

# Insight: The Voice of The American Council of the Blind of New York, Inc.

<http://www.acbny.org/>

**Fall Extra 2017**

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The American Council of the Blind of New York is the largest consumer advocacy and support organization of blind and visually impaired people in the state. Your financial contributions help ACBANY's work to promote the educational, vocational and social advancement of blind and visually impaired people in New York. Send your tax-deductible donations to ACBANY, 104 Tilrose Ave., Malverne, NY 11565.

If you'd like to renew your membership or become a member, you can fill out our [online membership form](#) at [www.acbny.info](http://www.acbny.info), or call 800-522-3303.

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Editor's Message – Annie Chiappetta [editor@acbny.info](mailto:editor@acbny.info)

Greeting ACBNY members and supporters, as I write this, it is a few days before the solar eclipse. How exciting it is to know, although the eclipse is mainly a visual phenomenon, the scientific community has found a way to promote VIP inclusion with the soundscape project. I will be writing a follow-up to the eclipse for the next issue.

This issue promises to be a preview to our annual convention; I hope you like what has been chosen for your reading pleasure. We are still finding it difficult for chapters to send updates. I am not sure, exactly, why this has been so difficult for your chapters to send a short email with what you have been doing. Chapter communication is important and I hope all nine chapters can one day be represented in this newsletter. I won't be attending the State convention due to tendon injuries on my foot. I will miss you all and hope some of you will send in articles about it.

Yours in Service,

Annie Chiappetta, Publicity Chair and INSIGHT editor

Convention Welcome Letter by Michael Godino  
Members and Friends of ACBNY:

You are cordially invited to attend the 2017 Convention of the American Council of the Blind of New York (ACBNY). This year ACBNY, together with the Utica Council of the Blind (UCB) will be hosting the convention at the Utica Radisson, 200 Genesee Street, Utica, NY 13502, phone, 315-797-8010. Room rates are \$99.00 per night if registered through ACBNY. The dates of the convention are October 20-22, 2017. Preconvention events are scheduled for October 19, 2017.

For your enjoyment and entertainment pleasure, we have planned a preconvention tour to the Saranac Brewery, scheduled to depart the hotel at 2:00 pm, Thursday October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Please see the registration form for details. Additionally, President Lori Scharff is planning a leadership training for new and current leaders of the organization. This event is by invitation only, please speak with your local leaders if you plan to attend this ACBNY training.

\*All chapter leaders should contact President Lori Scharff for more information.

This year the Convention committee has assembled a meal plan to assist in offsetting the high cost and additional outlay for meals at convention. The meal plan will consist of a full hot buffet breakfast at the Terrace Grill Friday, Saturday and Sunday, your choice of lunch on Friday and Saturday, and, a meal ticket for the annual convention banquet on Saturday night.

Additionally, we have included the options to pre-purchase the annual scholarship fundraiser ticket for a discounted rate as part of the meal plan; please see the registration form for details and pricing.

The Convention Committee has also been busy putting together an agenda to raise your awareness while educating and hopefully entertaining each of you. The 2017 ACBNY Convention Agenda we have assembled is as follows:

Friday October 20,

Full Buffet Breakfast

10 to 12 Noon, NYS Commission for the Blind Town Meeting

Opening Session, Lunch

ACBNY Business Meeting President Lori Scharff

ACBNY Scholarship Fundraiser: dinner, entertainment and raffles,

Music from Hand Picked and Comedian from Comedy CNY.

Saturday October 21, begins with a Full Buffet Breakfast and Exhibits in the Hotel Lobby; a family Expo with a Hands on event for families with children; GDUES meeting; NYSCCLV meeting, folloed by Lunch and presentations. we have invitations out that promise to expand your knowledge on various topics. ACBNY Annual Banquet, Keynote speaker, Sharon Giovinazzo, Presentations, Awards and Raffles.

Sunday October 22, Full Buffet Breakfast and Board Meeting, President Lori Scharff presiding; 12 Noon, Close of Convention.

To register for the 2017 ACBNY Annual Convention visit [www.acbny.info](http://www.acbny.info) or call or e-mail Mike Godino at 516-612-3368 / [mikeg125@optonline.net](mailto:mikeg125@optonline.net). Payment options are either PayPal through [www.acbny.info](http://www.acbny.info) or by mail. Payments must be received on or before September 15, 2017. Payments received after September 15, 2017 are subject to 20% increase on pricing. All payments by mail should be made payable to ACBNY and mailed to:

ACBNY c/o Mike Godino 104 Tilrose Ave. Malverne, NY 11565-2024. Refund policy: The registration fee is non-refundable. Refunds for all events are subject to the reselling of the ticket(s) for each event. If you must cancel your room reservation, you MUST do so more than 48 hours in advance of the canceled date(s) through the hotel and provide proof that it was done.

Any and all refunds will be addressed after the conclusion of the convention.

Thank you. The Convention Committee looks forward to seeing you in October.

Warmest Regards, ACBNY Convention Committee

##

Legislative Update by Mike Godino, Legislative Co-Chair

Hi all, and Greetings from the desk of the 2017 ACBNY Legislative Co-Chair Mike Godino. As the summer is quickly moving down the back slopes of the mid-summer hump, I thought it might be nice to provide you all a legislative update. We had a good year, let's hope the good energy continues to trend.

First and foremost, let me thank the Co-Chair Terence Page, the Legislative Committee and all the members that joined us in May for the Legislative Weekend. Thanks to Terence for all the support he provided me throughout the process. Thanks to the Committee for coming together to review the many issues, for researching the prospective issues and assembling the 2017 ACBNY Legislative Agenda. And, special thanks to the members who came to the Legislative Weekend. This part of the process is the most critical as visiting the legislators who represent us in the State Capital is, what we do as an advocacy organization.

This year we chose to take a position on four pieces of legislation. Two of the four have been in the ACBNY Legislative Agenda for several years but, the other two are new to the agenda. Starting with the two you all know, Licensure and the Electronic Information Act. Licensure passed the Senate as it usually does but, fell short in the Assembly as the lobby failed to convince the Chair of the Higher Education (Glick) to move the Bill to the floor for a vote. We are confident that if

we can get the bill to the floor, it will pass; however, we continue to hit the wall in the committee. This only means we have more work to do.

The Electronic Information Act is a bill that ACBNY supports in concept; however, the details are lacking in oversight and accountability. The committee and the representatives who visited the legislators did their very best to raise the awareness of the shortcomings of this legislation and some ways the sponsors and supporters might make the bill more acceptable. Currently the bill has not moved through the committee process; we suspect the current version will not move, but, we should continue to watch the bills A2125 (Pretlow) and S3274 (Parker) to insure they do not move without significant changes.

Next, I am very happy to share with you all that A267-A (Rosenthal) and S4113-A (Sanders), Bills to amend the Election Law to provide accessible online sample ballots have gone through significant changes as they gained support throughout the session. Currently both bills are represented as C versions. For those who do not know, C version implies that the bill has undergone two amendments to the language; version A usually not labeled, version B and what we have, version C in both the Senate and the Assembly. Additionally, and even more exciting, we managed to pass the Assembly in the last session. Thanks to all who represented, pat yourselves on the back. This is a major step. This bill has been around for years and has never moved, we, the American Council of the Blind of New York picked it up, supported it on our legislative agenda and, wow, it passed. Albeit with several changes but, the bill will provide online sample ballots that can be read using screen readers. This is a great accomplishment. All we need now is the Senate.

As a voter, I have continued working on this issue and, I believe we should be able to pass the Senate during the next session. Please watch for and participate in an upcoming campaign to write and share letters of support. Additionally, the Senator's office is looking to hold an event to raise the awareness for this legislation early in or before the next session. Let's keep our eyes and ears open for ways we can all help to pass this legislation in 2018. We need a big win and this can be it.

Finally, A-06515 (Miller) and S-04831, (Lavalle) The reader Fund Bills. If you attended the legislative weekend, you know the importance of this legislation and

how it can possibly open many doors to additional funding that can assist people who are blind to get better educations. I am happy to say thank you because, while we were all sleeping, these bills passed both the Assembly and Senate. Yeah sure, they were feel good bills but, the passage of these bills represents the first time since the inception of both bills, that there will be an increase in the amount of money a blind person can receive to hire a reader; and what an increase it is. The amount went from \$500 a semester to \$4000 a year. Additionally, this money can be used to purchase technology for reading if that might be a better option. Again, thank you and pat yourselves on the back. We did a great job this year and we need to take the credit where credit is due. But, we are not done with these bills. We are currently waiting for the passed bills to be delivered to the Governor. I am watching and when they are delivered to the Governor, I will put out an alert to call the Governor to recommend he sign it. Let's keep the heat on and see this through to passage.

The American Council of the Blind of New York is an advocacy organization striving to provide independence and dignity while educating the sighted and blind populations to the needs of the blind community. The Legislative Committee works hard to honor this mission in the work we do. This year was a successful one however, we have far too many that are not. We must continue the good work of ACBNY and, we all must do our part to insure the viability of the mission and further the continued success of this great organization ACBNY...

##

From the Electronic Resources Committee

Now that ACBNY's website has been migrated and updated, it is time for chapters to take charge of their own chapter web pages. If your chapter had a web page on the old website, it was migrated but not updated. We are asking each chapter to roll up the proverbial sleeves and go over what is on your web page and let us know what you want changed.

The Electronic Resources Committee is asking chapters to designate a point person to assist with updating chapter web pages on [www.acbny.info](http://www.acbny.info).

Whomever your chapter chooses should be able to provide the bare bones of the chapter so we can send it to the webmaster, David Annett. It is your chapter's responsibility to review or change what is written about it on your web page. If you want help with writing the content, Annie should be able to assist the chapter but it is up to the chapter to invest the time into this project. It is your chapter website and you must be responsible for both the content and the text.

The basics are: Official name of chapter, its officers and board members and their email addresses, constitution, and your mission statement. If you have a logo, you can provide this as well.

The ERC urges each chapter to appoint someone to work with us. We have the means and the opportunity to offer chapters a presence via the internet and we hope each chapter will work with us to update the content. Contact Annie at 914-393-6605 or [editor@acbny.info](mailto:editor@acbny.info)

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Special Announcement from NABA

The Northeastern Association of the Blind at Albany (NABA) will be hosting their ninth annual Low Vision Technology Fairs on October 16, 2017 at St. Sophia's Greek Orthodox Church, 440 Whitehall Road, Albany, and on October 17, 2017 at the Saratoga Springs City Center, 522 Broadway in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. Both are from 9am to 4pm. The fairs are free to the public. People with vision impairment as well as family members, caregivers, educators and healthcare professionals are encouraged to attend.

The purpose of a Low Vision Technology Fair is to showcase the latest in technologies designed to assist people with low vision and vision impairment with reading and daily activities. Low vision technology and vision related companies will be showcasing state-of-the-art products that help with reading and everyday tasks. NABA Technology and Rehabilitation staff will be on hand to answer questions. Other related organizations will be available to provide service information including the Lions Clubs, NYS Talking Book & Braille Library, WMHT RISE Radio, the NYS Commission for the Blind, Freedom Guide Dogs, CDTA,



Stratton V.A. Medical Center, local eye care professionals and more. New sponsors and exhibitors are welcome.

Guest speaker ophthalmologists will be presenting at each location on issues related to eye health, diseases, research and treatments. Dr. Glenn Thompson and Dr. Thomas Federici will speak in Albany. Dr. Nicole Lemanski and Dr. Salman Yousuf will speak in Saratoga. Each guest speaker will present at 10am and 1pm respectively.

“Low vision” is defined as a visual impairment that cannot be corrected by standard eyeglasses, contact lenses, medication, or surgery and that interferes with the ability to perform everyday activities. Many Americans with low vision have difficulty reading mail, shopping, cooking, watching TV and even reading this article.

Since 1908 NABA, a nonprofit organization has been fulfilling its mission to provide services and support to help blind and visually impaired individuals of all ages achieve independence and growth. NABA’s vision rehabilitation specialists work in-home and on-site with individuals to develop the skills that facilitate independent living. Located at NABA’s facility at 301 Washington Avenue in Albany, New York, the Dr. Harry M. Judge Vision Rehabilitation Center performs examinations by a low vision specialist for prescribing magnifiers, special glasses and adaptive devices. Services are no charge to the legally blind.

For more information about NABA’s Low Vision Technology Fairs, contact Cheryl Lawyer at (518) 463-1211, [clawyer@naba-vision.org](mailto:clawyer@naba-vision.org) or [www.naba-vision.org](http://www.naba-vision.org).

###

Chapter Round-Up

News from the Capital District By Nancy Murray

The Capital District Chapter is hosting a Dinner in the Dark on September 16, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. In Albany. We will have baskets to raffle off, a 50/50 drawing and perhaps a mystery basket as a silent auction.

Long Island Council of the Blind By Rosanna Beaudrie

## Vice President LICB

This year has been going by very quickly. We have done some very interesting things this year. In April, we had a braille fest at our children's museum here in Garden City. The braille fest was open to the public and helped educate the public and children how Braille is used. Many people came to visit; parents and children had the opportunity to have a hands-on experience of braille. It was a wonderful day.

In July of this year we had our annual LICB picnic at Marjorie Post Park here in Massapequa. We had a great turn out good food, lots of fun and good weather. We will reconvene in September to plan events for the upcoming year. We will plan our holiday party for December 2017. We are looking forward to ACBNY's convention up in Utica in October.

## News from Westchester

WCB has been fairly busy. We are participating in a monthly blindness resource group at a local assisted living facility. We are planning to expand this program in other towns and villages through Westchester. The Dining in the Dark fundraiser sponsored by our local White Plains Lions Club brought in just under \$2000 and it will be used for our new 50 plus technology grant. We are working on a number of smaller fundraisers and working on a membership drive, more on that later. We received a proclamation from our County's Executive, Robert Astorino on April 26 for International Guide Dog Day, along with GDUES and Guiding Eyes for the Blind. The press release and photo is up on the web in case you missed it. See you all in Utica.

## News from GDUES

Boy, the dog days of summer are upon us and we are gearing up for National Service Dog Month and the State convention promises to be great. Look for GDUES in the vendor hall, we will be selling dog biscuits and lollipops. Saturday's events are being planned and it looks like we will be running another wonderful workshop, so perk up those ears and sit, stay, and wait for more information coming your way soon.

News from ACBWN Y – Karen Blachowicz and Kathy Lyons

The Western New York chapter had a picnic at Karen’s home in the middle of June. Attendance was around 30 people. We are having our annual service dog walk this September 16 and we are doing a presentation at one of the local nursing homes on how to involve blind people in recreation and also how to approach blind people.

WNY has also been working on trying to dissuade the Town of Tonawanda from installing a round-about.

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#### Potpourri

Talking Book and Braille Library Cartridges and Accessories Available through Amazon

This is a preliminary notice about the availability of 4 GB digital cartridges from the Perkins Library utilizing Amazon Marketplace. Currently in stock are 4 gb cartridges, and coming by the end of September, Perkins will be offering 8 gb and 16 GB cartridges as well. We are also selling a few other items to augment the audio reading experience, and links to the Amazon product pages for each product are below. If you have any issues with the Amazon web pages, please let me know. You can call the Perkins Library at 617-972-7240 or email [library@perkins.org](mailto:library@perkins.org).

Here are the product links with pricing:

- [4GB Blank Cartridge for Talking Book Players](#)

Price: \$9.99 Each

- [8GB Blank Cartridge for Talking Book Players](#) NEW!

Price: \$10.99 Each

(Currently not in stock)

- [16GB Blank Cartridge for Talking Book Players](#) NEW!

Price: \$13.99 Each

(Currently not in stock)

- [Belkin Pro Series USB 2.0 Transfer Cable from Computer to Digital Cartridges with Talking Book Players](#)

Price: \$4.99 Each

- [Container/Mailer for the Digital Talking Book Cartridges](#)

Price: \$1.99 Each

- [Case for the National Library Service \(NLS\) Digital Talking Book Player](#)

Price: \$44.95 Each

- ["Over the Ear" Style Earphone for Talking Book Players](#)

Price: \$8.99 Each

[Perkins School for the Blind's Amazon Store](#)

Good luck!

Kim Charlson, Director

Perkins Library

A Message from Helping Hands for the Disabled of NYC

By Alice Crespo, CEO

We are Helping Hands for the Disabled of NYC. We are a blind organization who does paper work for you. We run a program called “Be a Friend Day”, where a volunteer will come to shop, or just to visit. We have a food pantry as well. Able bodied people can pick food up once a month and for seniors and shut ins they will deliver. For info go to [www.helpinghandsforthedisabledofnyc.org/](http://www.helpinghandsforthedisabledofnyc.org/)

Click on the link for “Astoria”, we could use volunteers to deliver food to the disabled, monetary donations, food donations or volunteering your time. For details please call Alice Crespo CEO of the organization, call 718-606-9712 or 917-696-8115.

American Council of the Blind

Officers and Board of Directors Contact List

The following is the most up to date list of members of the ACBNY Board of Directors. If there are any errors, please notify Lori Scharff at [lorischarff@gmail.com](mailto:lorischarff@gmail.com) and your newsletter editor, Annie Chiappetta at [editor@acbny.info](mailto:editor@acbny.info)

October 2017

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End of INSIGHT Summer Extra 2017