If they hadn’t been as wonderful as they are, I’m pretty sure that our school might have built a wall to stop anyone from taking him from us.

We had to say goodbye, but not before he and his daughter threw his Windermere family a going-away party complete with food, treats, and a bouncy house. He came back twice to visit his Windermere friends. My family and a few other Windermere families went to his new home in Orlando to visit him over the next two years, and we continued our family phone calls with him as often as we could.

One day I got a call from his daughter while I was at work. I had just talked with him a few days before, so I knew he had fallen and was currently in rehab trying to get better. When I saw her number on my phone, my heart sank. My fear was confirmed when I heard her voice. He was not doing well—he was in hospice; his body was shutting down. She held up the phone for me to talk with him. He cried. I cried. My heart felt numb. His daughter wasn’t sure he’d make it through the night, but he did. I started looking at flights the next morning. I had work, kids’ schedules, and plenty of important things on my plate, but nothing seemed more important than saying goodbye to my special friend in person. The next morning at 6 a.m. I was on the flight to Orlando.

He knew who I was as soon as he heard my voice. We hugged. I cried and he talked about my kids, politics, and the weather, as if it was just any other day. I held his hand and breathed him in—his warmth, his intelligence, his compassion, and his strength. I never want to forget it. The silver lining of my visit was knowing how content and ready he was to go. He said he was seeing colors for the first time since he had lost his sight. He saw flashes of yellow and I told him that I had no doubt that he was seeing the Golden Gates of Heaven. When it was time to say my last goodbye, my heart was breaking. He said “Stori, I can hear that you are crying, and I hope they are happy tears.” He told me he couldn’t wait to see my family and me for the first time from Heaven. I asked him to keep an eye on the five of us and he promised that he would. He passed away the next day in his sleep.
MEMORIES OF KEN MORLOCK

By Linda Wyman

I first met Ken Morlock back in the ‘90s before I ever learned anything about the American Council of the Blind. I had lost vision, enough to be considered legally blind, and though I harbored the hope that I would regain what I had lost, I knew I needed to move on with my life. That meant learning new ways to handle basic functions like reading and word processing. A great BSVI counselor suggested that I meet Ken. Off I went to a joint meeting of BSVI and BVR.

I recall department heads reviewing their accomplishments and program plans. When the time came for attendees’ questions and comments, Ken took his turn, calmly explaining how their proposed changes would affect the blind and visually impaired community. Looking at faces around the room, I could see that some present hadn’t considered some unforeseen consequences. At the meeting’s end I introduced myself to Ken, beginning a long-time relationship with ACB. I served as a board member for some years and finally as president.

Through it all I considered Ken a mentor and a friend. He taught me about advocacy for the organization and even for myself when dealing with agencies and elected officials both in the Ohio Statehouse and in Washington. I remember attending meetings with Ken. We would review our agenda expectations en route and review what actually happened on the way home, all while Ken directed the cab driver about exactly where to turn. I marveled that though he was blind, he always knew what street we were on.

Ken and his wife Jan are the reason ACBO has significant funding saved. Years before I came on board, Ken realized ACBO would need a funding stream, which is usually difficult for a membership organization. He developed our bingo game as our state fundraiser. He set up our relationship with a local high school boosters group, who served as volunteers and shared in the profit. My husband and I went to one of these bingo games on a Saturday afternoon. I knew Ken and Jan devoted every Saturday afternoon and Monday night to bingo, but until then I, like most ACBO members, had no idea what was really involved in such an endeavor. I remember a crowded hall full of excited players, maybe as many as 100, and the aproned volunteers circulating through the tables, selling new game cards.
HELLO OUT THERE!

By Shawn Thiel & Vicky Prahin

During this strange time of isolation, many of us are looking for opportunities to stay in touch with others. This article contains several possibilities for keeping up with changes, meeting with others, and filling some of the time.

More than a year ago we began having monthly meetings by conference call to involve our at-large members. These proved successful and we now invite anyone to participate in those calls, meeting new people and exchanging information and ideas. We often have speakers to tell us about what is going on and to answer questions. Speakers have included a representative from EnVision America, the Great Lakes ADA Center, and tech experts.

In April we began to use Zoom, making it possible to have better-quality
CONGRATULATIONS, KATIE!

By Melody Banks

At the 2019 state convention Katie Frederick received the Ken Morlock award. Several years ago, Katie applied for and won an ACBO scholarship. She became involved in the organization and has since served in many ways. She started by serving on the board of directors and has been part of too many committees to mention. In 2014 she was voted onto the board of ACB’s national organization, where she has been instrumental in helping to update its mission and vision statements. She served as the executive director of ACBO from 2013 to 2017. She currently works for

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 6142613561. 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 listen to music on the phone.

Some of ACBO’s chapters are holding meetings using conference calls, and our Zoom account is available to any chapter wanting to do that. Contact Shawn at acbo.director@gmail.com to set up your meeting until we can meet in person again.

ACB-Ohio has the Morning Exchange program at 11 a.m. on VOICecorps on the first Monday of each month. We report on the activities of our various chapters and individual members, talk about what the national organization is doing, and discuss other relevant issues. We have had guests from the Alexandria office, the Ohio chapters, Goodwill Columbus, Newsreel, and other groups and organizations from around the state. You can tune in to listen by going to voicecorps.org, search for it in the TuneIn Radio or Apple Music apps, or ask your Amazon Echo device to “Open Voicecorps.” If using Siri you may have to spell the name of the station.

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ACBO 2020 AWARDS
NOMINATE SOMEONE YOU ADMIRE!

Do you know someone who fits any of the following descriptions? Send your recommendations by September 15.

The **KEN MORLOCK AWARD** goes to a person who is blind or visually impaired who has worked to improve the lives of blind or visually impaired Ohioans. Ken Morlock served in various capacities for our state affiliate for more than 20 years, serving as a role model for others. Past recipients include Jill Noble, our current president, and Katie Frederick.

The **RUTH DAVIDSON AWARD** honors a person who has worked hard to enhance the lives of those who are blind or visually impaired. Recipients of this award include Chris Schumacher and Marc Solomon.

We present the **ARLENE COHEN ART OF TEACHING AWARD** to a blind or visually impaired teacher or to a sighted teacher who has taught blind or visually impaired students. This award commemorates a past president of the affiliate who taught for many years and considered ACBO very important. James Duffield and Ceil Peirano have received this award. Tell us about your special teachers!

The **AMBASSADOR AWARD** goes to an ACB-Ohio member who has worked hard for ACB-Ohio and the blind community. Past recipients include Linda Wyman and Karen Spry.

The **MEDIA AWARD** is given to a person who has written or reported about blindness or issues that concern blind or visually impaired persons. All nominations for the Media Award must be accompanied by the article, video, or other presentation. We have presented this award to Deborah Kendrick and Irwin Hott, among others.

The **EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD** is given to an Ohio employer who has hired employees who are blind or visually impaired. We honored Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities as program administrator for the Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired.
the Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center with this award in 2011 and in 2017 Concept Services of Medina earned the award.

The **COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD** is presented to a city, town, or organization for outstanding efforts put to enhance the lives of people who are blind or visually impaired. Past recipients include the Medina Lions Club and the City of Columbus.

Send your nominations to Lori Woodall at loriandkenny74@gmail.com or call 513-876-3351. It’s not too early to send those nominations!

**SCHOLARSHIPS**

Every year the American Council of the Blind of Ohio offers six scholarships to Ohio residents. Applicants do not have to attend a school in Ohio.

- Apply for $1,000 if you will be a freshman in the 2020-21 school year and are blind or visually impaired;
- Two $2,000 scholarships are available to blind or visually impaired undergraduate students;
- Two $2,500 scholarships are available to blind or visually impaired graduate students; and
- The Nola Webb-McKinney $2,000 scholarship is available to anyone studying in a blindness-related field, such as teaching, counseling, or O&M.

To get qualification information and apply, go to [www.acbohio.org](http://www.acbohio.org) or call the ACBO office at 614-261-3561 or 800-835-2226.
ACBO MONTHLY MEETING CALLS

By Ann Pimley

Everyone is welcome to join us on our meeting calls! For some of these we have a speaker and for others we share information and have a group discussion. We always have a few minutes for people to ask the speakers questions, or to ask for information from other members. Some of our previous speakers this year have talked about the ACB National Legislative Seminar and Hill visits, ACB Radio, ACB’s efforts to attract new members, and how to relieve stress through mindfulness and yoga.

The ACBO membership committee started these phone conferences to help connect with at-large members, however, we have found that many chapter members and visitors find our meetings interesting and we highly encourage you to join us. It is a great opportunity to meet new people, share ideas, and learn from speakers and other members.

We hold these phone conferences on the second Sunday of each month at 7:30 p.m. and are done by around 9 p.m. The meetings for the rest of this year are August 9, September 13, October 11, November 8, and December 13. There will be no meeting in July due to the ACB National Convention/Conference. We hope that all of you will join us!

To join our calls, 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 6142613561. 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 listen to music on the phone. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Ann Pimley or Shawn Thiel.

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I was always a huge fan of the Erasmus+ program, first as a student and then as a youth worker, because it opens new learning and traveling opportunities. Above all, this program creates a multicultural environment that encourages interaction and communication. Basically, youngsters take part in exchanges in order to continue their studies in foreign learning institutions or to enhance their soft skills through non-formal education.

As a student, I had the chance to study one year in Italy at Università di Bologna where I learned Italian and then moved on to Université Libre de Bruxelles in Belgium to improve my French competency. I gained so many skills from this program in my two years of studying languages abroad that I didn’t want my Erasmus experiences to end. I decided to take part in short-term youth exchanges that last around a week, with the emphasis on non-formal methods used for tackling current global issues.

Some of my Erasmus traveling included Poland, Montenegro, and Spain. I was impressed that, in such a short time, we were able to boost our soft skills like creativity, adaptability, teamwork, leadership, and interpersonal skills. A bookworm myself, I discovered that we can learn while having fun.
and that for a successful career we need the right combination of soft and hard skills. It is true that non-formal education is not fully integrated in the academic curriculum, but I think that it can provide excellent long-term results if combined with the right formal learning methods.

After noticing the strengths of this program as a participant, I became a youth worker, presenting workshops about disability or creating language and assistive technology courses for the visually impaired community. I recently started a fruitful collaboration with IPV Constanta, an NGO (non-governmental organization), located by the seaside, that believes in the same values as I do. I manage writing projects and create high quality content for the youth. All our actions have as key points intercultural understanding, constant involvement and volunteering, characteristics that guide us in our work. Our opinion is that education represents a turning point in young people’s lives. Poverty or other social issues must not be an obstacle to education, so we support physical and emotional health through activities that encourage social inclusion, personal care, and self-esteem.

We pay special attention to people with disabilities because the invaluable resources they contribute have not been appreciated in Romania. In 2017, IPV Constanta opened the first Romanian beach accessible to people with disabilities, and the project won two national awards. Each one of us can improve our communities through personal initiatives and volunteering.

Our adventure started when Unigrowth Development, an experienced Armenian NGO was looking for a Romanian partner in order to create a two-part youth exchange with the aim to make the target group more employable. The project titled “Employable” got me approved and financed by the European Commission. For the first time I would see the Erasmus+ program from a trainer’s perspective. Together with my close friend Anda, who is the legal representative of IPV Constanta, we selected eight participants and were ready to go to Dilijan, a splendid mountain region of Armenia. Another member in our group was of course Tina, my guide dog, who is al-

Walking with Tina in Dilijan’s mountain area with lots of snow; she is wearing a cute winter coat
ways ready for exciting trips—but was Armenia ready for her?

Our first destination was Yerevan, the Armenian capital, where we spent a day before meeting our partners. The city was getting ready for Christmas and the decorations created a festive atmosphere. We visited the city center, a few tourist spots, and stopped at a nice cafe. Of course, nobody wanted a service dog in a church, museum, or café, so I had to negotiate my rights over and over. It had become a custom, so it was not as exhausting as it used to be. The notion of a service dog was foreign to almost everyone that I met, but communication is key, and we made it through. Knowing the situation in Romania and Eastern Europe in general, I could somehow work out what awaited us.

We left for Dilijan where we met the Armenian team. For a week we lived in a cottage as a family consisting of 16 young people from both countries and four facilitators. Being such a small group, we managed to get close. This is the advantage of small projects; people get connected at a deeper level. It was no surprise that everybody fell in love with Tina at first sight. I told them about our adventures in Yerevan and we agreed that the lack of information may make people skeptical when it comes to service animals.

The working sessions started, and our young participants were ready to find out how to become more employable. As facilitators, we had the responsibility to keep their motivation high and not let them get bored. We started by analyzing the current situation of the work market in both countries, moving on to describe the importance of soft skills. Every activity focused on teamwork, problem-solving skills, and flexible thinking. Everybody was encouraged to leave their comfort zone and to get involved in debates.

Group work presentation during a workshop
and role playing. In fact, the participants were the real stars of the project, because we only had to guide them in their work, leaving them the space and time to reflect about what they learned.

Days were dedicated to work and nights to fun. We danced in a few neighboring pubs where Tina was the center of attention. She was lying down next to a chair, watching the dance floor, and everybody was calling her “shunik,” the Armenian word for puppy. When we were not dancing, we were walking down Dilijan’s snow-filled streets.

There were two evenings planned by the participants from both countries. From Romania, we brought stories about Dracula and of course some traditional food and drinks. The Armenians introduced us to their culture, and I found out so many new things. Did you know that chess is taught in schools from a young age? Maybe that’s why there are so many Armenian champions. If I had known that, I would have brought my accessible chess board. Other sports where Armenian talent is recognized are wrestling and weight-lifting. Another interesting fact is that there are more Armenians living abroad than in the country—over five million abroad versus three million inhabitants.

My favorite part of the evening was tasting staples of Armenian cuisine. Lavash is their traditional bread, but nothing compares with Ararat, Armenian cognac, which is the pride of the country. Winston Churchill simply adored it; I think he had great taste!

Tina enjoyed playing in the snow and taking a break from work during our trainings. Every morning I would take her outside, and the staff from the cottage were scared at first, saying that I shouldn’t go out by myself and that someone from the group should help me. How dare they leave me alone! Watching carefully, they saw how Tina guided me and were left speechless.
The last day was scheduled in Yerevan, and this time I made sure that I was better prepared for refusals. My friends taught me the Armenian words for “This is an assistance dog.” We stopped at the same cafe and nearby shop as the first day and the staff there knew that Tina was allowed to enter. People are understanding if they are informed. Their first reaction is not surprising since they rarely see visually impaired people on the streets with a cane or a dog. Everybody appreciated my well-studied Armenian vocabulary. I would advise all travelers to learn a few words in the local language because a basic vocabulary can get you out of lots of trouble. Wandering around to buy souvenirs, there was no way we could enter a shopping area, the major cause being Tina. We had no choice but to talk to the manager. He didn’t want to hear any explanation, in spite of my charming Armenian pronunciation. Finally, we reached a compromise. We can enter if we promise that the dog won’t bite or bark. He was watching us closely, worried about Tina scaring the clients. After an hour, though, he told us that we can stay longer if we like.

Armenia is worth visiting because the people are easygoing, the food and drinks are excellent, and wherever you go there is an amazing story about the past. We are looking forward to welcoming the Armenian participants to Romania where the second part of the project will take place, this time by the sea. In this part, they will learn how to prepare a good CV and cover letter for their future job. All their work and efforts will be finally recognized by Youthpass, a European certificate which becomes more and more appreciated by employers.

I am sure that this won’t be my last Erasmus experience as a trainer. I am already working on new ideas and projects to inform people about the rights and needs of the visually impaired community. The Armenian participants have told me that it was their first time interacting with a disabled person and that I am a real inspiration. I am so glad that they appreciated my work!

I have many friends who participated in Erasmus projects dealing with physical or intellectual limitations, but there were no participants with disabilities. Through my future projects, I want to encourage young disabled people to travel more and get involved in youth exchanges in order to make themselves seen. We as a community are responsible for the way in which others perceive us. We can’t complain that we are rejected if we don’t try to be included. We can’t complain that our needs are not taken into consideration if we don’t promote them. And we certainly can’t complain that we have no friends if we don’t have the courage to leave our comfort zone.
ANNOUNCING THE 2020 SCIACCESS CONFERENCE!

The Ohio State Department of Astronomy, in partnership with NASA and the SciAccess Initiative, is proud to announce that we will be hosting a free, virtual conference on Monday, June 29, 2020! This all-day event will be dedicated to promoting disability inclusion and equity in astronomy and the STEM fields.

It is taking place on the one-year anniversary of the inaugural SciAccess Conference, which was sponsored by The Ohio State University in 2019. This year, SciAccess is being hosted in connection with Making Space for All, a weekly webinar series that showcases underrepresented students and researchers in the astrophysics community. You can join live episodes of Making Space for All every Thursday at 3:00 p.m. using this Zoom link: http://go.osu.edu/makingspace.

Making Space for All and SciAccess 2020 are supported by The Ohio State University Department of Astronomy and the Center for Cosmology and AstroParticle Physics. They are free, open to the public, and feature ASL interpreting and CART captioning. Please feel free to share with your friends and colleagues. Questions? Email us at thesciaccessconference@gmail.com.

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

As always, thanks to the contributors: Melody Banks, Larisa Nechita, Ann Pimley, Vicky Prahin, Stori Rex, Ed Snively, Shawn Thiel, and Linda Wyman. 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.

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Phone: 614-261-3561

ACBO Community Shares Campaign Codes
State of Ohio 19003
City of Columbus 60240
Franklin County 60240
Ohio State University 60240
Columbus State 1061
PLEASE NOTE TWO IMPORTANT CHANGES DUE TO COVID-19 CONCERNS:

- The 2020 Summer Sports Retreat has been canceled.
- The ACB-Ohio Board of Directors has voted to cancel the in-person portion of the 2020 conference and convention. Look for additional details in the next issue of the Ohio Connection, as we plan for a virtual state conference this year. We hope everyone stays safe and remains healthy.

ACB-Ohio DATEBOOK

July 3-10, ACB Virtual Annual Conference, acbconvention.org
July 13, ACBO On the Radio, 11 a.m., voicecorps.org
July 18, ACBO Board Meeting
August 3, ACBO On the Radio, 11 a.m., voicecorps.org
August 9, ACBO Membership Call, 7:30 p.m.
September 1, Scholarship applications due
September 7, ACBO On the Radio, 11 a.m., voicecorps.org
September 13, ACBO Membership Call, 7:30 p.m.
September 15, Award nominations due