
HAB FORUM

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

Vol. VII No. I

March 2009

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, Retired Professor
 - Secretary: Maureen Sheedy, Ho'opono Volunteer
 - 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
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PRESIDENT'S CORNER – Warren Toyama

Looking back at 2008, HAB experienced a banner year in terms of the quantity and quality of projects undertaken and completed. The principal goal for 2009 is to solidify the gains we made in 2008.



The most important area of growth for HAB is in the area of sending many members away for leadership training education and exposure to the many facets of the blindness community. Now those same members who traveled last year must put to use at home what they learned while on their trips. We must provide them with the opportunities to utilize and perfect the skills they picked up last year. This is a call to service to all members who traveled – please volunteer!

HAB will continue to send members away to the mainland for training and exposure to new experiences. Let's all have a great 2009 together!

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE – Myles Tamashiro

Congratulations to you all for another successful Zippy's chili and bread sale. We'd like to send special thanks to Norman Ota and Amelia Cetrone for coordinating the sale. Stay tuned for more opportunities to come.

**SOCIAL COMMITTEE – Beth Flormata**

The HAB Social Committee would like to thank everyone who helped make the 2008 Thanksmas party a night to remember. Whether you attended as a member with your guests, or helped set-

up and clean-up the Ho'opono Cafeteria/Lounge, or provided beautiful Christmas decorations, or donated delicious food, or provided the music and sang Christmas carols, or showed up in your Santa costume and handed out gifts, let us congratulate ourselves for sharing our talents and resources.

2009 will probably be one of the most challenging years for us. With the economic slowdown, everyone seems to be feeling the effects and impact of what this translates to in our personal and business lives. To help usher in the new year, allow us to share with you some tips for a better life in 2009. May it guide you in your daily lives as we go through challenges and aspirations for a brighter tomorrow!

- Take a 10-30 minute walk every day. And while you walk, smile – it's the ultimate anti-depressant.
- Live with the 3 E's – Energy, Enthusiasm, and Empathy.
- Eat more foods that grow on trees and plants, and eat less food that is manufactured in plants.
- Make at least 5 people smile each day, including yourself!
- Don't waste your precious energy on gossip, issues of the past, negative thoughts, or things you can't control. Instead, invest your energy in the positive present moment.
- Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
- No one is in charge of your happiness except you.
- However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
- Do the right thing!
- Call your family often (or email them to death!!).
- Share this with every person you care about – we just did!

WESTERN REGIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE – Ronald Flormata

On October 31, 2008, 27 individuals nominated by their leaders from different ACB state affiliates in the Western Region of the United States gathered at the Hilton Hotel in Vancouver, Washington to attend the Western Regional Leadership Conference. Hawaii's delegation was composed of Filo Tu, Myles Tamashiro, Norman Ota, and myself. (Warren and Julie Toyama, unfortunately, were unable to attend due to an unexpected family tragedy.) Washington Council of the Blind, headed by Cindy Van Winkle and Sue Ammeter, organized the conference with the help of some ACB officers as facilitators, notably Mitch Pomerantz and Chris Gray. Member of ACB affiliates from Alaska, California, Idaho, Nevada, Montana, Oregon and Washington also participated in the Conference. The idea of bringing potential future ACB leaders together for leadership training was first announced by Warren Toyama during the 2007 HAB Annual Convention. Meticulous planning and preparations took almost two years which culminated in this successful event. HAB President Warren Toyama pitched in \$3,000 seed money to kick start the Conference. Topics covered were advocacy for the blind, history of the blind movement in the country (specifically the ACB), importance of national conventions, fundraising and promotions. The highlight of the Conference was when the body was divided into 4 groups with each assigned a specific task and having an ACB affiliate supervise. The tasks were: 1) preparing the convention agenda, 2) public relations, 3) membership brochure, and 4) preparing a



board resolution. Each group was able to draft practical and useful documents – something which can actually be implemented when members return to their respective areas. Overall, the Conference was a huge success, even surpassing participants' expectations. Discussions were always lively and well participated in. Everyone was ready to voice his or her opinion demonstrating a thriving democracy within the ACB ranks. The true spirit of fellowship was pervasive during all discussions where participants easily and unhesitatingly voice out comments and suggestions.

This ACB functions should be replicated in the future, perhaps in another region of the country. While we attempt to publish this report on the HAB website, it is never our intent to replace the actual holding of the Conference. You can never substitute the actual dynamics, fellowship, exchange of ideas, and networking one can experience by being there. The Web does provide an insight on how we were able to conduct a successful regional leadership seminar where other ACB members could check things out. For those who were there, this is a great opportunity to go back and review the presentations.

VENDING NEWS – Filo Tu

Aloha friends! I hope all of you took time to enjoy the holidays. I will remember 2008 for many reasons, including the sponsoring of two major events by HAB – the white paper in the beginning of the year, and the training seminar in November.

2008 will also be remembered by Blind Vendors Ohana as the hardest time we ever faced during our 14 years of operation. In the month of September, the owners and management team met to



discuss how to deal with a very difficult situation. People were getting laid-off everywhere, not only in the Honolulu International Airport, but outside the community as well. We came away from that meeting with a plan in case the economy continues to go down. And as you all know, the economy did continue to go down and more people were getting laid-off. I am delighted to inform you that Ohana was able to keep all its employees during this tough economy. Credit goes out to the owners, management, and all employees for their trust in Ohana and their willingness to work as a team. I would also like to thank the owners and managers for their support and willingness to go along with my suggestions about what we need to do to survive these tough times. Thank you all very much!

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

We are excited on Maui because KAPVI will celebrate its 10th anniversary on Saturday, April 25, 2009. KAPVI was started ten years ago when four students, two teachers of the visually impaired, four parents, and one husband got together on a Saturday morning to teach the students what it means to “fly a kite”. That morning KAPVI was born, and became the first parent group of visually impaired children in Hawaii.



The parents and teachers wanted the students to have opportunities to socialize with other visually impaired students, and parents wanted the opportunity to exchange information, to talk about concerns, and to be available to help each other. KAPVI has grown since then and is very active. The oldest ex-student members are in their twenties, and the youngest one just turned

three. KAPVI's logo, which was designed by Rainy Matherly, the first president, shows a family together supporting the child.

KAPVI's current president is Marge Masterson, and vice-president/social director is Jody Cambra. Below is our tentative calendar. We hope you can join us for some or all of the activities.

- February 7, 2009 – Valentine Luncheon
- February 21, 2009 – Train Ride on the Sugar Cane Train, Lahaina
- March 21, 2009 – Easter party and Easter egg hunt
- Whale Watch – to be announced
- April 25, 2009 – 10-year anniversary celebration – to be announced
- June 2009 – Lions' clubs fishing tournament for visually and hearing impaired

For more information regarding KAPVI or any of these events, please call President Marge Masterson at 669-0928, or email teachers Carol or Margy at: carol_hotta@notes.k12.hi.us, or margaret_greiner@notes.k12.hi.us.

Note from Carol Hotta to HAB

I just received this letter from Megan and her aide (Diane Tavares), and I am forwarding it to you. Megan and her aide, who live in Hana, have taken the MEO bus twice now to come to the Kahului side. They leave at 6:30 am and arrive around 8:30 – a two hour ride each way. When we have orientation and mobility lesson in Hana (no street lights, and all small streets and shops), it has been no challenge for Megan because everybody knows her and knows her family. As a result, she has had trouble learning new skills because everywhere she goes, people jump in to help or

to do it for her. This is wonderful as long as she doesn't leave Hana, but it doesn't work that way on the Kahului side. Last week was her second O&M lesson on the Kahului side, and a whole new world has opened up for her. Margy and I are both grateful for all the help you give to her, and we hope that she will be able to hook up with some other visually impaired students in the future. (She is the only one at the Hana High and Elementary School).

Many thanks,
Carol

- Dear Mrs. Hotta and H.A.B.:

I liked the bus ride on the M.E.O. bus to Kahului and I also liked going to Kaahumanu Shopping Center and all the pictures we took on my December trip. I like eating at McDonalds for breakfast and Jack in the Box for lunch. I cannot wait for my next trip to Kahului.

Love, Megan

- Hi Carol:

These O&M trips are a great asset to Megan's learning. She really loves the opportunity to be a "big" girl and ride on the MEO bus to Kahului, it gives her a real sense of accomplishment. She was disappointed that last time we didn't get to cross the "big streets", but she understood it was because the weather was not good and made it unsafe to be able to do that lesson. She loves having that time on her own without all the rest of her siblings tagging along. She is very much looking forward to our next lesson/trip to Kahului.

Diane

Note from Margy and Carol to HAB

This was the best Christmas party that we ever had with the students. The youngest one was three years old, and the oldest—well the oldest ones don't leave. They keep coming back they say "to help the little ones". But we don't mind, because they really do make the young ones feel welcome. There were about 37 students, parents, and siblings. (It was decided that Carol needs to get a bigger house.) But, seriously, so many good things happened that we are just thrilled!

Warren, in September, you and Julia suggested that when the students collect food and toys for the homeless, we should involve the students in taking the things to the homeless shelter. Well, this year, it just happened that one of Margy's students lives in the shelter.

Most of the people at the Christmas party realized that this family was from the shelter, and the support that they all gave to this one family was awesome! They decided to have the family take the food and gifts and distribute them not only to their own family, but also to other families in need at the shelter.

So one large van, packed with people and gifts, took a trip to the shelter, and our students learned so much more than if they had just dropped things off to "nameless people".

Warren and Julia, your idea was wonderful, and it worked out better than we could ever have expected. It still gives us chicken skin to think about what happened that day. We feel blessed because of the great, supportive parent and students that we have on Maui.

We are also blessed because of all your support. It really helps to make the things that we do so much more special. If any

of you are ever on Maui when we have the Christmas party, you are most welcome. The 2009 party will tentatively be December 12.

With our Aloha and wishing you all a Happy New Year,
Margy and Carol

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

HAPVI had a great turnout at their Annual Convention on Saturday, September 13, 2008 at the Pagoda Hotel in Honolulu. Updates were presented from members of Ho'opono DVR services for the blind, DOH Early Intervention services for infants and toddlers, and DOE update of services for visually impaired and blind students.



HAPVI's next meeting will be at Ho'opono on Saturday January 24, 2009. Members are encouraged to attend for information, updates and support.

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

SHAER has two news items to share. First, SHAER held its elections in September 2008 and the new officers are listed below: President – Sheri Gelbard, TVI/O&M instructor for Central District schools; Vice-President – Liz Martin, TVI/O&M instructor for Kona District schools; Treasurer – Lisa Craig, TVI for Honolulu District; Secretary – Wai Mei DeSilva, TVI for Central District. Congratulations to our new SHAER officers!

The second bit of SHAER news is their upcoming Professional Development training in February 2009 featuring educator Dr. Penny Rosenblum from the University of Arizona. Dr. Rosenblum will provide training in teaching Braille, Social Skills, Self-Advocacy and Independent Living Skills.

Finally, SHAER is most proud to report that all vacancies in the DOE for Visual Impairment teachers in our state have been filled! This is the second year in a row in which every school district in our state has at least one fully qualified and certified Teacher of the Visually Impaired. We've come a long way, baby! Looking forward to a fun filled third year of the same.

NEW PRODUCTS FOR THE BLIND – Art Cabanilla

Here are two new products that assist the blind. The first is called the Eyepal. This product is truly a remarkable product indeed. What does it do? It was designed to scan printed material and read it back to the user using synthetic speech. It can be connected to any desktop PC or Laptop running Windows XP or higher. The product works by first installing the scanner software onto your PC and connecting the accompanying digital camera. What makes this product so exciting from all the others is its ability to scan, recognize and read said material within seconds from the moment you press the scan key. Accuracy of the document being scanned is outstanding, with a 95% rate of accuracy for most documents. Unlike most scan and read products, the Eyepal is very portable and can be carried with you as you move from class to class or travel from office to office. Thereby, leveling the playing field and making it possible for the blind to read printed material almost anywhere. Scanned

documents can also be saved as text files for use with other devices such as BrailleNotes, Pac Mates and other similar note taking devices. Not only can single pages be scanned and recognized, whole books or multi-page documents can be scanned as well and they too can be saved as a text file for use with other devices. In addition to its ability to scan and read to the user, Braille access can be achieved by connecting a refreshable Braille display allowing the user the ability to read a document in Braille rather than listening to it with speech synthesis.

The second product is the KNFB Mobile Reader. Its technology is not entirely new but has come to the market in a new package. The KNFB Reader is a specialized version of the Kurzweil software which is designed to operate off the Nokia N82 phones making it the first compact mobile scanner to date. Its compact size offers a world of sight for the blind in the palm of your hand. Using the phones built-in camera and the installed software, one can now take a picture of a menu, flier, business card or any other printed document and have it read back to them. Another feature offered is the ability to recognize US currency. With the press of a single button, the phone will snap a picture of any bill and speak its denomination giving the user complete confidence in knowing how much money they have at any given time. Imagine going to lunch with your friends and whipping out your phone to read the menu and seeing your waitress in astonishment when you take a picture of the menu and are hearing your phone read the menu to you without her help. It is truly the greatest feeling to be able to read a menu for yourself instead of having to rely on someone else to read it for you. One of the first things I had noted when doing this was to hear not only the menu

items spoken, but the colorful way they worded each and in some cases the way the item was prepared. The reading of menus is just one example of how this device can be of help to the blind and where self independence can be achieved. There are so many other examples not mentioned here in this article where this device is as equally helpful. Being that the KNFB Mobile operates using the Nokia N82 cellphone, this device can double as a cell phone as well. With the installing of additional software called Talks, someone with little or no sight is able to use the phone's full capabilities aside from just sending and receiving calls. Such features as the calendar and contact list become readily available and can be navigated thru the use of Talks which is similar to Jaws for Windows found on most PC computers today. With the phones built-in Bluetooth capabilities, privacy of what you read or hear when navigating the phone's calendar or your contact list is possible with the use of a Bluetooth earpiece.

Because of these two new innovations, the

Dreams by Stacie Phasouk

In dreams, content to be in love's caress.
 Illuminate my face. A kiss with night.
 Refuse the invalid the summer's light.
 In desert's refuse, bites my hopelessness.
 Too close, one does desert the content, less
 it be invalid, when awake to fight;
 To struggle with the winds of pure delight.
 And hold the mist to bow before the blessed.

But blessed means what when envy's eyes do close?
 Reduced to judgement, beauty they will lack.
 And wind up tight like love of mother does,
 when young is led to kiss the blossom rose.
 Soon doves will fly, the sun against their back,
 and I awake to morn, with less the woes.

inability to read printed material on the fly has equalized the playing field by bringing the printed word to ones ear. If you require the need for access to printed material to perform your day to day tasks or to function expertly at school or work, then use of either product may just be the tool for you.

BLINDSIGHT NEWS – Iolana (Landa) Phelan

- A Caring Man

Captain Jerry Hofwolt, USN (retired), Executive Director for the USS Bowfin Museum and Park at Pearl Harbor, was working on a project and asked if Art Cabanilla and I would be interested. He wanted to be able to accommodate the blind and low vision community by providing special guided tours aboard the Bowfin. Jerry wanted to know how to best communicate the details of the ship and tips on safety.



Art and I met with Captain Hofwolt and discussed some sighted guide techniques like asking first if assistance was needed and offering an arm, and stating when stairs are going up or down or if there are narrow doorways or isles ahead. Using words like “see” and “look” are ok, but words like “over there” or “that way” means nothing to folks who are visually impaired so it’s best to say “right” or “left”. We also met with the staff training instructor, and they both caught on real quick. I gave them some reading material on different kinds of blindness so that they understood that everyone’s blindness is not the same. I also included Guide Dog etiquette information.

Then we proceeded to take the tour. Many years ago I took the tour as a sighted person, but I actually saw more as a visually

impaired person! Did you know that the pipes, dials and knobs are tactile? It was so the crew could operate the ship in the dark in case the lights malfunctioned. Would you believe that some of the beds were sandwiched between torpedoes and pipes? Captain Hofwolt put his heart into his presentation. He is serious about making the tour of the Bowfin memorable for the Blind. His style and delivery contribute to a vivid picture of history and what the brave men did to protect their country.

The Bowfin is a very long and narrow submarine, where only one person can walk thru the halls at a time. You must also be able to lift your legs up high to get through the doors. Ships are not built for people with disabilities, that's for sure! I took my guide dog Miss Pearline and she did just fine. If you are interested, Captain Jerry Hofwolt offers personal tours for the blind, two people at a time. Call (808) 423-1341 to make reservations, and ask for Jerry.

- Fire Department

Captain Earle Kealoha was our guest speaker at the February HAB meeting and he wants to get feedback from us on how the Fire Department can improve their services to the blind community. Last year, we had CPR training. Currently, I am negotiating to set up some safety/fire extinguisher training.

- Menus That Talk

I am now the Account Executive for Menus That Talk here in Hawaii. Restaurants can now provide talking menus to their customers in just about any language. It is tactile and simple to operate: press start, select the language, browse the menu, and

when you're ready to order press start again and the blue lights flash to signal your waitress. It also has a hand set for the hearing impaired. The unit is also made from recyclable material and is ADA compliant. I introduced it to the Restaurant Association for the first time, and I'm looking forward to introducing it to more restaurants.

AUNTIE WEEZIE'S CORNER – Louise Horio

Aloha Kakou! 2008 was a very eventful year. Let's invite some friends and family for some good conversation and eat some good soup on a cool night.



Italian Sausage and Tortellini Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 pound sweet Italian sausage, casings removed
- 1 large onion, chopped, about 1 cup
- 2 large cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 5 cups beef broth
- 2 cups diced peeled tomatoes, canned or fresh
- 1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce
- 1 medium zucchini, sliced
- 1 large carrot, thinly sliced
- 1 medium green bell pepper, diced
- ¼ cup dry red wine (optional)
- 2 tablespoons dried leaf basil
- 2 tablespoons dried leaf oregano
- 8 to 10 ounces purchased fresh cheese tortellini
- Parmesan cheese, freshly grated

Preparation:

Saute Italian sausage in heavy kettle or Dutch oven over medium-high heat until cooked through, breaking up with back of spoon, about 10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer sausage to a large bowl. Pour off all but 1 tablespoon fat from the pan. Add onion and garlic to pan and sauté until tender, about 5 minutes. Return sausage to Dutch oven. Add beef broth, tomatoes, tomato sauce, zucchini, carrot, bell pepper, wine, basil and oregano. Simmer until vegetables are tender, about 35 to 45 minutes. Add tortellini to soup and cook until tender, about 8 to 10 minutes. Season soup with salt and pepper to taste. Ladle soup into bowls and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Serves 6.

Helpful Hints:

- Store your opened chunks of cheese in aluminum foil. It will stay fresh much longer and not mold! Same thing for celery.
- Pin a small safety pin to the seam of your slip and you will not have a clingy skirt or dress. Same thing works with slacks that cling when wearing pantyhose. (This is great when visiting Las Vegas or if you live on the mainland.)

Healthful Hints:

- Ovarian Cancer cannot be detected with an examination...you must ASK for a blood test called CA125. Insist on this.
 - Aspartame: accumulates in the organs and can be dangerous to your health. Read labels on gum, preserved seeds from the Chinese Crack-Seed packages. Even prescriptions contain it!
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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 please call (808) 671-1160.

College Scholarship Application Form

Hawaii Association of the Blind

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

College: _____ Major (if any): _____

Completed Credit Hours: _____ Class: _____

- Must be legally blind as defined by National Standards.
- 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 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, #1102
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

Hawaii Association of the Blind
1255 Nuuanu Avenue, #1102
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

**FREE
MATTER
FOR THE
BLIND**