



TUCSON SOCIETY OF THE BLIND (TSB)

P.O. Box 57655. Tucson, AZ 85732

JUNE/JULY 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

Welcome to the June-July Newsy Notes.

I hope this newsletter finds you healthy and safe. Due to the corona virus, we are at home keeping busy. TSB members have been enjoying phone conferences on Tuesday mornings. We have had Lupita Hernandez – of the walking/running group *Achilles Heels*, who told us the amazing things she does; Van Fowler, who told the story of Walter Vail and John Wayne; Tanner Ger, who shared his inspiring stories of overcoming blindness; and Kirsten Engel who spoke about AZ state news. If you have not joined us for these phone conferences please do so. The phone call starts at 10:00 AM and the phone number is: 605-468-8020 with passcode 969009#

You will notice there is no calendar in this newsletter. This is because guest speakers are not confirming until the last minute.

We do not know when we will be back at the church. This depends on the corona virus and when the church gives us a green light to begin again. When we do meet again at the church we will have a pizza party so TSB will supply masks. Stay tuned for my email. You can also call me or Tom for the latest news of what is happening at TSB. There will always be a program with a guest speaker every Tuesday, whether on the phone or in the church. Even though TSB is not meeting at the church right now, we still need donations to meet our budget. See article in this newsletter on the Federal Tax Credit, where you can donate and get the amount donated back.

There are many helpful tips in this newsletter, so be sure to keep this newsletter for reference.

I sure miss not seeing all of you. I leave you with my favorite quote, “Keep your eye on the doughnut and not the hole.”

Eye Talk by Annie Schlesinger “Preparing for Vision Loss”

It wasn't until I was in my forties that I was diagnosed with my heredity eye disease, Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP). I was told I would likely become totally blind. Although I knew I couldn't see well, it was a shock! Not knowing how long I had, I begin to prepare. I took some classes at Braille Institute in Los Angeles. I was given lessons in using the long white cane. Next I took

correspondence courses from Hadley Institute that included Independent Living and Braille. After I started getting talking books I read stories by and about blind people. I wanted to know how to live.

Although I was legally blind, I could function fairly well for a lengthy period of time. BUT as the loss of vision started to impact more of my daily functioning I begin to take vision loss seriously. Unlike me, many people won't become totally blind. I read that 85% will retain some vision but may have trouble with reading and with activities of daily living. Everyone can benefit from these suggestions.

Here are some things I suggest:

My number one is to get organized! Don't waste your time and get frustrated by not being organized.

Learn to do things in a non-visual way. This is easier to do while you still have vision as you can check on yourself. Use other senses, there are four more besides vision. Touch does lots for us. Mark items with bump dots or 3D paint so you can locate places such as numbers on a microwave.

If you expect to change residences, do it while you still have vision and can arrange it to your satisfaction.

Work with your environment. Get used to pushing in chairs, close cabinet doors. Plan contrast in dishes, towels, rugs. Plan lighting, avoid glare.

Sign up for talking books if you like to read; this gives you telephone access to NFBNewsline which has over 500 publications available. BARD allows downloading books to a tablet or other device.

When you can't read your own handwriting there are several digital recorders you can use to make notes and lists, available for under \$100. If you can, get into technology. There's much available, and although harder to learn for older folks; it opens up another dimension for us. We older folks, and younger ones too, resist change and it may take more repetition for us to learn something. But I did it when all I really wanted in technology was to use the ATM.

Deborah Kendrick, a writer from Access World Magazine, wrote "With tools, techniques and a dose of imagination blended with persistence there have always been solutions to performing ordinary tasks without the benefit of 20/20 vision."

Donate to Tucson Society of the Blind and receive a Federal Tax Credit for 2020
By Barbara Macpherson

Relief and Economic Security Act, CARES Act, will permit taxpayers to deduct from their federal income taxes up to \$300 in cash contributions to charitable organizations, whether they itemize tax deductions or not. Subsequently, people can make a donation for essentially no cost. The CARES Act is a huge help to nonprofits because it gives people the opportunity to direct funds to charities of their choice. We hope you will financially support the work of Tucson Society of the Blind via the tax credit 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 and use Paypal which will put the donation on your credit card. Thanks ahead of time for your donation.

The BlindShell Classic Accessible Cell Phone

I recently got the opportunity to try out the new BlindShell cell phone and really liked it. The voice was loud and clear and it was about the same size as my iPhone SE. It was easy to read emails and make phone calls with the voice activated menus, however, I would have made a bigger dot with 3D paint from Michaels on the number 5 button. For those of you who want to send text and read emails, this product is much easier to use.

You can get a phone plan from AT&T for \$15 a month with unlimited calling, texting and 2 GB of data. This phone comes in black and red, and a carrying case is also available for \$35. See more details below on the Blind Shell cell phone which is designed for the blind and low vision individual.

The BlindShell is a completely accessible cell phone with a tactile number pad and buttons. It has a consistent, easy-to-use menu with text-to-speech, with very quick and easy access to your email, or to listen to internet radio or YouTube. You can also label objects such as items in the freezer. The major limitation is there is no BARD or BookShare on this phone, however you can download books from your computer to the phone. The phone is available at LS&S for \$349 and runs on the AT&T network. The phone received a good evaluation by the reviewer in the February issue of Access World. LS&S phone: 800-468-4789

SENDING OUT AN SOS on iPhone apps to help you in an emergency

SEVERAL NEW smartphone apps can help you in an emergency by providing key-information to responders and your contacts. The apps are designed to supplement calling 911 but not to replace it. The app NotOK is free and serves as a panic button, notifying selected contacts and sharing your location when you're in physical or emotional pain. Just open the app and tap the panic button. Although designed with suicide prevention in mind, it can be used in any crisis and is handy for older adults because it can alert several family members at the same time.

With a simple tap, the app Noonlight sends an alert to emergency dispatchers or your loved ones. The paid version for iPhone can even detect if you've been in a car accident.

Many of us use our iPhone as our "life" storage and retrieval system for our daily stuff. Help someone set up their Medical ID in the app called Health. In the app you add health information, list of medications, and medical conditions. This information can be accessed from the lock screen by a medical professional. You can create contacts for other emergency numbers and add to "Contact Favorites"

for speed dialing. Make sure to include a current medication list in your Files app and take pictures of medicine bottles just in case you are away from home.

Watching Movies with Audio Description (AD) on your iPhone or iPad

Wendy Greene was on the phone to talk about how to get movies with audio description on your iPhone or iPad. The link below will take you to a list of AD movies on Amazon prime. See this link. <https://acb.org/adp/amazonad.html> . You can find more information on AD at: www.acb.org/adp . There are audio description lists for Netflix, Disney Plus store, Target, or Walmart. You need to check the AD button on the iPhone under VoiceOver Accessibility. Once a movie starts playing, you can go up to the right hand corner and click AD.

Instructional Videos from Hadley by Douglas Walker

“Using VoiceOver on iPhone”

I have been watching instructional videos on learning to use the iPhone. www.hadley.edu/instructionalvideos . There are about 30 videos under different categories: Discovering the iPhone, Every Day Tasks, Communicating, Using Siri, Web Browsing with Safari, Writing, and Entertainment.

The Amazing Alexa Echo Dot

One of my favorite devices is the Amazon Echo Dot, (Alexa), or the “A Lady.” Mine is on all day. And Alexa is getting smarter all the time. You need a wireless internet to run her and the Alexa app can also be downloaded on an iPhone or computer. A second generation Echo Dot costs about \$30 on eBay and the third generation Echo Dot about \$39.99. Some of the many things the Echo Dot can do after enabling them on the Alexa app include: telling you the time, setting timers and alarms, reading the news (some sites I have stored are Fox News, National Public Radio, and the Associated Press), finding out the current weather conditions, getting a 7 day forecast for anywhere in the country, play Unlimited Music (Amazon music is \$8.11 a month), calling anyone in your contact list, getting the address or phone number of local businesses, using Alexa as an emergency device to call others if in trouble, creating and adding to your shopping list, looking up biographies of famous individuals on Wikipedia, telling you the Dow Jones average, playing games, playing current and previous episodes of podcasts (after enabling them such as Eyes on Success, Life after Blindness, Cooking in the Dark, Blindability), playing any radio station, enabling and listening to Sun Sounds of Arizona (choose Tucson), playing 94.9 Mix FM, playing commercial free Sirius XM satellite radio for no charge until June 30 (I like easy listening music on channel 69 “Escape” and playing 60’s music on channel 6, playing ACB (American Council of the Blind) radio channels (i.e. Live, Main Stream, Café, and Treasure. I have really been enjoying the Mainstream channel. Their programs run all night and repeat), playing NFB Newslines (have security number handy, open National Federation, Alexa walks you through the registration process), asking National Federation to play USA Today, playing Audible and Kindle books (asking what is free on Audible today - right now it is a Grownup Guide for Dinosaurs), acting as a public address system (to all the Echo Dots in the house), telling jokes and inspiring quotes (Try “Entertain Me” or

“Beam Me up Scotty”), using smart plugs to turn on a light or start an electrical appliance.

So, if you do not have an Echo Dot, consider getting one. The setup is not hard. The National Federation of the Blind and American Council of the Blind National Conventions are online this year. Sign up for the NFB convention for free by June 15. Go to www.nfb.org/convention to sign up for the convention July 14-18. The NFB state convention of Arizona will also be online, Sept 11-13. Download the NFB Connect App on your iPhone. Sign up for the ACB convention July 3-10 at www.acb.org . Registration is \$25, but you can listen for free on ACB radio live and mainstream radio on Alexa or on an iPhone. Download the *Acblink* app. There is also a tutorial and it is easy to listen to ACB Radio, Inspiring Words.

"When you are deciding on next steps, next jobs, next careers, or further education, you should rather find purpose than a job or a career. Purpose crosses disciplines. Purpose is an essential element of you. JIMMY FALLON, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida (2018).

"When something feels hard, remember that it gets better. Choose to move forward. Don't let anything stop you. J.K. ROWLING, Harvard University (2008).

"We do not need magic to change the world; we carry all the power we need inside ourselves already: We have the power to imagine better. BARBARA BUSH, Wellesley College (1990)." (2018)

"Go out there and make a difference. Be that difference." JON STEWART, William & Mary (2004).

"College is something you complete. Life is something you experience." STEVE JOBS, Stanford University (2005).

"Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life."

Have a Happy 4th of July! Barbara Macpherson, President TSB

Joe: My brother swallowed a box of firecrackers.

Moe: Is he all right now?

Joe: I don't know. I haven't heard the last report.

Teacher: More than 200 years ago, our forefathers defeated the British in the Revolutionary War.

Caleb: Wow! They must have been pretty strong, four men defeating a whole army!

Robert: What did the colonists wear to the Boston Tea Party?

John: I don't know.

Robert: Tea-shirts.