

**Advocating for  
Independence, Equality, Opportunity**

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**Vol. III No.**

**I**

**February 2005**

**ALOHA!** The Hawaii Association of the Blind (HAB) is proud to introduce everyone to the **HAB Forum**. This newsletter is published twice a year.

HAB is an organization comprised of blind and sighted members, who strongly believe in advocating for independence, equality, and opportunity for all blind persons. The officers are:

- President: Warren Toyama, vendor at the Tripler Army Medical Center
- First Vice-President: Filo Tu, President and CEO of Blind Vendors Ohana
- Second Vice-President & Scholarship Chairman: Don Thomson, Professor at Leeward Community College
- Secretary: Maureen Sheedy
- Treasurer: Amelia Cetrone, retired hotel CEO

- Board Members:
  - Myles Tamashiro, vendor at Kona Airport
  - Norman Ota, dark room technician at Tripler Army Medical Center
  - Nora Ota-Burrows, vending stand reliever
  - Miriam Onomura, vendor at Municipal Building

### **PRESIDENT'S CORNER – Warren Toyama**



Aloha! The infusion of new energy into our organization is very noticeable! During the past year we have added a good number of active, new members who attend HAB meetings regularly and, more importantly, eagerly take part in committee work. This development is a very bright spot for HAB and I encourage all members to look at what is happening, attend monthly meetings, and become active in some committee.

Louise Horio (a new member) has been appointed Chair of the Transportation Committee. This new committee will deal with issues affecting such things as audible traffic signals, Handi-Van problems, problems with The Bus, and any other issue affecting the travels of blind people. Taxis, airlines and cruises will all fall under the purview of this new Committee. Good Luck Louise!

Ronald Flormata has been hired as HAB's computer instructor. Any HAB member wanting to learn the basics of computer usage is encouraged to contact Ron and arrange for a class schedule. There is no charge to HAB members as the organization is paying for the classes. To date, the members who have taken lessons from Ron are: Walter Ishikawa, Norman Ota, Miriam Onomura, Dolores Rupard, and Nadia Schenk.

This summer's American Council of the Blind (ACB) National Convention will be held in Las Vegas, and HAB plans to have a sizeable delegation attend. The value of attending the convention is the wonderful opportunity to learn from blind ACB members from all over the country about all kinds of things dealing with blindness – employment, equipment, training, blind issues, attitudes, problems, etc. Plan To Make This TRIP!

- **Dinner with Miyagi Students**

On Wednesday, December 1, 2004, ten members of HAB had dinner at the Pagoda Restaurant with four blind Japanese students and five of their teachers. The nine-member group came to Hawaii for a three-day tour of Honolulu.

We encouraged the students to learn as much as possible while in school, and to begin learning the value of forming their own organization of blind people to advance the cause of blind independence in Japan.

The group is from Miyagi School for the Blind in Sendai, Japan. Mr. Kaoru Takahashi, who teaches English at the school, was the contact person with HAB.

### **•CCB Celebrates 70 Years**

In late October 2004, three HAB members went to Los Angeles to join the festivities of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the California Council of the Blind (CCB). Norman Ota, Ronald Flormata, and Warren Toyama represented HAB at the convention. Warren, along with Presidents from Oregon and Washington State, spoke on some of the affiliates' activities.

**SOCIAL COMMITTEE**  
**Chairperson**

- Myles Tamashiro,



On November 27, 2004 HAB held its Thanksmas dinner at the Pagoda Hotel. This annual holiday event was a huge success with lots of good food and fellowship. Julia Toyama and many other members of HAB prepared the food, and what a feast it was! Nora Ota and Louise Horio did a great job in handling the grab bag game. The most popular grab bag gift was a large pack of toilet paper! The singing of Christmas carols brought in the Christmas spirit. Donations were collected and sent to the Lokahi Fund to help make some people's holidays brighter.

Our annual New Year's party was a tremendous success! It was held at the Pagoda Ballroom. Sixty-eight people enjoyed a fabulous buffet dinner. The prizes donated for the Bingo game were unbelievable! Warren Toyama put together another exciting raffle. Nora Ota was the big \$100 raffle winner. Five people donated \$20 each toward the raffle prize – Toshi Takano, Myles Tamashiro,

Don Thomson, Warren Toyama, and Filo Tu. Thank you gentlemen for your generosity! The raffle raised \$520 for the Social Committee. Thanks everyone for a great party!

**FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE** – Myles Tamashiro,  
Chairperson

This year the Fundraising Committee is planning a chili and bread sale from Zippy's. The sale is scheduled for April 15 through June 15, 2005. Proceeds from the sale will be used to implement various projects planned by HAB. Stay tuned for more details to come in the very near future.

**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE** – Norman Ota,  
Chairperson



The Membership Committee is very proud of the pamphlet it developed. This pamphlet briefly

describes the philosophy, purpose, and activities of HAB. This writing is a condensed version of the HAB handbook. The pamphlet was developed to enable prospective members to have a quick glimpse of HAB.

In late October 2004, I attended the California Council of the Blind's (CCB) 70<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention. I was able to sit in a meeting of the Membership Committee of CCB. It was very interesting and informative because we were able to share ideas on recruiting new members and enriching current membership.

This past year we were successful in bringing many new members into HAB. These new members have been very active in various committees. The Membership Committee has many great ideas and activities planned for 2005. Stay tuned!

**TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE – Ronald Flormata,  
Webmaster**



Aloha! This past year has been good, especially for our website. It has opened HAB to the rest of the world. I am very excited about this, and I will strive even harder to bring important and up-to-date information to the blind and visually impaired.

The most exciting development about our website is the number of hits (or visits) since we had the “new look” put in place on April 6, 2004. It is simply remarkable how we were able to attract more than 1,100 visitors in just 8 months!

New columnists are always welcome to the HAB site. I am happy to have Yolanda Phelan join our website. Her new column is called “Blindsight News” and she will be sharing her experiences as a visually impaired person traveling around Honolulu and other destinations. You can also read about her travels in this newsletter. Good Luck Yolanda!

We encourage everyone to visit the website at: <http://www.acb.org/hawaii>. The HAB website is

residing in the (computer) server courtesy of the American Council of the Blind. The site is updated frequently as the need arises. We invite everyone to come visit and tell us what you think we can do to improve on the service. For comments and suggestions, please contact the HAB webmaster, Ronald Flormata via email at [comhaus1@hotmail.com](mailto:comhaus1@hotmail.com).

**INTERNAL SUPPORT COMMITTEE – Beth Flormata, Chairperson**



The Internal Support Committee was created in 2004 and includes Ronald Flormata and Dolores Rupard. This new Committee is tasked with providing assistance and support to HAB members in whatever way it can. I invite all HAB members to contact any Committee member to let us know how we could be of service to you. I would also like to invite any interested HAB member to join our Committee. Let us all unite to help our other members achieve their goals. I look forward to hearing from you!

## Vending News – Filo Tu

Happy New Year to all HAB members. I hope 2005 will be a good year for the blind vending program. Last year was a very tough year for blind vendors. This was the first time that blind vendors felt intimidated in their own program. It is very hard for blind vendors because most of us have been in the program for twenty or more years. Then all of a sudden, someone who the program calls its Business Enterprise Manager, comes in and tries to change something that has been working fine for more than 65 years!

I believe the question that the vendors should ask is “WHY is this person doing this”? Well, one thing is for sure – it’s for CONTROL, CONTROL, CONTROL!

It is very important for ALL blind vendors to come together. I really feel that the Business Enterprise Manager of our program is trying very hard to divide us. Remember, this is OUR program. He is working for US. I don’t think he feels that he is working for us – maybe they didn’t tell him that. So, we just have to keep on reminding him that he is working for US!

I would also like to remind all vendors that it is very important for everyone to learn and understand your rights in the vending program. Things are not like before when the Business Enterprise Managers were out to help the

vendors. Today, the Business Enterprise Manager is here to give orders. So, **as long as you don't know your rights, you will continue to have a hard time as a vendor.**

### **Hawaii Association of Parents of the Visually Impaired (HAPVI) – Myles Tamashiro, President**

HAPVI's Annual Convention took place on Saturday, September 18, 2004 at the Pagoda Hotel. Participants were able to voice their concerns regarding teacher shortages, recruitment of teachers of the visually impaired, service delivery and more to Dr. Paul Ban of the State Special Education Department, and Sydney Freitas the Administrator of the Hawaii Center for the Deaf and Blind (HCDB).

Sue Sugimura of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped presented information on services and materials offered by the library. She also addressed the new library hours. Parents were concerned about no Saturday hours, but the library does have an extended day on Tuesdays, and materials can always be sent directly to member's homes.

Amy Downard provided information on Orientation and Mobility services and updates regarding the DOE staff. Currently, the Honolulu District is still seeking a

third Itinerant Teacher of the Visually Impaired. All other positions are filled statewide.

A new administrator position has been created at the Hawaii Center for the Deaf and Blind. Sydney Freitas will continue to be an administrator at HCDB focusing on the deaf population needs. The new administrator will focus on the blind population needs. This new administrator should be confirmed and hired by February 2005.

HAPVI continues to meet several times throughout the year for support, advocacy, and fellowship. Our next meeting will be at the HCDB on Saturday, February 26, 2005 from 10 am – 12 pm in the library. For more details regarding HAPVI events, contact HAPVI President Myles Tamashiro at 626-0535.

### **Keiki and Parents of the Visually Impaired (KAPVI) – Carol Hotta**

KAPVI was started on Maui by a small group of parents and a teacher more than five years ago. Marge Masterson, the current President, several other parents, teachers, and students had gotten together to fly kites because one student had no idea what a kite was. As a result of this get-together, KAPVI was born.

We have grown since those early days, and it is an exciting thing for me to see the next generation taking over. Jody Cambra, who was my student just a few years ago, is our current Vice-President and Social Director. She arranges parties, outings, and other activities.

The students look forward most to the Christmas party, when thanks to HAB, it has become a tradition for the students to receive a disposable camera at the beginning of the party. We have gotten some really interesting shots – some of them a test of skill for the sighted parents and teachers to see if they can aim their faces at the camera lenses as the students take pictures of us. And we have some really wild BINGO games!

Some of the other traditional activities include the Valentine celebration usually involving go-carts (yes, even our blind students love them!). At Easter the kids hunt for Easter eggs. There are whale watches, the Lions fishing tournament (where KAPVI kids have won top honors for the last three years), the Halloween pumpkin decorating contest, and the Lions Thanksgiving celebration.

We believe that KAPVI should stay connected with other organizations serving the blind such as HAB, HAPVI and the Lions Clubs. For more information on KAPVI on Maui, please call President Marge Masterson at (808) 669-0928.

## **SHAER Report – Amy Downard**

The State of Hawaii Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind (SHAER) is an organization of professionals here in Hawaii who provide services to the blind and visually impaired population. This includes teachers of the visually impaired, rehabilitation teachers, orientation and mobility instructors, and more.

SHAER held its elections on December 10, 2004 at the Hawaii Center for the Deaf and Blind (HCDB). We'd like to congratulate and welcome our new officers:

President – Kristen Oien (HCDB)

Vice-President – Melissa Geyman (Leeward District)

Secretary – Karen Kojima (Leeward District)

Treasurer – Debra Pang (Windward District)

Board Members – Christian Yates (Central District),  
Naomi Imai (Ho'opono)

Shirley Ching will continue to be the Membership Chair, and Amy Downard will enjoy the title of Past-President.

Also, congratulations to the 9 Teachers of the Visually Impaired in our state who recently completed their Orientation & Mobility programs with the University of

Northern Colorado. This is a great step in the right direction of providing all necessary services to our students in the DOE.

### **Visually Impaired News from the DOE- Amy Downard**



Kristin Oien, a teacher of the visually impaired and an orientation and mobility instructor, has been added to the Administration of the Hawaii Center for the Deaf and Blind. Kristin will oversee the state Visual Impairment and Blind Issues, while Sydney Freitas will stay on as Principal of the HCDB and she will continue to address the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Issues.

In November 2004, about 20 blind and visually impaired students statewide participated in Kerry Kolmer's "Safe Without Sight" workshop at the Queen Kapiolani Hotel in Waikiki. Students improved overall safety awareness skills, learned specific self-defense moves, and worked on night mobility skills in Waikiki. Some students

were even interviewed on two local news channels! This event was sponsored by HCDB.

## **Blindsight News – Yolanda Phelan**

- Travels Around Town

I must say that walking down Kuhio Avenue is a real challenge because the sidewalks are no longer straight! They curve like a snake from one end of Waikiki to the other. That is not the only challenge – there are fire hydrants in the middle of the sidewalks, along with the trees and poles, and in some places there are clusters of poles (not sure which ones are bus stops). Speaking of bus stops, several of them are not where they used to be. That’s not all! There are lots of pot holes along the way, plus the irregular shaped stones (flagstones) are not smooth in several places and your cane will jam-up. I have no idea who got the bid for this job, but the workers have nothing to be proud of. They really could have used a blind consultant. So, please be extra careful if you find yourself walking down Waikiki. I rate this job “no stars” because beauty came before safety!

- Restaurants

TGI Fridays on Kuhio Avenue is in the process of updating their Braille menu. The Fridays on Ward Avenue has no Braille or large print menus. I was told they don't mind reading it to you.

### **Auntie Weezie's Corner – Louise Horio**



Aloha and welcome to Auntie Weezie's Corner! I hope to share some recipes for living that will feed the body, the mind, and the soul. Happy 2005!

#### **Surprise Cake**

1 box devil's food cake mix  
4 eggs, add one a time.

1 can any flavor Comstock pie filling.  
Mix everything together and bake as directed on box.  
Top with Cool Whip or Confectioner's Sugar. (Ice cream is nice too!)

What's the surprise? You don't need water or oil to make this cake. Even kids can make this one! Enjoy!!

### Auntie Weezie's Teriyaki Sauce

2 cups Aloha Shoyu

2 cups Sugar (brown or white)

½ cup Sweet Drinking Wine (such as Sangria or Morgan David)

2 or more cloves Garlic, chopped

Thumb-size ginger, peeled and chopped

½ cup Green Onion, chopped

(Optional: 1-2 Hawaiian Chili Pepper, or 1 tsp Hot Chili Sauce)

Just add everything together to make the sauce!

### **Thought for the month:**

DOUBT is when you ask questions.

UNBELIEF is when you don't listen.

### **New Year's Greetings**

Akemashite omedeto gozaimasu (Japanese)

Hauoli makahiki hou (Hawaiian)

Manuia le tausaga fou (Samoan)

Shinnen kwai lo (Mandarin)

She heh pok mahi badayo (Korean)

Manigong bagong taon (Tagalog)

Gung hee fat choy (Cantonese)

Chuk man nam moy (Vietnamese)

Ofa ke ke ma'u ha ta'u fo'ou monuia mo fie fia foki  
(Tongan)

## **HAB Scholarship**

The Hawaii Association of the Blind is offering scholarships to legally blind college students who are also Hawaii residents. The students may be attending any accredited university or college regardless of location. May 15<sup>th</sup> and November 15<sup>th</sup> are the deadlines for Fall and Spring applications.

Scholarships may be offered on an annual or a semi-annual basis as determined by the scholarship committee. The committee reserves the right not only to accept or deny scholarship applications, but also to determine the amount and duration of the scholarship. Scholarship recipients must re-apply in order to be considered for future scholarships. Those who are denied a scholarship are eligible to re-apply in the future. Scholarships will not exceed one-year in duration and are not expected to be less than \$500 per semester.

- **Eligibility Requirements:**
  - Must be legally blind as defined by national standards.

- Must be planning to attend college for the period which he/she is applying.
- Must be a resident of the State of Hawaii.
- Must not be a member of any national organization other than The American Council of the Blind, the parent organization of the Hawaii Association of the Blind (since other national organizations have their own scholarships).
- Persons who are not affiliated with any national organizations of blind people are encouraged to apply.

For further inquires, Phone: (808) 455-0367 or Email ([thomsond@hawaii.edu](mailto:thomsond@hawaii.edu))

## **College Scholarship Application Form**

Hawaii Association of the Blind

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

College: \_\_\_\_\_ Major (if  
any): \_\_\_\_\_

Completed Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Credit  
Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

- Applicants must submit a letter of no more than two pages describing his/her educational goals, and informing us of information he/she deems relevant to the application.
- Applicant must provide the scholarship committee with official college transcripts. If the applicant has not attended college or is in the first semester of attendance, official high-school transcripts are required.
- Applicant must submit at least two letters of reference, one of which must come from a professor or teacher.
- The committee reserves the right to ask the applicant for further information.

- Relevant false information given will cause any scholarship recipient to have his/her scholarship terminated and a legal action will be taken to reclaim money already awarded.
- Information omitted which is relevant to the requirements of the scholarship shall be considered to be falsely presented, and thus will result in the same penalty.

Please send scholarship applications to:

Hawaii Association of the Blind

College Scholarship Committee

1255 Nuuanu Avenue, #1102E

Honolulu, Hawaii 96817