



Newsletter



CCB National Newsletter January 2018

Happy New Year from CCB!

Announcements

President's Message ++

"Happy New Year to all"



As we begin 2018 chapters across the country are busily preparing for White Cane Week. I hope that stormy weather will not cause any disruptions in plans for special events.

CCB will continue our working relationships with organizations of and for the blind as well as other disability groups so that we can help in the prevention of blindness and improve the quality of the lives of individuals already experiencing vision loss so they can lead a comfortable and productive lifestyle. Working together with other groups such as (but not limited too) CELA, IFA, BMC, and CTA we are better able to get a voice to make a difference for everyone. We will continue to send support letters for a variety of Patient Groups in their efforts because many of the particular diseases they represent are diseases that our members often re battling as well as blindness so it helps the common good for all.

An example would be a letter of support for when Cannabis becomes legalized latter this year there will be a tax all products. This can be an added burden for those who will be using it through prescriptions for medical reasons, other prescription drugs are not taxable could prevent people who really need this type of pain relief to not be able to afford the prescription. While this can be a controversial issue it CCB is supporting the proper medical use of cannabis only not the recreational usage.



In February, expect to see a new look to our monthly newsletter. We hope to reach a larger population and hence increase membership.

A special Thank You to all our sponsors and donors throughout the year for aiding in promoting our programs and making it possible for more persons with vision loss to enjoy using these programs as well.

Keep well through the coming year and check out our CCB Health and Fitness program.

Louise Gillis, National President

White Cane Week 2018++

Get ready for another fun and exciting awareness week from February 4 to 10. Events include our annual AMI Canadian Vision Impaired Curling Championship and countless local activities.

Please visit the CCB website to keep yourself updated on the many exciting events that will be taking place this year across the country. And stay tuned for reports on events in upcoming newsletters!



A Proclamation from British Columbia++

Thanks to the hard work of the Canadian Council of the Blind members in the British Columbia/Yukon Division the province of British Columbia has proclaimed that February 4 to 10, 2018 shall be known as White Cane Week.



CCB Blind Sports Nova Scotia Chapter Update - December, 2017++:

***Tandem Bike Club ***

With excellent cycling weather, the Tandem Bike Club saw a high level of participation! Plenty of individuals loaned tandem bikes throughout the summer and well into October.



New stokers (riders with vision loss) rode with us, we trained new volunteer pilots and returning volunteers who were keen to help us make cycling accessible in Halifax & surrounding areas.

We had a blast getting out for a number of group bike rides, including a few rides over 40 kilometres from Halifax to the Bike and Bean restaurant in Tantallon and back.

Sighted cyclists, family & friends, also joined for the fun & outdoor exercise, and we made new friends on the trails.

***Running, Walking, & Guide Bunnies ***

At least 10 runners & walkers with vision loss participated in events at the 13th Scotiabank Blue Nose Marathon. The Blue Nose also serves as one of our chapter's main fund raising events each year.



Stephanie Berry, a CCB Blind Sports NS member raced her first half-marathon at this year's Army Run in Ottawa. She placed 2nd in the visually impaired category - Congratulations!

Jennie Bovard, CCB Blind Sports NS member & Communications Director and CCB NS Division Advocacy Officer, took on 5 races this season, with highlights including 6th in her division (of 60) at the Navy 5 kilometre race and 19th (of 117) in her division at the Legs for Literacy 10 kilometre road race.

We're extremely grateful to the Guide Bunnies, a sub-group of the White Rabbit Pacing non-profit, whose guide runners have made it possible for Nova Scotians with vision loss to participate in races alongside sighted peers & achieve new milestones. We can't wait for next season! Check guidebunnies.wixsite.com or email pacebunnies@gmail.com to learn more about them.



Goalball's Back

We're elated to witness such growth in the sport of goalball throughout Nova Scotia!

The goalball season may have just begun, but we've never stopped holding demonstrations for at schools, universities, and community events. Through these event's, we've grown awareness & participation, and inspired our sighted peers to join on the level playing field that is the goalball court.

***Weekly goalball programs are up & running: ***

- Junior goalball programs in New Minas, Antigonish, and Halifax
- APSEA youth goalball
- Recreational goalball (all ages, all levels, co-ed) in Halifax
- Junior goalball in Halifax
- Senior men & women's goalball in Halifax



3rd Annual Nova Scotia Open Goalball Tournament:

Thanks to the support & dedication of donors, volunteers, coaches, officials, athletes, and our community, we hosted another successful international tournament in Halifax, the only event of its kind in Atlantic Canada!

Elite and developing athletes from the USA and Canada went head to head in a well-attended, live streamed, event that saw great competition and even media attention.

Here's how the standings shook out

- 1 Turnstone (USA)
- 2 California Crown
- 3 Nova Scotia
- 4 Quebec
- 5 Ontario All Black
- 6 Atlantic Ship Recs

Coming up...

Give Spinning a Spin

With cycling season over, the Tandem Bike Club offers a free introductory indoor spin class for anyone with vision loss. A great way to stay active during the winter months, the event will take place Sunday, December 17th and will be hosted by long-time volunteer tandem bike pilot, Jim.



***18th Montreal Goalball Tournament ***

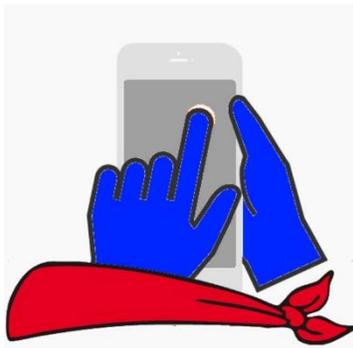
January 26th to 28th, 2018, the Nova Scotia men's goalball team will compete alongside athletes from across North America.

Assistive Technology

Tech Article: Apps That Assist Beginners with Learning Voice over Gestures++:

Here are some recommendations for apps that might help new iPhone users learn the iPhone gestures.

These are four apps I think are helpful in learning the VoiceOver gestures of the iPhone. They are all free, I think.



The Blindfold Bop one is free, however limited in how many times you can use it, so I purchased it for about \$6 which allows me unlimited use of the app.

Below I have provided a link to the entire list of iFocus MP3 files in my Dropbox folder. It is a Zipped file that you can download to your computer.

1. VO Starter, is an app that is text based and explains the Voice Over gestures well in a well organized fashion. It's a great manual for learning what's possible.
2. Blindfold Bop, is a game based tutorial that gets you to practice gestures with ever increasing speeds and complexity.
3. VO Tutorial, is an app that works the user through several games requiring that gestures be performed in order to work through the game. It's great for beginners.
4. VO Lab, I found this one less helpful as it gets the user to turn off VO and use a self-voicing voice. It might be too confusing for beginners. I don't like it, but it's possible that others will learn from it so I included it.

Of course, VO Calendar is a great way to use the Calendar with an accessible and usable overlay on the native on board Calendar app.

iFocus MP3 Zipped File (nearly 3GB):

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/nytxnwzs544p4on/ifocus%20MP3%20Files.zip?dl=1>

By Albert Ruel, GTT West Coordinator

Some Tips to help better Utilize the Safari Web browser++:

Safari for iPhone and iPad is an incredibly capable mobile web browser despite its simple, straightforward user interface. It is the browser of choice on iOS, in large part because it is the one pre-installed, but very few people know everything you can do with Safari.

Much of Safari's advanced functionality is hidden behind "long-pres gestures" that most people do not know exist.



Long press on the Bookmarks button
On Safari for iPhone and iPad, the normal way to add a bookmark for a webpage is to press the Share toolbar button and scroll through the activity pop-up to select the Add Bookmark option. Using a long-press, you can do the same thing more quickly.

Long-press on the Bookmarks button (which tapping on normally takes you to view your bookmarks) and a new action menu appears. The modal features options to Add Bookmark or Add to Reading List. Saving to Reading List is immediate, whilst tapping the bookmark option will open the usual options view to confirm the name and Favorites folder location.

In the News

Engineers are helping the blind ‘see’ fireworks++:

It is almost that time of the year again, the moment that sees out the old and welcomes in the new, on New Year’s Eve. In the seconds that take 23:59 in 2017 to 00:00 in 2018, bursts of fiery light will appear in the night skies around the world as displays of fireworks are triggered.

Some of the world’s grandest fireworks happen on Australia’s Sydney Harbor, on the United Kingdom’s London Eye, on France’s Eiffel Tower in Paris, and on Brazil’s Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro, to name a few.



Nothing dazzles crowds quite like fireworks displays. They are, after all, a marvel of chemical engineering. There is a visceral excitement felt by many when fireworks burst into the sky as a New Year dawns.

However, for visually impaired members of our global population, enjoying a fireworks display is limited to the reverberating explosions alone. The engineers and researchers at Disney Parks and Resorts have worked to find a solution.

The company is world renowned for its firework displays; in fact they are the largest consumer of fireworks in the world. A former Product Designer at Disney Consumer Products, Ben Suarez, says Disney uses up to US\$50,000 of fireworks per show at their resorts. It is estimated that the resorts collectively blow up \$50 million worth of fireworks every year.

Feeling Fireworks

Researchers at Disney are developing a technology that would allow visually impaired patrons to experience the fireworks at their parks in a new way; by feeling them. A flexible screen is set up, with water jets positioned behind it. By placing their hands against the screen they feel a representation of a firework exploding outwardly.

To further improve the experience, a Microsoft Kinect camera array is set up, for the purposes of tracking users' hands. Once a user's hands are up against the flexible screen, the jets are activated through the Kinect sensor and a personalized 'fireworks explosion' is performed for the user.

Disney's researchers are experimenting with a variety of nozzles on the water jets to produce varied patterns and thus a breadth of tactile experience. Using an Arduino-based computer, the engineers control the amount of water the pump emits and can control the direction of the nozzles. The researchers have also found that they can produce the experience inexpensively.



They write:

“Our approach is low-cost and scales well, and allows for dynamic tactile effects to be rendered with high spatial resolution.”

The rise and development of haptic technology will enable an increasing number of tactile experiences in the near future. Haptic feedback is something engineers are embedding in technology to make humans feel like their interactions with technology are more genuine.

Disney believes that the technology could be adapted to other industries. The researchers write:

“Beyond the specific application, the technology represents a novel and cost-effective approach for making large scalable tactile displays, with the potential for wider use.”

Disney’s investment in fireworks goes further. According to former Disney & NBC Product Designer Ben Suarez the company has invested millions into “developing new fireworks that left minimal amounts of smoke”, after the smell of their many fiery displays agitated crowds.

A festive season is, after all, for everyone. It is commendable that Disney has used their engineering expertise to ensure this gladness is spread a little more widely.

By Quintus Potgieter



OC Transpo fined \$25K for failing to call out bus stops++:

The Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) has hit OC Transpo in Ottawa with a hefty fine after enforcement officers discovered major stops were not being called out on three trips.

A CTA enforcement officer checked buses on routes 4, 7 and 62 on the afternoon of Nov. 14, following a CBC report about problems with OC Transpo's Next Stop Announcement System, and found a failure to call stops on all three buses.

Visually impaired riders had previously told CBC that stops were not being called out consistently, a problem that was supposed to be solved by the automated system of visual and audio alerts.



The \$12-million system, which CCB actively advocated for, was installed in late 2010 following a complaint to the CTA by Terrance Green, a blind user of OC Transpo who said drivers were failing to call stops as required by OC Transpo's own policy.

Green told CBC in November that problems with the system were ongoing, but his concerns seemed to come as a surprise to OC Transpo's director of customer systems and planning, who said he believed the system was "working consistently, for everyone's benefit."

Pat Scrimgeour said OC Transpo's staff inspectors had been monitoring the system and found it was functioning properly about 98 per cent of the time.

The transit agency learned about the fine on Monday and will review what happened on those routes, according to Troy Charter, OC Transpo's director of transit operations. He said it was too soon to say whether the agency would request a review of the decision.

"We need to gather our facts and look at what occurred," Charter said. "We need to sit down and review our maintenance logs, look at those specific buses, see if there were operator or customer reports, review the downloads . Essentially we need to do our investigation to look at what occurred."



If the automated system is not functioning, drivers are required to call out the stops to comply with

the earlier ruling by the Canadian Transportation Agency.

But Charter noted, if the automated system is not working, drivers on busy routes with crowded buses may not be able to hear it, and so may not know they need to be calling out the stops.

The deadline to pay the \$25,000 fine is Jan. 23.

CBC News, December 19, 2017

Friends help blind woman in difficult task of finding a job++:

Tepi Hughes was found as a toddler in the rubble of her famine-torn home-city of Dhaka, Bangladesh. She spent 10 years in an orphanage during the Bangladesh genocide of the 1970s.

At seven, she contracted smallpox, and unlike 300 million people worldwide, Hughes didn't die of one of the most feared diseases. She did go blind, though.

Life changed at 11 when she was adopted by a Canadian family.

Her formal education finally began when the new family registered her in Grade 4 with the W. Ross MacDonald School for the Blind in Ontario.

For nine years, like hundreds of other blind students — Hughes experienced abuse. A class-action lawsuit recently reached a settlement in dealing with the abundance of claims. Of larger consequence to Hughes was the school's decision to place her in a "learning disability class" where she did not obtain literacy skills.



Hughes thinks the school's decision was based on her limited ability to speak English and remembers that time as the moment grade school ended — with less than two years of formal education.

Hughes, in her 50s now, has spent more than 40 years in Canada. Like many working-age blind people, she lives below the poverty line. She does her best to make a home as an independent woman with a good network of friends, many from the Canadian Federation of the Blind — an organization that promotes independence. Hughes describes the CFB as: "A group of friends who travels to conferences, meets monthly, practises cane skills and enjoys each other's company."

"We all believe a blind person can do anything they set their mind to," she says.

The only thing I knew about the Bangladesh genocide was that George Harrison and Ravi Shankar had organized benefit concerts. I googled and learned of an estimated three million

people, brutally murdered by the West Pakistan military in what was then East Pakistan.

I wondered: How does a person heal from that foundation? In his latest book, *Waiting for First Light*, former Canadian general Romeo Dallaire describes the ongoing healing process from his painful experience in Rwanda.

Dallaire is white and tall and handsome and brilliant and powerful and a trained soldier. He has position power and political power as an esteemed Canadian three-star general and senator. He is



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an author of three extraordinary books. He has a hard-earned international reputation and a supportive family and influential friends. And yet, even with tremendous supports, dealing with his experience of genocide nearly destroyed him, as it has done to many other combat professionals.

I am grateful to Dallaire for his courage in helping all of us to understand. But I am afraid for my friend. A small, blind woman, who grew up in an orphanage surrounded by genocide, has few such support privileges.

And yet, Hughes has an uncommon vitality and light-heartedness. I met Hughes a few times at Christmas parties for the Canadian Federation of the Blind and remembered a jovial character. I am not a member of that community, but an ally and supporter of their work.

In the summer of 2016, a mutual friend asked me to accompany Hughes as a “sight guide” while she volunteered at the Mustard Seed Street Church’s food bank. It wasn’t until Hughes and I volunteered together that we got to know each other better. For

five days we scooped rice and oatmeal and other staples out of 50-pound sacks and into little plastic bags to be distributed in family food hampers.

Hughes worked hard, kept the work space organized, and was thorough in completing her tasks — not too surprising, as she had wrapped candy for a local chocolate factory for 10 years until she was laid off.

She had an easy way of connecting with people in the busy warehouse. If someone walked by, she would call out a friendly “hello.” The next time that person went by, they would say hi, and while Hughes was sorting fruit she would jokingly ask if they wanted to have a blueberry fight.



On her last day, several co-workers said how much they enjoyed working together, and the food bank organizers thanked her for the help. I came away with a nagging feeling that Hughes was underutilized.

She told me she wanted to get a part-time, minimum-wage job to supplement a disability income. I figured that would not be too hard, and offered to help with what I thought would be a two-month search.

We arranged to meet every Tuesday morning to strategize and job-hunt.

According to the job-hunter’s guide, *What Colour Is Your Parachute 2017*, circulating traditional resumés nets a four per cent success rate, while forwarding a letter of introduction to

specific businesses nets an 86 per cent success rate. We decided to hand-deliver 30 tailored letters to selected businesses in the first few weeks.

We reached out in every which way, and made use of local support agencies.

Potential employers at businesses or job fairs frequently saw Hughes as a blind person — and nothing more. Imagine being seen as a sighted person — and nothing more.

Rejections were always, nice, polite, gracious and swift.

With an outgoing personality and disarming charm, Hughes would make a great receptionist, I thought. But I also knew I would not likely convince anyone of that truth.



Fifteen months later, Hughes still does not have a part-time, minimum-wage job that would provide some small income and some large sense of purpose as a working person. Luckily, at the start of our job-hunting saga, we

agreed on a “never give up” motto.

We were in a coffee shop on Foul Bay Road recently when two construction workers came in.

“I remember you. You’re Tepi,” one said. “I worked on your street last year.” Hughes listened and then said: “You guys did an amazing job of fixing that sidewalk. People who use wheelchairs in my building are safer now.”

It was a scene I have witnessed frequently. She might not have received a formal education, but Hughes has a PhD in the art of being friendly.

These days, Hughes, another CFB friend, Doris Belusic, and I meet on Tuesday mornings for breakfast, a good chat and,

always, a laugh. Beth Cowin, an employment counsellor at Phoenix Human Services is also a supporter and equally determined to help Hughes find a paying job. It is taking longer than she expected, but Cowin is tenacious and not prepared to give up, either.

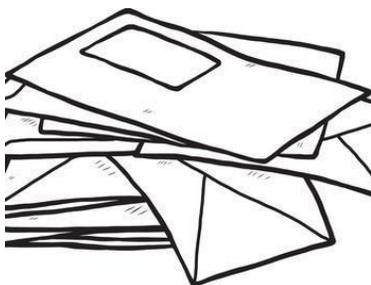
We are learning that in 2017, many employers in Canada still see blind applicants as helpless and dependent. Hence the 90 per cent unemployment rate for working-age blind people. What a crazy waste of talent!



As ridiculous as it sounds, after surviving genocide, smallpox, blindness, a childhood in an orphanage, a scandalous education system in Ontario and decades of financial challenge while managing a poverty-level existence, Hughes' biggest challenge of all might be to find an employer in Victoria who will recognize possibility in her strengths — and hire her. And then her friends will throw a party. By Thelma Fayle, for Times Colonist

A Gifted Artist Finds Success, Despite Being Deaf and Blind++:

For years, Kelly Brown sat in the corner of a dimly lit Wynnewood warehouse stuffing envelopes. Doing bulk mailings was typical of the work at Lower Merion Vocational Training Center and other



state-supported programs for people with physical and intellectual disabilities. Deaf and blind from birth, Brown performed the simplified, repetitive tasks assigned to her and her co-workers. She didn't complain; she was paid a stipend, and the steady job gave structure to her days.

Brown was considered unremarkable-except for the ropes. Somewhere along the way, she learned to crochet, and during her breaks, she made long, thick, multicolored ropes. Brown did this so often that the ropes crowded her workspace. Not having any use for them, the staff put the ropes in trash bags and stashed them in a spare room. That's where Stephanie Petro found them years later. From the black plastic bags, she pulled crocheted rainbows of pink, blue and yellow yarn. Petro didn't see trash. She saw art.

A former social worker with a B.F.A. in painting, Petro was part of a team assembled by Lori Bartol in 2009 to transform the mail house into the Center for Creative Works. Working under the auspices of Pennsylvania's Resources for Human Development, the center still serves people with intellectual disabilities. But Bartol doesn't focus on providing traditional therapies.



"We make art," Bartol says. "We're not here to fix anyone. We're here to mentor and support them. Your identity isn't your disability. Your identity is that of an artist."

It's tough to say what Brown thought her identity was, or if she thought about it at all. But Petro had a hunch that Brown was filled with creativity. "I gave her a box of fiber materials, each with a different feeling, and off she went," Petro says.

"Everything I put in front of her-rubber bands, tape, coffee filters, feathers-she turned into art."

It was slow going at first. Deaf-blind people like Brown communicate through touch sign language. A branch of American Sign Language, touch sign is also called tactile sign or hand-over-

hand sign. The deaf-blind person places their hands over those of the person making the signs. Movements can be felt; words can be spelled.

This is how Helen Keller learned to communicate with her teacher, Anne Sullivan, the woman who brought her out of darkness and silence to become one of history's most inspiring role models.

But Petro didn't know sign language. On her own time and dime, she took classes to learn sign language and touch sign. Next, she gave Brown clay, then a loom, then a wide variety of textiles.

Petro scoured flea markets, yard sales and dollar stores for lampshades, metal frames, colored beads, leis made of plastic flowers, tinsel, and acres of yarn. Most of these objects are used, discarded or on sale because no one sees uses for them.

They may be sitting in dark corners of attics, garages and stores, waiting perhaps for someone to bring them to life.

Brown has done just that, resurrecting the materials into upcycled art. Her vividly colored, multi-textured pieces of fiber art have

Never enough yarn...



been displayed and sold at the St. Louis Outsider Art Fair, Grounds For Sculpture in Trenton, and galleries in and around Philadelphia.

Bartol wants that kind of success for all of the 85 artists at the Center for Creative Works-and they are making progress. In the past three years, their pieces have netted more than \$50,000 in sales.

"My teachers are really good at recognizing things that are technically part of [the artists'] disabilities, but turning them into the informing piece of their art,"

Bartol says. "Kelly's tapestries are so textural. The first thing you want to do is touch them. That comes directly out of the fact that she works as a blind person."

Fame itself doesn't matter to Brown or Petro or Bartol. What they need, Bartol explains, are sales of art to keep the Center for Creative Works running. For each piece sold, the artist gets 60 percent and the center retains 40 percent. Bartol uses that money to provide a never-ending supply of materials for artists who are as creatively voracious as Brown.

To boost sales, Bartol wants to open a small retail space that would function as the center's gallery and a community space where artists could teach classes. Bartol already made headway with that concept. Last fall, six of the center's artists taught at Moore College of Art & Design. "They have the necessary skills," Bartol says. "But no one ever considered putting them in front of a class to teach."

Everything the center does jibes with Bartol's philosophy that the center's studio residents are artists first and foremost. "What may be a disability for life is not a disability for artwork," she says. "It just happens to be who you are, so run with it. Make art with it. If you're in a room with people who have no disability at all and take a poll to see how many have artistic sensibilities, the answer is probably none at all. Art isn't tied to an IQ or intellect. It comes from your soul."

To learn more about Brown's work, visit www.centerforcreativeworks.org

By Melissa Jacobs