

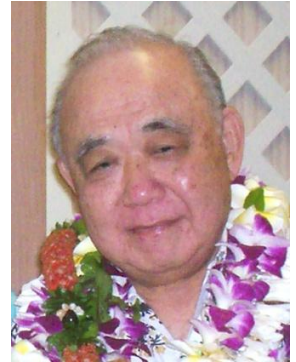
HAB FORUM

Advocating for
Independence, Equality, Opportunity

October 2012

PRESIDENT'S CORNER – Warren Toyama

As we venture into September, my thoughts begin to turn in the direction of our 46th annual convention in March 2013. I will need the assistance of all of you in order to make our next State convention our best ever!



I have already received a positive response from Mitch Pomerantz, President of the American Council of the Blind (ACB) to serve as our banquet keynote speaker. Other program speakers will be added in the months ahead.

Exposing our membership to national convention experiences continues to be our principal way of developing our membership. You are all encouraged to save money so you can attend the 2013 ACB convention in Columbus, Ohio, and the 2014 convention in Las Vegas, Nevada.

My thanks to all our members and friends who have helped make this a great year for us, and I look forward to all the great accomplishments and achievements ahead! Mahalo!!

Thanksmas Dinner – Keith Okazaki

With Summer coming to an end and Fall right around the corner, it will soon be time again for our annual HAB Thanksmas

dinner. It is a special night to not only enjoy fellowship with HAB family and friends, but also a time to express our gratitude for all the blessings we've received throughout the year. Here are the tentative details: Saturday, November 24 at the Ho'opono Auditorium (tentative); 5 pm to 9 pm; Cost is only \$5 per person. Please bring a small grab bag gift, one per person with a \$5 value. We also humbly ask for a modest donation so we can share our blessings with less fortunate families through the Salvation Army. As always, a few fun games and entertainment are planned to help put the icing on the evening. So, please mark your calendar to join us for a very special evening at our annual HAB Thanksmas dinner on Saturday, November 24. See you all there!

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE – Myles Tamashiro

The Membership Committee is made up of HAB members Norman, Art, Julie, Debbie, and Nora. We are still implementing the same recruiting system. Anyone interested in joining should attend at least two meetings, and we are now requiring them to read our HAB history booklet. The committee will then meet with the perspective member to have a question-and-answer session. Then the committee meets with all HAB members at the next regular meeting to decide whether or not to accept this person for membership. So if you are interested in joining, let us know!



Technology – Ronald Flormata

As a blind individual, there are things in life that you just have to give up for practical purposes. Take for instance driving.

Would you trust a blind person to get behind the wheel and drive around town? For everybody's safety, the blind have been content being only a passenger...well, maybe for now...



Japanese, German and U.S. car manufacturers are investing research and development funds into the driverless car technology. This was originally a project of DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Project Agency), part of the U.S. Government's Department of Defense. Although conceived for military use, a good number of projects have found successful implementation in public use. Technology has proven to be a game changer for the blind. The lack of visual sense is somehow compensated by technology through our audible senses.

A little over a decade ago, I wouldn't want to touch a mobile phone, not because I didn't need it but because it was simply not accessible. Today, look at all the blind people tinkering with their keyless smartphones, notably the iPhone. And to think the iPhone does not have a tactile numeric keypad!

We are witnessing tremendous advances in technology. While computers shrink in physical size, their power has increased by leaps and bounds. Storage media like hard drives and memory cards have reduced their footprint while capacities went through the roof! Data communication technology likewise is undergoing similar outstanding growth,. Today, we have 4G networks which allow us to even watch streaming video on our mobile phones. Some phones with the appropriate network speed enable users to see each other in real time – remember Star Trek? That takes a lot of bandwidth to accomplish! Technology is truly a blind person's friend that levels the playing field.

Now, going back to the driverless car, those scientists and engineers were able to integrate the requisite technologies, artificial intelligence with robotics to come up with a wonderful product with far-reaching effects. Sebastian Thrun, a Google VP, helped build Google's driverless cars. He comes from Stanford University's Artificial Intelligence Laboratory. Google's fleet of autonomous cars include 6 Toyota Prius, 1 Audi TTS, and 1 Lexus hybrid RX 450h. Outside of Google, Stanford University is testing a Volkswagon Shelly retrofitted with a driverless car kit and it was able to reach speeds of 120 mph on a route with 15 different sharp turns. The craze is not only concentrated in the U.S. Tests are going on in Europe involving manufacturers of Audi, Volkswagen and Volvo. It is reported that Google's autonomous cars have logged 300,000 accident-free miles as of August 2012.

Statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau show that nearly 11 million accidents occur every year in the country, with 35,000 being fatal. Shocking but true. The driving force behind Sebastian Thrun's dream was to build a driverless car that is not prone to human errors and emotions that sometimes sadly prove fatal.

It is estimated that a driverless car generates 1 gigabytes of data every second that needs to be processed. This gives us a good idea where all the current leading edge technologies are getting harnessed. As the saying goes, "this is where the rubber meets the road". In the movie "Scent of a Woman", Al Pacino played an Army Colonel who was blinded in the war. He drove a Ferrari with his nephew just for fun. Whoa! But that was the movies...the driverless car is real and it is almost in our grasp! Picture yourself behind the wheel of a Lexus while cruising in town and on the highways. Did you say only in your dreams?

Maybe not... The scientists and engineers tasked with the design need only to consider the blind's perspective. They can take a cue from the Apple analysts and programmers.

So, are you ready for a test drive? Are you getting all excited? Hold your horses...don't pull out your checks yet. It is not expected to be available in the market in the near future. However, Ford is gearing up to a 2017 offering, some are also saying 2019...who knows? Fact is, it will come eventually. It's just a matter of time. In the meantime, don't forget to make your Handi-Van reservation!

HAB News – Filo Tu, First-Vice President

The Hawaii Association of the Blind has achieved a major goal that will help all blind people of Hawaii...so let's celebrate!

Four years ago, Ho'opono had no Administrator, no Secretary, and most of the positions had been frozen by the last Governor. In the first year of Governor Abercrombie's term, Warren and I went to meet with the good Governor and told him about the problems that the agency was facing. We explained to the Governor that the blind needed his help, and because he is a friend, he was willing to listen to us. We were so pleased that he acted right away and did what was necessary. As of July 2012, Mr. Cordova informed Warren and me that all the positions at Ho'opono have been opened and they are now hiring people. Last year Ho'opono hired an Administrator and in the beginning of this year they hired their Secretary.

I don't know about you, but for me this was a big accomplishment for our organization. Congratulations to the



Hawaii Association of the Blind for it's continued advocacy to improve the lives of blind people in Hawaii. Mahalo!!

Ho'opono's Summer Employment Experience – Art Cabanilla

For the past few years, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Annette Tashiro has coordinated the Summer Employment Experience (SEE) project, a youth in transition program designed to give blind students the opportunity to gain work experience and earn money over a 4-week period. Students participate in various activities such as writing a resume, preparing for a job interview, and attending a simulated job fair. Through my work with Island Skill Gathering (ISG) as a Technology Specialist, I had the opportunity to take part in this year's summer program.

About a dozen students participated, but were broken up into groups of two to three. ISG was the host organization for HAB's own member Sazza Self and another young man from McKinley High School. Both had expressed an interest in learning more about assistive technology for people with disabilities. Both were introduced to an array of technology for people who are blind or have low vision; people who are deaf or hard of hearing; people with speech disabilities; and people who are deaf-blind.

For example, I presented information on hardware and software technology such as a PC laptop with JAWS, the BrailleNote Apex, and the Intel Reader plus Capture Station. Guest speaker Keving Forde-Nahipali presented the Tobii C15 which is an assistive and augmentative communication device (AAC) that enables effective communication in all forms, from face-to-face communication to long distance communication. Valerie Miehlsstein, a sign language interpreter of ISG, shared and

showed different kinds of assistive listening and alerting devices for deaf or hard of hearing people. DOE Itinerate Teacher Amy Downard gave a hands-on presentation of the Blind-Deaf-Communicator. This three-piece device gives a deaf-blind person portability and independence to participate in TTY, text messaging, and face-to-face conversations.

Even though I covered such inner working of a PC computer such as gaining a sense of what is RAM, what is a hard-drive, and what are the functions of the Mother Board, my main message to these two tech users (and one technology specialist wanna-be), is that in order to perform actual client training of different adaptive equipment, one must be a teacher, a mentor, a knowledgeable technology specialist. But in addition to product knowledge, a greater part to it all has to do with effective communication; being able to listen attentively and speak in an articulate manner.

Sazza and her partner in the program made it through the four-week program complete with presentation, recitals, and ice cream Fridays. I was a bit worn too. I was reminded of my job as a Technology Specialist – a very satisfying job, but one that requires constant review and research, and a Summer Employment Experience to remember.

Inspirations – Beth Flormata

The Olympics is a classic example of mankind's struggle for excellence and glory. By far, winning the gold is the highest honor an athlete can receive in the field where he or she aspires to be the best and be recognized for it. And because of this driving force and this need to excel, we become aware of many people who have inspired the



millions out there watching these prestigious events. Whether you are able-bodied or not, the success stories abound.

Take for example a legally blind archer, Im Dong-hyun, who set the first world record in the London Olympics, breaking his own record and helping South Korea set a team record. Im does not wear glasses, has 10% vision in his left eye and 20% in his right eye, and relies on distinguishing between the bright colors of the target. He only sees colors with blurred lines between them when he looks at the targets. He has won gold medals in the team event at the 2008 Beijing and 2004 Athens Olympics.

But Olympics or not, we also hear amazing stories about everyday people's struggles who do their best and become shining examples for us to follow. One of them is a 16-year-old blind runner from Ohio named Sami, who proves that adversity doesn't have to prevent you from crossing the finish line. Thanks to her guide dog Chloe, Sami is probably the first athlete to compete in her state with a golden retriever. She does cross-country running and has Chloe as her eyes through crowded hallways at school and through running trails. Sami has become a source of hope and inspiration to other kids, showing that even though a person has a disability and is at a little disadvantage, it's not the end of the world. While running with the use of some peripheral vision is terrifying, Sami and Chloe are doing an amazing job even though collecting a medal is not the ultimate goal; they have found a way to overcome the odds!

And then there is this Colorado quarterback who plays football despite being legally blind. Rhett Gutierrez is afflicted with a retinal disease called Stargardt, which is also known as the junior form of macular degeneration. Despite losing most of his sight,

Rhett relies on his knowledge and instincts and has helped his junior varsity team win three games last year. He continues to play a sport that he loves and continues to keep his positive attitude.

All of these shining examples attest to the simple fact that we are who we want to become. Our fate is largely determined by our own attitude, guided by our principles, and with the love and support of family and friends we have faith in ourselves.

To everyone out there with a dream, I say: GO FOR IT! And when the opportunity presents itself, just embrace it with both hands and the good times will come your way!

BLINDSIGHT NEWS – Landa Phelan

- Emergency Shelter Exercise

Have you participated in a Shelter Exercise? I did one in Nanakuli that was put on by the Civil Defense, Red Cross and National Guard. I arrived with my white cane via the Handi-Van, along with another blind woman who used a walker for mobility. We were told by volunteers to “go over there”. I explained that we are both blind and will need some assistance, so they pointed and told us again where to go. One then started to help me and I said that I will follow him and that he should guide the lady in the walker. She then had to instruct him on how to help her by not pushing but guide her by holding the front of the walker.

We then had to register with the Red Cross. You need to provide your ID, address, phone number, name of medications you’re taking, and your doctor’s information. They needed to know about any allergies, and had a long list of questions to answer (if you’re diabetic, have seizures, who your emergency contact person is, etc..).

Next came the orientation. We were then led to some chairs, and were told that we needed to go to the next building where we would be given scenario cards. While sitting there we could hear people leaving but no one came to help us. When I heard someone walking by, I called out and said we needed a guide to the next building. She had to go check with the operations manager and found someone to take us to the gym. The walk over was long especially because of my injured knee and the lady with her walker. Upon our arrival, we had to ask for assistance again on where to go. We then listened to a woman giving a presentation about instructions regarding the scenario cards, but because of the noise we couldn't hear and had to ask for her to speak up. After she was finished she did come over to us and explained everything again. Although she did not identify herself, she did mention that she was with the Civil Defense and was eager to help us.

I had three scenarios where I had to perform as a different person with different needs. This role playing was great for the workers to learn to handle different situations. First I was a very upset and emotional person trying to register at the shelter; second I was a Korean person who didn't speak English and had high blood pressure; and third I was a blind alcoholic. For me, this gave me an idea of what a shelter might be like in an actual emergency. It was very confusing and noisy. It would have been nice to know who some of the workers or managers were; not many people identified themselves. They all need to remember that blind or low vision people can't always see their badges, or know where to go. It was a great experience for me and a good exercise for First Responders. Contact Debbie Jackson at 586-8121 or email debra.jackson@doh.hawaii.gov.

- **Condolences**

HAB would like to express condolences to James Horio on the passing of his wife Louise Horio. She was an advocate for blind seniors and a blind leader in the community. She will be missed.



Another passing I would like to acknowledge is my guide dog Miss Pealine who was 11 years old. She lost her battle to cancer on March 6. We will all miss her dearly!

Who is the Hawaii Association of the Blind?

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 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

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

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1255 Nuuanu Avenue, #1102
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

**FREE
MATTER
FOR
THE
BLIND**