

HAB FORUM

HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF THE BLIND
Advocating for
Independence, Equality, Opportunity

Vol. V No. II

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2007

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
- Landa Phelan, self-employed
- Ronald Flormata – HAB Webmaster

PRESIDENT'S CORNER – Warren Toyama



There are two major projects being planned that will profoundly affect HAB in a positive way.

The first is a 3-day workshop to discuss the ACB Vocational Rehabilitation White Paper. It will be held over the 2008 Martin Luther King holiday weekend, Friday night to Monday. At the Minneapolis ACB National Convention, Paul Edwards of Florida agreed to come and lead the discussions on the 12-page White Paper.

The significance of the White Paper is that ACB members will have a clear understanding of the basic differences between ACB and NFB. Paul Edwards is a longtime friend of Hawaii, and has been to HAB's convention as ACB President. Keep looking for more details on this important project.

The second project concerns Leadership Training. HAB has a number of potential leaders but lacks the training

capability for them. Thus, I spoke with then ACB President Chris Gray about setting up a Western Regional Leadership Conference to benefit HAB. HAB is offering a \$3,000 grant to get this project going. Right now, a committee of leaders from the Western Region is being organized: Chris Gray (heading the Committee), Sue Ammeter and Cindy Van Winkle (Washington State), Jeff Thom (California), Mitch Pomerantz (ACB President), Sandy Sanderson (Alaska), Melanie Branson (ACB), and myself from Hawaii. Others from Oregon, Montana, etc. may be invited also. HAB is indeed in the forefront of some big ACB happenings!

HAB Celebrates 40th Anniversary – Warren Toyama

For the past 40 years the Hawaii Association of the Blind has been the most influential force for positive social change in the lives of Hawaii's blind citizens. Our administrative, legislative, and judicial endeavors have brought about many changes in the way Hawaii's blind citizens perceive themselves and how the sighted community view the blind.

The 40th annual convention of HAB was held on Saturday, March 17, 2007 at the Pagoda Hotel. The daytime program was very well attended, and the evening banquet drew a record crowd of HAB supporters. Also, HAB hosted a record number of out-of-state guests: Al

and Connie Gil from Seattle, Washington; Robert and Donna Seliger from Des Moines, Iowa; Tommy and Kim Venable from Terrytown, Louisiana; Joe and Janet Wetmore from Chicago, Illinois; Jeff and Leslie Thom from Sacramento, California; Mitch and Donna Pomerantz from Los Angeles, California; Ardis Bazyn and Kevin Berkery from Burbank, California; Robert Humphreys from Washington D.C.; and ACB President Christopher Gray from San Francisco, California. Mitch has since been elected ACB President.

The day's program was a moving experience.

Superintendent of Education, Pat Hamamoto, addressed the convention and pledged to be back next year. Mr. Joe Cordova, Administrator of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, gave his usual inspiring talk. Don Thomson, our Second Vice-President, traveled down memory lane and gave a wonderful talk on HAB's early activities.

The crowning event for our 40th convention celebration was a wonderful banquet. 134 of us filled the ballroom to enjoy a sumptuous steak and shrimp dinner. Mr. Robert Humphreys did a masterful job as the M.C. HAB presented monetary grants to: the teachers of the Visually Impaired from all districts, the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Ho'opono, and the Hawaii Center for the Deaf and Blind.

The Eva H. Smyth Award was presented to: Mr. Joe Cordova, Landa Phelan, and Myles Tamashiro.

The Hawaii Association of Parents of the Visually Impaired (HAPVI) presented a plaque to HAB for 40 years of service to the blind of Hawaii. Also, the teachers of the Visually Impaired presented HAB President Warren Toyama with a Koa plaque, thanking him for his many years of leadership as HAB founder.

As an outgrowth of the banquet, State Senators Willie Espero and Suzanne Chun-Oakland arranged for HAB to receive a congratulatory plaque presented in the Senate chambers during the Senate session. Warren Toyama, Filo Tu, and Myles Tamashiro also received individual plaques from the Senate.

This past convention was a momentous celebration, and we all look forward to many more exciting and productive years to come!

ACB 2007 Convention in Minneapolis – Art Cabanilla

As I readied myself for the long journey to Minneapolis, I thought to myself: what would I want to do or see there? The first thought that came to mind was access technology for the blind, and the second was

workshops/events that dealt with self-employed blind individuals. Since my day-to-day work revolves around the training and/or selling of access technology for the blind through a company I operate and manage (Six Sense Solutions), this seemed a logical plan of action.

One of the first events I attended was a breakfast with Independent Visually Impaired Enterprisers (IVIE). These blind and visually impaired entrepreneurs ranged from computer/technology specialists to home-based business, and everything in between. Needless to say, I wasted no time in becoming a member myself. A key attraction for me was the support by other members in the way of sharing personal experiences with other up and coming blind entrepreneurs. I was also asked to participate in an interview for an upcoming issue of IVIE's newsletter...I anxiously await my copy of the issue.

Another event I attended was the Blind Information Technology Specialists (BITS) breakfast meeting. I also went to a few other workshops about accessible cellphones and other devices that would help aid in the day-to-day living of the blind.

Aside from meetings and events, I had fun too. I went on a City Tour of Minneapolis, where we toured sites such as old Minneapolis, parts of St. Paul, and their many lakes and rivers. In addition to this, I toured local pubs and

restaurants, meeting old and new friends for lunch and dinner, which made for an interesting week of conversation and camaraderie.

I was also able to visit a close friend who lives in the St. Paul area. To get to their home, another friend from Hawaii and I utilized the local bus system, which was much like our own system in Hawaii. Getting around really wasn't too difficult, and it seemed many other conventioners felt the same. The streets of Minneapolis were filled with fellow conventioners and their guide dogs or canes, going here and there and enjoying themselves. The ease and pleasantries of getting around was made possible by the many volunteers that were posted here and there to help at a moment's notice. The hotel staff were well prepared to assist you, and the elevators were extremely accessible, saying the floor numbers and short descriptions of what you may find on each floor.

Convention week was packed with an array of different events and workshops, and all sorts of folks with different backgrounds.

Mark your calendars for next year's convention. Join the rest of the Hawaii team as we make our way to Kentucky for ACB's next

National Convention. Plan to be a part of it all, and don't miss out!

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE – Myles Tamashiro



The fundraiser for this year was selling Zippy's famous chili, and banana or chocolate bread. The sale ran from April to June. Thanks to Norman Ota and Amelia Cetrone for coordinating all the details.

Mahalo to everyone for making this fundraiser a huge success!

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE – Ronald Flormata, HAB Webmaster



Owasys 22c - Talking Cellphone

One of the most eagerly anticipated highlights of the ACB Annual convention is the exhibit. Here, you can actually see, listen, and try for yourself the latest and greatest new assistive technology available on the market.

The 46th Annual Convention of ACB was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, and it was teeming with many

manufacturers and providers of technology such as Freedom Scientific, Humanware, Sendero, and MaxiAids to name a few. I always look forward to exhibits about accessible cellphones. Some carriers claim to have accessible cellphones but the truth is they are not quite so.

One exhibitor at the 2007 Convention stood out to me, Capital Accessibility, represented by it's founder Janina Sajka. She demonstrated their accessible product, the Owasys 22c cellphone.

This phone boasts of no special features and is indeed a basic cellphone unit. It is however screenless and talking. Who needs the display anyway if you are blind? What makes it special is that all buttons are accessible through voice. Unlike some units which require a separate purchase of a \$300 screen reader software that needs to be installed, this phone comes with the hardware and software in one piece. It is ready to use out of the box. Here is a list of the phone's features:

- . Talking feature: speaks out all the buttons, menus, commands, and messages
- . Well-spaced raised buttons
- . 250 Phone book entries: enter and store up to 250 names and numbers; when a call is received the caller's name may be spoken out
- . Send/Receive text messages: it reads the text

- . Lock/Unlock feature: lock buttons so you don't accidentally press them if it is in your bag/pocket
- . Upgradable: unit's software can be upgraded when new programs are available; features can be downloaded from the internet and installed on the unit when you connect the phone to your computer via cable supplied upon purchase

Some people may find the voice a little hard to understand especially if you're used to the Eloquent speech synthesizer implemented by the JAWS screen reader. Owasys 22c uses Babel software and uses a woman's voice.

For more info visit their website at <http://www.screenlessphone.com>.

The unit cost is \$549.99 without a service plan. However, if you sign up with T-Mobile with a two year contract, the price goes down to \$249.99. Please note that the Owasys 22c is a GSM (Global Standard for Mobile) and thus can only be used with AT&T/Cingular and T-Mobile.

2007 HAB Convention

This was the fourth time I've been to an HAB convention, but there was something different about this year's event compared to the previous ones. Was it just me or did

everyone have the same feeling? There was so much excitement and joy in the air; guests and members alike were so excited to celebrate 40 years of the blind movement in Hawaii. It had the most attendance from within the islands and from the mainland. You have to be there!

As we have successfully proved from last year's HAB convention, it is possible to document convention happenings in audio and share them with the rest of the world, particularly the blind community. By publishing the actual footage of the 40th HAB annual convention in audio format on the Web, we encourage everyone to join us via cyberspace and re-live the convention. Hear all the speeches and messages from distinguished personalities like Senators Daniel Inouye and Daniel Akaka, Governor Linda Lingle, and Mayor Mufi Hanneman congratulating HAB for 40 years of advocating independence, equality and opportunity for the blind. Also available on the website is the video of Jim Kahue's interview with Chris Gray. Chris, the immediate past president of ACB, talks about blindness and issues affecting the blind community in America.

We encourage everyone to visit the HAB website at: <http://www.acb.org/hawaii> For comments and suggestions, please contact HAB webmaster, Ronald Flormata via email at

comhaus1@hotmail.com

SOCIAL COMMITTEE - Myles Tamashiro

The Social Committee has a few upcoming events. We are looking at a possible summer social function. Members can look forward to our annual Thanksmas dinner party in late November or early December. The members of this committee are Nora Ota, Dolores Rupard, Landa Phelan, Beth Flormata, Julia Toyama, and Myles Tamashiro.

Vending News – Filo Tu



How lucky are we? Well, let me say that we are luckier than many people out there in the world.

I will not say that the Blind Vending Program is one of the best things that has ever happened for those who are in it, but let me say that it is the best things that has ever happened to all of us in the program.

The Blind Vending Program has given blind people an opportunity to be part of the tax payers in every state in the country, but more than that, it gives us the

feeling of being a part of society. This program was here way before us. It was founded in 1936. That is a long time for a program to survive considering some of the difficult times this country has encountered from the 1940's until now.

I wonder if this is the reason why we the blind vendors are taking this program for granted? I surely hope not. This program has been under attack for a long time, and I believe it's time for all of us to be concerned and do whatever is necessary to protect the vending program for the blind.

On June 18, Warren and I received a letter from our attorney informing us that the U.S. Supreme Court has turned down our request for the high court to rule on the Tamashiro case. Losing is not an easy thing for us to take because we know that we are correct on this issue and we should have won this case.

I would like to congratulate all the attorneys for their hard work. I know that all of you put in a lot of time and effort into this case. One thing that we should all remember is that we did not lose the case on merits. So if we go back, and I know we will, I believe we will win.

I would also like to thank all of the vendors who

participated in this case. It is a sad day, but as you well know, nothing comes easy for the blind. I think we should never give up as long as we believe we are correct. If and when we do go back to court, I believe we will come away the winners.

ADA Update – Eric Bridges, ACB Director of Advocacy and Governmental Affairs

Members of Congress unveiled their versions of the ADA restoration Act. Representatives Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI) along with Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) introduced the ADA legislation. These two bills seek to ensure that the ADA is interpreted as broadly as originally intended by Congress.

Over the past several years there have been some disturbing Supreme Court decisions that have had a considerable impact on people who have a variety of disabilities. These rulings hold that employees who are discriminated against based upon their disability still may not be qualified to sue their employers for such discrimination. Courts have based these decisions on a belief that some individuals are not “disabled enough” to be covered by the ADA’s protection

against discrimination. These court decisions could have serious consequences for people with visual impairments in the very near future. For instance, people with low vision are at risk for employment discrimination due to their vision loss may be denied a legal remedy if they happen to use low vision aids. Judges may view the employee's use of low vision aids or other assistive technology to perform tasks as proof that the employee isn't really disabled.

In addition to the Supreme Court rulings there have been some rulings concerning lower court decisions that have limited the applicability of the ADA to commercial businesses and other public accommodations when their sole means of conducting commerce is through the use of the internet. We are waiting for the publication of the Department of Justice's proposed regulations which are expected in the next few months. It is our understanding that these regulations will include provisions to rectify this issue. If for some reason these regulations don't include the provisions, ACB will seek a legislative solution through the ADA Restoration Act or through other legislation.

ACB feels that it is appropriate to support the two versions of the ADA Restoration Act that were introduced, but will continue to negotiate with

members of Congress to insure that the needs of the blind and visually impaired community are met. There will be more updates concerning this issue in the coming months.

Hawaii Association of Parents of the Visually Impaired (HAPVI) – Amy Downard



Got brownies? Well, if it's chocolate you're craving, call your nearest HAPVI member! The next fundraising drive starts soon and brownies will be sold to raise money for HAPVI's ongoing events and activities. Come out and support the team and soothe that sweet tooth as well!

HAPVI will be hosting it's annual convention on Saturday, September 8, 2007 from 8am – 2:30pm at the Pagoda Hotel. Convention presenters include DOE Superintendent Pat Hamamoto, Aida Yoshida from Family Protection and Advocacy, Fusako Miyashiro from the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, and HAB members Julia Toyama and Filo Tu to discuss attitudes relating to blindness. The cost is \$25 per person, which includes registration, conference

materials, and lunch. If you would like to join or renew your HAPVI membership at the convention, the cost is \$5 per family. Please confirm your participation by September 1, 2007 by calling HAPVI President Myles Tamashiro at 626-0535.

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



KAPVI students took big awards this year at the annual Fishing Tournament held by the Lions Clubs of Maui. KAPVI students won six of the possible nine trophies in three categories. Winners for the Smallest Fish were: 1st Place – Karl Calimag, a first grader at Wailuku Elementary School, 2nd Place –

Liam Nicol of Kula Elementary School, 3rd Place – Nicole Masterson of Honokaiwai. Winners for the Largest Fish were: 1st Place – Kamakoa Almasin of Makawao School, 3rd Place – Lokahi Bissan, freshman at Maui High School. And Jody Cambra of Makawao came in 2nd Place for catching the Most Fish (88 fish caught). Congratulations to all in the Fishing Team!

KAPVI had a summer Go-Cart activity in July and are planning to have another one on September 29. A pumpkin decorating contest will be held on October 26, a Thanksgiving activity with the Maui Lions Clubs will be in November, and a Christmas party is tentatively set for December 15. Please join us if you are on Maui by calling either of the Maui teachers for more information, or emailing

carol_hotta@notes.k12.hi.us

or

argaret_greiner@notes.k12.hi.us

State of Hawaii Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (SHAER) – Amy Downard

Hey folks! SHAER is our state chapter of Visual Impairment teachers, Rehabilitation Counselors, and others providing services to the blind and visually impaired. The current SHAER President, Christian Yates, is hard at work preparing for our next conference event.

Mark your calendars. . . SHAER will be hosting a one-day conference on Friday, February 15, 2008 at the Pacific Beach Hotel in Waikiki from 8am – 4pm. The topic will focus on

Orientation and Mobility for Early Childhood and/or Clients with Severe Disabilities. The presenter, Kevin Stewart, is an O&M Specialist and professor from Toronto, Canada. Registration information and further details will be distributed soon.

Blindsight News – Iolana (Landa) Phelan

Hawaii Association of the Blind

I am now a proud member of HAB, and was honored to be a recipient of HAB's highest award, the Eva H. Smyth Award, at their 40th Convention. I was so surprised and shocked. This award was named after a teacher whose contributions to the blind community made a difference. I was also given the honor of becoming a member of HAB's Board of Directors. I believe in the philosophy of this organization and ACB, and I look forward to serving and advocating for the rights, equality, and opportunity for the blind citizens of Hawaii.

Blind Awareness

I believe that educating the public on blind awareness is necessary since there is a lack of education in the work

force as well as in the public sector. This year, I have given presentations on sighted guide techniques, safety tips, some ADA laws, and Guide Dog etiquette to students at Helemano Plantation who are studying to be caregivers. I also met with the management and staff at the Sheraton Hilton Waikiki to help them host the PAC Rim conference. I also did some outreach at a health fair put on by the Hawaii Kai Lions Club at the Hawaii Kai shopping center, and I provided training to the management and staff at Willows Restaurant. Soon I will be contributing my expertise to the City about its bus service, and as a new member of HAPVI I look forward to supporting this group.

ACB Convention

My attendance at the ACB convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota proved to be very fruitful and inspiring. I attended some technology workshops, and learned that larger companies are focusing on making their products accessible to the blind. For example, companies like Whirlpool and Maytag have washers that feature dials that click or beep, and stoves that are not digital. I also learned about the Scrip Talk Station which is an audible prescription reader. It is light weight, portable, has a natural voice, an earphone for privacy, and it reads the entire label. I really did enjoy all the exhibits.

I had a full schedule at the convention. I enjoyed going to mixers and meeting people from other states. I attended the IVIE breakfast and soon became a member. I made some new friends from South Dakota, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania, and will keep in touch. I realized that some issues we have here in Hawaii are the same elsewhere. I was so busy that I did not get to go to the Great Mall...oh well, money saved!

I had also made time for fun and toured the city. With the little sight I have left, the city looked like a lot of golf courses with trees, green grass, and lakes in the middle of it all. I really liked St. Paul with all its old houses. A friend and I got to have dinner with some friends in a 15th century home, and I loved it. My guide dog Miss Pearline loved it too. She got to visit with other guide dogs and finally relax. She works overtime at conventions and is such a professional. There were hundreds of other guide dogs at the convention, and I have never seen so many dogs at one time.

The hotel was well prepared. I really liked the fact that the elevators were audible and told you what floor you were on. The staff was very friendly and happy to assist right down to the last day. The local merchants were also very accommodating since they all had Braille menus but not too many large print menus.

I enjoyed sharing this eventful experience with all the other HAB members that attended. Warren and Julie Toyama, and Filo Tu were always there for us, checking and making sure all our needs were taken care of. But, I think Julie forgot the rice pot. I went through some withdrawal...there was no rice or spam on any menus anywhere! Would I do it again? YOU BETCHA!!

Auntie Weezie's Corner – Louise Horio



Aloha ka kou! Boy, does time fly for those of us who are busy, eh? This has certainly been an exciting year for me. I am now a board member of the Statewide Independent Living council.

Prepared for a Hurricane? How did you prepare for Hurricane Flossie? Were you ready with enough canned food? Here are a few hints for the next emergency:

- . Get a crank radio that does not need batteries. There are even ones that are solar powered
- . How about flashlights that require no batteries?
- . If the hurricane comes too close, please wear your covered shoes when you wait out the storm. Our habit of

leaving our shoes outside or near the door may catch us by surprise if any of your windows shatter. Being sight impaired, you may not be able to go across the room to retrieve your footwear. What if you had to run outside?

. Fruits like bananas, apples, and oranges do not need refrigeration. Peanut butter and jelly come in handy too, with crackers...yum!

. Don't forget to stock extra toilet paper, diapers in ascending sizes, wipes, and feminine products when items are on sale. They don't rot, and will be in great demand in emergencies.

Avocado Season Many of us are either lucky to have a tree or a friend who shares the fruit. How many have you wasted because you cut it in half before it was ready to eat? All you had was two rubbery halves of green avocado. Well, do not throw it away...just keep the seed in the fruit, close up the two halves together, and set aside on the counter. It should be ready to eat in a day or two. It will not discolor and will taste just as great in a salad, sandwich or on toast.

Got the Munchies? Do you shop at Costco and buy huge bags of pecans or walnuts for recipes? Now you have a lot of leftover nuts to eat. Here is a recipe to solve the problem of what kind of snack to eat when you get the

munchies: Glazed Pecans 1 stick of margarine or butter
pinch of salt 2 egg whites 3 cups pecans
1 cup sugar

- . Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Melt butter in a 9x13 baking pan.
- . Beat egg whites to a soft peak. Add sugar and salt, continue to beat until stiff. Fold in pecans with wooden spoon.
- . Spread into melted butter, bake for 30 minutes. Stir every 10 minutes. Remove to wax paper. When cool break into pieces.

I don't always use a wooden spoon, and I leave the pecans in the pan to cool, giving it one last stir after removing them from the oven so they don't stick together.

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 15th and November 15th 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)

College Scholarship Application Form

Hawaii Association of the Blind

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

College: _____ Major (if any): _____

Completed Hours: _____ Class: _____ Credit

- 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