THE VENDORSCOPE™

RANDOLPH-SHEPPARD VENDORS OF AMERICA™

WINTER, 2013 – VOLUME 45 – ISSUE # 1

BLIND BUSINESSMEN/WOMEN BUILDING A BETTER AMERICA

Purpose of the Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America™

The purpose of this national organization is to bring together blind persons engaged in the operation of vending facilities, and individuals and groups supporting the goals and objectives of this organization, its members, and the Randolph-Sheppard vending facility program, in order to:

A: Provide a continuing forum for the expression of the views of licensed blind vendors, trainees, retired blind vendors, and blind employees participating in, or affected by, the Randolph-Sheppard vending facility program;

B: Protect the interests of blind persons engaged in the operation of vending facilities under the Randolph-Sheppard program;

C: Promote the expansion and improvement of the Randolph-Sheppard program and the economic benefits and employment opportunities for blind vendors throughout the United States; and

D: Assist in promoting the purposes of the American Council of the Blind through affiliation with that organization.

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Bequests

If you or a friend would like to remember the Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America in your will, you can do so by employing the following language; "I give, devise and bequeath unto the Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America, a nonprofit charitable organization in the USA, the sum of $--- (or '---') to be used for its worthy purposes on behalf of blind persons."

If your wishes are more complex, you may have your attorney communicate with the executive office for other suggested forms.

THE VENDORSCOPE ™

A PUBLICATION OF
THE RANDOLPH-SHEPPARD VENDORS OF AMERICA™
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THE VENDORSCOPE™ provides a forum for issues of interest concerning the Business Enterprise Program for the Blind. Editorials, columns and articles appearing in this publication are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of RSVA's Board of Directors. Furthermore, editorials, columns and articles appearing in THE VENDORSCOPE do not constitute policies or recommendations of the organization unless otherwise stated. All submissions are welcome and will be considered for publication.

Printed by: Horizons for the Blind
Crystal Lake, IL 60014
www.horizons-blind.org 815-444-8800

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REMEMBER…ELECTRONIC, LARGE PRINT OR TEXT VERSIONS OF THE VENDORSCOPE ARE AVAILABLE BY E-MAILING OR CALLING THE RSVA NATIONAL OFFICE!

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By: Dan Sippl, RSVA President

Meeting and Exceeding our Members' Greatest Expectations

It is with great pride that we in RSVA can thank our Board of Directors, Committee Chairs, families, and volunteers for such a great start to the year with an outstanding Sagebrush Training Conference. This was followed with a wonderfully executed ACB Affiliates President's Meeting and Legislative Seminar. Please join me in thanking all of our committee chairs, Board of Directors, their families, and volunteers for all of their valuable time and effort in making RSVA such a wonderful organization, which accomplishes our mission with the greatest of pride.

However, great successes cannot hinder us from our mission of improving the lives, economically and otherwise, of blind vendors across the country. We have renewed our rebate contract with PepsiCo for their Frito-Lay products, to enhance our member's bottom lines and to better fulfill their family's financial needs. All of the rebates go directly into your pockets.

We have kicked off our Monthly Monetary Support Program (MMS), in conjunction with the American Council of the Blind (ACB), in hopes of expanding our services to our members. (Please see related article from Ways and Means Chair, Ken Jessup.) Our Lifetime Memberships are growing with the recent additions to your constitution, which broadens the eligibility to the Lifetime Members Roster. We will continue to recognize those that support your RSVA by the MMS and Lifetime Membership.

There is no time like now to join in on the satisfaction of supporting such a great organization that can stand up and help make your voice resonate throughout society, in particular, Legislative Venues across the country.

Our Legislative Committee, under the guidance of our 1st Vice President, Ron Eller, will continue to expand its presence in Washington, D.C. and State Houses across the country. The RSVA Executive Committee and Board of Directors will continue to make every effort to make ourselves available for your annual Upward Mobility Training Conferences, affiliate meetings or any other meeting or consultation you desire.

Remember there are many friends out there that you just simply have not met yet. So please join me in meeting all of our friends by getting involved, if not for your sake, for that of your families. Please keep the summer RSVA conference, in conjunction with ACB, in your calendar.

P.S. If there is anything that you would like us to have available at your Sagebrush Training Conference or annual convention, please do not hesitate to share your thoughts with me at any time.

* * * *

SAVE THE DATE
JOIN US AT THE RSVA/ACB
SUMMER CONVENTION IN
COLUMBUS, OHIO
JULY 5-12, 2013

FROM THE DESK OF THE CHAIR

By: Ardis Bazyn, Publications Chair

This is our first issue since the RSVA Sagebrush Annual BEP Training Conference in Las Vegas. In this publication there will be several articles relating to that conference. We'll finish with more in the next issue. If you were a first-timer this year, please share your experience with us and we'll place it in the next issue. We expected another great turnout of sponsors and exhibitors, as well as participants, and we were correct!

Please enjoy our regular columns of *What's New?, Legislative News,* and our *President's Message*. The RSVA Publications Committee extends an invitation to all affiliates to please share your state upward mobility and state affiliate events with us, both to publicize your events before they come and to share outcomes and information about them after they occur. In this issue, we have articles from Massachusetts and Hawaii.

Please read the article about the upcoming summer conference in Columbus, OH. RSVA plans to have many opportunities for you to network with others and even learn some new things. Watch for more updates on the RSVA.biz website and on acb.org as well. Also, please read the article about the three awards this summer and submit your nominations. RSVA presents these awards at our annual luncheon.

Our website now has past issues of the Vendorscope on it. We don't put the latest Vendorscope on right away, since receiving the Vendorscope is a benefit to being a member. However, we want members to encourage others to learn about our publications.

We'd also like you to let us know what you'd like to see on our RSVA website and online networking sites.

We have an annual award for the best article sent in by an RSVA member who is not on the RSVA Board of Directors or the RSVA Publications Committee. This award entitles the winner to a free flight, hotel, and conference registration to an upcoming conference.

Please keep those "Facebook" and "LinkedIn" messages coming. We'd like to get you all connected. If you don't like to use the online site, sign up for the RSVA-L email list. It is the easiest way to connect with others interested in R-S issues. There are links to all three opportunities on the RSVA website. Please read the explanations of all three networking opportunities.

I want to again thank our Publications Committee and their commitment to complete each issue on time. If anyone is interested in serving on this committee, please give me or Dan Sippl a call.

* * * *

REMEMBER…THE VENDORSCOPE IS AVAILABLE IN:

(1) Large Print Hard Copy

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CONTACT THE RSVA OFFICE
TO OBTAIN YOUR CHOICE!

RSVA OFFICE REPORT

If anyone would like to include a memorial or their get-well wishes in The Vendorscope, contact RSVA.

IN MEMORIAM

It is with deep sorrow that we make the following announcements. We would like to extend our condolences to their family and friends. All who knew and loved them will sorely and deeply miss them.

Opal Hiesler (wife of Gene Hiesler), TX

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GET WELL WISHES FROM RSVA

David Altstatt, OK
Jeanne Martin-Hanlon, CA

- - - - -

All of your much needed tax deductible donations can be sent to the RSVA National Office, 940 Parc Helene Drive, Marrero, LA 70072-2421. The office phone number is: 504-328-6373 and the fax number is: 504-328-6372. Remember, RSVA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and all donations are tax deductible.

DONATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RSVA would like to thank the following members for their support. It is a pleasure to see our members so dedicated to our cause.

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Charles Hackney, FL
Mary Lou Washburn, OK
Connie Sanchez, TX
Joel Palmer, IL
RSVA of MS
Kevin Slayton, IA
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Harvey Johnson, TX
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RSVA LIFETIME MEMBERSHIPS

PRESIDENTS COUNCIL: This is our most honorable individual membership bestowed upon those most philanthropically disposed individuals. Lifetime memberships may be attained with a one-time contribution of $1,000.00 or more. A lifetime member in the RSVA Presidents' Council receives a plaque from RSVA and acknowledgement at a national conference.

If you are interested in becoming a life member in the Presidents Council or perhaps you would like to honor someone else with an RSVA lifetime membership in the Presidents Council, please contact Kim Venable at the RSVA National Office at 504-328-6373. You can also purchase a life membership in RSVA for $200. A separate fund has been established for life membership donations.

RSVA LIFE MEMBERSHIPS PURCHASED SINCE THE LAST VENDORSCOPE:

Allan Curry, AZ
Phillip Carr, KS
Zach Snow, GA (payment plan)
Albert Travers, CO
Robert Martin, NM (payment plan)
David Parker, CA
Leonard Johnson, OH
Jim Swartz, AK
Tammy Winn, AK
Eddie Turner, MS

* * * *

SAGEBRUSH 2013: A SUMMARY

By: Ardis Bazyn, RSVA Publications Chair

The Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America™ 2013 Sagebrush National Business Enterprise Program Training Conference theme was: "Meeting and Exceeding Today's New Challenges". The conference, held from Monday, February 18 to Friday, February 22, 2013, was even more successful than last year.

The speakers, exhibits, and sponsors made the conference worthwhile to all participants. In this Vendorscope, we are highlighting several events. This article is just a brief summary of what happened. Please read all the other accompanying articles to get a real sense of the conference and its benefits.

The RSVA Board of Directors held its board meeting on Monday afternoon. Monday evening the "Welcome to Vegas!" RSVA Legislative Fundraiser was held. The entertainment, *The Ninth Island Serenaders,* was hosted by the Hawaii Blind Vendors. All in attendance enjoyed the great music and refreshments.

On Tuesday, participants had time to network during breakfast and then Filo Tu, the Sagebrush Committee Chair, welcomed everyone. Dan Sippl, RSVA President, then welcomed attendees. The morning moderator was Charles Glazer who introduced Kae Pohe, President, Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of Nevada, who gave another hearty welcome. Carol Ann Ewing, Immediate Past President of the Nevada Council of the Blind, also welcomed all to the Golden Nugget.

The introduction of participants presented several new administrators and new attendees to Sagebrush. “ACB Updates” were given by Mitch Pomerantz (CA), President, American Council of the Blind. Mitch talked about the upcoming ACB midyear meetings, including the Presidents’ Meeting and the Legislative Seminar. “Monthly Monetary Support and RSVA Life Memberships” were explained by Ken Jessup (VA), RSVA Ways and Means Chair. (See his article in this issue.)

Daniel B. Frye, J.D. (DC), Management and Program Specialist for Randolph-Sheppard Programs in the Rehabilitation Services Administration, discussed some of their recent challenges and efforts for the Randolph-Sheppard program including their recent training for attorneys working with the BEP program.

Following Dan Frye’s presentation, the annual “Vendor Report Card” highlighted vendors from around the country talking about their state programs – positives and negatives. Mike Barclay (AL), President of Southern Foodservice Management, Inc., told about the options provided by his company. He said he’d be around all week so vendors could ask him questions any time. RSVA thanks Southern Foodservice for being a DEALER’S CHOICE SPONSOR.

Bob Humphreys (HI), RSVA’s attorney was available all Tuesday afternoon for one-on-one consultations on R-S program issues. The moderator for Tuesday afternoon was Zach Snow (GA). He opened the Sagebrush segment called “Pros and Cons of BEP Facility Types” by first introducing the cafeteria managers: Herbert Reado (LA) from the Federal City Snack Shop and Shirley Bee-Thibodeaux (LA) from the Iberville Café.

Next, Zach introduced DOD manager, Leonard (Lenny) Johnson (OH), from the Wright Patterson Air Force Base. Next, the total vending manager, Charles Carroll (AL) from CC Snacks spoke, followed by the snack bar manager, Carol Ewing (NV), from Carol's Cabinet. The prison facility managers who spoke were Allan Curry (AZ) from Curry Vending Service, Roy Harmon (CA) from Green Valley Bistro Station, and Esta L. Scott (TX) from Kit and Caboodle Enterprise. (Marie Keane has an article giving more info on this vendor segment.)

Dan Lieberman, President of the AAA Division, and Kurk Johnson, ATM/Vending Sales Manager, for Lieberman Companies, explained "How ATM's Benefit Your Business". They stated ATMs can yield an extra income in high traffic areas.

Tim Paul (WV), Regional Manager/South from Automated Merchandising Systems, gave a presentation on their latest products. He invited participants to see their latest machines in the exhibit area. RSVA thanks Automated Merchandising Systems for being a CASINO STAR SPONSOR.

Android/Smart Phone Accessibility was then discussed with Ken Jessup (VA) telling of Android features and Zach Snow (GA) telling about iPhone accessibility. Ken recommended the Android, especially to low vision people. Tracking system benefits for vending was presented by Dave Severin (SC), Regional Product Support Manager for Crane Vending Solutions.

Two break-out sessions were held at the end of the afternoon, one for state administrators and one for state committee chairs.

The administrators' panel was co-moderated by Joe Styron (MS), Mississippi BEP Administrator, and John Hulet (MN), Minnesota BEP Administrator. The state committee chairs meeting was co-moderated by Clayton Hell (TX) from Clayton's Snacks, Inc. ECM Chair, Texas and Terry Camardelle (LA), ECM Chair, Louisiana.

After breakfast, Ardis Bazyn (CA) moderated the Wednesday morning session. The first session covered the topic "Accessing Apple Products". Brian Charlson (MA), Vice President, Carroll Center for the Blind, described how the various Apple products worked and advantages of each product. He said they all worked well in conjunction with the iPhone. "Financial Planning Essentials" was presented by Mark Breen (OH), NFP Securities, Inc. He explained how much money vendors could move to a 401(k) style account.

"National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA), Action and News" was provided by Sandy Larson, Senior Legislative Director and Counsel for the Western Region. She hoped many vendors could attend the upcoming trade show.

Jim Brown (CA), Chief Operating Officer, Blackstone Consulting, Inc., then gave us some "Blackstone Consulting News". RSVA thanks Blackstone Consulting for being a CASINO STAR SPONSOR.

"New Developments with Shop24" was shared by Matt McGovern (OH), CEO of Shop24 Global LLC. They will provide funding for vendors in appropriate settings like college campuses.

The National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB), Randolph-Sheppard report was presented by Catriona Macdonald (DC), President, Linchpin Strategies, LLC.

David Ward, Key Account Manager, PepsiCo Foodservice Division, gave a “What’s Happening with PepsiCo?” report. RSVA thanks PepsiCo Food Service for being a LAS VEGAS WHALE SPONSOR.

On Wednesday a reception with appetizers and iced tea was provided for those who attended exhibits. Another welcome from Nevada was given by Mike Dang (NV), Chief of Business Enterprises of Nevada Program. During the exhibits, many door prizes were given. This was a great way to network with friends and colleagues.

On Thursday, February 21, after the breakfast buffet, moderator, Filo Tu (HI), introduced the “State Administrator Update”, all state administrators attending Sagebrush were encouraged to participate. (See article later in this issue.)

The next topic was “Using Accessible Point of Sale Machines”. Stan Emoto (HI), Director of Sales for CompuTant, explained their products and services.

Vanessa Liston (TX), Vice President of Administration, Cantu Services, Inc. next gave “The Latest on Cantu Services, Inc.”. RSVA thanks Cantu Services for also being a LAS VEGAS WHALE SPONSOR.

Lea Grupen (HI), Administrator, Ho`opono Services for the Blind, gave the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) Report. She was followed by a panel discussing cashless vending systems.

Dave Severin (SC), Regional Product Support Manager, from Crane Vending Solutions; Dave Bender (SC), Regional Sales Manager from Crane Merchandising Systems; Gary Massey (PA), Regional Sales Manager from MEI Solutions and Pat Mattingly (MO), Sales Director from Coinco Royal Vendors told of the systems available and how costs of credit card usage were calculated. Many questions were asked and speakers suggested participants give them a call if they want more information.

The annual Sagebrush Luncheon was moderated by Dan Sippl (WI), RSVA President. He introduced the keynote speaker, Sonny Melendrez, a nationally known Hall of Fame radio and TV host, inspirational speaker and author of “The Art of Living with Enthusiasm!”

Eddie Turner, RSVA Awards Chair, presented the “George Arsnow Scholarship Award" to Bill Packey from Alaska. This award is presented to a new vendor who has managed a facility for less than two years.

The Thursday afternoon moderator, Marie Keane (MA), RSVA Board Member/Sagebrush committee member, introduced Barbara Duckett, Area Training Specialist from the Las Vegas Social Security District Office. She gave us Social Security and Medicare updates.

The final topic for Thursday was “How to Structure Business Plans Effectively”. Rich Newman (NV), a SCORE Mentor, gave some basic guidelines for a business plan and many tips on why businesses fail. (An article on this presentation will be written as well.)

On Friday, February 22, after the continental breakfast, Vanessa Liston (TX), Vice President of Administration, Robert Welch (TX), CEO and Rick Cantu, Chair of Cantu Services, Inc. discussed the impact sequestration would have on the military bases and all federal buildings.

They suggested we let advocates at the ACB legislative seminar know how devastating this could be to the vendors on these bases.

We want to thank all of the sponsors for their participation in this conference. The 34 exhibitors were welcomed by the participants, and all who attended learned valuable information to use when they returned home. Please check the website and future Vendorscopes for updates on our next Sagebrush.

* * * *

SAGEBRUSH ADMINISTRATORS' PANEL

By: Marie Keane, RSVA Board Member

The State Administrators' Panel at Sagebrush had many interesting speakers. They all sounded enthusiastic about their own business programs and were very proud of their successful vendors.

The first speaker was Lea Grupen from Hawaii. Services for the Blind in Hawaii are celebrating over 75 years. They are happy to report that they enjoy their relationships with RSVH (Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of Hawaii) members. They are proud of the strong showing each year at the RSVA conference.

After a long fight, Hawaii has acquired a Marine Corp base facility that starts on March 1, 2013. Also, Honolulu had not been allowing vending machines or extending opportunities in city buildings. Hawaii's State Attorney General, along with Filo Tu and Warren Toyama's RSVA lawyers, finally agreed on a settlement of $285,000 that will go to their vendors.

Hawaii remains one of the top vending programs in the nation. They have expanded with 2 military dining facilities and several federal building locations. They have 3 people now ready to be placed. March 2nd and 3rd there will be statewide upward mobility training for all the vendors. Our RSVA President, Dan Sippl, will be attending and we look forward to his next report in The Vendorscope.

The second speaker, Joe Styron from Mississippi, stated currently, there are 39 vendors in their program and they soon will be adding their 40th Randolph-Sheppard vendor. They just added a third military contract. They are proud of opening their second Subway Sandwich shop. For the vendor, the workload has been about the same, managing, with the Subway manager. The vendor's income has gone up and there is less waste and labor cost. The sandwich shop concept has been very well received. Mississippi is negotiating for three military base contracts at this time.

The third panel speaker was Michigan's Bureau of Blind Persons new director, Ed Rogers. He said that there is an advisory committee that meets annually which suggests changes or improvements for their low vision and legally blind services. Michigan has approximately 80 vendors. They have decided to try the franchise route.

They have contacts with Dunkin' Donuts, Wendy's, and others and hope to have at least five locations by the end of 2013. They feel franchising is a good step towards their future.

The next speaker, Jeanne Gallo, was from the Washington State Department of Blind Services. The state of Washington has 19 facilities and five of them are satellites or espresso stands, attached to cafeterias.

They also have 29 licensees and sixteen of these are in operated facilities. She emphasized the importance of VR counselor's choosing people that have an understanding of the complexities of the business world.

Their training program is six months long, with hands-on training along with culinary arts, as well as access to food services and espresso operations. They also hold classroom lessons in business law, handling personality issues and finance. Ms. Gallo expressed that even though healthy foods have been promoted to the BEP for vending machines and cafeterias, they do not realize that they are infringing on the customer choices in a free market system.

After Jeanne Gallo was finished, Alabama's Director, Ray Dennis spoke about their program. He stated that the managers are the most important aspect of the BEP, in Alabama. You do not need to wear a watch because it does not matter; you work until the job is done.

One of the successes in the Alabama's BEP, would be the acquisition of the federal women's prison in west Alabama. This is the second of the full security federal prisons in the country that houses 1800 inmates.

There were ten jobs almost taken away, but because of the advocacy of our RSVA member, Charlie Carroll, all ten were saved. Chairman Carroll and his state committee met with the Governor's Chief of Staff and effectively kept the workers employed. These ten work release canteens are all up and operational.

Mike Dang from the BEP of Nevada has fifteen licensed operators and one trainee, along with 28 sights. All of the business managers are l business enterprise officers in the state of Nevada.

The state is working with vending companies on healthier choices to be placed in vending machines. They are also looking at new sites, such as golf courses, convention centers, veteran's homes and various types of kiosks.

For more information on these and other states, Brian Charlson will be placing all of the recordings of the Sagebrush sessions of the conference, on the ACB radio website soon.

* * * *

<u>CHECK OUT OUR NEW FORMS IN THIS ISSUE:</u>

(1) The New Membership Application Form in which you can sign up for a lifetime membership.

(2) The New MMS (Monthly Monetary Support) Sign-Up Form for automatic bank account deductions to support RSVA / ACB!

* * * *

ACB LEGISLATIVE SEMINAR

By: Ron Eller, RSVA First Vice President/Legislative Chair

The legislative seminar began on Sunday afternoon at 2 p.m.. First, all participants were introduced. Several first-timers were present. RSVA was well represented not only by the legislative committee but also several vendors representing other ACB state affiliates. The goal of the committee was to visit as many senate offices as possible and thank those senators for their support in voting against the Senator Portman amendment.

Our other goal was to visit the offices of newly elected congressmen and women to make them aware of the Randolph-Sheppard Act and what it means to blind and visually impaired citizens.

After opening remarks from Mitch Pomerantz, ACB President, Eric Bridges introduced the first speaker: David Capozzi, the Director of the U.S. Access Board. He discussed the hot button issues of the blindness community in which there was Access Board involvement.

One of the hot topics was website accessibility. The guidelines should be out soon. David Morrissey, the Executive Director of the International Council of Disabilities, spoke on the future of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. He discussed the ludicrous myths being spread to the public about this treaty. He suggested sending representatives a link to the specifics of the treaty so they know what is included.

Mitch Pomerantz then gave an update on the accessible prescription drug project since the passage of the FDA Safety and Innovation Act.

A group of organizations and agencies are developing guidelines for pharmacies regarding how best to meet the access needs of blind and visually impaired customers.

Melanie Brunson ended the afternoon by explaining some of the legal issues in which ACB has participated. She said even though the dates have passed to let SSA know of your format needs, you can still contact them to let them know if you need specialized formats.

ACB is still working on the accessible currency issue and is waiting for the Treasury Department to end its requests for input.

Eric Bridges started Monday morning's sessions giving highlights of recent ACB legislative successes. He mentioned the telecommunications bill passed in 2011 and the regulations which came out this summer.

He also discussed the quiet car initiative which is developing the right sounds for them to use in the future. He congratulated ACB advocates for all the accomplishments we have made in the past few years.

The next topic was the first legislative imperative for this year: the need for Medicare to cover purchase of certain low vision devices.

He explained the action to be requested would be a demonstration project for five years to look at the possible savings in assisting seniors with low vision devices, which would likely keep them in their own homes instead of in assistive living facilities or nursing homes.

The second imperative was then discussed; the need for comprehensive special education legislation. The Ann Sullivan Macy Act could be a stand-alone bill or added to IDEA legislation. It would more closely monitor blind children to make sure they have adequate blindness related training so they are ready at college age. Karen Peltz Strauss, Deputy Chief, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, gave an update on the committee's work.

The deputy chief of the Disability Rights Section of the Department of Justice talked on "Knowing Your Rights and Working to Find Solutions". Before logistics, Ardis Bazyn told the group how the current budget crisis could hurt the Randolph-Sheppard vendors throughout the country.

Tuesday, February 26, most of the participants in the conference spoke to their congressmen and congresswomen about our issues. We strive to visit each office and speak to someone. If no one is available, we drop off a packet of information. I encourage anyone who hasn't attended these meetings to try to do so, if possible.

It is always a learning experience- even for those of us who have gone often. Some in Washington are pushing a budget proposal that would cut Social Security benefits by $127 billion over the next 10 years. The "chained CPI" proposal would cut the yearly cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for Social Security, leaving people with disabilities struggling to keep up with the rising cost of utilities, groceries, and health care.

The chained CPI would be especially harmful to people with disabilities because they usually rely on Social Security

payments starting at a younger age and for a longer period of time than retirees. The benefit cut under chained CPI would start now and grow over time, making it increasingly hard for them to afford to live in their homes and communities as they age.

Washington should focus on finding responsible ways to address our nation's budget challenges, not cutting benefits for people with disabilities. Don't let Washington hurt people with disabilities by cutting Social Security benefits.

Below are the top 5 reasons why the chained CPI would hurt people with disabilities:

1. People with disabilities can least afford a cut in benefits. On average, people with disabilities receive only $13,560 in yearly benefits and 37 percent depend on it for nearly all of their family income (90 percent or more).

2. People with disabilities will face deep benefit cuts. The chained CPI would cut benefits more with every passing year and people with disabilities--who rely on Social Security payments starting at a younger age and therefore for many more years--will see very deep cuts in benefits over time. A 35-year-old disabled worker, who receives average disability benefits, would see his or her benefits reduced annually by $886 at 65 and $1,301 at 80.

3. People with disabilities have a greater chance of falling into poverty. Social Security keeps nearly 40 percent of people with disabilities, age 18 or older, and their families, out of poverty.

The benefit cut would force those already living on tight budgets stretched by rising prescription drug, utility and health care costs to cut back on vital needs.

4. It's less accurate. The chained CPI assumes that when the cost of something you normally buy goes up, you will substitute a lower-cost item. This theory falls short since many people with disabilities spend a large share of their income (around $4,200 a year on average for Medicare beneficiaries with at least one disability) on health care – which rises faster than inflation and doesn't have lower-cost substitutes.

5. Disabled veterans would be hurt twice. Since Social Security and veterans benefits will both be cut by the chained CPI, disabled veterans would be hurt twice. By age 65, a 30-year-old veteran with severe disabilities would see his or her veterans' benefits reduced by $3,286/year and Social Security benefits reduced by $1,655/year.

Call 1-800-323-2230 and tell Washington to reject any budget proposal that cuts hard-earned Social Security benefits.

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Remember…

State affiliate contacts can be found at RSVA.biz. Join in RSVA fun as well as your state affiliate activities <u>anytime</u>.

SAVE THE DATE!
ANNUAL ACB / RSVA CONFERENCE

The 2013 RSVA summer convention will be held during the 52nd Annual ACB Conference and Convention in Columbus, Ohio July 4th through July 12th. The Hyatt Regency Hotel, 350 North High Street, will be our location.

Start planning now to explore Columbus with ACB in 2013. The conference and convention will be packed with workshops, seminars, programs, technology, tours and fun: BE THERE!

The first tour will be on Thursday, July 4. ACB general sessions will begin on July 6th. The ACB banquet will be on Thursday, July 11th, with the last tour on Friday, July 12th. RSVA will begin with hospitality on Friday night, July 5th, and then the Board of Directors meeting will be on Saturday morning, July 6th, from 10 a.m. to noon. Sunday afternoon, July 7th, there will be speakers followed by the nominating committee.

On Saturday night after the ACB opening session, RSVA will hold its second hospitality function.

On Sunday, we will hold our annual luncheon followed by an RSVA business meeting. On Sunday evening, RSVA will hold its auction and karaoke night.

On Monday, RSVA affiliate presidents and the Board of Directors will meet for lunch. Later, from 2:45 until 5:30 p.m., the ACB rehabilitation committee will have a session on getting rehab to work better with students, seniors, and the R-S program, so vendors are encouraged to attend. On Monday evening, RSVA will hold its Annual Casino Night.

Hotel room rates are $89 plus tax per night (single, double, triple, and quad). Make your reservations by phone by calling 888-421-1442. Rooms come complete with refrigerators.

Reserve your room online; visit www.acb.org, follow the 2013 conference and convention link, and choose the direct link to the Hyatt for online reservations. Mention that you are with ACB in order to receive the conference rate.

Watch the RSVA website for more updates on the RSVA conference segments. For more information on ACB events and programs, call the ACB national office, 202-467-5081 or contact Janet Dickelman, Chair, ACB National Conference and Convention Committee, at 651-428-5059 or e-mail her at: janet.dickelman@gmail.com.

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RSVA CONVENTION SEGMENT

Summary of Dates: Friday, July 5th through Monday, July 8th, 2013.

Call the Hyatt Regency reservations to reserve your room, 888-421-1442.

JOIN IN THE FUN WITH YOUR FELLOW VENDORS IN COLUMBUS, OHIO IN JULY!!

* * * *

ATTENTION: SEEKING AWARDS NOMINATIONS

By: Eddie Turner, Awards Chair

Do you appreciate RSVA members who work hard to preserve the Randolph-Sheppard Program and advocate for blind vendors in general? Each year, RSVA shows its appreciation to a few select people for their dedication to the preservation and growth of the Randolph-Sheppard Program throughout the United States.

The people selected to receive recognition for their outstanding service are nominated by you, our members. Please take a few moments of your time to think of people you know who are contributing to our success. Please help us honor those people who unselfishly give their time and expertise.

You may nominate that special person for one of our awards. Listed below are the criteria for each of the three awards presented by RSVA at our annual convention. This is your opportunity to show your appreciation to a person who you think has made a difference.

Nominations are due no later than June 1. For more information or questions, please contact me, RSVA Awards Chairman, Eddie Turner, by email at ETurnerServices@aol.com or phone: 601-624-4443. Please send your nomination letter to me as well as an email copy to RSVA at:

randolphsheppardvendorsofamerica@randolph-sheppard.org

"Jennings Randolph Service Award"

This award is presented to someone outside of the Randolph-Sheppard Program who has given his or her time and energy to Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America and for his or her service to blind vendors, but is not an active vendor.

“Vendor of the Year Award”

This Award is presented to an RSVA member who has been an active member for at least five years and has given his or her time and energy to Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America and for service to blind vendors.

"Don Cameron Advocacy Award"

This Award is presented in memory of Don Cameron for his many years of service for blind vendors, especially in the areas of communication and legislation. This award has three requirements that must be met:

(1) The nominee must be or have been a member of RSVA for at least five years.

(2) The nominee must have been a blind vendor for at least twenty years.

(3) The nominee must have been seeking to improve the goals of RSVA, as well as promoting blind awareness in their community, state, and nation.

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MMS, LIFE MEMBERSHIPS
BUILDING the FUTURE of RSVA

By: Ken Jessup, RSVA Ways and Means Chair

RSVA just celebrated the most successful Sagebrush Conference in recent memory. Can we top it next year? Yes we can, and "YES" we will!!

RSVA is at a crossroad; we must now build on the momentum recently created. Our organization has always been at the forefront of national as well as state Randolph-Sheppard issues and we continue to be the leader for Randolph-Sheppard advocacy.

That said, the organization is now taking a proactive approach in strengthening relationships with RSA, ABILITY ONE, and more importantly, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension Committee (HELP), as well as other Congressional committees and members of Congress.

In order to provide stronger advocacy on a national scale, which also includes individual states, RSVA has instituted a "Monthly Monetary Support" or MMS plan. This plan is in conjunction with the American Council of the Blind (ACB).

All an individual needs to do is to sign up, and determine whether the MMS will come from a checking account or credit/debit card. There are two date choices for withdrawal during a month. That's it!! Fifty percent goes to ACB and fifty percent goes to RSVA.

Here is an example: If you want to donate $25.00 a month to RSVA, the total would be $50.00, including $25.00 a month to the ACB.

Now, before anyone starts to hide their wallets (I know vendors!!), let me remind you of two things:

(1) You will receive a printed annual statement showing your total contribution.

(2) It's *TAX DEDUCTIBLE*!

You will be helping your organization as well as yourself. Such a deal; I'm telling you!

Another way to help RSVA is to become a "Life Member". All monies collected for Life Membership, go to a dedicated account and cannot be spent. Only the interest will be collected for RSVA advocacy.

In this way, you will be able to assist your organization long after you have won the bid for that vending route in the sky. All of us will move on when our time on earth is done. Wouldn't it be great to leave a financially viable RSVA, to continue the good work that you started?

Lifetime memberships come in two sizes; $200.00 and $1000.00. Please consider this viable way to contribute.

In closing, we signed 7 attendees of Sagebrush to the MMS program and a similar number of Life Memberships. We are putting in place ways to say "*Thank You!"* I cannot say at this moment, but there are some surprises in store for all "Lifers" as well as MMS contributors.

THIS FORM HAS BEEN DESIGNED IN LARGE PRINT
FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND
MONTHLY MONETARY SUPPORT PROGRAM

6300 Shingle Creek Pkwy, #195
Brooklyn Center, MN 55430
Phone: 612-332-3242, Fax: 763-432-7562

ACB Sponsor Name (enter here): _____

Please use this form to enroll, change existing information or to request that we contact you.

New Enrollment: _____ Change Existing Information: _____

Please Contact Me: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

E Mail Address: _____

If we need to call you, what is the best time to reach you?

_____

What is your preferred method of receiving information:

Braille: ____ Large Print: ____ E-mail: ____ Cassette: ____

Deductions are made the 10th or the 22nd of each month. Please select the date each month you wish the deduction to occur:

10th Day: ___ 22nd Day: ___ Date to commence: _____

For new enrollees:

Enter your total monthly donation amount: $_____

For changes to existing accounts (choose only one) :

Increase my monthly donation by $_____

Decrease my monthly donation by $ _____

Complete this section if you wish to assign a portion of your monthly donation to one state or special interest affiliate. Leave this section blank if you wish to contribute all of your monthly donation to ACB:

Affiliate Name: Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America

May we inform this affiliate of your donation? Yes: ____ No:____

For New Enrollees

Enter amount you wish to designate:

(Up to one half of monthly donation) $ _____

For Changes to Your Existing Account (Choose only one):

Increase my affiliate donation by $ _____

Decrease my affiliate donation by $_____

If you are using a paper form, please complete the reverse side to finish your enrollment or change. If you are using an electronic form, please see below.

Complete this section if you wish to make your monthly donation via credit card:

Credit Card Type: Visa: ___ MasterCard: ____ Discover: ____

American Express: ____

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration Date (month/year): _____

Name as it appears on the card (If different from above):

_____

Complete this section if you wish to make your monthly donation via automatic monthly deduction from your bank account:

Checking: ____ Savings: ____ Credit Union Share Draft: _____

Bank Name:_____

Bank Address:_____

Bank City, State, Zip _____

Bank Routing Number: (9 digits, usually left of the account number):

_____

Account Number: _____

(The best way to ensure your ACH is set up accurately, is to write "void" on one of your checks and attach it to this form.)

I hereby authorize the American Council of the Blind (ACB) to draft the amount indicated on this form, each month on the specified date, from my account or credit card as indicated below, as a contribution to ACB. ACB is further authorized to continue to draft funds, as set forth below, until I instruct ACB to alter or cancel this authorization. As an MMS participant, I understand that I can, at my sole option, designate a portion of my ACB monthly contribution (not to exceed one half) to one state or special interest affiliate of ACB, as designated below.

Please sign and date this form:

Authorized By: _____Date: _____

For Minneapolis Office Use Only

	Previous Amount	Amount of Change	New Amount	Effective Date Of Change
ACB Portion	_____	_____	_____	_____
Affiliate Designation	_____	_____	_____	Sponsor Recorded
Total Monthly Donation	_____	_____	_____	_____

Processed by: _____ Date _____

MMS Revision 080108

MASSACHUSETTS VENDOR TRAINING

By: Marie Keane, RSVA Board Member

The Massachusetts vendors held their annual training conference on December 2, 2012. The conference was held at the *Massachusetts Commission for the Blind* office in Boston. The well-attended group chatted about business, shared marketing tips, and enjoyed coffee and doughnuts before the session started.

Commissioner Janet Warbeck attended the morning session and discussed issues concerning the vendors and answered queries from the attendees.

The morning presenters included a sales representative from Performance Foods who is working on group pricing options. Another sales representative from the company, Whateva, handed out their popular bags in 2 sizes. We then took a break for lunch provided by Boston Bakery. The representative handed out product lists for the vendors to browse while eating a hot delicious lunch.

The afternoon session was enjoyable as well. The representatives from GuideLights and Gadgets displayed their products geared for the visually impaired and guide dogs, as well as pets. The group learned different ways to take credit cards. A Taekwondo instructor shared his life story and how he got into the martial arts profession.

After a very informative day, our RSVA President, Dan Sippl, spoke about national issues concerning the Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America organization.

He gave a fine presentation that got a lot of positive feedback from many of the vendors who attended. Dan pointed out how we cannot learn unless we really listen, that we need to work together in a positive manner, and emphasized the importance of staying involved.

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HAWAII BLIND VENDOR TRAINING

By Ronald Flormata, Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of Hawaii

As promised a year ago, the Hawaii State Committee of Blind Vendors (HSCBV) conducted a statewide training conference for the blind vendors of Hawaii. Like last time, the training conference was held at the Ala Moana Hotel in Honolulu March 2nd and 3rd, 2013.

Attendance of vendors was considered high with a good number coming from other islands, namely Maui, Kauai and Hawaii. Also in attendance were vendor trainees who are waiting for vending facilities to become available so they can officially start in the Blind Enterprise Program. The four students in the program were also present during the 2-day conference.

Kyle Aihara, Chairman of HSBVA, presided over the proceedings. Topics covered included the following:

(1) Department of Health “Healthy Choice” presentation, by Katherine Richards.

(2) Civil Defense presentation on disaster preparedness, by Marsha Tamura.

(3) Service Core of Retired Executives (SCORE), Customer Service presentation, by Sarah Hudgins.

(4) Food Safety and Sanitation presentation, by Tom Frigge.

(5) Legislative Process, Healthy Vending Initiative, by Senator Suzanne Chun, Oakland.

We also had a teleconference call to Dan Fry, Rehabilitation Services Administration who was in Washington, D.C. at that time.

On Saturday, dinner speakers were from the two consumer groups of blind vendors, namely Dan Sippl of Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America (RSVA) and Nick Gacos of National Association of Blind Merchants (NABM).

Ms. Kyle Laconsay spoke on the current status of the BEP training program with 4 students who are using the revised training manual. Interestingly, the group, headed by Ms. Kyle, went around town visiting nearby vending facilities and exposing the students to actual operations of BEP vendors.

Ms. Lea Grupen, Ho'Opono Administrator, reported the negotiated settlement of the Tamashiro case with the Honolulu City and County, resulting in $185,000 in additional funds going to the Hawaii Randolph-Sheppard revolving account, and the commissions thereafter, from related vending machines in the aforementioned county.

There was no shortage of healthy discussion during the conference, especially on the topic of customer service, presided by Score representative Sarah Hudgins.

Seven years after signing up to head the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in Hawaii, Mr. Joe Cordova delivered his goodbye to the vendors. It should be noted that Mr. Cordova was instrumental in the preparation of the 2012 and 2013 Training Conference for the vendors of Hawaii. He will surely be missed. He has submitted his resignation letter but whereever he goes, we - the blind vendors of the Aloha State - wish him all the best in his new endeavor.

Overall, the 2013 Training Conference was successfully conducted and completed. Congratulations to HSCBV and Ho'Opono.

(*Note: I wonder why every time I write an article about Hawaii, it involves somebody we love leaving Hawaii. Last year, it was Susan Kern, now it is Joe Cordova...)*

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NORTH CAROLINA (NCBEP) ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE

By: Ron Eller, RSVA First Vice President

The North Carolina BEP held its annual training conference, February 15 thru 17, 2013 at the Holiday Inn in North Raleigh. The conference opened Friday evening with registration and the annual food show. We had the largest turnout of suppliers and distributors we have ever had attend our conference. Our registrations were up to their highest level since back in the 90’s. The first general session Saturday morning was vending machine maintenance and repair, sponsored by South Eastern Vending Company.

The next session was on math and training, from location interviews. Vendors also received training on our daily/monthly “D” Sheet.

Our first speaker of the day was Mr. John Crane with NESTLE. John talked about trends in the vending industry and what healthy snacks were hot items.After lunch our first speaker was Dan Sippl, President of RSVA. Dan spoke about his background and how everyone should belong to one consumer group or the other, adding that he hoped everyone would join RSVA. Dan explained all the things RSVA was involved in and the most recent successes. The North Carolina BEP appreciated Dan’s attending the conference and doing a great job representing RSVA.

Our next speaker was Nicky Gacos, CO, President of NABM, a division of NFB. After Dan’s presentation, Nicky didn’t have a lot to say. He did introduce a friend of his from the COMPASS Group who was pushing snack shops, a group of modules -- shelves where items are sold without the aid of an attendant. Good honest people just walk up, grab something from the shelf or cooler, and pay for it via self check-out. All the operator does is stock the shelves.

The next speaker was Mr. Robert Humphries, RSVA’S attorney. Robert did an outstanding job explaining the history of the R-S program, the amendments to the R-S act and how the program was administered through the US Department of Education. The NC BEP appreciated Robert taking his time to be with us on Saturday afternoon and at the Saturday night banquet, and delivering such an important message.

The last speaker Saturday was Mr. Terry Smith. Terry's sole purpose of attending was to push NABM, NFB, and BEI. He explained all the good work he has been doing for vendors across the country, how the expenses were mounting up and how the NFB had basically cut the backing of its financial sponsorship of BEI this year.

Of course, Terry was begging for money and wanted NC to sign an ongoing contract for Terry's services at $3,000 per year. They also call everything BEI does "training", so other vending money, or even *set-aside*, can be used to pay the contract.

On Sunday morning, during our Elected Committee meeting, Tim Jones invited Terry to speak once again about NC signing on with the BEI with an annual contribution of $3,000. A motion was made to spend the money and then a motion to table the motion was made and passed without a single "no" vote.

With all things considered, it was a good conference and we look forward to next year's meeting in February 2014.

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CHARACTER IS HOW YOU TREAT THOSE WHO DO NOTHING FOR YOU!

By: Ken Jessup, RSVA Ways and Means Chair

On December 12, 2012, I received an email, on a listserv, asking for help from a Randolph-Sheppard vendor. The vendor was asking a general question for assistance on behalf of a new vendor.

What made it important to me was a reply sent out on the listserv. After reading the reply, from a very active advocate, it hit me that the very words which had been written by this strong advocate, were the words that separate the two advocacy organizations for Randolph-Sheppard.

I like to think that I can get along with anyone, and I do have friends in all of the blind advocacy groups. However, that one sentence, that one email, after many years clearly explained to me why I support RSVA, why I have become a life member and why I feel I can make a positive difference by serving on the RSVA Board.

What did that sentence say? I will not honor the writer; anyone who gets the listserv will know. Here it is: *"if your friend is active in the National Federation of the Blind, i.e. a contributor in some form or fashion, he ought to call me."*

During the past few months, RSVA has been attacked, ridiculed, and vendors have been told not to support RSVA events. I am here to tell you that if you have a problem or an issue with your SLA, a question -- anything dealing with your business….call the 800 number to RSVA.

There is someone on the other end of that line who will ***not ask*** if you are a member, do you contribute, or how can you help us. **NO!** RSVA will try to help you with no obligation or cost…. and that is why I am a member of RSVA and that is why I gladly support RSVA financially… because I want to, not because I am obligated.

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RSVA CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS

By: Ardis Bazyn, RSVA Constitution Committee Chair

If you are interested in submitting possible recommendations for changes in the RSVA Constitution, please send them to Ardis Bazyn at abazyn@bazyncommunications.com. If you have questions, please call 818-238-9321. All suggested changes must be submitted before the next Vendorscope is sent to the publisher on June 1.

* * * *

RESOLUTION SUBMISSIONS

By: Ardis Bazyn, RSVA Resolutions Chair

All suggested RSVA Resolutions should be sent to Ardis Bazyn at abazyn@bazyncommunications.com. If you have questions, please contact Ardis Bazyn.

All resolutions should be received before the convention if possible.

* * * *

Please contribute to the RSVA Monthly Monetary Support Program.

During Sagebrush, members signed up for the joint ACB/RSVA Program, which will now contribute $220 per month. Even minimum support amounts assist immensely. Just think what RSVA could do, if each member contributed a small amount!

WHAT'S NEW?

By: Ardis Bazyn, RSVA Publications Chair

(*To submit items for this column, send information to Ardis Bazyn, email: abazyn@bazyncommunications.com. Please note, the appearance of any items in this column does not imply any endorsement by the RSVA Board or the Publications Committee.)*

AFB AccessNote

The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) launched the AccessNote, a specialized notetaker for the iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch. AFB designed this app to complement the iPhone's other popular features, like web browsing and email, so users who are blind have all the tools they need in one, handy device. AFB's AccessNote app is available for $19.99.

In addition to being a low-cost alternative to traditional notetakers, AccessNote allows users to combine efficient notetaking with many other features and functions of the iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch. This allows people who are blind or visually impaired to use the same popular devices their sighted peers are using in classroom or business settings.

This is the first notetaking app developed and designed specifically for users with vision loss. AFB evaluated many of the other available notetaking apps, but found none to be very efficient or user-friendly to people who are blind or visually impaired. What sets the AccessNote apart includes:

a. Seamless navigation - Customized keyboard commands make notetaking more intuitive and productive than ever before, including quick access to important features like

search all notes, search within a note, as well as several navigation options.

b. Automatic saving - With an automatic save on every few keystrokes, notes will never be lost.

c. Cursor tracking - When navigating among multiple sets of notes, users can always pick up right where they left off.

d. Unparalleled simplicity - With a clutter-free interface, users can create, read, find, and sync, making it easier to spend more time with actual content and less time with tools.

d. DropBox integration- All notes, always on hand. DropBox keeps AccessNote in sync with the user's desktop (and other devices) so their notes are always available and backed up.

e. Compatibility with Bluetooth keyboards - AccessNote is optimized for efficiency with the Apple wireless keyboard and for today's wireless braille displays. AccessNote was developed in conjunction with FloCo Apps and is available on the App Store (sm).

BrailleTouch

BrailleTouch allows you to type using braille on your touchscreen and is based on the standard six key braille keyboard. BrailleTouch will be in the App Store. With BrailleTouch, you can send text messages, emails, and tweets from the touchscreen braille keyboard. You can also copy text you type in braille to the clipboard and paste it into other apps on your iPhone. A free version of BrailleTouch is available to try before you buy it. The free version lets you type in braille and hear the text you entered.

Many braille instructors would like to use BrailleTouch as a teaching tool, which the free version will support.

Additional features are available as in App Purchases. The Messaging Upgrade allows you to send text messages, emails, and tweets from the touchscreen braille keyboard. The Clipboard Upgrade allows you to copy text from the touchscreen braille keyboard and paste it into other apps on your iPhone.

BrailleTouch is based on research conducted at Georgia Tech in Atlanta, Georgia. Testers who used the standard Perkins braille keyboard were able to master BrailleTouch within an hour of practice and type at an average of 23 words per minute using Grade 1 braille.

This software will provide a helpful alternative to the VoiceOver split tap keyboard, and it will help improve the mobile computing experience for people in the blind community who use an iPhone.

BrailleTouch is fully compatible with VoiceOver. It works on the iPhone 3GS through the iPhone 5, iPod Touch models since the 3rd generation and requires iOS 5.0 or a later operating system. BrailleTouch is only for the iPhone and iPod Touch, and is not supported on the iPad.

The first release is based on *North American English Grade 1 Uncontracted Braille.*You can choose to hear speech feedback for each character you type, each word you type, or both. More information about BrailleTouch is available on the website:

http://brailletouchapp.com/.

The website includes a *User Guide* and *Frequently Asked Questions*. You can also sign up for the email list. It is also on Twitter: https://twitter.com/brailletouch.

Messaging Upgrade costs $9.99. Clipboard Upgrade costs $9.99. You must have Messaging Upgrade first before you can get Clipboard Upgrade.

iPhone iOS6 Updates

iPhone iOS6 Updates: Getting Started with the *iPhone for Blind Users*, by Anna Dresner in braille, eBraille, Word, ASCII text, ePub, or DAISY is available at the National Braille Press for $9. You can get the full iPhone tutorial or get both this book and the full tutorial together and save.

The iPhone 5 is faster than previous iPhones, can take advantage of the faster 4G network and has a better camera. Rather than putting out a whole new tutorial, this book is a supplement that you can use alongside *Getting Started with the iPhone* and *iOS5 for Blind Users*. The same section titles are used in both this supplement and the full tutorial, so you can find them easily.

If you already know the basics of using the iPhone, you can use this update to review what's new. This book includes updated versions of the braille display and Bluetooth commands and revised versions of all the appendices.

An additional appendix that lists all the apps referred to in this book, along with links you can use to find them, are in the iTunes store. These materials should allow the book to do double duty as an iPhone reference card.

Read the full table of contents and place an order at:

http://www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/IOS6-UPDATE.html.

To order any books, send payment to: NBP, 88 St. Stephen Street, Boston, MA 02115-4302, or call and charge it toll-free, 800-548-7323 or 617-266-6160 ext. 520 or order any of their books online at:

http://www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/publications/index.html.

Passenger Support Specialists Program (PSS)

Passenger Support Specialists are Transportation Security Officers, Lead TSOs and supervisors who, in addition to their regular checkpoint duties, have volunteered to take on the collateral responsibility of assisting passengers who may be in need of assistance.

A traveler who needs assistance or is concerned about his or her screening can ask a checkpoint officer or supervisor for a Passenger Support Specialist at the respective checkpoint. Or, if TSA personnel recognize someone is having difficulty, a PSS could be called to ask whether assistance is needed.

TSA still encourages travelers with disabilities and medical conditions to contact TSA Cares before they fly. At some airports, Passenger Support Specialists will also complement the TSA Cares program. In the course of assisting a passenger, the PSS will adhere to all of TSA's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

While customer service will be emphasized, security is the primary mission and will not be compromised.

While all Transportation Security Officers receive training on how to screen individuals with disabilities and medical conditions, PSS's receive enhanced training directly from subject matter experts in the field of disability and from individuals with disabilities themselves.

PSS's receive approximately four hours of additional training, including two hours from the TSA Disability Branch, focused specifically on travelers with disabilities and medical conditions. This training includes additional instruction on civil rights for individuals with disabilities and medical conditions, and strategies for providing assistance with dignity and respect.

Members of TSA's disability coalition helped to develop, and participated in, the training of PSS volunteers to ensure that specialists are learning directly from the community they will be assisting.

TSA is committed to having a Passenger Support Specialist available during all screening checkpoint operating hours. If a traveler believes he or she may need to request the assistance of a Passenger Support Specialist, he or she is encouraged to arrive at the airport early and immediately ask an officer or a supervisor for a PSS.

Home Readers New Monthly E-newsletter

Home Readers has a new monthly newsletter: Shopping & Sharing Blind Advocate. This newsletter will feature products, services, special promotion codes and good deals, as well as sharing about the products and services that work for you. We want to hear from you, the consumer, about the products and services that work for you and the ones that don't work.

Do you have a favorite food brand that you use in a recipe? Share the brand and recipe with us. How about those of you who have your best pet friend? Tell us about their favorite treats, the food they prefer, best toys, and what supplements, shampoos and conditioners you believe are helpful for your pet! Parents and grandparents, we want you to share about your little ones, tweens or teens and where the best place to shop online or in your city is.

The kind of items your kids like or you think is great. Enjoy music? Let us know where you shop and the best buys to find. Share your favorite artist, group, instrument or genre. Do you have a favorite place to shop for family members and friends? What types of unique and special gifts do they have?

Where are the best places to eat or what website has delicious foods? Are you looking for a product or service? Ask others where you can find it or for the place which will have the best buy on it.

They are also going to have a place for sighted friends, family and co-workers to participate. Please share the newsletter with your blind friends, but also with your sighted friends and family. Most people like finding good deals, which will be in the Shopping & Sharing Blind Advocate.

Anything R or X-rated, any foul words or talking about adult content, will <u>not</u> be included in any part of this newsletter. The newsletter will be informative and enjoyable. Please sign up because, just like everything with Home Readers, it's for you, about you, and can't make it without you. If you wish to submit something for next month's newsletter please submit it.

To subscribe to Home Readers Shopping and Sharing Blind Advocate newsletter, please send a blank e-mail with *News Letter* in the subject line, to orders@homereaders.com.

Artificial Retina

The Food and Drug Administration approved the first treatment to give limited vision to people who are blind, involving a technology called the artificial retina. The device allows people with a certain type of blindness to detect crosswalks on the street, the presence of people or cars, and sometimes even large numbers or letters. The approval of the system marks a milestone in a new frontier in vision research, a field in which scientists are making strides with gene therapy, optogenetics, stem cells and other strategies.

The artificial retina is a sheet of electrodes implanted in the eye. The patient is also given glasses with an attached camera and a portable video processor. This system, called Argus II, allows visual signals to bypass the damaged portion of the retina and be transmitted to the brain. With the artificial retina or retinal prosthesis, a blind person cannot see in the conventional sense, but can identify outlines and boundaries of objects, especially when there is contrast between light and dark, fireworks against a night sky or black socks mixed with white ones. About 50 Americans and Europeans have been using the device in clinical trials.

It helps them differentiate curbs from roads, and detect contours of objects and people. The F.D.A. approved Argus II, made by Second Sight Medical Products, to treat people with severe retinitis pigmentosa, in which photoreceptor cells (cells which take in light) deteriorate.

The eyeglass camera captures images, which the video processor translates into pixelized patterns of light and dark,

and transmits them to the electrodes. The electrodes then send them to the brain. Initially between 10,000 and 15,000 will likely qualify for the Argus II, according to the company.

To be eligible, people must be over 25, have previously had useful vision, and be so visually impaired that the device would be an improvement. But experts said the technology holds promise for others who are blind, especially those with advanced age-related macular degeneration (the major cause of vision loss in older people), which affects about two million Americans.

In Europe, Argus II received approval in 2011 to treat severe blindness from any type of outer retinal degeneration, although so far it is marketed there for retinitis pigmentosa. In the United States, additional trials are necessary for such approval. Eventually, the company plans to implant electrodes directly into the brain's cortex to allow them to address blindness from all causes.

Initially, Argus II will be available at seven hospitals in New York, California, Texas, Maryland and Pennsylvania. It will cost about $150,000, excluding surgery and training. Second Sight said it was optimistic that insurance would cover it.

Argus II was developed over 20 years by Dr. Mark S. Humayun, an ophthalmologist and biomedical engineer at the University of Southern California. Some financing came from private sources, the National Eye Institute, the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy…all federal agencies.

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☐ Any member in good standing wishing to become a Life Member for a one-time donation of $200.00.

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