



**TUCSON SOCIETY OF THE BLIND (TSB)**  
P.O. Box 57655. Tucson, AZ 85732  
August/September 2020 NEWSY NOTES  
TSB meets every Tuesday – 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Christ Presbyterian Church, 6565 E. Broadway  
For more information call Barbara, 298-2427 or Tom, 721-1029  
[www.tucsonsoftheblind.org](http://www.tucsonsoftheblind.org)

## **CALENDAR**

### **August**

Due to the increase of corona virus cases, TSB Members are meeting by phone Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on a free phone conference line 605-468-8020 pass code: 969009 pound. This is what we have so far:

- 4 Dr. Chuck Gerba, microbiologist from University of Arizona, “How to keep your environment and yourself safe and clean during this pandemic.”
- 6 6:30-8:00 p.m., Talk about Vision loss podcast discussion. We will be listening to: Hadley Presents - Ricky Enger, “How to go to the Eye Doctor Safely during the Pandemic.” Everyone will get to make comments and ask questions after the podcast.
- 11 Dr. Brian McKay Update on “Research on Macular Degeneration and other eye diseases.”
- 14 TSB Board Meeting on phone from 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
- 18 Nicky Lee, Ward 4 City Council, “How the City Council Works,”
- 25 Sharla Glass from America Envision, “Learn how to advocate; learn about Scrip Talk, the accessible prescription reader; and the state laws in Nevada and Oregon.”

### **September**

- 1 Dan Roberts, “An Inspiring Story of how he started Macular Degeneration Support Organization which reaches over 20,000 visually impaired adults every year.”
- 3 6:30-8:00 p.m., Talking about vision loss, podcast discussion group - Hadley Presents Ricky Enger, “Facing Challenges due to Vision Loss.”
- 8 Start at 9:30 a.m., Marc Arneson, “All about Hadley’s courses and website and discussion groups for the visually impaired”
- 10 TSB Board Meeting on phone from 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
- 10,11,12 National Federation of the Blind State Convention online, register for free by Aug 31<sup>st</sup> by going to [www.az.nfb.org](http://www.az.nfb.org)

15 Tarik Williams, NFB president of the Tucson Chapter, “All about the NFB State Convention.”

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### President’s Message by Barbara Macpherson

Well, due to the increase of the corona virus I am still self-isolating at home. I have enjoyed two awesome national conventions online. It looks like TSB will not be returning to the church anytime soon. For now we are meeting every Tuesday at 10 a.m. on the phone.

We will be trying something new. We will be having a discussion group on the first Thursday of each month, starting on August 6<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. During this first discussion group we will listen to a Hadley podcast hosted by Ricky Enger called, “Safely visiting the eye doctor during the pandemic.” This podcast is 30 minutes long, which will give us an hour for discussion afterwards. We all have stories to share of trying to navigate in the doctor’s office. Hopefully we will get some new folks who cannot join us on Tuesday mornings.

You will notice three brand new speakers from the Midwest on our calendar: Sharla Glass from Envision America, and Marc Arneson from Hadley School of Learning for the Visually Impaired. I’m especially thrilled that Dan Roberts is joining us. Besides being a wonderful person, he is knowledgeable on all issues and resources for individuals with vision impairment. His favorite mantra is TASK, Tenacity, Adaptability, Support, Knowledge. His positive attitude has inspired me for years. Besides Annie’s article on White Canes, you will find an article by my sister, Joan Hill called, “Going Solo to the Hospital.” She sometimes has to stay overnight because of her chemo therapy treatment. We are very proud of how well she copes with being blind in a difficult situation.

### **Eye Talk by Annie Schlesinger** *The Long White Cane and Me*

By the time I was diagnosed with my eye disease, I was in my forties and legally blind. I had some classes at Braille Institute in Los Angeles and Orientation and Mobility training (O&M). Most of my O&M has been done wearing a blindfold. It was SCARY! My first instructor let me walk into a wall; he said, “You need to learn!”

For years I didn’t use the cane; I could get around fairly well and only occasionally bumped into people or objects. Luckily I never fell. Like many others, I didn’t want to be identified as a blind person; some perceive a stigma about using a cane.

I started using the cane when I was bumping into more people. One woman didn’t accept my apology and shouted at me. She walked away but came back and shouted at me again. I was about in tears. After that I started at least carrying the cane to identify myself. People were nicer and often helpful. I was safer.

The long white cane helps me to scan my surroundings for obstacles and orientation landmarks. The basic technique is to swing the cane side to side no wider than the shoulders, the cane is two steps ahead as one walks. This can be done by tapping the cane in an arc or sliding the cane from side to side, keeping contact with the surface. In close quarters, a pencil grip keeps the cane close to the body while still checking ahead. Shore lining is hitting the edge of the sidewalk with each swing.

No matter how skillful I am, situations develop. So far I deal with them and go on. In my complex, walkways can have obstacles: walkers, carts, baskets, and sometimes doors are left ajar. My cane encounters them and I pass safely.

I search for landmarks such as potted plants, changes from carpet to tile and other changes in surfaces. I am alert for ramps, curbs, and stairs. Sometimes sounds echo off a surface or a low ceiling; skillful travelers can often detect differences in these sounds.

When do you start to use a cane?

- When you are not effective in getting around,
- When you are relying more and more on help,
- When you become dangerous to yourself and others,
- When you want to be more effective and competent,
- When you want to walk as a blind person with confidence, it's time to use a long white cane!

[NFB.org](http://NFB.org) has instructions for using the cane, "Care and feeding of the long white cane." It is instructive, but I recommend training with an instructor.

### Get Ready To Go Solo, by Joan Hill

Are you prepared for a solo hospital visit? In our current situation, visits to the hospital, even for things like getting blood test, can change very rapidly. You need to be prepared in case you need to go in alone without sighted assistance. Some things I've discovered on recent hospital trips will hopefully let you plan ahead.

First, plan ahead on transportation, as it can be very challenging. Public transportation may not be an option, as treatment time is varying greatly and most waiting rooms are closed. Have a phone number of someone who can arrange your ride and be available in a range of at least 2 hours from what is normal hospital time.

Second, use your white cane, even if you are in a wheelchair and have an assistant, as it lets everyone know from the front door on that you are blind. People will be meeting you at the front door taking your temperature and asking questions even before admissions. They need to know if you may need assistance. Even if someone is with you at the front door of the hospital, they may not be let into the hospital, depending on policy at the minute you arrive.

Finally, have a hospital "go bag" ready with key information and items you might need. Again, this is to insure you have everything you need if an assistant is not let

into the hospital. I use a 1 gallon zip lock bag for this. I switched these items from my waist pack to a bag, as during my last hospital stay they sent my pack home with family so there would be no valuables in my room.

My bag includes the following: A personal information list which includes: my name with full address, 3 contacts with cellphone numbers of family and friends, blood type, allergies, insurance companies but not numbers, doctor's names and phone numbers, current medical treatment, prescription and non-prescription medicines, and where I buy prescriptions. The medicine list includes not only the dosage, but also when and how I take it. You should include medicines you take "as needed," such as head ache and allergy remedies. Adapt what else to keep in the bag based on your personal needs. Some suggestions are: folding indoor white cane, hearing aid batteries, index card with name and phone of transportation, charger for cell phone, alcohol sterile wipes, and lock dots to mark bed remotes. Each hospital bed has had different buttons, so I mark "bed up" and the power button. Normally the nurse's call button has been brailed with an "N". Another useful thing is a braille watch that has dots for time, as it is much quieter in a hospital situation and doesn't interfere with hospital equipment like a phone.

In closing, I have found all the hospital personal gracious and helpful, once they realized I was blind, including the bed transporters, who let me know they were laying oxygen tanks on the bed, so I could move my arm. I have been fortunate that my hospital has allowed my daughter to come in with me, but it has been a relief to know I'm prepared to go solo if needed.

### Donate to the Tucson Society of the Blind and receive a Federal Tax Deduction for 2020

By Barbara Macpherson

The CARES Act will permit taxpayers to deduct from their adjusted gross income on their 2020 federal income taxes up to \$300 for singles or \$600 per married couple, when contributing to charitable organizations. This deduction can be taken whether they itemize their deductions or simply take the standard deduction. This can be a huge help to nonprofits because it gives people greater opportunities to support charities of their choice.

We hope you will financially support the work of Tucson Society of the Blind via the tax deduction so that TSB can achieve its mission of providing social, recreational, and educational programs to individuals with vision loss. TSB also provides information and resources to the Tucson community. Mail checks payable to TSB, P.O. Box 57655, Tucson AZ 85732, or donate through the website: [www.tucsonsoftheblind.org](http://www.tucsonsoftheblind.org) and use PayPal which will put the donation on your credit card. Thanks ahead of time for your donation.

### News You Can Use by Barbara Macpherson

I've really been enjoying the Wilson Digital Recorder for recording phone numbers. You can purchase one for \$42 plus shipping from Independent Living

**Aids, 800-537-2118. Disabled riders who have signed up with Sun Van can ride Sun Van for free. All passengers need to wear a mask.**

**Recently Catt and I watched the movies *Pick of the Litter* and *Lady and the Tramp* from Disney Plus (an Internet Streaming service) for \$6.99 a month.**

**Disney has done an outstanding job of providing audio description, (a narrator describing what is happening between the dialogue). Even the older films, like *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Cinderella*, have audio description. The first time you play a movie on Disney+, pause the movie and go to the upper right and select Audio Description in English. From then on the audio description will automatically load.**

**As a blind person, I hate losing things. I could not find my left hearing aid anywhere and the aid was not in the dish on the bedside table. What a horrible feeling, misplacing an expensive hearing aid. Later I found the hearing aid in my short's pocket. It reinforced the important lesson to always put things back in the same place.**

### **Playing podcasts on Alexa, The Echo Dot**

**Tell Alexa to play the following podcasts on vision loss: "Eyes on Success" podcast by Nancy and Pete Torpry, "Life after blindness, Cooking in the Dark, Hadley presents, Echo tips," (ACB radio mainstream, American Council of the Blind)**

**Other magic words with Alexa besides *play* are *open* or *enable*. You may have to ask twice, getting closer to the speaker. Also if she messes up a lot, try taking the plug out for a minute and plugging it back in to reboot.**

### **Hearing Help and Resources**

**Adult Loss of Hearing Association (ALOHA), [www.alohaaz.org](http://www.alohaaz.org), [info@alohaaz.org](mailto:info@alohaaz.org) located here in Tucson, AZ**

**Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA ), [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org)**

**Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA ), [www.alda.org](http://www.alda.org)**

**Some Hearing-impaired Equipment dealers:**

**Williams Sound: [www.williamssound.com](http://www.williamssound.com) 800 328 6190**

**Harris Communications: [www.harriscomm.com](http://www.harriscomm.com) 800 825 6758**

**Hearing Direct: [www.hearingdirect.com](http://www.hearingdirect.com) 800 216 2331**

**You can ask for free catalogs from any of the above. Helpful items include: amplified telephones, door bells, baby monitors, and smoke detectors.**

### **More SOS Apps for iPhone**

**Be Safe This voice-activated SOS system sends your location to your selected contacts and automatically streams and records emergency video. Features a built-in siren. Android, iOS; free.**

**Dark Sky Weather** Provides local weather info for the next hour. Don't get caught in a storm! iOS; \$3.99/lifetime.

**First Aid** by American Red Cross contains valuable info on what to do in any common first-aid emergency. Also download free Red Cross apps for emergency weather alerts and expert advice for tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, and floods. Android, iOS; free.

**Medisafe Medication Reminder** Get reminders on your phone for when to take your medication or supplements and when your supplies are running low. Caregivers get real-time missed medication alerts. The app also warns of potentially dangerous drug interactions. Android, iOS; free.

**ICE Medical Standard** It's like a medical alert bracelet on your smartphone's lock screen display, informing first responders of your conditions, allergies, medications and emergency medical contact information. Android, iOS; free.

**Noonlight** Silently calls for help to your exact location with the tap of a button. A trained operator at Noonlight's monitoring center will text and call you to verify the alarm. If you can't talk or don't respond, Noon sends 911 an alert including GPS location, profile information, and even a picture of you. Android, iOS; free.

**Snug Safety** Made for people who live alone, this app checks on you at a time of day you select. You press a green check mark on the app and receive a quote of the day. If you fail to check in, your emergency contacts are notified. Android, iOS; free. Boys' Life and other.

**AIRA- Visual Interpreters using iPhone camera** You can download the AIRA app for free from the App Store. These trained adults will help you with daily task or seeing what is around you under five minutes for free. For more minutes, consider joining the American Council of the Blind, (ACB) \$10 yearly dues, by contacting John McCann 571-212-3100 or by email at [lists@jamsite.us](mailto:lists@jamsite.us). AIRA is a wonderful service. Consider the plan below.

Aira is extending special ACB Membership pricing from June 1 through December 31, 2020.

#### **ACB Member Intro Plan**

- Minutes: 30 per month
- Price: \$20.00 per month
- Plan Share: no additional users

#### **ACB Member Enhanced Plan**

- Minutes: 140 per month
- Price: \$99.99 per month
- Plan Share: up to two additional users

Plans are only available through the Aira Customer Care Team. To qualify for these plans, one must be a member in good standing of the American Council of the Blind.

Getting Assistance with AIRA Customer Care 800-835-1934 or visit [www.aira.com](http://www.aira.com)

Download free books from National Braille Press, 800-548 7323 [www.nbp.org](http://www.nbp.org) , [www.nbp.org](http://www.nbp.org) ,

*Getting Assistance with the iPhone* by Judy Dixon,

*Dinner is Served* and *Managing Health care when you are blind*, can all be downloaded for free until Aug 31 either in MS Word or Daisy format, in Braille or order them on a preloaded flash drive.

*When Your Ears Can't Help You See*

*Strategies for Blind and Low Vision Individuals with Hearing Loss*

By Deborah Kendrick, \$18 (This is her newest book)

A Little Arizona Humor

*You know you are in Arizona when:*

- *you notice that your car is overheating --- and you haven't started it yet.*
- *you can say Hohokam and no one thinks you're making it up.*
- *you see more water flowing down the street than is in the Salt River.*
- *you know that a "swamp cooler" is not a happy hour drink.*
- *you have to run your air conditioner in the middle of winter so that you can use your fireplace.*
- *you know that Valley Fever is not a disco dance.*
- *the water coming from the "cold" tap is hotter than that from the "hot" tap*
- *you think that Circle K signs are the state tree.*
- *hot air balloons can't fly because the air outside is hotter than the air inside.*
- *you can understand the reason for a town being named "Surprise."*

Three sisters lived in a house together.

One night the 96 year old draws a bath, puts her foot in and pauses.

She yells down the stairs, "Was I getting in or out of the bath?"

The 94 year old yells back, "I don't know; I'll come up and see."

She starts up the stairs and pauses; then she yells, "Was I going up the stairs or coming down?"

The 92 year old was sitting at the kitchen table having tea, listening to her sisters.

She shakes her head and says, I sure hope I never get that forgetful."

She knocks on wood for good measure; then she yells, "I'll come up and help both of you as soon as I see who's at the door."

Our eyes are always the same size from birth, but our nose and ears never stop growing.

It's impossible to sneeze with your eyes open.