

# HAB FORUM

HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF THE BLIND

Advocating for

Independence, Equality, Opportunity

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**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, Professor at Leeward Community College
- **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
  - Betty Mason - retired

## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER – Warren Toyama**



HAB's upcoming convention will mark the 40th anniversary of our organization. As the founder of this advocacy group, I take immense pride in being able to provide four full decades of service to blind people in Hawaii and across the country. Thank you very much for

permitting me to serve this group for so long. As we celebrate 40 years of service, it is only fitting that we pause to thank those who helped us along the way: Political leaders who helped enact positive legislation to assist the blind of Hawaii; Lawyers who helped us defend the rights of blind citizens; Hawaii citizens who donated funds to our organization; Kind people who advised us as to the prudent ways to achieve our goals; And the many folks who gave their time and talent to assist us. To all of these many people (and probably many, many more helping hands) we extend our heartfelt thanks! The immediate future of our organization presents serious challenges. Leadership training must take place. Legal questions need to be resolved. Accessible currency must become a reality. Descriptive video services must happen. Audible traffic signals need to be prevalent all over the State. Talking ATM's must be commonplace in Hawaii. Many challenges await us as we step forward into our 41st year. Are you ready to carry your share of the load? Let's go!!

## **FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE – Myles Tamashiro**



Aloha, from the Fundraising Committee! We are anxiously awaiting our next fundraiser. We will be selling the famous Zippy's chilli, along with some yummy banana bread or rich chocolate bread. Stay tuned for further info...

Our last year's fundraiser was very successful, and we are hoping this year will be an even more profitable one! All proceeds from these sales will go to assist HAB in carrying out its projects which include advocating for the rights of the blind,

and helping teachers of blind and visually impaired students.

## TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE – Ronald Flormata, Webmaster

My job as a cashier -

Curious customers, noticing that I'm blind, can't resist the

temptation to ask "How can you tell (how much I gave you)? Can you feel the difference?". That question always puts a smile on my face, and I just say "I can see a little".



There's no magic or mystique about it. However, I feel my minimally sighted days are numbered since my vision is slowly but definitely slipping away. It's not as dependable as a year ago. Working as a cashier in a busy environment can put a lot of stress on anyone, especially if you are a visually impaired person accepting money and giving back change. Although I have a note reader (an electronic device that gives an audible sound of what paper bill you slip in it), I have never used it...not yet at least. Some customers just don't have the patience to wait, particularly when their flight is already boarding.

If you do a time and motion study of this procedure (for example, receiving money from the customer, slipping it into the note reader in one try), you'll realize that you already used up about 10-15 seconds. Then, there's the change you have to deal with. You must be able to determine all the denominations of paper bills. The coins are fine because they have unique shapes and

sizes.

While we do not have a standard time ringing up a customer, I give myself less than a minute to help a customer. But if I were to use the note reader, fold my bills before placing them in the drawer, count the change from the folded bills, and some other kinks that may arise, imagine how long that would take! I wish all customers were kind and understanding with enough time to wait.

Given this scenario, is there any technology available now that will help the situation? The answer is NO. It would greatly help blind and visually impaired persons, whether working as cashiers or not, if they can easily tell how much a currency note is.

Let's face it, note readers are not pocket-sized devices and they are not always as effective, not to mention fast enough. Sometimes, technology just can't cut it. What if we modify the currency notes? Sounds like a very tall order. But it can be done, right? There would be consequences for everyone including businesses, but in time everyone would adjust.

[NOTE: The American Council of the Blind filed a lawsuit against the Treasury Department stating discrimination against the blind over the issue of accessible paper bills. ACB won the suit and the Treasury Department has appealed that decision.]

Thanks!

Much mahalo to those who regularly visit the HAB website. 2006 has been a very exciting year as we showcased the multimedia capabilities of the online website. HAB was proud to stream audio and video on the web, enabling anyone with a

computer and Internet access to listen to actual proceedings of the last HAB Annual Convention. We anticipate 2007 to be more exciting! Here's wishing all our friends in the US and elsewhere, and everyone in the blind community, a HAPPY & REWARDING NEW 2007!!

We encourage everyone to visit the HAB website at: <http://www.acb.org/hawaii>. For comments and suggestions, please contact HAB webmaster, Ronald Flormata via email at [comhaus1@hotmail.com](mailto:comhaus1@hotmail.com).

Thoughts about theBus - Ronald Flormata

Traveling from place to place is always a challenge if you're blind. For those who cannot rely on their sense of sight for directions, they must sharpen other senses to compensate for this deficiency.

A blind person uses hearing primarily, and the rest of the remaining senses, notably touch, via a white cane when walking. Since a blind person cannot drive, he/she depends on public transportation such as a taxi, bus, or train. On Oahu, we have the Oahu Transit Services, Inc. which is the publicly-owned company

of the City and County of Honolulu managing "theBus" and the HandiVan. The buses are designed to accommodate disabled individuals; for example, the two rows of seats parallel to the curb

right behind the driver are reserved for the disabled, meaning they

have priority to these seats. During peak hours when buses are

full, drivers take the initiative to remind able-bodied passengers occupying these seats to give way to the disabled. Moreover, bus drivers are trained to assist wheelchair riding patrons by lifting them up from the curb, and securing their chair to the bus floor.

Blind and visually-impaired passengers depend on the GPS (global positioning system) equipment installed on most buses to announce in advance (about a minute before) the next bus stop thereby providing an indispensable guide on their journey. This technology enables the blind to gain independence while on the bus, and minimize the probability of going astray.

But, like any system, theBus is not perfect. There are areas in the system that demand improvement in order to cater to specific needs of the disabled patrons. Although bus drivers are trained to

assist disabled riders, a small number of them do not take this directive seriously. There are drivers who could care less and take things for granted.

[NOTE: The HAB Transportation Committee, under Louise Horio's leadership, is attempting to increase the use of the GPS equipment by bus drivers.]

INTERNAL SUPPORT COMMITTEE & SOCIAL  
COMMITTEE – Beth Flormata

Another year has passed, and we can look





forward to a new year filled with either great anticipation or dread. Which will it be? For those of us who like to think positively, it will be another year of pleasant surprises, challenges, love, friendship, and all the wonderful blessings we can think of.

For

all HAB members, I wish each one of you another year filled with hope, faith, peace, prosperity, and most of all, a year that will sprinkle each family with enough sunshine to brighten the rainy days, enough laughter to overcome the bouts of sadness, enough trust to rise above misgivings, and an abundance of love to fill our hearts.

In retrospect, 2006 gave the Social Committee a chance to prove that with enough team spirit and support from each and every member, arranging get-togethers (such as the 2006 New Year's Party, the Karaoke Night, and the Thanksmas Party) can be a fun and learning experience. While we aim to please everyone at the gatherings, it can't be helped if at some point during these occasions, there were certain omissions and confusions, as well as processes that can be improved in forthcoming events.

Overall,

these gatherings have been quite successful, judging by the number of attendees, as well as the encouraging and positive comments received. The camaraderie has inspired episodes of blissful and jubilant exchanges of talents and moments of joy. And for these, I would like to thank not just all of the Committee

members, but also other HAB members who did not hesitate to share their precious time, energy, and resources in striving for success.

As for the Internal Support Committee, I hope that I have contributed in my own little way by sending warm birthday greetings throughout the year, and wishes of good health to those who have been under the weather.

As I bid farewell to both columns, please let's all join in welcoming 2007 with gladness in our hearts, with courage and faith that we can overcome the hurdles, with hope for new beginnings, with strength and determination to realize our dreams, as we reach out and inspire one another!

[NOTE: Beth has tendered her resignation as co-chair of the Social Committee and as chair of the Internal Support Committee.]

## Vending News – Filo Tu



Here we go again! It seems that whenever I come up with an article, I'm always telling you about the problems the vending program is facing. This time, it's not only Hawaii's problem, but it involves

the vending program nationwide.

The blind vending program is a very important program to all of us, not only because it is our livelihood, but because it is one of

the ways we have been able to show the public that blind people



are people who just happen to be blind. Furthermore, we are able to prove that given the opportunity, we can be independent, tax-paying members of society.

We the blind vendors, are now asking all of you for your help by doing whatever you can for one of the most successful programs the blind has ever had since 1936. Having been in existence for so long, some feel this program should be taken away from the blind. You see, whenever you have something good, you know there will be people who want to take it away from you. When this program was first opened to the blind, most people thought that it was a workshop. Even the blind people themselves didn't think very highly of the program at that time. But in the last 30 years, other people with disabilities found out how successful the vending program for the blind has become. Now, they want some of the success that the blind has had for 69 years. This vending program has always been known as the vending program for the blind! And we, the vendors of Hawaii and the nation, are committed to make sure that we keep it that way.

I know that some of you will probably be asking each other how you can help. You can contact your congressional delegation and let them know that this program is for the blind. You can say that we don't have any problem with them helping other handicapped people, but they should look for other ways to help

them instead of taking away a program that has been successful under the blind for 69 years.

Let's all work to help save the vending program for the blind.

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

HAPVI enjoyed a well attended annual Convention on Saturday, September 16, 2006 at the Pagoda Hotel. The evening hospitality prior to the Convention was so much fun! How many people can

you cram into a Pagoda suite? Well, you'll just have to attend next year to find out! Great music, ono

food, sing-a-longs (don't worry folks, my horrid voice did not ruin it!), and great fellowship intermingled throughout the night. The next day at the Convention, Jon Koki updated the participants regarding some of the exciting new programs for youth at Ho'opono, including their weeklong camp at Camp Erdman, their Maui Trek at Haleakala, and an upcoming adventure on the mainland. The LBPH updated the participants on new collections and resources offered. Sydney Dickerson, administrator of HCDB, updated the participants on resources provided by the DOE to blind and visually impaired students. Dr. Tammy Bopp from DOH's Early Intervention program shared the struggles of

staffing their Visual Impairment position.

HAPVI continues to advocate for the necessary services visually impaired students receive from the DOE and DOH

Carol's photoprograms. Discussions and recommendations with administrators from both agencies are ongoing.

HAPVI's next meeting will occur on Saturday, April 14, 2007 from 10am – 12pm at Ho'opono in the conference room.

Contact

Myles Tamashiro at 626-0535 for further details.

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

. Convention

Maui KAPVI was pleased to have its vice-president, Jody Cambra, represent KAPVI at the HAPVI convention in September. Jody, who is also blind, enjoyed meeting everyone so much that she would like to attend future HAPVI functions!

**.KAPVI is growing!**

**KAPVI was organized to give the students opportunities to socialize. It includes parents and siblings when appropriate.**

**The**

**youngest member is only three, and it includes all age groups.**

**Halloween**

**KAPVI had its annual pumpkin decorating contest in October. Two kindergarten students, Karl and Liam, took**

**first and  
second places!**

### **. Christmas**

**The students celebrated their annual Christmas party with gift exchanges, BINGO, and cameras. They took lots of pictures!**

**They also collected toys and canned goods for the needy.**

### **. Future Events**

**The students are planning a Valentine go-cart race and lunch on Saturday, February 17, and a whale watch and Easter egg hunt later in the spring. If you are on Maui for any of these events, you are welcome to participate.**

### **. Staff Shortage**

**Maui District is still short-staffed for teacher of the visually impaired. There has been a vacant position since August 2005. In**

**addition, Margy Greiner (TVI) just had kidney surgery in Honolulu and will be out until the end of January. If you know of any teachers of the visually impaired who would like to move to Maui, please let the Maui teachers know.**

**For information about KAPVI on Maui please call President Marge Masterson at 669-0928, or email Carol Hotta at [hotta@maui.net](mailto:hotta@maui.net).**

**State of Hawaii Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (SHAER)**

**Amy Downard SHAER hosted their Transition Conference on October 20 & 21, 2006 at the Queen Kapiolani Hotel in Waikiki. The Conference was well attended by teachers of the visually impaired, Ho'opono staff, DOE transition teachers, and parents. Dr. Karen Wolffe provided a presentation with realistic transition goals and topics for students who are visually impaired. It was inspiring to hear her strategies to develop strong skills development in the area of career exploration and preparedness. Many of us left the conference with great resources to use with our students and clients. The latter part of the Conference ended with a Vendor/Exhibitor Fair, which included representatives from Island Skill Gathering, Ho'opono, LBPH, Social Security Office, Safety Systems of Hawaii, and ATRC.**

**SHAER** held its elections in August 2006. New officers are:

President - Christian Yates

Vice-President - Sherri Gelbard

Treasurer - Joan "Wainani" Anderson

Secretary - Liz Causey

Board of Directors - Lea Ono (DOE) & Dave Eveland (DVR)

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**Auntie Weezie's Corner** – Louise Horio

**Aloha ka kou! I hope this finds you rested from the holidays and ready to get on with life. I hope you are involved with things and those around you. You can find a cause worth fighting for...like safe and on-time traveling on the Handi-Van or theBus.**

**And, of course, meeting a new person or rediscovering an old**



**friend...may bring new adventures!**

**Dessert: Easy, No-Fuss Delight**

**1 thick slice of pound cake 1 big wallop of Cool Whip**

**Frozen or fresh blueberries, strawberries, or other fruit**

**. Just build your own dessert, and enjoy!**

**More uses for Bounce**

**. Dissolve soap scum from shower doors: just clean with a sheet of Bounce**

**. Repels mosquitoes: tie a sheet of Bounce through a belt loop when outdoors during mosquito season**

**. Repels yellow jackets, ants, and mice from cars & baseboards**

### **Artist's Nook**

Are you still committed to those New Year's Resolutions, or have you fallen off the wagon already? Here's an exercise that might help you get back on track. The following poem will tell you all you need

to know... Meanwhile, have a great year – the kind you've always

wanted. May all your dreams come true!

### **The Burning Bowl**

Do you make a resolution each New Year's Day,

Only to laugh and brush it away?

I've found a way that works for me.

It's the Burning Bowl ceremony.

I take a dotted page of Braille

Where I've listed the times that I've tried and failed –  
The commitments I've made that have lacked follow-through,  
And the times I've just bitten off more than I can chew.  
Now we move in a line toward the Burning Bowl,  
Thinking: "In with the new, out with the old."  
Each bearing a list and a personal vow  
To release what is past and embrace what is now.  
As the smoke and the flames burn my paper away,  
My thoughts rise from the ashes to create a new day.  
I decide how I want my future to be,  
And commit to the changes required of me.

I write down these plans and I lock them away.  
When I read them again a year from today,  
Will I be living those changes I vowed to accept?  
Will my promises made be promises kept?  
If I've made a true vow, my answer is yes,  
As the new life I've pictured begins to express.  
With intentions I've planted, with a plan that is clear,  
It will manifest quietly throughout the year.  
So forgive the past and let it go.  
In its place, allow your new life to grow.  
Imagine the future you desire to see,  
And then watch with delight as it comes to be.

In Memorium

Helen Kitchen Branson, 86, died September 18, 2006. Born in Boise, Idaho, Helen was a freelance writer and psychologist.  
Helen, a

longtime loyal HAB member, is Lyn Hamamura's mother. Our deepest sympathy to Lyn and the rest of Helen's family.

## **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, Phone: (808) 455-0367 or Email  
(thomsond@hawaii.edu)

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([thomsond@hawaii.edu](mailto:thomsond@hawaii.edu))

# College Scholarship Application Form

## Hawaii Association of the Blind

Name:

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Address:

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City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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College: \_\_\_\_\_ Major (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

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Completed Credit Hours: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

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- 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 a 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, #1102E  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817