



OHIO CONNECTION

American Council of the Blind of Ohio

TWO ACBO AWARDEES WHO ADVOCATE, EDUCATE, & INSPIRE: WES DERBY & JOY SPITE

By Annie Davis

As a past scholarship winner and longtime member of the American Council of the Blind, a favorite part of my involvement is recognizing good people who work tirelessly to enhance the quality of life for people who are blind and visually impaired. During my time on the ACB-Ohio board, I served on the Awards Committee, and 2018 was an incredible year for our state affiliate. By the grace of God and with the support of the committee, two of my nominees won! I am delighted to introduce them both.

WES DERBY, 2018 KEN MORLOCK AWARD WINNER



Wes has been a friend and colleague of mine for the past three plus years. Initially, we met on Facebook, quite by accident, as we have at least 30 mutual friends in the blind community and beyond. Little did I realize at the time that we would soon be working for the same company. Wes came to Red Roof in 2016, bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience in business, customer service, technology, and life in general. On top of all this, he is a compassionate individual and a relentless advocate for the blind and visually impaired community.

Perhaps it was no coincidence that we were in the same training class when both of us were promoted to a higher position. At that time, Red Roof was developing new systems for us to perform the essential functions of our jobs. Wes was the one my coworkers and I would go to when we had technical questions and the like. Over the years, I have grown to love him as a brother.

In addition to the above, Wes is an experienced DJ. We are still colleagues, only now we work for the same radio station (www.xtransmissionfm.com). I would say it is partially his 'fault' that I became interested in internet radio at the end of last year. He is engaging, open minded, and has diverse taste in music and world affairs. In fact, from time to time, we seem to feed off each other when it comes to ideas for our shows, particularly obscure cover songs. Currently, Wes is an independent travel agent, passionate and eager to help anyone reach his or her dream destination, be it in the U.S. or abroad. Wherever life takes him, I have no doubt Wes will continue to do great things and bring about positive change.

JOY SPITE, 2018 ARLENE COHEN TEACHER OF THE YEAR



I had the pleasure of working with Joy Spite from the time I was in first grade all the way through high school. For over 20 years, Mrs. Spite has given her time and limitless skills to students of all ages who are blind and visually impaired, serving as a braille instructor as well as an orientation and mobility specialist. On a personal note, when I was in the third grade, my teaching assistant was new to the braille code, and as she was learning, Mrs. Spite would often help out by brailleing the assignments I needed to stay caught up in my classes. One such task she took on was my DOL (daily oral language) assignments in which students learned how to properly write a sentence with correct spelling and grammar. In this learning process, Mrs. Spite took the liberty to write the sentences as they were to be written to provide me an example of how they should look. These served as the perfect study guides for weekly quizzes.

While I was in high school, she would come during my study hall, and at that time, I struggled in math, one of her many strong suits. The first thing she would ask was if I had math homework with which I needed assistance, and I never refused such offers.

These are just a few examples of Mrs. Spite's selfless generosity. Whether one is learning to read and write braille, prepare for a proficiency test, or navigate a school or neighborhood, she is patient, kind, and treats each student with dignity and respect.

“I learn as much from my students as they have learned from me,” Mrs. Spite stated during her acceptance of this honor. Currently, she resides in Kennesaw, Georgia, with her daughter and enjoys spending time with her grandchildren.

I feel blessed to know both Wes and Joy. It is lovely to recognize them for who they are and the impact they have on many lives.

ACBO/ACBI CONVENTION UPDATE

By Jill Noble

The 2019 conference and convention will take place in Columbus, Ohio, November 15 to 17, at the Crowne Plaza North Hotel, 6500 Doubletree Ave., 43235. To reserve a room, call either 614-885-1885 or 866-309-1866. Our group code is BLI. The room rate is \$104 per night plus 17.5 percent tax for a total of \$122.20. Share a room and save!

If you want to donate to the auction, contact Vicky Prahin at 614-261-3561. Please provide a description of the donation and where you want the proceeds to go—the state affiliate or a specific chapter. You can bring contributions to the hotel or drop them off at the office.

If you like crafts or know someone who does, consider contributing something for the ACBO exhibit table. We will be selling items that are knitted, crocheted, needlepointed, painted, and more. We will also have other goodies at our table, so stop by when you visit the exhibit area.

Another way that you can give is to donate to the You Cane Give Initiative. Wondering what to do with that old folding cane you no longer use in the closet? Is that drawer of used canes collecting dust and taking up space? By donating your used folding canes to the You Cane Give Initiative, you will be helping to provide canes to individuals who are blind or visually impaired around the world. James and Wendy Boehm began the program three years ago and have distributed 130 refurbished canes to the Philippines, 110 to Kenya, and many more to other countries around the world. Let's face it, we have it good in America. With the click of a button, we can order almost anything we need, including a cane. In countries like Mexico, the Philippines, India, and South Africa, people

do not have access to the proper tools for empowerment, independence, and success. Please do not let your canes go to waste! The You Cane Give Initiative allows you to provide your cane to a person far away who needs it. You can bring your cane donations to the ACBO table in the exhibit hall; give us your name and phone number, and we will enter your name into a raffle at the end of the convention. Maybe we can get a friendly competition going between Ohio and Indiana to see which state collects the most canes.



Who cane give?



You cane give!

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

From Leah Noble, Chair

The Nominating Committee presents the following eligible members for election to the ACBO Board of Directors at the annual meeting in November. Other eligible individuals may be nominated from the floor of the annual meeting to run in opposition to those listed below.

First Vice President: Terry Olandese

Secretary: Ann Pimley

Board position 1: Brant Adams

Board position 3: Melody Banks

Board position 5: Molly Marcinick

Board position 7: Karen Spry

Board position 9: Kelsey Nicolay

Board position 11: Katie Frederick



DON KALMAN RECEIVES 2019 JPMORGAN CHASE LEADERSHIP FELLOW AWARD

By Katie Frederick



Medina's Don Kalman (back, left) with this year's class of JPMC Fellows

A grant from JPMorgan Chase (JPMC) allows the American Council of the Blind (ACB) to invest in leadership activities for new and emerging leaders. Since its inception in 2016, the program has awarded 23 leadership fellow grants. This year's class provided five individuals an opportunity to experience an ACB national conference and convention and strengthen their leadership skills. Don Kalman, current president and treasurer of the Medina (Friends 'N Focus) chapter, was selected as a JPMC Fellow. Prior to attending the conference, Don submitted a

letter to the Durward K. McDaniel Committee expressing his interest in the program and discussing his community and ACB involvement. ACB-Ohio president Jill Noble also submitted a letter of recommendation as part of the application process. The committee ranked candidates, conducted phone interviews with the applicants, and chose five individuals active in ACB affiliate leadership roles in Virginia, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, and Kentucky.

Don was honored to attend the ACB Conference and Convention as a JPMC fellow. "Everyone on the committee was great, always able to answer all my questions," Kalman said. Throughout the week, Don participated in conference general sessions, leadership seminars, and many workshops and conference sessions. Some of the highlights for him dealt with advocacy and technology. "During the conference I came to understand the importance of advocacy," Don said. "If we don't advocate when we need something, nothing will get done."

Don's advocacy makes life easier for Medina residents who are blind or experiencing vision loss, as he works with the mayor to ensure audible pedestrian signals are installed where appropriate. Don places CCTVs in the hands of individuals who need them and is always finding ways to educate and help the local blind and low vision community. "I want to thank JPMorgan Chase for the opportunity I had to attend the convention," Don said. Thank you, Don, for everything you do for the Medina community and ACB—your advocacy, leadership, and generosity are making a difference.

CONGRATULATIONS TO RAY O'NEAL, JEFFERSON AWARD SEMI-FINALIST

By Vicky Prahin

Ray O'Neal became blind many years ago, but that hasn't stopped him from being a dedicated Goodwill employee and community volunteer. Ray has worked with VOICEcorps Radio Reading Service, the American Council of the Blind of Ohio Columbus chapter, and Accessible Arts of Central Ohio, an organization which helped introduce audio description. During his more than 15 years at Goodwill Columbus, he has also helped develop community programs to show the public that people who are blind are just as capable as anyone else.



Ray O'Neal in front of the Capitol Building

He started training in 2002 at Goodwill Columbus to learn mobility and daily living skills. He says that as soon as he walked in, he felt that "here is where I am

starting my life over again.” He eventually gained employment at Goodwill, where he is a donation call representative specializing in auto auctions.

In 2018, Ray gave a speech at the Ohio Statehouse about his life and what Goodwill has meant to him, and was so well received that he had an invitation from the Ohio Association of Goodwill to participate in the annual visit to Washington, DC, to speak to members of Congress about the importance of the work that Goodwill Industries International does. Goodwill Industries International sends representatives to Capitol Hill every year from around the country, people who are good examples of the work of Goodwill. Ray talked about workforce development and people with disabilities, universal donation, and told his story about how he became part of the organization. He made such a good impression this year that he was invited to return next year.



Ray says that Goodwill has made it possible for him to do the advocacy work he feels is so important. He joined ACBO several years ago, encouraged by a member of the Columbus chapter, and continues to work with that group.

In March, Ray received an email from Angela Pace of Channel 10 with congratulations, informing him that, as a result of a nomination by fellow employees at Goodwill for a 2019 Central Ohio Jefferson Award, he had been selected as a semi-finalist.

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and Senator Robert Taft, Jr., of Ohio created the national Jefferson Awards in 1972 to highlight the works of unsung heroes across the country. The Central Ohio Jefferson Awards were first presented in 1996. These awards are presented by WBNS-10TV and Lifeline of Ohio each year to recognize five individuals who do extraordinary things in their community without expecting anything in return. Twenty semi-finalists are selected in March, and the five winners are announced at a ceremony in April. Because of his visit to Washington, Ray was not able to join other finalists and semi-finalists at the awards ceremony, but he said that he was both flattered and humbled by the nomination.

NEXT UP FOR RECREATION: THE WINTER SPORTS RETREAT

By Chris Schumacher



Even though there are still a few weeks of summer left to enjoy and a beautiful autumn ahead, it is never too early to start planning for Winter Sports Retreat 2020. This year will be number 32. So, mark your calendar for January 17 to 20.

If you have participated in the past and are on the sports and recreation email list, you should receive an email with information and forms attached by October 15. If you want to be added to the email list or would like more information, call 614-261-3561. You can also pick up printed forms at the ACB-Ohio table in the exhibit hall during the 2019 state convention. ACB-Ohio offers partial stipends on a first come, first served basis. When they are gone, they're gone!

Now you know where to get the information. To those who are thinking about joining us for the first time—come on, try it! For past participants, welcome back!



PLEASE JOIN US!

By Ann Pimley

Everyone is welcome to join us on our ACBO phone conference calls. Our next call will be on Sunday, October 13 at 7:30 pm. We have a speaker at some meetings and have a group discussion at others. Some of our previous speakers have talked about ScripTalk audible prescription labels, video description, the ADA Center, and the ACB National Conference.

The ACBO Membership Committee started these calls to connect with at-large members, however, we have found that many chapter members and visitors find our meetings engaging and informative. It is a great opportunity to meet new people, share ideas, and learn from speakers and other members.

Our conference phone number is 218-339-0402. Use passcode 2226446# (make sure to use the # sign at the end of the password). We may change the phone number at a later date, so check for announcements sent by email to all

ACBO members, or call the ACBO office, or check on the ACBO web site.

We hold these phone conferences on the second Sunday of each month at 7:30 p.m. and are done by 9 p.m. The meetings for the rest of the year are November 10 and December 8. The first one for 2020 is on January 12.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Ann Pimley or Vicky Prahin.

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ROCHESTER RECAP: A SNAPSHOT OF THE 2019 ACB CONVENTION

By Ann Pimley & Molly Marcinick

What a great experience it was for us attending the American Council of the Blind National Conference and Convention for the first time. Ann Pimley, D.A. Pimley, and Molly Marcinick and her guide dog, Aulani, arrived at the Riverside Hotel in Rochester, New York, on Saturday afternoon in early July. This was one of two hotels booked for the conference and was connected to the convention center. Ann was the ACB-Ohio convention delegate and Molly was the alternative delegate.

Saturday evening Kim Charlson opened the conference for her last time as ACB president and gave her yearly report. The New York Buffalo Soldiers did the Presentation of Colors (bringing the U.S. flag to the side of the podium) and a minister gave the invocation. After that, Kerri Regan sang "The Star-Spangled Banner." At the end of the first session, ACB Secretary Ray Campbell did a roll call of affiliates.

All the other sessions were from 8:30 a.m. to noon. Prior to each, attendees were treated to a half hour of entertainment ranging from vocalists to instrumentalists playing either the piano or guitar. Each day we covered some of the same

general topics, including ACB business, ACB life memberships, ACB Angels, and presentations from corporate sponsors. ACB recognized many attendees with awards and scholarships, including ACB First Timers and ACB/JPMorgan Chase Leadership Fellows. Reports on the constitution, bylaws, and resolutions were presented and discussed.

There were different levels of corporate sponsors and many individuals who made donations to ACB. Aira, the Crown Jewel sponsor, was at the top. The next level down, Diamond Sponsorship, was made by several corporations including Google, Microsoft, JPMorgan Chase, Verizon, Vispero, Comcast, and Vanda Pharmaceuticals. Below that, at the Emerald Sponsorship level, were Sprint and Uber Technologies.

The vendor hall and the ACB Mini Mall had a large variety of items and clothing for sale. It was great to hear that the ACB Mini Mall made record sales this year.

Along with many fascinating and enjoyable speakers during the general sessions, the afternoon and evening provided opportunities to explore topics of interest to blind and visually impaired participants. Some of these included “Notetakers—Choosing the Right One,” “Beginning Yoga for the Blind and Visually Impaired,” Microsoft Soundscape, Aira, and Smart Houses (Amazon Echo and compatible products). There were so many opportunities to learn and share.

On the last day, 24 resolutions were read and voted on and elections were held. It was Ann Pimley’s duty as delegate to compile the votes from ACB-Ohio members present at the convention and give them to the ACB secretary when called on. Our new officers are President Dan Spoons, First Vice President Mark Richert, Second Vice President Ray Campbell, Secretary Denise Colley, and Treasurer David Trott. Donna Brown was elected as a board member, Zelda Gebhard was elected as a Board of Publications member, and Deb Cook Lewis was appointed Board of Publications Chair. You can find out more about each at <https://www.acb.org/2019-newly-elected-board-members>.

ACB’s 58th annual conference and convention was an exciting time. We learned more about how ACB is organized, we heard about ScriptTalk, Blindfold Games, the National Library Service, American Printing House for the Blind, and many more topics. We met new people and reconnected with old friends.

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

By Kelsey Nicolay



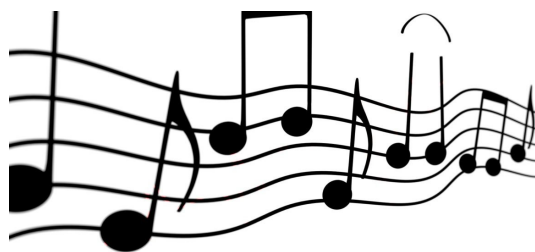
In my sophomore year of college, I had the opportunity to participate in an opera class offered by the music department. I had heard my friends talking about it and I decided to look into it, so I contacted my choir director. She explained that the class was designed to introduce students to operatic literature and would culminate in a performance of scenes from various operas. Since I was not a music major and most of my previous singing experience was choral, I wasn't sure whether I would fit in, but I decided to sign up anyway. I contacted the instructor ahead of time and explained my visual impairment as well as accommodations I might need; she assured me that she would work with me to see that I had everything I needed to be successful.

The first day of class we went over the syllabus, got to know one another, and got the music we would be working on. The instructor asked each student to sing a piece so she could determine which role best suited each participant. Since I was not a voice major, I did not have a piece prepared, but the instructor had me vocalize for her so she could get an idea of my voice quality and range. I had very limited solo singing experience and was very shy about singing in front of others. As everyone sang through their pieces, I kept thinking "what have I gotten myself into?" I wasn't worried about singing as much as I worried about the movement that would be required on stage. I reminded myself that I had done choreography in high school choir and that I could conquer this. Fortunately, I was only in two group numbers with little movement.

Adaptations for the course were minimal. I was given the syllabus, rehearsal schedule, and any other needed documents electronically so I could read them using JAWS and my BrailleNote. Since I had not yet learned braille music, the Disability Services Office typed the lyrics to the songs I needed and emailed them to me. I used the Perkins braille to make a hard copy. I found recordings of the pieces for reference as well, but the instructor and my classmates were willing to work with me one on one when needed. I kept in close communication with the instructor throughout the semester to make sure I had all the necessary materials and to discuss logistics when it came time to learn the movement for my scene. I was a little nervous after some negative experiences in the past

where someone stood behind me and moved my arms during a performance. When I shared my experience with the instructor, she assured me that would not happen and made sure other students understood that they were not to do any of the movements for me. When the other students were learning the movements, the instructor came over and quickly showed me what to do and had me practice it while she observed to make sure I knew what I was doing, then left me to perform the routine with everyone else. When I made a mistake, a classmate noticed it immediately and corrected me. The instructor briefly stopped rehearsal to see what was going on, but my classmate told her that they had handled the situation and she could continue with rehearsal. The other students knew that I was capable of participating and did not need help performing the arm movements.

The performance went smoothly and many in the audience commented on how well I had done. They said I fit right in with the group, which is exactly what I wanted. I decided not to sign up again the following years, but at least I tried something new and was successful. The most important lesson I learned from this experience is to have a positive attitude—even though the class was challenging, the experience paid off. Eventually, two participants became my voice teachers, which probably would not have happened had I not stepped out of my comfort zone and signed up for the opera class.



THE MEDICARE DEMONSTRATION OF COVERAGE FOR LOW VISION DEVICES ACT

As many readers know, ACB has been working with various congressmen to change current Medicare restrictions on low vision devices. On July 30, the following appeared in the Washington, DC, press:

Today, Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney (D-NY) and Congressman Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) reintroduced the Medicare Demonstration of Coverage for Low Vision Devices Act. This legislation would help Medicare beneficiaries live safe and independent lives by creating a five-year national demonstration project administered by the Department of Health and Human Services to evaluate the economic impact of allowing reimbursement for low vision devices under the

Social Security Act, which are currently excluded from Medicare coverage.

“Medicare coverage of low vision devices would be life changing for seniors with vision impairments. It would give them the ability to partake in everyday activities, whether it be reading a book, watching television or safely crossing the street,” said Rep. Maloney. “With the rising costs of healthcare, we must ensure that Medicare beneficiaries have proper access to any and all necessary medical devices that are currently not covered by Medicare.”

“As a visually impaired American, I have first-hand knowledge of the difficulties that accompany this condition. Simple tasks can be a significant challenge, and low-vision assistive devices are often required for essential life function. Sadly, many of these products are out of reach for seniors who live on a fixed income, and the devices’ exclusion from Medicare necessitates a difficult choice between extreme financial hardship or disengagement from these vital activities. I view this legislation as a preventative measure that will help seniors stay healthy, active, and self-sufficient for a longer period of time. This is not only better in terms of quality of life for our seniors, but also will result in reduced overall financial cost to the Medicare system. I am hopeful that the demonstration project authorized by this good, bipartisan legislation will help validate this approach,” said Congressman Bilirakis.

“The American Council of the Blind commends Representatives Maloney and Bilirakis for introducing this legislation that will improve access to low vision devices for all Americans living with vision loss. Making low vision devices more affordable is imperative to increasing the independence and quality of life for people who are blind and visually impaired, and ACB and our members urge Congress to support this legislation,” said ACB Executive Director, Eric Bridges.

Original co-sponsors of the bill are Congressman Steve Cohen (D-TN), Congressman Adam Schiff (D-CA), and Congresswoman Ann Wagner (R-MO).





FAA'S FINAL STATEMENT OF ENFORCEMENT PRIORITIES REGARDING SERVICE ANIMALS

On Thursday, August 8, 2019, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) put out a final statement of Enforcement Priorities Regarding Service Animals. The statement responded to comments provided by a myriad of advocacy groups after an interim statement was issued in May of 2019. This final statement supersedes previous statements.

The new statement provides several provisions that positively impact the travel of guide dog users. First, service animal users are not required to provide advance notice to airlines before they travel with their service animals. Airlines previously proposed new policies that would require up to 48 hours of notice before a passenger flew with a service animal. However, the final statement prevents airlines from doing so for people flying with service animals. Airlines can only request such notice if the flight will exceed eight hours in length. This guideline allows for service animals to fly more easily, without having to pre-plan. In the instance where the flight will exceed eight hours, an airline can then ask for documentation that the dog will not have to relieve on the plane. Also, the airline can request early check-in for such situations.

Next, if a situation presents itself where an airline employee questions the legitimacy of a service animal, the airline employee is allowed to ask limited questions concerning proof that the dog is a service animal. This limited questioning is comparable to the three questions business owners are permitted to ask patrons under the Americans with Disabilities Act when the legitimacy of a service animal arises.

Finally, a request for documentation is only permitted when determining whether a dog poses a direct threat to other travelers or airline employees. If an employee believes a service dog poses such a threat, the airline is allowed to ask for documentation to demonstrate factors such as the existence of vaccinations, the behavior of the dog, or the history of the dog's training. The test used to determine what documentation is permissible is that the documentation must be reasonable to believe that it would assist in determining if the dog poses a direct threat. The final statement also stressed that breed and age restrictions for dogs are impermissible.

The FAA stated that a notice of proposed rulemaking should be issued in the fall of 2019. ACB encourages members to submit comments at that time. For more information, or to read the statement in its entirety, visit <https://www.transportation.gov/individuals/aviation-consumer-protection/final-statement-enforcement-priorities-service-animals>.

BRAILLE TRANSCRIPTION IS NOW AVAILABLE AT OSU

The Office of Student Life Disability Services now has an in-house braille transcriber for students requesting textbook and other materials in braille, providing a faster and more cost-effective way to serve the needs of students and university departments. Disability Services' Lisa Vogt recently became a certified braille transcriber through the National Library Service literary braille transcription program. Students who would like materials produced in braille format should email SLDS at slds-braille@osu.edu.



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

As always, thanks to the contributors: **Annie Davis, Katie Frederick, Molly Marcinick, Kelsey Nicolay, Jill Noble, Leah Noble, Ann Pimley, Vicky Prahin, and Chris Schumacher**. 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 by **November 15**.

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FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND

ACB-OHIO DATEBOOK

OCTOBER 1

ACBO/ACBI CONFERENCE
REGISTRATION BEGINS

OCTOBER 7

ACBO ON THE RADIO
VOICECORPS.ORG

OCTOBER 13

AT-LARGE MEMBER PHONE CALL

OCTOBER 15

WHITE CANE SAFETY DAY

NOVEMBER 1

DEADLINE FOR AUCTION ITEMS

NOVEMBER 4

ACBO ON THE RADIO
VOICECORPS.ORG

NOVEMBER 10

AT-LARGE MEMBER PHONE CALL

NOVEMBER 15

ACBO BOARD MEETING

NOVEMBER 15

OHIO CONNECTION
NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

NOVEMBER 15-17

ACBO / ACBI CONFERENCE
CROWNE PLAZA NORTH, COLUMBUS, OH

DECEMBER 2

ACBO ON THE RADIO
VOICECORPS.ORG

DECEMBER 8

AT-LARGE MEMBER PHONE CALL

JANUARY 6

ACBO ON THE RADIO
VOICECORPS.ORG

JANUARY 17-20

WINTER SPORTS RETREAT

