*CANBERRA BLIND SOCIETY (CBS)*

*November 2020 Newsletter* 423

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# From the President’s Chair – Peter Granleese

June Ashmore AMIt was with much sadness that we learned of the passing of June Ashmore who died on Wednesday October 21 aged 85.June was raised in Queanbeyan, qualified as a physiotherapist, and then married her soldier husband David, who was subject to the Army’s usual demands to travel wherever needed, including overseas. June practiced paediatric physiotherapy until her field of vision became so restricted that she could no longer see a whole child.She worked as a Policy Officer at the Australian Council for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled where she absorbed useful information about the politics of disability and writing successful proposals for government grants.In close contact with the Society in the early 1980s June was asked to help start a Friday Group for children who were blind and to assist with collating a Sensory Awareness Kit for Special Education Pre-School Teachers.Undaunted by her own loss of vision, but with increasing awareness of the problems and feelings involved, she started a support group for people with Retinitis Pigmentosa, which became an incorporated association Retina Australia ACT in 1992. This association became a member of Retina Australia in 1993 and June was elected National Secretary. She subsequently represented Australia at the Retina International World Congress in Switzerland in 1996 and at the Congress in Washington DC in 2000.At the same time June was elected Vice President of Blind Citizens Australia (BCA). As part of that role she represented Australia at meetings of the World Blind Union in Fiji, Canada and South Korea. She also spent some time in Vietnam in association with a BCA program to train women who were blind to learn braille, to experience and master daily living skills related to becoming independent in their own homes and to contemplate the possibility of earning a living.When she consented to take on the role of President of the Society in 1997 June was able to bring new ideals and ideas to the way Canberra’s blind population was served. The International Year of the Disabled in 1981 began to change public attitudes to disability and, under June’s influence, staff and volunteers were encouraged to listen to and respond appropriately to clients sometimes changing needs. This was contrary to the paternalistic approach of many disability organisations at the time, who thought that they knew what was best for their clients.After obtaining recurrent funding from the ACT Government June, assisted by Treasurer Paul Hemsley, transferred all staff onto award wages. She led the Board in introducing Strategic and Operational Plans and in developing a Policy and Procedures Manual.Enjoying speaking publicly June’s ability to hold the attention of an audience was invaluable in promoting the Society’s image.

June made it her business to be informed on the latest developments in the causes and treatment of sight loss and encouraged staff and volunteers to access further training both in house and interstate. Jenny Findlay and Louise Hemsley had hands on training at the Association for the Blind in Melbourne.During her presidency, she spent many days each week working with staff to identify ways to better meet the needs of clients and to fund new initiatives. Among her significant innovations was the introduction of the Birrigai weekend camps and Overview with its accompanying Seminar. These programs brought together clients, their families, the providers of equipment, staff, volunteers and the public who went away better informed. The Overview seminars also drew the medical speakers’ attention to the value of the Society.During her ten year presidency, the Society grew into an organisation providing an extensive range of services, including a very professional outreach program. These services were highly thought of by the ACT Government who continued to provide ongoing funding and one off grants for particular projects.In 2005, June decided to retire and asked me to take over as President of CBS. She continued as a member of the CBS board for the next three years, which I greatly appreciated. She was my mentor during these years, especially, sharing her extensive knowledge and expertise when writing proposals for Government grants.One of her continuing passions after retiring from the CBS Board, was to complete an official history of CBS. The idea of an official history went back to the early 2000s, when the CBS Board decided to include it in the Society Action Plan. The introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the entering into a three-year agreement with RSB South Australia to provide joint services, any further thoughts about writing a history, had passed into deep hibernation if not disappearing off the agenda completely. Fortunately, it was back on the Agenda by 2017. A working party was established to write and publish the history, chaired by June with editing help by husband David, collated material, revised drafts and using her vast knowledge of the Society, wrote several chapters. The book entitled, Enlightening Years - A History of Canberra Blind Society 1958-2018, (Junes idea), was launched at a gala dinner held at Rydges Hotel on 13 October 2018 to celebrate the Society’s 60th anniversary. June invited her old friend and well known blind activist, David Blyth to launch The Book. Her three dog guides gave her independence and comfort over thirty years, and frequently opened the door to new friendships. In fact, friendships were a speciality of June due to her warm and caring concern and fantastic memory for the vast network of her contacts. Always a volunteer, she was constantly available to give support to friends and clients before, during and after her presidency.In 2003 June was awarded an AM in the Australia Day Honours for service to people who are blind or vision impaired, as an executive member of a range of blindness-related organisations providing advocacy, support and assistance to members.

June was a great friend and a mentor to all those who were privileged to know her and will be sadly missed.

# Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Canberra Blind Society will be held at the Griffin Centre, Room 6 Level 1, Genge Street on Thursday 19 November 2020 at 6.00pm. Following the successful General Meeting held 29 October, online attendance is now permitted at all CBS meetings. Nominations for Board positions and Proxy votes may also be lodged online. If you would like to attend the meeting online please contact the office for login details no later than Wednesday 18 November. Members and Friends of the Society are most welcome to attend.

# The Way I see It – Graham Downie

He was not known, as far as is understood, to anyone in the Canberra Blind Society, but John Richards through a generous bequest has greatly supported the work of this society.

John David Richards - April 14, 1943 - October 26, 2016,

Was an accountant in Canberra. Throughout his life, many people and charitable organisations were the recipients of his generous financial support. The Canberra Blind Society is only one of the many organisations which have benefited from his legacy. Though he died in 2016, his gift to CBS became known relatively recently as several payments from his trustees were received.

Though his bequest to CBS is generous, he made no stipulation as to how the money would be spent. His trustee, Tony Bandle, says Mr Richards carefully researched the organisations named in his will. From this it can be assumed Mr Richards trusted those organisations to use the bequests prudently.

The CBS Board has not yet considered how to appropriately recognise this gift, though it certainly will. In keeping with this generosity, John Richards sought no recognition for his gift. While respecting this, my personal view is, even if only internally, CBS should appropriately honour the name of John David Richards.

He was passionate about his profession and his energy and dedication to excellence were recognised by his peers in the Accountancy profession. He was a keen cricketer and hockey player, and later a golfer and bowler. If that were not enough, he was also a keen skier in Australia and North America.

In his gift to CBS, there is a reminder, if one were needed, that much good is done by including charities and worthwhile organisations in our bequests. It is perhaps the least painful way of giving financial support. Afterall, money from our estates has to go somewhere because, and please excuse the hackneyed phrase, we can’t take it with us.

There are important considerations when making bequests. So it is wise to seek professional advice on the wording of wills. There are cases, probably many cases, of conditions of bequests being so stringent or prescriptive so as to make the bequest itself unworkable and of no value to the recipient organisation. But, particularly for large charities or organisations which have a wide range of services, donors are quite entitled to specify the service or services to which money from their bequests will be directed.

While bodies such as CBS encourage supporters to remember them in bequests, professional advice is needed to ensure wills are not challenged by people who can claim an entitlement. Where legal challenges occur, lawyers are generally the major beneficiaries, often leaving little or no money for the donor’s intended purpose.

That is not the case with the bequest to CBS by John David Richards. It will help the society to continue its service to people who are blind or vision impaired. Meanwhile, suitable recognition for his gift will be considered by the Board. To this end, suggestions by CBS members are encouraged.

# Retail shop at CBS

CBS has a range of products that may make life easier for people who are blind or have low vision.

CBS now has talking digital thermometers and blood pressure cuffs. We also have Liquid Level Detectors which emit a sound when a cup is full. We have talking meat thermometers, talking weight scales (both for cooking and people), and magnifiers from Eschenbach – everything from pocket magnifiers to lighted stand magnifiers, Daylight magnifying lamps and Wizzpegs (to make your laundry day easier). We have display items at the CBS office, and we can arrange an appointment for you to come and have a look. Don’t forget Christmas is coming and these items will make a great gift.

We are happy to meet you at the office, please contact us by telephone on 6247 4580 or by email at [canblind@canberrablindsociety.org.au](mailto:canblind@canberrablindsociety.org.au) to arrange a time.

# In the kitchen

**FRIED WONTONS**

**INGREDIENTS**

Wonton wrappers

500g Pork mince

1/4 shredded Chinese cabbage

1 bunch chopped shallots

2 cloves garlic chopped

1 tablespoon grated ginger

2 tablespoon soy sauce

1 teaspoon 5 spice powder

Oil for frying

***optional*** 1/2 teaspoon sesame oil, chilli flakes

**METHOD**

Combine all of the ingredients in a large bowl and stir till mixed well.

Place wonton wrapper on a board and put 1 teaspoon onto wrapper and fold into a parcel. You can use water to wet the edges of the wrapper so it sticks if needed.

Heat oil until hot and add a few wontons at a time. Cook approx. 4 mins until browned.

Drain on paper towel. Serve with soy sauce and or sweet chilli sauce. Yield 40

**BANH MI VIETAMESE ROLLS**

**INGREDIENTS:**

Crusty rolls

Pate and mayonnaise

Your choice of meat; roast pork, chicken, meat balls

Cucumber sliced

Coriander

Pickled carrot (recipe follows)

Chilli sliced (optional)

Hoisin sauce or soy sauce

**METHOD**

Warm crusty rolls in moderate oven for 5 mins

Slice roll diagonally not all the way through.

Spread pate and mayonnaise on the bottom of the roll opening

Place your choice of meat on the pate and mayonnaise.

Add cucumber, pickled carrot, coriander and chilli

Sprinkle hoisin or soy sauce on top

Enjoy!!

**PICKLED CARROT**

Shred 4 carrots into a bowl and 1 tablespoon of salt

Mix well and leave for 20 mins then rinse and drain.

Add 1/2 cup sugar into 1/2 cup of boiling water and stir till dissolved

Add 1 cup of white vinegar and 1 cup of water into a bowl.

Place the shredded carrot and pickling liquid in a container and leave at least 1 hour or overnight.

# Tech Updates - Scott Grimley

**Inaccessible Apps made Accessible – iPhone and iPad**

iOS 14 was released for iPhone and iPad over a month ago for most iPhone and iPad models. Many of us are familiar with VoiceOver, but now there is a new feature called Voice Recognition making inaccessible apps, web pages and images accessible with VoiceOver.

Voice Recognition, once activated, can recognise most unlabelled buttons and fields in an app, read text in images or on a webpage and provide descriptions of images without alternative tags, but this last one is a little hit and miss.

To activate Voice Recognition, go to Settings, Accessibility, VoiceOver, Voice Recognition. Once here you will be greeted with an introduction and a number of switches. With descriptions. The first is Image Descriptions, Screen Recognition and Text Recognition. Turn them on and off as you choose.

Image and Text recognition will happen automatically when you touch an image, but you may find the image description a little hit and miss. A selfie of myself after a new haircut was ‘A polar bear in a blue shirt in the snow’. The A I am still learning so give it a few tries on an image at times.

Screen recognition will add a choice to your Rotor. Twist your two fingers on the screen until you hear it. Swipe one finger up to turn it on and one down to turn it off for that inaccessible unlabelled app to hear it become much more accessible. Now, be careful. If you activate Screen recognition for an app that is already accessible with VoiceOver, such as Twitter, you will find an accessible app is not so accessible anymore. So, for Twitter, the Like button is now labelled Heart.

Have a play and see how it works for you, Apple is always looking for feedback at accessibility@apple.com.

**BindiMaps at the National Library of Australia**

BindiMaps, a beacon navigation system for the blind and vision impaired for Apple and Android now has its first Canberra venue, the National Library of Australia, with its extensive braille collection, research resources, discussion rooms, and more.

I recently had the opportunity to work with the team from BindiMaps with my iPhone 11 to see how it works along with O&Ms from Guide Dogs NSW/ACT. I found it simple to use, easy to follow the clock face directions and logical landmarks and a very accessible app with VoiceOver, overriding the app’s own voice for those who are not blind or vision impaired.

The system consists of many Bluetooth beacons, each with their own specific location. I chose from a variety of lists such as Facilities, Accessible toilets, Galleries, Reading Rooms, Photocopy room and others. After selecting the Training rooms on the 4th floor while on the ground, we set off.

First directed to the Lifts at 4 o’clock at 7 m and then proceed to the 4th floor. On exiting on the 4th floor, I was instructed to turn to the 3 o’clock and move forward 4m to the training suites foyer. Similar instructions and ease were experienced for the accessible toilet on the lower ground floor, BookPlate Café and the Family History discussion room.

You can use this app in a variety of locations in Sydney such as the Stocklands at Wetherill Park and St Vincent’s Hospital and in Melbourne, the Southern Cross Station and a couple of Stocklands centres all listed in the app.

Once you have downloaded the app from the Apple or Google App Store, enable your Bluetooth, calibrate your compass app and either search the listings of venues or ask to find a location automatically and start finding your way around the selected venue.

BindiMaps is still fine tuning the beacons at the National Library so any feedback you may have can be provided through the app so they may make adjustments.

# Audio Book Club – Bob James

The Audio Book Group will meet on Wednesday 4th November at 9:30am to 11:30am in room 6 (first floor) of the Griffin Centre. Zoom facility will be available if you don’t want to come into the office when our book to discuss will be "The Vanishing Act of Esme Lennox” by British author Maggie O'Farrell. We need to know numbers so RSVP to Bob James on 6296 2644 to attend in person or by Zoom or Telelink.

# Braille Group – Sharon Sobey

The Braille Group will meet at the Griffin Centre on Thursdays from 10:00 in the CBS office (6 people only allowed with social distancing). Enquiries from new or existing members will need to book a place with Sharon Sobey on 0419 263 413.

# Thanks to our Sponsors

Canberra Blind Society would like to thank our sponsors for supporting our local community

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| **Southern Cross Club Community Rewards Program**  Members of the Southern Cross Club can help us raise funds by taking part in the Southern Cross Club’s Community Rewards program. Nominate the Canberra Blind Society as your organisation to benefit under the rewards program and five percent of your purchases made on food and beverages in the public restaurants, bars and grills are included. |

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