***CANBERRA BLIND SOCIETY (CBS)***

*October 2021 Newsletter* 433

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**Given the challenging COVID-19 situation, and the state and territory lockdowns, we are planning to deliver the best possible local events for our members and clients to participate in, when and where possible.**

**The health and safety of members and clients, volunteers and staff is our highest priority and Canberra Blind Society is following closely announcements from Office of the ACT Chief Health Officer to finalise the COVID-safe arrangements for any event moving forward. Further information will be made available as soon as possible. For updates on the COVID situation please go to the ACT Health website at**[**covid19.act.gov.au**](https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/)

# Notice Board

* **During lockdown Book Club and Friends of Braille will be operating online with Zoom meetings. Please contact the organisers of the sessions for details. Other in person activities are cancelled until restrictions ease and it is safe for people to gather.**

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| **October 2021** |
| 6  | First Wednesday  | 10:00 | Book Club |
| 7, 14, 21, 28 | Thursday | 10:00 | Friends of Braille |
| **November 2021** |  |  |  |
| 2 | Melbourne Cup event |  | Stay tuned for details |
| 3 | First Wednesday | 10:00 | Book Club |
| 4, 11,18, 25 | Thursday | 10:00 | Friends of Braille |
| **December 2021** |  |  |  |
| 1 | First Wednesday | 10:00 | Book Club |
| 2, 9, 16 | Thursday | 10:00 | Friends of Braille |

# CBS has joined Facebook

Thanks to our Visual Communications Officer, our Facebook page for is now live. The link is: <https://www.facebook.com/CanberraBlindSociety>. Please like and follow us to get updates on events at CBS.

# From the Acting President’s Chair – Heather Fitzpatrick

Welcome to the October 2021 issue of the Canberra Blind Society newsletter. This newsletter is number 433 – a remarkable achievement and I am particularly happy that we have managed to produce and publish newsletters during the last 2 years when pandemics, lockdowns and restrictions have made it much more difficult.

I want to thank the dedicated people who help with the production of the newsletter and who help distribute the newsletter in all its forms – email, large print and audio.

It’s very important to keep in touch during a pandemic and I want to remind Newsletter readers that CBS is available to help you – by contacting us by email at canblind@canberrablindsociety.org.au or telephoning us on 6247 4580. We will do our best to return emails and telephone messages within 2 business days so it’s important to be clear with your question and what you would like CBS to help you with. We are following the daily updates from the Chief Minister and ACT Health, so there is no need to leave messages on the answering machine providing us with these daily updates.

During lockdown I have been listening to podcasts and reading books to while away time. My podcast list is headed by 99% Invisible. Roman Mars (best radio voice) hosts the show which is about all the thought that goes into the things we don’t think about — the unnoticed architecture and design that shape our world. A podcast is released each week. I highly recommend it.

Another podcast I enjoy is run by the Smithsonian Institute called Portraits. Director Kim Sajet chats with curators, historians, and thought leaders about their favourite portraits, and reveals the real people behind the art.  A bit quirky but always interesting.

The good thing about podcasts is that once you find one you like there are back issues to listen to and other podcasts are suggested for you to try.

I recently started reading a book entitled ‘There Plant Eyes’ by M. Leona Godin. It comes in both print and audio version. I have found it fascinating– the author speaks of the “Ocularcentric culture” and she challenges the bias blind people live with – for example sentiments such “you must be so brave, “I don’t know how you go about living, I couldn’t live without my sight” and the ingrained ideas about what it is to be blind. The author herself is blind so lends her perspective to the narrative.

Just a couple of suggestions to help while away lockdown waiting for summer and the easing of restrictions.

Stay safe.

# The Way I see It – Graham Downie

During the COVID-19 lockdowns, Be My Eyes is even more important to people who are blind or vision impaired, especially those who live alone.

I have written about this app previously, and after a recent crucial failure of my PC, it seems important to remind people of its existence. Further, I hope to encourage not only people to make use of it, but those with vision to volunteer their service.

Put simply, the Be My Eyes app on a smart phone connects people who are blind or have low vision with volunteers. The phone’s camera enables the sighted volunteer to see what the blind person cannot. For example, the label on a wine bottle, the setting of a thermostat or even misplaced items around the house. I might not use the app for weeks, then put it to use several times within a week. Rarely is it difficult to have a call answered quite promptly by a volunteer and over several years I have always found the volunteers courteous and helpful.

Over those years, the service offered by Be My Eyes has expanded to include specialist help. Though aware of this, the need for it became very apparent to me recently when after deleting an audio editing program from my computer, the screen reader would not function. Well, technically, the screen reader still functioned but all of the computer’s sound cards were removed with the audio program, hence there was no audio from the screen reader. As I do not use a Braille display, having no sound from the screen reader was equivalent to a person with sight trying to operate a computer with no screen.

Directing my phone’s camera at the screen, using an app, Seeing AI,

Voiceover on my iPhone indicated the computer was working. But with lockdown preventing my asking someone to call by, I could get no further. So, a call to Microsoft disability support, 1800 280 300. This too is a valuable service. But without access to my computer, I could not give the helpful gentleman access to it. The solution, suggested by him, was for me to contact Microsoft through Be My Eyes specialist help.

Through my phone’s camera, The Microsoft man could see my computer screen and quickly diagnosed all sound card drivers had been deleted. To fix this, he needed remote access to my computer. With considerable patience, especially by the Microsoft man, we achieved this. After unsuccessfully trying to reinstall the drivers, the solution was to backdate the computer by a couple of days. After about 90 minutes, we had reached the moment of truth. He asked me to restart the computer. Sure enough, speech from the screen reader was working again.

So dedicated was the Microsoft man, based in the Philippines, that he asked me to again restart the computer to be sure everything was as it should be. It was, and still is.

The main point of this story is that without Be My Eyes, I would have been without the use of my PC until someone was able to visit. Which, under present circumstances, would have been many days. Apple, Twitter and numerous other companies are included in the special technical help through Be My Eyes.

Though I have spoken of this extremely valuable service to a few friends, to my knowledge none has become a Be My Eyes volunteer. So I take this opportunity to make readers of this newsletter aware of the terrific benefit provided by this free app and trust at least someone will benefit from it. Also, without presuming too much, to encourage people with sight to give a little time as Be My Eyes volunteers to make a big impact on someone’s life.

# Canberra Health Services

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

In developing this plan, Canberra Health Services invites people to complete an online survey which will close at 5pm on Monday, October 11. The survey is open to patients and carers.

A quick check of the online survey indicates it is easily accessible with screen readers.

The link is: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CHSPatientsAndConsumers>

If alternative formats are required, email policyathealth@act.gov.au or telephone: 5124 7933

# Check in CBR card

A Check In CBR card is now available. This is designed for those people who do not own a smartphone or who are unable to download and use the Check In CBR app. This free card contains a unique QR code which can be scanned at the majority of businesses and venues across the ACT. This will make checking in a quick and private process for card holders. Note that the Check In CBR card cannot be used at those locations where there is no-one to assist with scanning of the card (for example on public transport).

[Applying for a Check In CBR card](https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/check-in-cbr-app/check-in-cbr-app-form) is a quick and simple process and can be done on behalf of an individual if they are unable to do so. The link to the application form for this card is below.

<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/check-in-cbr-app/check-in-cbr-app-form>

If you are unable to apply for a Check In CBR card online, please contact the ACT Health Digital Solutions Support team on (02) 5124 5000 for assistance.

If you are unable to check in on public transport, please ensure that you have a registered MyWay card or keep good records of the services you have used.

# World Sight Day

World Sight Day is an International Day of Awareness, held annually on the second Thursday of October to focus attention on the global issue of eye health. Every year hundreds of activities are planned to celebrate this day.

CBS planned a visit to Lerida Estate Winery located just off the Federal Highway between Canberra and Goulburn to celebrate World Sight Day on Thursday 14 October. Due to COVID-19 lockdowns being extended in the ACT until 15 October, this excursion has been cancelled. Once we move out of COVID-19 restrictions we hope to plan another visit.

CBS now plans to hold a Zoom session where members and clients can join in on the morning of Thursday 14 October, to celebrate World Sight Day.

This will be an opportunity to share with the group some of your talents and abilities or just to share experiences that might be special to you.

Maybe you have an inspiring story to tell, perhaps you can play a musical instrument or sing or tell a joke. You might want to share with the group your latest creation in the kitchen, are you an inventor? Can your pet perform extraordinary tricks?

Join the group at 10 am on Thursday 14 October and tell us about your talents, abilities and experiences. Bring your cuppa and cake with you.

Look out for an email with details in the coming weeks.

# Zoom Energy Balance - A beautiful and gentle exercise. Join in.

Blind Sport and Recreation Victoria (BSRV) offers a range of FREE online fitness classes for blind and vision impaired people and BSRV volunteers to get fit at home.

New Zoom Energy Balance Class with Jenny

Jenny Dodd who is BSRV’s Project Coordinator and has just finished teaching a 6 week ‘Meditation for Beginners’ online class. Jenny is an internationally certified DRU Yoga, Meditation and Qigong teacher with over 20 year’s experience.

**When:**Join Jenny Wednesdays at 9.30am (dial in from 9.20am) for an energy balance fitness session. Classes run 30-45 minutes

**How to join in:**Connect to Zoom video/audio conferencing to join the class. BSRV can offer advice and support to help you connect.

All fitness levels are welcome, no equipment is necessary, and anyone who is blind or has low vision around Australia can join in.
Volunteers are also welcome to join.

To find out more or for Zoom log-in or telephone dial in details, please contact Jenny Dodd, Program Coordinator on Tel: 9822 8876 or jenny@blindsports.org.au

# How have you coped during lockdown?

We would like you to share with us what adjustments you have implemented in your lives as a result of lockdowns that could be of benefit to the CBS community?

Tell us how CBS can support you remotely and how we might change services to provide even greater support.

You can call the office on 6247 4580 and leave a message for Deb, our Outreach Officer and we will get back to you asap. Alternatively, you can email Deb at outreach@canberrablindsociety.org.au

# Why do some people abuse people with disability?

A report commissioned by the Royal Commission has found that further research is needed on protective factors and interventions to protect people with disability from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The [**Rapid Evidence Review: Violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation of people with disability**](https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/research-report-rapid-evidence-review-violence-abuse-neglect-and-exploitation-people-disability), published 24 August 2021, was a joint project between Monash University and the Centre for Evidence and Implementation.

It examined existing research to gain a better understanding of both risk and protective factors relating to why some members of society cause harm to people with disability.

Researchers – with the help of an advisory group that included people with lived experience of disability – used a rapid review process to identify 168 papers in the peer-reviewed literature.

They found that while the majority of studies focused on the risks for people with disability, few looked at the risk factors which enable perpetrators, or systemic issues that enable violence.

They also highlighted that the research tends to point out the ways in which people with disability struggle within existing systems. This is rather than identifying the ways in which people closest to the person with disability may contribute to harm.

These may be carers, family members, educators, healthcare staff, those in the legal system and other professionals.

‘Few to no studies examined the role of perpetrators and the systemic factors that enable the perpetrators to target people with disabilities, often repeatedly,’ the report concludes.

The report found that evidence from the studies suggest that people with disability are more likely than others to experience all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

It also suggests that women with disability are at greater risk of violent crime, various forms of violence and sexual abuse.

# Tech Updates - Logitech G unveils a wireless gaming headset with braille

Logitech G set a new standard for sustainability with the announcement of [Logitech G435 Wireless Gaming Headset.](https://www.logitechg.com/en-us/products/gaming-audio/g435-wireless-bluetooth-gaming-headset.981-001073.html) A new and above all ultra-light wireless headset designed for modern gamers.

The headphones in three new collar combinations are Logitech G’s lightest and lightest wireless headphones. “It is versatile, stylish, extremely comfortable, and ready for high-performance gaming sessions.”The G435 weighs only 165 grams. The headphone design has been optimized for smaller head sizes. In addition, the headset has an optional volume limiter. colour combinations.

The new G435 wireless gaming headset is available in three colour combinations: black and neon yellow, blue, and raspberry, and off-white and lilac, allowing gamers to choose a headset that reflects their personal style and personality. There are also left and right on the headset braille indicators Added, to make it easier for visually impaired people to know which side they are on.

The headset can be connected wirelessly to a computer, PlayStation, smartphone, and other devices. LIGHTSPEED Wireless connects to your PC or PlayStation via a 2.4GHz USB-A adapter. Radial-forming microphones amplify sound while reducing background noise. This way the user appears to be in the same room with their friends (playing side by side). The G435 also offers Bluetooth Low Delay technology for pairing with mobile devices, which should significantly increase speed over standard Bluetooth connections.

# When will self-driving cars be ready for blind and vision impaired people?

One day, cars will drive themselves. Driving will be a thing of the past, and if the tech industry is to be believed so will traffic and road accidents. All because the autonomous car’s computer brain is more connected and aware than any human driver could be. It’s a prospect that would change the way human beings get around the world.

Modern cars can already do a lot of things autonomously, though they aren’t at the stage where they can truly be called ‘self-driving’. Right now the best autonomous driving systems are only on ‘Level 2’ of the autonomous driving scale. But have you ever wondered what that actually means?

What is the autonomous driving scale?

The autonomous driving scale is made up of six different levels, each describing different levels of automobile autonomy. The higher the level, the less input and oversight is required from a human driver.

The scale was first laid out in 2014 by the Society of Automotive Engineers, and has since been updated in both 2016 and 2018. These levels have also been adopted by the U.S. Department of Transportation, and have become the way the auto industry defines just how autonomous a particular car or driving system is.

What are the different autonomous driving levels?

Currently there are six levels of autonomous driving, ranging from ‘Level 0’ (zero autonomy) all the way to Level 5 — absolute full autonomy. Each level represents a new stage of autonomous driving ability, so let’s break down what they are, and what they mean.

Most of the cars utilized in self-driving car trials have Level 4 autonomy, since they drive around independently but still have a human driver on hands just in case they’re needed.

When can we expect something better than Level 2?

The main issue with autonomous cars is that there are huge legal implications for their use. Right now, a Level 2 system requires an attentive driver who can take over at a moment’s notice — which makes the driver liable for what the car does.

Take autonomy a step further, to a stage where the driver doesn’t need to pay attention, and the car is doing the brunt of the driving, and things become a lot more complicated. There’s no legislation governing the use of anything Level 3 and above by the public. Autonomous vehicle trials do take place, but only with approval from the relevant government authority.

Of course, this hasn’t stopped automakers from making grand promises about the future of autonomous cars. Volkswagen has claimed that the ID.Buzz van will offer Level 4 autonomy by 2025, while the Apple Car, which is said to be completely autonomous, is also rumoured to arrive around that same time.

# How to make Mac speak announcements and notifications

Your Mac’s Speak Announcements feature belongs to Apple’s Accessibility settings, which include several features designed to help more people access and navigate their devices efficiently.

When enabled, your Mac will speak out the text in notification messages. It will also notify you when you need to perform certain actions in apps.

How to Enable Speak Announcements

Before you get started, make sure that this feature works on your Mac: it’s only available for Macs running macOS Sierra and later.

To make your Mac announce notifications and alerts:

Go to System Preferences > Accessibility.
Click Spoken Content.
Enable the box beside Speak announcements.
Accessibility Spoken Content Options
This feature is also fully customizable. You can choose the voice you prefer and the phrase you want to hear before the text is announced. To modify the Voice, Phrase, and Delay, click Options.

Here are the options it gives you:

Voice: By default, your Mac uses System Voice. Click the dropdown menu beside Voice to select another voice if you want.
Delay: You can set a delay from 0 to 60 seconds before your Mac speaks an announcement or notification.
Phrase: You have several options for the phrase you want to hear before your Mac announces a notification. By default, your Mac will state the app’s name associated with the notification. You can choose from available phrases like “Pardon me” or “Attention,” or you can set a custom phrase. Just click Edit Phrase List > Add, then type the phrase in the text box and hit OK.
Spoken Announcement Customization
To disable this feature, simply head back to System Preferences > Accessibility > Spoken Content, then deselect Speak Announcements.

# In the kitchen

**Salmon Cakes**

Serves 2

Ingredients
1 medium potato
1 small sweet potato
1 x 210g can pink salmon
1 clove garlic
1 tablespoon chives, fresh or dried
1 tablespoon parsley, fresh or dried
1 egg
2 tablespoon flour
¼ cup dried breadcrumbs
1 tablespoon of extra virgin olive oil

Method

1. Dice potato and sweet potato. Crush garlic.
2. Add potato and sweet potato to a microwave safe dish with 1 tablespoon of water. Heat in microwave for 3 minutes or until soft. Allow to cool slightly and mash.
3. Drain salmon and add to mashed potato. Add garlic, chopped chives and parsley. Season with pepper if desired.
4. In a small bowl whisk the egg. Add the beaten egg and flour to the potato mixture and mix until well combined.
5. Shape the mixture into 4 small patties and coat with breadcrumbs.
6. Drizzle a non-stick fry pan with oil and heat to medium heat. Cook patties for about 5 minutes on each side until golden brown.
7. Serve with a wedge of lemon, garden salad or steamed greens.

# Friends of Braille Group

The Friends of Braille meeting will be held via Zoom on Thursdays from 10:00 in the CBS office. Enquiries from new or existing members can contact Sharon Sobey on 0419 263 413. Contact Sharon for the Zoom link and for any help needed.

# Book Group

The Audio Book Club will meet again on October 6th at 10:00 am, most likely via a Zoom meeting. Our book for this month is from the 1920’s. *The Enchanted April* by Elizabeth Von Arnhem. An enchanting story of a holiday in an Italian castle and the changes and encounters of four women.

New members are always welcome, all you need is a love of reading, a Vision Australia Library membership, and facility to use Zoom. We would like to assist if you are considering joining us. Call Bob James on 6296 2644.

# Thanks to our Sponsors

Canberra Blind Society thanks all our sponsors for supporting us.

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|  Southern Cross Club Community Rewards ProgramMembers of the Southern Cross Club can help us raise funds by taking part in the Southern Cross Club’s Community Rewards program |

 

  

 