

HAB FORUM

Advocating for
Independence, Equality, Opportunity

September 2010

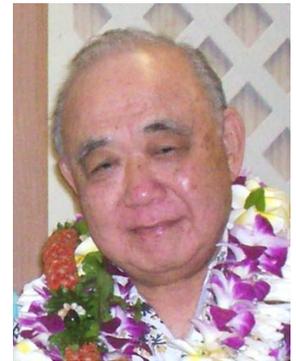
ALOHA! The Hawaii Association of the Blind (HAB) is proud to introduce everyone to the **HAB Forum**. This newsletter is published twice a year.

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
 - Art Cabanilla, Access Technology Product Sales For the Blind
 - Landa Phelan, self-employed
 - Ronald Flormata, HAB webmaster
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PRESIDENT'S CORNER – Warren Toyama

The Senior Fair held at the Blaisdell from September 24 – 26 was a huge success for the promoters of the Fair and for the Hawaii Association of the Blind. This annual 3-day event drew about 22,000 people to the Blaisdell.



HAB distributed 1500 fliers and 500 of our brochures. We also handed out HAPVI brochures during those three days, as well as Ho'opono's various brochures on Saturday and Sunday. Maybe next year Ho'opono will deliver their brochures to the leadership of HAB so that we can share information about Ho'opono on the first day of the Fair (Friday), which was also the busiest.

The Hawaii Blind Vendors Association convention will be held on October 16th. All HAB members are urged to attend. Also, the annual HAB Thanksmas dinner will be held at Ho'opono in the Auditorium on the last Saturday of November. Last year we raised over \$900 for the Salvation Army to assist the less fortunate. All kind-spirited people are urged to sign-up for the dinner and donate to help the Salvation Army!

Technology – Ronald Flormata

About four months ago, late April to be exact, my life turned from being monotonous to one full of excitement. The waiting was over – on April 20, 2010 I officially got my first facility under the Randolph-Sheppard Program which is managed by Ho'opono.



Vending Stand #20 (Department of Health building) became my first stand where I'll do my 6-month probation before earning my license as a Blind Vendor. I'd guess this place is more than 30 years old. It has a full-service kitchen with an array of commercial grade cooking equipment (some of which needed repair to be useful), and the dining area is home to a good number of tables & chairs that can accommodate more than 20 people at a time.

So, where does technology enter the picture? Given the fact that this vendor can't see, how do I go about running the day to day operations such as ringing up sales, identifying products, telling currency or giving change? And how about stocking up the shelves, doing inventory and creating reports using the computer, and even communicating using email? Although I must admit that I am sincerely grateful that I have full and unconditional support from my wife and daughters, I cannot totally depend on them. I have to ensure that I can run the business independently, and only with assistive technology am I able to perform tasks without help.

- Cash Register

When I started at this location, I was provided with a regular electronic register which was inaccessible. After waiting a couple weeks my Sharp electronic cash register (model ER-A450T) arrived and I hooked it up with a bar code scanner. This model was modified by Captek making it accessible to the blind. Every key on the keyboard is spoken so the user knows what they are pressing. There is a knob to adjust the volume of the voice, a "read screen" button, and a toggle switch. In order to help me navigate the buttons, I placed rubber markers on certain keys which helped me get oriented with the keyboard. The register has two COM ports, one of which I used for the bar code scanner, and I gather that the other port may be connected to a computer to enable

downloading of info. However, to do that you need to purchase software from Sharp which amounts to about \$1,000 – yikes!

- Currency Identifier

Initially, I utilized the Note Teller even though I had apprehensions about it due to prior bad experiences. Much has been said about the newest money reader on the market called the iBill, and I was so glad I got my hands on it after a few weeks. Physically, it is smaller than the Note Teller and is very light using only one AAA battery. Functionally, it's accurate and provides three modes of informing the user of the currency denomination (voice, tone and vibration). For me, I chose vibrate because I find the volume voice too soft even at the loudest setting. And yes, the iBill reads fast; just press a button to start reading, unlike the Note Teller. There is also another feature of the iBill that I did not read in the reviews – it's durable. I dropped it a number of times and it still works! I have used the iBill with all denominations and bill conditions, and so far the device has proved its worth. I am pleased with the performance and highly recommend the iBill to anyone looking for a reliable money reader.

- Bar Code Scanner

The ID Mate Summit is an accessible portable bar code scanner that I find indispensable in identifying the merchandise in my store. The model Summit is the latest model in the ID Mate lineup, smaller than previous models. The bar code database resides on a 2 gigabyte SD memory card that also houses other data such as inventory information and voice files. It uses a lithium ion battery that lasts about 10 hours on a full charge. I use this when doing inventory and stocking shelves. It comes with several bar code stickers which you can use to identify items. For instance, I have three airports of coffee and I have stickers on each

to identify which is for vanilla macadamia, kona classic, and decaffeinated. If an item is not in the database, it is simple to set-up. You place the sticker on an item then use the ID Mate Summit to read the bar code. Since it is not yet in the database of codes it will ask for you to record a message. Press the record button and say a description of the item. That's it! Now every time you scan the item you will hear your recorded message. The only problem I discovered was that the bar code stickers that came with the ID Mate are not compatible with my Sharp cash register.

- Cell Phone

I've had the KNFB cell phone for a year before getting my vending stand. During those times, and more so now, this unit has deserved its praises. An ordinary Nokia phone was transformed into a blind man's friend! It is so dependable that I did not bother to have a landline phone installed at the stand.

- BookSense

The BookSense is a digital player and recorder. How does it help me in my business? Aside from being an entertainment device, it reads text and Microsoft Word files that can be downloaded into the unit either on its built-in flash memory or an SD memory card. I have my price list, menu for the week, and other important business documents on the BookSense. One other feature I like is the radio. The model XT has an FM tuner that keeps me updated on current events. The BookSense can also play audio books. I have stopped counting the number of audio books I've downloaded from BARD at the National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

With all the technology cited above, allow me to thank my Vending Specialist, Mr. Donald Okashige, who has been most supportive and has helped me tremendously in getting off to a

good start, despite the limitations he is faced with in the Business Enterprise Program. I look forward to a long and fruitful career in vending!

The Blind Vending Program – Filo Tu

The Hawaii Association of Blind Vendors is continuing to work hard to bring the blind vendors together not only in Hawaii, but in this beautiful nation of ours. For the past year and a half, Warren Toyama, Myles Tamashiro and I, have worked very hard to bring the leadership of RSVA together because of their importance to the blind vending program. I want to give special thanks to all the leaders of RSVA and of course, all the people involved in making RSVA the strongest and most powerful organization of blind vendors in the nation. Because of your willingness and commitments to the Blind Vending Program, there is a chance that the Randolph-Sheppard Act will be around for a long time.



Special announcement to all Hawaii Vendors – the Hawaii Association of Blind Vendors will have its annual Convention on October 16, 2010 at the Pagoda Hotel. Please come and join us! We are in for a special treat this year since the Randolph-Sheppard President will be our special guest for the Convention. We look forward to seeing you all at our Convention!

Congratulations are in order for three very special gentlemen. I am happy to inform you that three HAB members have been placed in the vending program within a year's time. These lucky gentlemen are Ronald Flormata, Norman Ota, and Kenny Jonson. Good luck to all of you, and remember this one important piece of advice: take good care of your people and they will take care of you. Congratulations!!



Congratulations Joe Cordova!

On August 25, 2010 Joe Cordova, Department of Human Services Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator, was presented the Manager of the Year Award by Governor Linda Lingle at the State Capitol.

Hawaii Association of Parents of the Visually Impaired

(HAPVI) – Amy Downard

Happy 10th Anniversary to HAPVI!! They provided a fantastic convention in August 2010. Many of the participants liked that it took place at Ho'opono. Parents, students, siblings, teachers, other professionals and members of HAB enjoyed a stellar program of top notch information and resources. We were first updated by LBPH on acquiring the new digital book players and a grant for next year to enable enlarged and audio access to all public library computers. The tax ladies shared information on important tax forms and deductions for individuals who are blind. The best information was that there is free assistance to file your taxes. A tax issues open house will take place Saturday, Sept. 25 from 9am – 2pm at the IRS office - Federal Building, 300 Ala Moana Blvd., Room I-128.

Ho'opono updated everyone on the summer youth services program, the client excursion to Alaska (yes, even in the summer it was cold) and the upcoming White Cane Day March at the Capitol on Friday, October 15 (call Gavan Abe at Ho'opono for participant information). The best information shared was that the clients of

Ho'opono have an average combined salary of over \$20 per hour. Everyone is making more than the federal minimum wage, which is super in this tough economy. Filo Tu shared information from Blind Vendors Ohana. The support they provide to beginning and continuing employees is a great way for an individual who is blind or visually impaired to get employment experience in a fun and supportive environment.

The bento lunch was a great time to catch up with everyone, moving from table to table. Thanks again to HAB for supporting this annual gathering of advocacy, information sharing and networking with each other. And Happy 10 years to a worthwhile organization, HAPVI!

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

Lots of activities are coming up for KAPVI and visually impaired students this season on Maui. The Maui Lions' Clubs will be sponsoring their first White Cane Day on Wednesday, October 20. KAPVI students and parents are showing support by marching with their canes. The youngest marchers will be a seven-year-old second grader, and the oldest is a retired 91-year-old who recently got a dog from Guide Dogs of California.



Jody, vice-president of KAPVI, along with Margy and Carol attended the 10th HAPVI convention on August 28th. They left Honolulu with much information to share, and 72 packages of cookies! Jody sold the first two packages to security personnel as we were being x-rayed at the Honolulu Airport! Thank you, HAPVI, for a great convention!

KAPVI will have the annual October Pumpkin Party/Meeting on Friday night, October 22. Besides information to share from

the KAPVI convention, a new twist to the evening will be that the parents will have the opportunity to experience what it is like to be visually impaired. I will have more information on the results for the next newsletter.

In December, KAPVI will have the Christmas party, food drive for the Maui food bank, and toy drive for the homeless shelter on Saturday, December 11. The young members of KAPVI decide each year if they want to continue the drives, and I am happy that they chose to share.

We always enjoy our times together, and we feel really blessed to have such a fine group of students and supportive parents. Happy Holidays!

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

SHAER continues to support professional development and training for professionals who work with individuals who are blind and visually impaired. In early 2010, the teachers of the visually impaired were able to have their first face to face meeting in over a year. Due to budget shortfalls, these teachers meetings that occurred 3-times per year were totally cut and only short, two-hour videoconferences 4-times per year were arranged. This greatly reduces the time to network and learn from each other. HAB was so generous and helpful to provide financial support so that all of the 21 teachers of the visually impaired in the state could meet face to face once again for professional development and to assist each other with our caseload of students. Thanks so very much HAB!!!



Teachers again moved around this year. Some left for the mainland, some moved to other districts. The good news is that all the teaching positions in each school district are again filled with a qualified visual impairment teacher. The state level position, for assessments and resources, is vacant and hopefully will be filled this school year. We'd all like to wish Carol Hotta of Maui a Happy Retirement filled with fun and joy. Her dedication and camaraderie will be greatly missed, but we know we can still call her at any time for help (right, Carol??!!). We will also miss our greatest resource, Kristin Oien, but wish her luck as the state resource for VI and O&M in Minnesota (brrrrr!).

Ho'opono has suffered a huge staff reduction, but they are still cranking out the services. Many students enjoyed job experiences this summer with HAB's donation to support Ho'opono's Summer Youth Services Program. The students had community service and job shadowing experiences. DOE and Ho'opono worked together to ensure students were signed up for the service and knew how to get to Ho'opono independently.

BLINDSIGHT NEWS – Landa Phelan

- Helping Ramon

One day, Amy Downard came to me and asked if Miss Pearline and I would come to the Center for the Deaf and Blind School to meet a young boy named Ramon. Amy explained that Ramon is Deaf and Blind, and is thinking of getting a Guide Dog.



First let me tell you a little about Amy Downard. She is a teacher of the visually impaired, and an orientation & mobility instructor for the Honolulu District schools. Amy is originally from Louisville, Kentucky. She grew up near the American

Printing House for the Blind, and would often see people using white canes and guide dogs walking near her home. While seeking her teaching degree, as a student teacher, she had a young boy in her class who was blind. She wondered how she could teach him since he couldn't see her diagrams and charts. Amy was encouraged to pursue her degree in the education for the visually impaired after working with this student, who is now attending college and pursuing his dream of being a musician. Twelve years ago, she and her husband John moved to Kauai. After four years of beach and country living they moved to Honolulu for the fast paced city. Now, Amy enjoys working with her students in the community to access public transportation, ask for assistance, find specific addresses, make purchases with assisted shopping and so much more. She uses the motivations of her students to design individual education plans so they can become independent.

Amy's student Ramon also has a palm sign interpreter named Joyce. He is so fortunate to have two wonderful ladies to share and broaden his world. To inspire Ramon to learn Braille, I asked Amy if he could write to Miss Pearline. Ramon learned how to mail a letter, use the postal system and stamps, and write Braille!

Last week we went to see Ramon. He brought a tug toy and ball to play with Miss Pearline. Now, remember he cannot hear sound so he had to be taught how to shake the toy to get Miss Pearline's attention. Once he did that she began tugging first with Amy and then Ramon. Eventually Ramon learned how to play with a dog! We were also introduced to Ramon's classmates which was also a lot of fun, especially



for Miss Pearline. The kids were excited to learn about dogs and asked questions like: Is this what they call a paw? Are these the ears? Oh, is this the tail?

Ramon is a shy young man, and during the last visit he wanted to give me a hug good-bye. With tears in her eyes, Joyce told me that he had not done this before and that this was progress for Ramon in social interaction.

The next thing we are planning to teach Ramon is what it's like to bathe a dog. He will also learn how to do the laundry by washing the towels and Miss Pearline's bed. It makes my heart swell and I cry happy tears because it makes me so happy to see how Miss Pearline is making a difference in one boy's life.

- Guide Dogs

While sitting at a bus stop with my black Labrador Miss Pearline, after volunteering at Ho'opono, a man sat down beside me and said "You have a nice looking dog". I replied "Thank you". He then asked how much I paid for the dog, and I replied "There was no charge. She is a working dog for the blind." He then proceeded to make me an offer of \$25 for her, and I told him she was not for sale. He said he would give me \$50 for her, and I said she wasn't for sale. Then he leaned real close to me so no one could hear and said, "I have more than \$50 in my pocket. I can give it to you right now and you can get another dog." I shook my head no, then thank goodness the bus showed up!

This was the second time this has happened to me. At a bus stop by Ala Moana Center the offer went up to \$100! It is obvious that some people don't realize what is involved in the training of a guide dog. It takes \$35,000 to \$65,000 to raise a guide dog, which comes not from government help but from those who donate and volunteer and do fundraising for the school.

My guide dog came from San Rafael, California. They have their own breeding program and volunteer puppy raisers. The trainers are all certified and specialized in training for Guide Dogs for the Blind. When you apply for a guide dog, you have to fill many forms for initial consideration. Then there is a period of assessment in order to gain final approval. Once approved, you will go to the school for about three weeks to learn how to adjust to having a guide dog, with all expenses being paid.

There are just no words to explain all the special rewards that Miss Pearline brings to my life. Our relationship is magical. We have been a team for seven years now, and I feel very blessed to have her; she is truly a gift from God.

My Experience At This Year's ACB Conference – Art Cabanilla

I have attended a few conferences in the short time that I have been a member, but this year's conference was a learning experience for me and it allowed me to see things I never really saw or understood before. No doubt, seeing a large number of blind individuals from across the country is eye-opening in itself but it also encourages and up-lifts one's self-esteem. It is amazing to see and hear how folks just seem to go about their business as if their blindness does not exist nor does it hamper their ability to live life to its fullest. There are folks from different cultures and all walks of life with some regarded as professionals within their own careers (ie: teachers, lawyers, computer programmers/analysts, and the self-employed). Imagine the energy and excitement that flows within the halls and rooms where the many different workshops are held. Imagine the person sitting next to you and how excited they are because this is all for the blind and everyone is happy to be a part of it all. Well, this is just a small part of what you have

missed if you had never attended an ACB Conference before, and why you should consider attending the 2011 Conference next year.

As stated earlier, this year's Conference was a learning experience for me. This has mainly to do with the fact that I was able to experience for the first time a greater sense of how the logistical procedures of a conference of this magnitude really works and how it can affect one's attitude.

Having been chosen as this year's alternate delegate for HAB, I had the experience of voting on behalf of HAB during the business section of Friday's General Session. Why would this be exciting you may ask? Well, not only did I learn more about the way general business is conducted and how voting procedures are carried out, I also learned more about myself and what it means to be an ACB member. When casting that vote, my voice was heard over the airways of ACB Radio. Imagine blind folks around the world attending the conference by listening to ACB Radio and hearing me speak. Although a small part, somehow, it felt a lot larger than it actually was. It made me feel a lot closer to our Hawaii affiliate and empowered me with a greater feeling of ownership. You may wonder what ownership has to do with it all? Well, what I perceived as being capable and unlimited to those attending the Conference in my earlier statement had really been self-pride and commitment to the organization and all that it stands for. And, this self-pride was something I had not yet truly understood until I took hold of that mike and cast that first vote on behalf of HAB. In doing so, I had become closer to the organization and had felt a feeling of belonging and pride that I had never really felt before. This was a feeling of ownership. That is to say, yes I belong, but I also participate and help to make a difference. Sure I pay my membership dues and yes, I attend the

monthly meetings and go to our State conferences, but until I was given this experience to participate in this way, I had not yet truly understood what it meant to be a member of this great organization. So, I encourage you all to join me and step up to the plate and let's become owners of HAB and help guide it into the future as we forge ahead as one.

Inspirations – Beth Flormata

It's now the Fall season and soon we will be sharing Thanksgiving dinner with family and friends, followed by Christmas carols and holiday greetings everywhere. Isn't it amazing how time flies?



As we get caught up with our own busy lives, I, for one, am guilty of forgetting to “stop and smell the roses”! We also have a tendency to complain about our family, our health, our job, our friends, and almost everything else in our lives. Why is that? Is that human nature? Maybe, but I know we can do something about it. Which brings us to the second segment of my topic: ATTITUDE. Sometimes, no matter how hard we try, we never seem to get what we want or never like what we get, and yet we all have to live and love for that's what Life is all about. For those who are hurt and in pain, there is happiness out there waiting, you just have to make an effort to find it. We must also learn to appreciate the people who have touched our lives.

Let me share with you another story entitled “Ducks Quack, Eagles Fly” from a dear old friend of mine from Manila. Hopefully it will have an impact on how we go about our everyday lives and the people we come into contact with.

A guy was waiting in line for a ride at the airport. A cab pulled up and the first thing he noticed was that the taxi was

polished to a bright shine and the driver was smartly dressed in a white shirt, black tie, and freshly pressed black slacks. The cab driver jumped out and rounded the car to open the back passenger door. Once inside, he handed the guy a laminated card and said, "I'm Wally your driver. While I'm loading your bags in the trunk, I'd like you to read my mission statement."

Taken aback, the guy read the card: "Wally's Mission Statement: To get my customers to their destination in the quickest, safest and cheapest way possible in a friendly environment." This blew him away, especially when he noticed that the inside of the cab matched the outside. Spotlessly clean! As the driver slid behind the wheel, he offered coffee, soft drinks, water, juice as well as a choice of music stations and newspapers.

And as if that weren't enough, Wally told him that the air conditioning is on and asked if the temperature was comfortable for him. Then he advised the best route to his destination for that time of the day and let him know that he'd be happy to chat and tell him about the sights or leave him with his own thoughts.

Amazed at what he had seen and experienced so far, he asked the driver if he had always served customers like this. In reply, Wally said no and that in fact, it's only been in the last two years that he started doing it. His first five years were spent complaining like all the rest of the cabbies. Then he heard the personal growth guru, Wayne Dyer, on the radio one day who had just written the book "You'll See It When You Believe It". Dyer said that if you get up in the morning expecting to have a bad day, you'll rarely disappoint yourself. He said, "Stop complaining! Differentiate yourself from your competition. Don't be a duck. Be an eagle. Ducks quack and complain. Eagles soar above the crowd."

“That hit me right between the eyes,” said Wally. “Dyer was really talking about me. I was always quacking and complaining, so I decided to change my attitude and become an eagle. I looked around at the other cabs and their drivers. The cabs were dirty, the drivers were unfriendly, and the customers were unhappy. So I decided to make some changes. I put in a few at a time. When my customers responded well, I did more.”

“I take it that has paid off for you,” the passenger said. “It sure has,” Wally replied. “My first year as an eagle, I doubled my income from the previous year. This year I’ll probably quadruple it. You were lucky to get me today. I don’t sit at cabstands anymore. My customers call me for appointments on my cell phone or leave a message on my answering machine. If I can’t pick them up myself, I get a reliable cabbie friend to do it and I take a piece of the action.”

Wally was phenomenal. He was running a limo service out of Yellow Cab. The passenger probably shared Wally’s story to more than fifty cab drivers over the years, and only two took the idea and ran with it. Whenever he goes to their cities, he gives them a call. The rest of the drivers quacked like ducks and told him all the reasons they couldn’t do any of that he was suggesting. The cab driver chose to stop quacking like ducks and started soaring like eagles. So, what are you? You decide! Let us all remember: No one can make us serve our customers well. That’s because great service is a choice.

Comments and Questions

What do you think of this newsletter? If you have questions, would like more info, or have any ideas, please contact HAB by Phone: (808) 521-6213, or Email: ToyamaJ005@hawaii.rr.com.

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) 521-6213.

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

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MATTER
FOR
THE
BLIND**