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# NW Connection

Your Eyes and Ears in the Northwest  
Happy New Year Everyone!

Hello!

Welcome to the year 2009! Let us hope this new year will bring a better economy, peace and goodwill toward mankind. Taryn and I are pleased to continue the yearly newsletter and in this issue you will find useful tips and information on a variety of topics.

Technology is ever changing and it is impossible to include everything. If you are looking for something specific and need help in locating it, just give us a call or email us and we will try to find the resource for you.

Here are a couple of the highlights from the past year in our region. In Oregon, a listserv was established for those who live in Oregon and are deaf-blind. See inside the newsletter for details. There is a possibility that a social/support group may be established in 2009. Another highlight is the joint venture of the Washington State Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Helen Keller National Center's (HKNC's) Northwest Regional Office in gathering census data through the HKNC registry project.

Because of the impact of the economy, we are doing more with less as many other non-profit agencies are. You can expect our office to continue to offer consultations, resources, training, advocacy, information, and other supports for the coming year. We look forward to hearing from you.

Here's hoping the new year will be healthy and productive for you and your loved ones.

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## HKNC GOAL

This newsletter is for people who are deaf-blind in the Northwest and those who live with them, work with them and socialize with them. HKNC's regional offices are specifically for you. They are resource centers from which you can learn where to find what you need. The regional representative is a consultant as well as a link to existing services and resources and an advocate for people who are deaf-blind, their families, friends, and co-workers.

Your Regional Representative is Dorothy Walt, 206-324-1133 TTY/Video Phone. For voice callers, call 711, then give the operator Dorothy's number. Dorothy's CapTel number is 206-720-4642 (accessed by the toll free number of 1-888-801-7210). Email: [nwhknc@juno.com](mailto:nwhknc@juno.com) or FAX 206-324-9159.

Address is: Helen Keller National Center; NW Region; 1620 18th Avenue, #201; Seattle, WA 98122

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## GENERAL NOTE FOR NEWSLETTER

Products, services or activities listed in this newsletter do not imply endorsement by HKNC. They are provided for informational purposes only.

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## SEABECK CAMP

Seabeck Camp 2009 is going to be Sunday, August 23rd through Saturday, August 29, 2009. The applications are scheduled to be mailed in early February! For more information send an email to: [dbretreat@seattlelh.org](mailto:dbretreat@seattlelh.org)

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## DIGITAL TV CONVERTER BOX COUPONS

Within the next few months, all full-power television stations in the United States will stop broadcasting in analog and switch to 100% digital broadcasting. Digital broadcasting promises to provide a clearer picture and more programming options and will free up airwaves for use by emergency responders. All television broadcasts in the USA will be in high definition. If your television uses an antenna, it will no longer work unless you purchase a

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converter box. If you have a cable service or satellite service company your service will automatically be changed. You can sign up to get a \$40 discount coupon from the Federal Government for a purchase of a converter box. They are currently out of coupons but you can be on a waiting list. This offer also includes those who live in nursing homes (see the special application form on the web site). For more information about the DTV Coupon Program, please visit [www.DTV2009.gov](http://www.DTV2009.gov).

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### HEALTH VIDEO REFERENCES

LifeLinks (a company that offers video relay services) also encourages education by offering a series of educational videos on important health and medical topics. The site to access the educational videos is: <http://www.lifelinksvrs.com/videos.html>

Topics include: About Your Pain, Alzheimers Disease, Angina, Diabetes, High Blood Pressure, Stomach Flu and many more!

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### LOOKING FOR A LARGE PRINT CALLER ID DEVICE?

SmithGear offers a wide range of caller ID products and telephones. The Caller ID comes in Jumbo, Giant and Extra Large sizes. The “Bright Id'er” is the Largest LED Caller ID Display in the World!. Check out the options at: [www.smithgear.com](http://www.smithgear.com) .

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### QUOTE

“The unselfish effort to bring cheer to others will be the beginning of a happier life for ourselves. — Helen Keller

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### EXPERIENCES OF DEAF-BLIND PEOPLE

The Nordic Information Center for Acquired Deafblindness is offering a free resource that can be downloaded in Word or PDF format. You may also request a printed copy. For this project, 20 deafblind persons in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Iceland were once a year for a five year period. The participants shared their experiences as people who are living with a progressive visual and

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hearing impairment. The structured interviews have focused on each person in different life situations - in the family, at work, in their free time etc. - and have resulted in six booklets on different themes. 265 pages in total. Published 2005. <http://www.dbcent.dk/vcfddb/subpage106.aspx>. Thanks to Cynthia L. Ingraham, HKNC East Central Representative, for this information.

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### 9TH INTERNATIONAL CHARGE CONFERENCE

The 9th International CHARGE Syndrome Conference will be held on July 24th - July 26th, 2009 at the Indian Lakes Resort in Bloomingdale, Illinois, which is located about thirty minutes from exciting downtown Chicago. Online registration and updated information will be available for the 2009 conference on the CHARGE web site of: <http://chargesyndrome.org>.

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### OREGON DB GROUP STARTED

A new Yahoo group has been formed called "Oregon Deaf-Blind Outreach." To join and/or get more information go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/OregonDB/>

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### STARFISH ON THE BEACH

Once upon a time, an old man was walking along a beach when he saw a human figure in the distance moving like a dancer. As the old man got closer, he saw that it was a young man and he was not dancing. The young man was reaching down to the shore, picking up something and very gently throwing it into the ocean. "What are you doing?" said the old man. The young man replied, "Throwing starfish into the ocean." The old man asked: "Why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?" The young man answered: "The sun is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them in, they will die." The old man said: "But, young man, don't you realize that there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish all along it. You can't possibly make a difference!" The young man listened politely, then

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bent down, picked up a starfish and threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves. He said: "I made a difference to that one."

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### BOOKSHARE.ORG OFFERS READING CHOICES

Did you know that there is an online community (Bookshare.org) that enables books to be scanned and shared for individuals who are visually impaired and otherwise print disabled? You just log on to their site ([www.bookshare.org](http://www.bookshare.org)), register (\$25 one time fee), provide written proof of a print disability, pay the annual fee (\$50) and then go to their web site to download the books. Schools and students with qualifying disabilities in the U.S. have free access to Bookshare thanks to the generous support of the Office of Special Education Programs of the U.S. federal Department of Education.

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### FRONT DOOR BELL NOW WORKING!

There is now a door bell at the front of the MNC Building where HKNC and DBSC are located. Both agencies have offices on the second floor. If the building is locked because the agencies on the first floor are not open you can press the door bell to have your contact at HKNC and/or DBSC know you have arrived. The door bell is connected to our Silent Call pagers and your contact will feel the vibration from the bell.

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### HUMANWARE BEGINS SHIPPING NEW DEAFBLIND COMMUNICATOR

The new DeafBlind Communicator (DBC) started to be shipped out to Washington State customers the beginning of December 2008. The DBC enables deaf-blind users to communicate with other deaf people and the general public in many different ways. The basic DBC provides a TTY (with answering machine) for communicating with other deaf or deaf-blind individuals. It also includes a totally portable face-to-face communication system for dealing with sighted/hearing people on buses, in restaurants and shops, at

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school, or with colleagues and customers in the workplace. Get more information on the Humanware web site: [www.humanware.com](http://www.humanware.com)

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### **WOMEN! COME TO THE CITY OF ROSES JULY 22-26, 2009**

Deaf Women United (DWU) will have their 12th Biennial Deaf Women United conference in Portland, Oregon in July 2009! The theme for the conference is “Honoring our Deaf Women Pioneers.” Many activities are planned! For more information contact DWU at: [www.dwu.org](http://www.dwu.org) or the Deaf Women of Oregon and Washington at:

[www.dwow.org](http://www.dwow.org)

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### **NFB LAUNCHES LARGEST-EVER WHITE CANE INITIATIVE**

The National Federation of the Blind is trying to ensure that any blind person in the United States and Puerto Rico who needs a long white cane will have one, regardless of ability to pay. The NFB will provide a free cane to anyone in the fifty states, the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico who is blind or has low vision and who uses or desires to use a white cane in order to travel independently. To order a free cane, visit the Free Cane Program page at [http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Free\\_Cane\\_Program.asp](http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Free_Cane_Program.asp).

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### **ROLE MODEL PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH USHER SYNDROME**

One of the newer programs at The Center for Deaf Blind Persons in Israel is the “Role Model Program for Children with Usher Syndrome: To Cope and to Overcome.” Children and potential young role models with Usher Syndrome (congenital deafness and progressive blindness) throughout the country are identified. The role models are trained to work with the children to educate them and prepare them for independent lives. Their objective is to provide these children with the information and the skills they need to become functional and independent adults. Achieving this, through early and appropriate intervention, benefits not only the deaf-blind community, but also Israeli society as a whole, which, instead of supporting these children when they become adults, gains valuable

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members who can and will contribute to society. Learning to function also helps prevent these children from sinking into a deep depression about their progressive blindness, and aids them in accepting the rehabilitation process, such as the possibility of using a cane or reading braille if necessary in the future.

**\*NOTE**

Information for this article was obtained from the Center for Deaf Blind Persons web site at: <http://www.cdb.org.il/english.html>

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**FREE EYE CARE HELP FOR SENIORS WITH DIABETES**

EyeCare America has created a diabetes eye care program. It promotes annual eye exams, raises awareness, and provides free educational materials and facilitates access to medical care.

Eligible participants receive a free eye exam and treatment for up to one year with no out-of-pocket costs. For more info or to determine eligibility, call 800-272-EYES voice. Eligible callers receive a referral to one of EyeCare America's 7,500 volunteer ophthalmologists.

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**WEATHER WEB SITES**

Want a couple of web sites to get the weather that are easy to use? Well, try out both of these for ease of operation! Go to: [www.simpleweather.com](http://www.simpleweather.com) or go to: <http://braille.wunderground.com> and then enter in your zip code for weather in your area.

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**CAN THE RETINA REBUILD ITSELF?**

In a pioneering study at the University of Washington, Foundation Fighting Blindness (FFB) -funded researchers discovered a way to prod retinal cells to regenerate after injury. If perfected, the approach could be used to restore retinal tissue, and vision, for people with a variety of retinal degenerative diseases including retinitis pigmentosa and macular degeneration. This information

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was found on the Foundation Fighting Blindness (FFB) web site ([www.fightblindness.org](http://www.fightblindness.org)).

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### **HELP US SAVE TREES**

Help us save trees by using email instead of a paper format to get our annual newsletter! Just contact us by email, phone, mail or in person and we will be happy to change the format for you!

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### **BEE PIN TO BENEFIT FOUNDATION FIGHTING BLINDNESS**

Judy Kahl (a woman who is deaf-blind from Florida) wanted to do something to raise money for the FFB and decided to make BEE PINS! She does not “sale” the pins but she accepts donations to FFB in exchange for the pins.

According to Judy, the colors on the pin represent the following: “BLACK represents the darkness of being blind; WHITE is the brightness of sight; SPARKLE on the wings reminds me that the bee should not be able to fly because the undersized wings should not be able to carry the weight and size of its body. BUT, it does fly, and we will, too; and GREEN eyes will hopefully bring the "green" we need as in \$\$\$ to fund research and find a cure.”

Interested in getting a Bee Pin for yourself? You can contact Judy at: Judy Kahl, FFBe, 5310 NW 33rd Avenue, Suite 219, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309. Phone: 239 390 0555

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### **2009 COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDENTS**

*Through the Looking Glass* and its *National Center for Parents with Disabilities and their Families* are pleased to announce new scholarships specifically for high school seniors and college students who have parents with disabilities. All application materials must be completed and postmarked by Monday March 16, 2009.

There are two separate scholarship awards, and each has separate eligibility requirements: The first is for High School Seniors. To be eligible, a student must be a high school graduate (or graduating senior) by Summer 2009, planning to attend college in

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Fall 2009 and have at least one parent with a disability. Five separate \$1000 awards will be given out in Fall 2009. Individuals may submit only one application per award period.

The second is for college students. To be eligible, a student must be currently enrolled in a college or university, be 21 years of age or younger as of March 16, 2009, and have at least one parent with a disability. Five separate \$1000 awards will be given out in Fall 2009. Individuals may submit only one application per award period.

For more information go to the Through the Looking Glass web site: <http://www.lookingglass.org>

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### ONLINE TUTORIALS FOR JAWS BOTH BEGINNER AND ADVANCED

Want to learn about the JAWS program? The Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind have online tutorials for beginner and advanced JAWS users. They even offer a free sign language tutorial. The link is: <http://www.asdb.state.az.us/it/assist/tutorials.html>

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### UK HONORS WORKING DOGS

Did you know that the United Kingdom (consisting of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) honored Working Dogs in 2008? Last year in the UK was the Year of the Assistance Dog. To pay tribute to these service dogs, the UK Royal Mail released a Working Dogs Mint Stamp Set. For more information go to their web site at: [www.royalmail.com/portal/rm](http://www.royalmail.com/portal/rm).

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### SEEING HELEN

There's a really neat 8-minute video on YouTube all about Helen Keller. There are still photos from her very early life with Annie Sullivan along with the original water pump scene from "The Miracle Worker." In the video, Helen and Annie explain how they used Tadoma to read a person's lips. The sentence Helen repeats after Annie is "I am not dumb now." Hmmm!! There is a live shot of Helen receiving her degree from Radcliffe - and you will hear her actual voice in several of the other scenes. There are other live

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clips showing Helen dancing with Martha Graham, and talking to such notables as Katharine Cornell and the former President Dwight Eisenhower who had tears in his eyes as Helen explored his face with her hands. Check it out at <http://american-tigress.blog.sohu.com/100560431.html> where other videos on Helen Keller may be viewed.

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## **NEWS ABOUT A HAZARD ALERT SYSTEM**

Deaf Link has announced the Accessible Hazard Alert System-Individual Notification (AHASIN). This system will provide you with access to emergency information for your county, city or state. This service will attempt to notify you if an emergency/hazard happens in your area through your email/pager/text phone/PDA address. It can be received in ASL, English text, voice and braille. In order for this system to provide you with this potentially life saving information you must be in the database. To get more information go to <http://www.deaflink.com/ahas/ahas.html>

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## **NEW LISTS MANAGED BY DEAF-BLIND CONSUMERS**

Here are some new lists that are being managed by Deaf-Blind Consumers.

- **DB-ADVENTURES** — This is a group for deaf-blind people who love to travel and have fun adventures
- **DB-GOLDINLIFE** — General discussion on finer things of life, humor, etc.
- **DB-GOLDINPOETRY** — DB poetry group
- **DB-LDS** — Private discussion list for Deaf-Blind members of the Church of Latter Day Saints
- **DB-SPOUSAL-SUPPORT** — Private discussion list -spousal support group for couples where one partner or both are Deaf-Blind
- **DEAF-BLIND\_NEWSSTAND** — Public list for posting news stories of interest
- **GEB-SN** — Guiding Eyes for the Blind-Special Needs

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There are new lists starting all the time so go to the WOU site to get the full list at <http://tr.wou.edu/archives>

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### **CNET TV HAS CLOSED CAPTIONING**

Did you know that the Internet based web site CNET TV offers videos on demand has closed captioning on a lot of their videos? They started offering this service in 2008 because that was one of the most popular requests from users in recent years. To enable the closed captioning just click on the “CC” button under the video. This site offers the shows “The Buzz Report”, “CNET Top 5”, CBS News, 60 Minutes, The Early Show and many more. Besides news they also provide product reviews and guides for computers. For more information go to their web site: [www.cnet.com](http://www.cnet.com)

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### **CONFIDENT LIVING PROGRAM FOR SENIOR ADULTS**

HKNC is offering a one-week program specially designed for Senior Adults (age 55 and better), who are hard or hearing and blind or visually impaired, and do not use sign language as their primary means of communication. The program dates are March 30—April 7, 2009 at HKNC Headquarters. Contact Dorothy for more info.

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### **BLACK BACKGROUND THAT IS PORTABLE**

Is it easier for you to have a black background behind the person signing or talking to you? The company B & H sells a background for photographers that might work for you.

The background is called the Botero #035 Collapsible Background and is the size is 5’ x 7’. It comes in black and also includes a carry bag. If you are interested in more information, here is the link to the product on the B & H web site: [http://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/303033-REG/Botero\\_C03557\\_035\\_Collapsible\\_Background.html](http://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/303033-REG/Botero_C03557_035_Collapsible_Background.html)

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### **NEWSLETTER LINKS AVAILABLE ON HKNC.ORG**

As you read the newsletter, you will note many web sites. For those of you who prefer to just click on the web site to review the

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information you can do this by going into the [www.HKNC.org](http://www.HKNC.org) website (please wait a little while for the newsletter to be put on the site). Scroll down to Field Services, then to Regional Representative Contact Information, then Region 10 and finally on “click here” for Winter 2009 newsletter. Locate the article with the website and then and click your mouse and it will give you the web page.

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### **NO COMPUTER?**

If you do not have a computer and would like more information on any of our articles please contact Taryn and she will send you more information on your topic!

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### **HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?**

Questions, Comments, Changes of Address or Email? Would you like to receive your newsletter in a new way (Email, Large Print, Braille Grade I and Braille Grade II)? Just contact Taryn by phone at 206-324-9120 (V/TTY) or by email at [hkncnw@qwest.net](mailto:hkncnw@qwest.net) and she will be happy to make any changes you would like. We are always happy to hear from you! Newsletter editors are Dorothy Walt & Taryn Hill.

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### **LOOKING FOR WAYS TO STAY ACTIVE?**

VisionAWARE invites you to visit their site and check out their expanded sports and recreation section for people who are blind or have low vision. Learn how to stay active at: [http://www.visionaware.org/sports\\_groups](http://www.visionaware.org/sports_groups)

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