



The Sight-Loss Support Group of Central Pennsylvania, Inc.

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The OUTLOOK

APRIL/MAY 2014

**Official Newsletter of the Sight-Loss
Support Group of Central PA, Inc.**

TOUR OF THE ARBORETUM AT PENN STATE: CELEBRATE SPRING (AT LAST!)

On Tuesday, May 6th at 10:00 am come "tiptoe through the tulips" as we tour the Arboretum at Penn State. SLSG audio describers and Penn State Extension Master Gardeners will help us and guests from Centre Crest explore spring-flowering bulbs and all the glories of spring. This excursion is entirely FREE OF CHARGE! Come out and enjoy the lovely spring flowers on flat, easy-to-manuever walkways with lots of benches for resting while inhaling the fragrances. Make arrangements with CATARIDE to attend this olfactory treat.

LUNCH BUNCH

The Lunch Bunch: Thursday, April 17 & May 15, Mount Nittany Residences

The Lunch Bunch always shares a simple lunch and excellent conversation. All are welcome; just bring a sandwich – drinks are “on the house.” Mount Nittany Residences is located at 301 Rolling Ridge Drive behind Hills Plaza.

TWO AUDIO-DESCRIBED MUSICALS IN APRIL

Children of Eden: Sunday, April 13, 2:00 pm, State College Area High School, North Building Auditorium
The State High Thespians’ much anticipated spring musical is Children of Eden. From Stephen Schwartz ("Pippin" and "Wicked") and John Caird ("Les Miserables") comes this frank, heartfelt and often humorous examination of the age-old conflict between parents and children. Adam, Eve, Noah and the "Father" who created them deal with the headstrong, cataclysmic actions of their respective children. The inspiring message in Children of Eden is contained in the lyrics of one of THE show tunes: *"The hardest part of love....is letting go."*

Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$10 for young people. To reserve tickets, call the SCAHS box office, 231-4188, and leave a message. To purchase tickets, stop by the box office at the school, Monday - Friday, 3:30 - 5:30 pm, or one hour before the performance at the high school. The Thespians spring musical is very popular so it is advisable to get your tickets soon.

Bring It On: Thursday, April 17, 7:30, Eisenhower Auditorium.

The Tony Award best-musical nominee, Bring It On, is set amid the high-flying world of competitive cheerleading and tells the story of the challenges and unexpected bonds formed through the thrill of

extreme competition. A sassy crew of characters, an exciting fresh sound, as well as explosive dance and aerial stunts combine in this all-new story, created by some of the funniest and creative minds on Broadway. Bring It On is sure to delight you on an otherwise dull Thursday evening!

Call the SLSG office, 231-0132 to ask about the possibility of free or reduced-rate tickets for this performance!

CONGRATULATIONS GO OUT TO –

Jesse Smith, president of the Sight Loss Support Group board of directors, for being honored in the April, 2014, edition of *Town & Gown*. The 11th annual edition of "Men in the Community" recognizes 47 outstanding men who continue to help this region grow and prosper. Jesse, a member of the SLSG since 1997 and president of the board for the past 12 years, has worked tirelessly to facilitate opportunities for blind and vision-impaired persons in Centre County. He was sponsored by Lions Gate Apartments.

Nanette Anslinger, coordinator of the SLSG audio describers, for having her non-fiction essay, "One Sunday in Sydney" included in *Pastiche*, the magazine of OLLI at the Penn State Writers' Special Interest Group. Her essay will appear in the spring 2014 issue, available online and at special locations. Congratulations Nanette!

PENN STATE RESEARCHERS EXPLORE CUTTING-EDGE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR THE BLIND

It is an exciting time to be blind! Assistive technology for the visually impaired has been changing at a breathless pace in recent years and the sight loss

community had adapted to this new pace. But it's time to kick that pace up a notch – get ready to embrace technologies considered futuristic only yesterday. The future is not quite here but it's just around the bend.

If you haven't heard about Google Glass or Orcam listen up. This is cutting-edge stuff for those of us who are blind or have low vision. A team of Penn State researchers is exploring the practical application of Google Glass in the everyday lives of visually impaired individuals (VIPs). The researchers from the Information Sciences and Technology Department and the Center for Human Computer Interaction were guest speakers at the recent March meeting of the Happy Valley Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB). The Penn State researchers explained their project and gave a demonstration of Google Glass and other prototype devices that have real potential to benefit VIPs.

The Penn State research team, headed up by Jack Carroll, will be exploring how Google Glass can make the world of blind and low vision users more accessible. They want their research to be grounded in the real needs and daily challenges of people with significant vision loss. Therefore, they will be collaborating with visually impaired individuals in our community who can speak for their own constituency and help guide the exploration of how Google Glass can assist the visually impaired. The presentation at the Happy Valley Chapter meeting was the first step in this process.

A brief word about Google Glass – it is a wearable Android-powered computer built into spectacle frames. Google Glass displays information in a smart phone-like, hands-free format that communicates with the internet via natural voice commands. It uses a

miniature display that puts data in the upper right of your vision via a prism screen without obstructing your view. Google Glass can also film, take pictures, perform searches and run specially designed apps while you are on the go. In a world where so many of us are glued to our smart phones, Google Glass gives us a way of accessing the internet while being able to do other things.

The presentation also introduced Orcam, another prototype device being developed in Israel. It shares many similarities with Google Glass. Orcam is a smart camera mounted on the frames of your eyeglasses, which “sees” text, recognizes objects and “whispers” in your ear. Orcam is a sensor that sees what is in front of you, understands what information you seek and provides it to you through a bone-conduction earpiece. A portable computer/battery control pack, smaller than the average glasses case, fits in your pocket or clips to your belt.

Orcam is activated by simply pointing your finger at what you want to read or detect; the Orcam begins to read the newspaper, food package, money note or sign to you. A person can personalize their Orcam by teaching it to recognize personal items like your credit cards. In the future Orcam will be equipped with facial recognition allowing you to recognize who is in a room when you come in. You will be able to orient yourself by reading outdoor signs and teaching the device to memorize places you’ve already visited. It will be able to tell you which bus line or train is coming toward you. Orcam, at present, is designed for people who have low vision rather than totally blind individuals.

It is important to point out that Orcam and Google Glass are not yet ready for prime time. They are prototype devices still in the development phase. But

it's an important beginning of a new phase of extremely helpful devices that in time will change the lives of visually impaired individuals. If you'd like further information on the Penn State study or are interested in being a participant in the study, please call the SLSG office at 238-0132.

THE LIONS INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CAMP AND EXCHANGE PROGRAM: CNIB LAKE JOSEPH CENTRE

The Lions International Youth Camp and Exchange Program offers a once in a lifetime opportunity to connect with Canadians and youth from around the world who are blind or partially sighted in a distinctively beautiful Canadian environment. The Youth International Exchange is held at the Lake Joseph Centre, a resort/camp owned and operated by the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB). The Lake Joseph Centre works in partnership with Lions Clubs in Canada and internationally, and is proud to be hosting this international exchange program.

The two week camp style program is for young adults between the ages of 19 and 25 and runs from July 6th – July 19th. 'Lake Joe' is located in breathtaking Muskoka, Ontario and offers visually impaired youth the opportunity to experience all that the Ontario wilderness has to offer: waterskiing, sailing, campfires, water-tubing, swimming, fishing, and outdoor cooking in a fully accessible environment. This expanding experience offers youth from around the world the chance to build connections and experience Canadian culture.

Funding for this program is available; check with your local Lions Club. For more detailed program and

facility information, contact the CNIB Lake Joseph Centre at lakejoe@cnib.ca or (877) 748-4028. For information on the Youth International Exchange contact Jacqueline Bruce-Moore, the Program Supervisor, at jacqueline.bruce-moore@cnib.ca or (705) 375-2630 ext. 5501.

APH & DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY PARTNERSHIP

The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) and the Dollywood Foundation began an exciting partnership in the summer of 2011 that expands Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL) program to provide young blind and visually impaired children with accessible books in audio and print/braille formats. With the support of Penguin Group USA, the APH/Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Partnership, established the Accessible Books website at APH. It offers a growing collection of audio files of Imagination Library books available as free downloads.

Now, selected Imagination Library Books are also available, free-of-charge, in print/braille format. By enrolling in the Partners Print/Braille Book Program, a child is able to receive five free print/braille books each year until reaching his/her 6th birthday. APH selects the titles from the current years DPIL booklist and print/braille versions are mailed directly to the child's family. If your child is a potential braille reader under six years of age, he/she is eligible to enroll in the program. Books are limited and enrollment is on a first come, first serve basis.

APH President Tuck Tinsley: "We're excited! What an honor it is to partner with someone like Dolly who is as passionate about literacy as we are." Ms. Parton;



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"Any credit I get is really due to the hard work and fine reputation of all of those who partner with us to bring the love of reading to so many kids. I am just thrilled we can work together to bring this same joy to all children who may have trouble seeing but have no trouble in believing that all of their dreams can come true."

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, a part of the Dollywood Foundation, partners with local sponsors in 1,300 communities in three countries to provide a quality, age appropriate book each month to preschool children enrolled in the program. For more information, visit www.imaginationlibrary.com or the official FaceBook page.

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