



Robert Scheffel
President & CEO
MAB

Inside This Issue:

Page 2
Accessible Apple Computers
KNFB Reader Available

Page 3
Adaptive Aids
Invitation to MAB Open House

Page 4
DVS and Accessible Films

Page 5
A Client's Viewpoint
Tips and Tricks

Page 6
In Memory of Ruth Loncar

Page 7
Calendar of Events
United Way Grant to MAB

Page 8
United Way Grant cont.

It may surprise some of you to learn that our agency's revenues come from the following sources: 81% from Accessible Braille Services (textbooks and statement rendering services), 12% from United Way of the Central Carolinas, 6% from service contracts with area school districts, and 1% from contributions. While it's terrific to have revenues like those provided by our business, Accessible Braille Services (ABS), there is a growing need to reduce our dependency on this or any single revenue source. Like a well-invested portfolio, we need to diversify our revenue sources. Why? Because **any reduction in revenue from ABS would necessitate a similar and immediate reduction in our services to blind and visually impaired people.**

The elimination of United Way's supplemental fundraising policies a few years ago has given us the opportunity to appeal to the general public for support. We're doing that again this holiday season. We want to increase the revenues from contributions from 1% to something much greater. If you receive this newsletter, then you are a friend and supporter of MAB, and you have likely already received our appeal letter. The appeal describes the circumstances faced by two of our clients, and their assessment of the services provided to them. Their testimonies are moving and real. And these same stories are repeated on a daily basis at our agency. An independent research study says that "the overall first impression of MAB is highly positive. Individuals have realized great benefit from the organization and value what it has done for their lives in the services and support provided on an individual basis. There was a feeling of caring and true consideration by the staff in working with the individuals at the onset, including taking the time to explain the services and giving them a complete understanding of all that MAB offers. Individuals were surprised by the level and extent of services offered through MAB and consider it an organization that needs to be better known within the community."

At MAB, we're doing all we can to help people reduce the daily living problems that blindness and severe visual impairment have created for them. We need to do more. We need your help to do it. I join our staff and Board of Directors in hoping that this holiday season was the very best ever for you and your family.


President and CEO

Apple Computers Provide Accessibility for Blind and Visually Impaired Users “right out of the box”!

Apple has introduced an Operating System, “OS X” with **built-in** features that allow blind and visually impaired users the ability to access their computer right out of the box. This eliminates the need to purchase and install costly screen reading or magnification programs. When turning on the computer for the first time an audible prompt will instruct the new user how to get started, providing a virtual talking tour and guide for using its accessibility features.

The accessibility features specific to visual impairment included in OS X are: the ability to magnify the entire screen or specific areas of the screen using ZoomView, the ability to adjust the display contrast to the user’s preference and the option to have speech output through VoiceOver. VoiceOver is the built-in screen reader that provides keyboard control of the computer. It is intended to give blind or visually impaired users the ability to use a Macintosh computer by reading aloud the contents of documents as well as providing descriptions of the workspace and activities taking place on the computer – all without the need to purchase additional software.

If you would like to get more information about Apple’s OS X accessibility features, please visit their website at www.apple.com/accessibility.



The KNFB Reader is Now Available!

The Kurzweil National Federation of the Blind Reader (KNFB Reader) was developed when Ray Kurzweil teamed with the National Federation of the Blind



(NFB) to develop the first handheld scanner and reading device. This portable device, weighing only about 13 ounces and the size of a PDA, combines a digital camera with text to

speech software. In a flash, this combination now allows a blind user to access print materials whenever and wherever the need arises.

The KNFB Reader takes a picture of the print material, and then uses OCR technology to convert the image into text. At this point the user has audible access to the scanned information in about 30 seconds. For the first time ever, people who are blind have on the spot access to everything from menus to ATM receipts to utility bills. In addition to instant access, the scanned pages can also be stored and transferred to a computer or notetaker for future reference.

Like all new technology, there are some limitations to the KNFB Reader. According to the user manual, clocks, street signs, or LED and LCD screens are among the texts that cannot be scanned and read.

For many, the \$3,495 price tag may seem steep; however, the instant availability of print material could provide a level of independence never before experienced. This price also includes lifetime support services and a year’s worth of software updates.

The KNFB Reader is available for purchase through Kurzweil Educational Systems, Inc., and its dealers. For more detailed information on this device you can visit www.knfbreader.com or call 877-547-1500.

Adaptive Aids in Multiple Languages

Did you know that talking adaptive aids can speak in languages other than English? Adaptive products catalogs such as Independent Living Aids, LS&S, and MaxiAids sell talking watches, alarm clocks, glucose monitors, blood pressure monitors, food scales, and calculators that speak Spanish, among other languages. Adaptive computer software with voice output can also speak in languages other than English. With JAWS you can switch to another language in the Language menu; with Window Eyes you can install other languages if you do a custom install; and ZoomText has an international version for about \$100 more that speaks several different languages.

Contact Information:

Independent Living Aids,
www.independentliving.com

or 1-800-537-2118

LS&S, www.lssproducts.com or 1-800-468-4789

Maxi-Aids, www.maxiaids.com or 1-800-522-6294

Our Mission:

To reduce or eliminate the daily living problems imposed upon people by blindness or severe vision impairment.



Metrolina Association for the Blind



is proud to announce that starting in the spring, we will be hosting an educational/social event each quarter!

MAB invites you to attend our “Open House” Social! This event will be held at the new Low Vision Clinic on March 15, 2007; come any time between 10:00 am - 2:00 pm. It is an opportunity for you to come and see our new low vision facility as well as socialize with new and old friends. Light refreshments will be served. **If interested, please call Joy Boyer at 704-887-5137 for more details or 704-887-5113 for transportation.**

Please feel free to contact Joy with any suggestions for future events.

MAB Matters



Did You Know

You can subscribe to *MAB Matters* Quarterly Newsletter? It is available in four accessible formats: Print, Braille, Audio CD, and E-mail notification with a link to the newsletter on MAB's web site (PDF format). Contact Kelly Austin at (704) 887-5129 or kaustin@mabnc.org to sign up.

DVS and Accessible Films

In the 1970s, WGBH made history when it developed captioning for deaf and hard of hearing TV viewers. It later pioneered Descriptive Video Service (DVS) which provides blind and visually impaired viewers with an audio narration of a program's visual elements. Eventually, MoPix was developed, a system that provides both captions and descriptive video for feature films. More than 300 theaters in the U.S. and Canada now offer MoPix technology, enabling patrons with disabilities to enjoy feature films at the same time as their sighted and/or hearing family and friends.

We have a DVS library of over 250 titles for clients to view. MAB clients select the titles that they would like to receive from a list; those movies are then sent in the mail one at a time. Individuals can keep movies for up to 30 days and simply return them in the mail when they are ready for the next selection. If you are interested in receiving Descriptive Videos, speak with your MAB case manager.

The Charlotte area is home to three MoPix equipped theatres where you can view feature films while listening to description with a headset:



AMC Carolina Pavilion 22, 9541 South Boulevard, Charlotte 704-643-1507

AMC Concord Mills 24, 8421 Concord Mills Blvd., Concord 704-979-0197

AMC Northlake 14 Theatres (2 auditoriums), 7325 Northlake

Mall Drive, Charlotte 704-643-4262

View the full list of over 300 MoPix-equipped theater locations at www.mopix.org.

There are a number of things you can do to advocate for more accessible theaters in the Charlotte area. You can contact a Hollywood studio to thank them for making films accessible, and to request access to more films. Contact a major theater chain to thank them for making their theaters accessible or to ask that they consider installing DVS Theatrical Systems. For more information contact Kelly Austin at 704-887-5129 or kaustin@mabnc.org.

MAB Board of Directors

Maggi Braun
Retired

Mabel Condor
Retired

Vivian Coleman
CDOT

Scott Hamilton
Wachovia Corporation

Lonnie Harvey
Private Businessman

Michael Kidida
JCSU

Erin Mandell - Chairperson
Communications, Bank of America

Don Meanor - Vice-Chairman
Pitney Bowes

Ashley Lamm
Attorney

Brenda Leiker
Businesswoman

Gregg Montana
Bank of America

Allen Moore
Social Security Administration

Julie Ryan
Trammel Crow Company

Chet Snow, Jr.
Realtor

Laura Yaeger
Lawyer

Ken Schwartz
CPA

Tim Spaulding
Technology Specialist

Paula Tilley
CPA

George Warren
Lawyer and CPA

From a Client's Viewpoint

My name is Trevor Thomas. I am 37 years old, and less than a year ago, I found out that I was going blind from a rare eye disease, for which there is no cure. I believed, as do most newly blind people, my life was over. Trying to

attempt to deal with blindness alone was an utter disaster. I spent months banging into things; the simple act of leaving the house got progressively more dangerous and utterly unattainable.



After my diagnosis, I did what most of us do - I pined away in the house, bemoaning my loss of sight - truly believing that my life was over. Realistically, what was I going to do as a blind person? The idea of getting a job and being a productive member of society seemed utterly ridiculous at the time. Then, I had no hope.

Nearly 6 months after my diagnosis, a friend of mine put me in contact with Metrolina Association for the Blind. The services provided to me by the MAB have literally changed my life. Thanks to Laura Valoria Schmidt, who has been providing me Orientation & Mobility skills that I never thought I'd need, and keeping me alive throughout my dangerous escapades - I can never say thank you enough. To Julie Adkins, who has made me literate once again through Braille, and has given me all the other skills I will need to function in life, I am equally grateful.

Had it not been for the tireless work of MAB employees, I would not be able to attempt the first continuous, northbound through-hike of the Appalachian Trail by a blind person. This is my goal for Spring, 2007. I appreciate being associated with MAB. I hope that others who may be in a similar situation can take Erik Weihenmayer's words to heart: "Those things that I cannot do, I will let go, and those things that I can do, I will do well."

Tips & Tricks

USE OF APRONS WITH POCKETS:

I put on my apron as soon as I dress for the day. I then find a cordless phone and put it in one of the pockets, or clip it on the apron. No matter where I am in the house, my phone is with me for handy answering and placing calls.



And, as I go along in the day, doing all necessary things in my home, I place things in one apron pocket to carry or move to another location. When I'm ready to go out of the house, or even to bed at the end of the day, I take off my apron and know that my apron has saved my clothes from soiling due to any cleaning tasks I've done during the day.

Sharon Chambers, MAB Client

OLIVE OIL MEASURING: For people who fill measuring cups by putting their finger over the edge of the cup to tell when to stop pouring, keep your liquid cooking oil in the refrigerator so that you can feel it hit your finger (room temperature oil is almost impossible to feel). **Julie Adkins, Vision Rehabilitation Therapist**



BOILING: If you do not want to pour potatoes or pasta into boiling water, just put them in the pot with hot water from the sink, and add about 7-8 minutes to your usual cooking time (macaroni or spaghetti will take about 18 minutes, potatoes will take about 30 minutes). **Julie Adkins, Vision Rehabilitation Therapist**

HANDSEWING



Kay Townsend, Vision Rehabilitation Therapist

RUTH S. LONCAR
May 28, 1935 - November 27, 2006

Ruth S. Loncar lost her battle with cancer on November 27, 2006.

She was born Ruth S. Pfalzgraf on May 28, 1935 in Clarington, Ohio. During her teen years, she met Steve Loncar, but they didn't officially start their courtship until several years later. They became engaged and were married on November 10, 1956. A couple of years later, they started their family when their first daughter Kelley Jo, was born. Six years later Stephanie was born, and in the following year, Christopher arrived. Ruth devoted 15 years exclusively to raising her children, the pride and joy of her life.



Ruth dearly loved her precious grandson, Spencer Boyd, son of Stephanie and David Boyd. In her darkest hours, his quiet and earnest "Hello, Grandma" gave her strength beyond all physical understanding. Often she would highlight the family traits and characteristics that she shared with Spencer.

Ruthie, as she was known to her co-workers, began her career with MAB on June 25, 1984. She was originally hired as the Assistant Director for the agency, fulfilling multiple roles such as bookkeeping, textbook production and facility management. Prior to working for MAB, Ruthie worked as a buyer of ladies clothing and accessories (Mackenzie & Jones, Canton, OH), buyer of non-food items (Fishers Food, Canton, OH) and buyer of window displays (The Lioness, Charlotte, NC). MAB was truly rewarded by Ruthie's shrewd purchasing abilities.

Bob Scheffel, President of MAB, often cited Ruthie's willingness to go the extra mile. "She always did all that was asked of her to fulfill the agency's mission. She gave willingly of her time and talents in whatever ways were most beneficial to the agency, and always brought a pleasant demeanor and optimistic outlook with her when she came to work. However, when situations dictated, her demeanor changed to one of candor and challenge. She was a terrific employee."

Whatever Ruthie said, she meant; she was truly a woman of conviction and ethics. Ruthie was outwardly self-confident and enjoyed helping people succeed. She was a very classy lady, admired for her distinctive jewelry and style of clothing. She told and retold the stories of her life with enthusiasm and zeal, always as if she was telling the story for the first time. Close friend and agency vendor, Glenn Dixon said of Ruthie - "One of the first times I called on her as a customer, she was very gracious and made a really bad day a good one."

Ruthie showed her family, friends and co-workers not only how to live, but also how to die with grace and dignity. She was admired for the way she handled her illness, never giving up, and always finding something to smile about. She will be missed dearly by all who knew and loved her, and will live on through the memories that we all so deeply cherish.



Saturday, January 20

National Federation of the Blind (NFB) Meeting
Eastern Hills Baptist Church, 2 PM
4855 Albemarle Rd.,
Charlotte
Bring \$5 for lunch
Contact: Muriel Brown
704-679-4140

Wednesday, January 31

VIP Travel Club, Mecklenburg Park & Rec.
S&D Coffee and Krispy Kreme, 9 AM-4 PM
\$15 Registration

Pick-up and drop off at: Marion Diehl, 2219 Tyvola Rd, Charlotte, 9 AM, 4 PM

MAB, 704 Louise Ave., Charlotte, 9:30 AM, 3:30 PM
Contact: Karen Howard
704-336-2344

Saturday, February 17

Foundation Fighting Blindness Quarterly Meeting, 9:30 AM
Sharon Towers – Hunter Hall
5100 Sharon Rd., Charlotte
Topic: Clinical Trials
Contact: Chris Stetkiewicz
919-781-8014

Saturday, February 17

National Federation of the Blind (NFB) Meeting
Eastern Hills Baptist Church, 2 PM
4855 Albemarle Rd., Charlotte
Bring \$5 for lunch
Contact: Muriel Brown

704-679-4140

Thursday, February 22

VIP Travel Club, Mecklenburg Park & Rec.
Bowling at Northcross Lanes, 9 AM-4 PM
\$15 Registration
Pick-up and drop off at:
Marion Diehl, 2219 Tyvola Rd,
Charlotte, 9 AM, 4 PM
MAB, 704 Louise Ave., Charlotte,
9:30 AM, 3:30 PM
Contact: Karen Howard 704-336-2344
Karen.howard@mecklenburgcountync.gov

Saturday, February 24-27

American Council of the Blind (ACB) Affiliate Presidents Meeting
Holiday Inn – Roslynn
1900 N. Fort Myer Dr., Arlington, VA
(800) 424-8666

Thursday, March 15

MAB Low Vision Satellite Open House
1318 AO Central Avenue
Charlotte, NC 28204
Light refreshments, limited transportation offered
Contact: Joy Boyer 704-887-5137

Saturday, March 17

National Federation of the Blind (NFB) Meeting
Eastern Hills Baptist Church, 2 PM
4855 Albemarle Rd., Charlotte
Bring \$5 for lunch
Contact: Muriel Brown 704-679-4140

Tuesday, March 20

VIP Travel Club, Mecklenburg Park & Rec.
To be announced, 9 AM-4 PM
\$15 Registration
Pick-up and drop off at:
Marion Diehl, 2219 Tyvola Rd,
Charlotte, 9 AM, 4 PM
MAB, 704 Louise Ave., Charlotte,
9:30 AM, 3:30 PM
Contact: Karen Howard 704-336-2344
Karen.howard@mecklenburgcountync.gov

MAB Receives a United Way Empowering Seniors and Disabled Focus Area Grant

MAB is always looking for ways to further enhance and/or increase our level of services to our clients. Recently, our agency was selected by United Way to receive \$30,000 through their Empowering Seniors and Disabled Focus Area Grant.

We applied for this grant (Project ACCESS) in order to gain more equipment for our expanding low vision services as well as to provide computer technology and training for low income seniors.

Our target population for Project ACCESS is economically challenged seniors who are legally blind or have an eye condition that may result in visual impairment or blindness.

Our agency will receive the first half of the grant in January of 2007 and it will be used for the low vision clinic. It will enable us to have the latest in testing equipment as well as optical and non-optical devices in order to provide comprehensive low vision services for our patients. The increase in low vision devices for loan will provide patients with the opportunity to make an informed choice as to which device will work the best for them.

The second half of this grant will come later in the year and will go towards the purchase of 10 computers and a copy of JAWS (a screen reading program) or ZoomText (a

Continued on Page 8

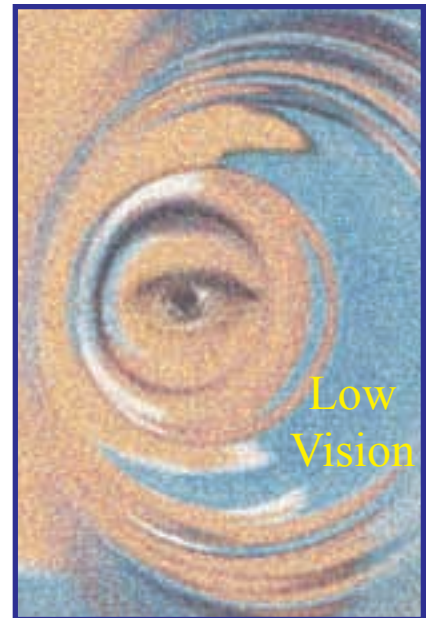
Continued from Page 7

screen enlarging and reading program). The computer and software will become the possession of the client who completes the computer and software training. The benefits of this aspect of the grant are immeasurable! A computer can enhance independence in several ways – communication, bill management, and access to information are just a few of them. If you or someone you know would benefit from being a recipient of this equipment, please call your MAB social worker or the main office number to begin receiving services.

We are very pleased to have been chosen as a recipient of the United Way Empowering Seniors and Disabled Focus Area Grant and look forward to how it will enhance the agency's level of service for our economically challenged visually impaired and blind seniors.

“Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.”

Mark Twain



The Metrolina Association for the Blind



Phone: (704) 372-3870
Toll Free: (800) 926-5466
Fax: (704) 372-3872
Web: www.mabnc.org

704 Louise Ave.
Charlotte, NC 28204-2128

Low Vision Satellite Clinic
1318-AO Central Ave.
Phone: (704) 285-7490

A United Way agency since 1938, MAB provides critical rehabilitation programs benefiting 722 Charlotte area residents in 2005/2006 and more than 11,000 individuals monthly in all fifty states through its Braille, large print, and audio compact disc transcription services.

