



PERISCOPE

**A Quarterly Newsletter sponsored by the
Mississippi Council of the Blind, Inc.**

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Tax deductible contributions may be sent to:

MS Council of the Blind

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Clinton, MS 39060

Anyone wishing to remember the MS Council of the Blind in a last will and testament may do so by including a special paragraph for that purpose. If your wishes are complex, please contact MCB for clarification.

Contributions to the James Doyle Case Memorial Scholarship Fund or to the Carter Gable Memorial Technology Assistance Fund should be appropriately marked and sent to the above address.

Phone MCB at 769-257-4515.

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President's Message

by Jane Peets

Hello, everyone, I hope you are happy that the groundhog didn't see his shadow this time. I am enjoying the warmer weather we are having at the time of this writing.

MCB has several things going on at the present time. We have had the Braille writers donated by Ms. Betty Dement cleaned and repaired. These will be donated to blind students attending public schools. These Braille students only have access to a Braille writer at school and have no way to practice Braille writing out of the classroom. Also, Ms. Patricia Austin has told me she wants to donate Gary's Braille writers to us for the same purpose. I would like to thank both of these ladies for helping us to help others.

MCB received the funds from the New York Life annuity in December, and this money has been reinvested at Trustmark Bank. \$100,000 was placed in an eight-month CD at 5% interest. The remainder, around \$97,000, was placed in a money market account at 5% interest.

A new one-page flyer has been composed to be printed on a regular home printer as needed for distribution when the opportunity is available.

Our web site is in the process of being updated by Mr. Jeremy Johanson. Jeremy administers several sites for various ACB groups. Alison Smitherman has very graciously agreed to be our contact person with Jeremy to be sure our website is up-to-date and accurate.

MCB will have a one-day convention on April 27th at the Holiday Inn Trustmark Park in Pearl, MS. Registration will include the cost of the hot served luncheon and will be \$25. A block of rooms will be reserved for those who might wish to stay at the hotel. The room rate is \$129 per day plus taxes. The cutoff date for reservations is April 1. The reservation block is named Mississippi Council of the Blind. To make a reservation, call (601) 939-5238.

As you all will remember, last year's convention was going to be held at the same hotel, but we had to change all plans because we didn't have enough members preregistered in order to pay for that venue. When you receive the registration form for this year's convention, please do not procrastinate getting it filled out and sent back in. Our membership is sadly diminished from years past, and if you haven't paid your membership dues you need to get that done because the date for reporting our number of members to ACB is approaching soon. Please help us to

make this year's convention a success by planning to attend. I look forward to seeing you there.

MCB Board Meeting Highlights
by Ralph Smitherman

The MCB Board met by Zoom on Saturday, January 20, 2024. We met at 10 AM. A quorum was established. Kenneth Reed opened the meeting with prayer. The minutes from the October 2023 meeting and the Treasurer's report were approved as distributed. Committee reports and chapter reports were given. Plans are in the works for us to host a one-day state convention, either on April 27, 2024, or May 4, 2024. The convention would be held at the Holiday Inn in Pearl. The Board encourages everyone to pay their 2024 state and chapter dues.

The MCB website will be administered by Jeremy Johansen. We will need to provide appropriate content.

President Peets said that she has the three Perkins braillewriters from Luther Dement and will send them for repair. Note, there are three children who need a braillewriter in relation to this project.

Pshon Barrett is to write the information concerning the Angel Wall of ACB in recognition of Gary Austin.

President Peets stated that MCB received a thank you note from ACB concerning our participation in the Haiti food crisis.

Billy Mayfield said that the new MCB brochures were ready; copies can be made for distribution.

Our next scheduled state Board meeting is as follows:

Saturday, March 23, 2024, 10 AM, central time, Zoom platform.

Jackson Chapter Update

by Ken Maddox

The Jackson Chapter is like the Energizer Bunny, we just keep going and going.

We had our annual Christmas party and business meeting in December and elected our board for 2024. The new board is as follows:

Ken Maddox - President

Eddie Turner- Vice President

Rene Virden - Treasurer

Ralph Smitherman - Recording Secretary
Jane Peets - 3-year Board Member
Gary Cooper - 2-year Board Member
Randy Thompson – 1-year Board Member

At the present time, we have 54 members and \$15,356.43 in our treasury.

We continue to have our board meetings every other month and socials on the alternate months. Our next social will be held at Scrooges Restaurant on February 24.

Update: We had 22 people in attendance at Scrooges Restaurant on February 24th. Also, congratulations to Eddie Turner for winning the 50/50 raffle drawing that took place at our lunch that day.

Zanagrams

by Ralph Smitherman

Zanagrams is a word puzzle game available from the app store. There is an initial free version. Each game has six clues; the clues are at random. Below the six clues you will find a grid of letter tracks. The letter tracks are in two or three letter combinations; for example, you might find, er, ing, ent, us. You

will choose the corresponding track for the particular clue. Now, you may ask what makes this puzzle interesting? Well, this word game works with VoiceOver. When you are playing the game and you choose a particular letter track, that track is taken off of the letter grid. Of course, you will have the option to purchase other puzzles, however, you can enjoy the free version until you complete all of the games. Some clues are easier than others. It is good to know that some app developers are making their products accessible! When you play you can also shuffle the letter grid. The free version contains two word puzzle categories, namely, Word Salad and Outer Space. If you enjoy word games, you will like this one.

Demon and David - Book Review

by Linda Adams

Barbara Kingsolver's Pulitzer winning novel, *Demon Copperhead* (DB110786) was based on Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*. Kingsolver set the story in current time and placed it in the coal mining area of Appalachia. The publisher's comments on BARD give an excellent overview of the book on which I could not improve, so, read that for plot details. My comments in this article are from interviews by the author, including one she gave locally that I was pleased to attend. Kingsolver and her husband were on a book tour in England and

had the opportunity to stay in the home where Dickens wrote David Copperfield. She was between books and thought “What if?” Kingsolver, herself, was raised in and now lives in the Appalachian area of Southwest Virginia. In “Demon” she has written about today’s challenges faced by small rural communities, especially where financial decline has occurred. Kingsolver discussed the difference between “rural poverty” and “city poverty.” In the first instance, you may be barefoot but will have food whereas in the city, it can be the opposite. Kingsolver described how she used names in her novel that reflect those in Dickens’ novel. For example, David Copperfield becomes Damon Field whose nickname is Demon Copperhead, because of his red hair. Another example is Dicken’ villain, Uriah Heep becomes Ryan Pyles (nickname U-Haul). Reading David Copperfield before Demon is not necessary, but I did so to prepare leading my neighborhood’s book discussion. Certain that I must have read it many years ago, by Chapter 3 I decided that if so, I had forgotten most of it or was I just thinking of “Catcher in the Rye!” Both Copperhead and Copperfield are long books, 21+ hours and 38+ hours respectively, but worth the investment.

On a non-literary note, Kingsolver performed with the Rock Bottom Reminders Band along with authors Stephen King, Dave Barry, Ridley Pearson and others. Kingsolver and Amy Tan both performed with the band as lead vocalist. The band’s

first performance was in 1992 and they performed at the opening of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1995. Sadly, they no longer perform but with a little effort, you may be successful in tracking down one of their CDs.

Editor's Corner

by Alison Smitherman

First, I would like to thank those of you who submitted articles for our Spring issue of the Periscope. Also, thanks to those who assisted with formatting and distribution of the newsletter. Without your help, this newsletter would not be possible.

If you ever need assistance with composing your article, please feel free to contact me and I will be glad to help you. My contact details are provided on page 1 of the newsletter.

As a reminder, we can send you the Periscope in one of the following formats: large print, Braille, NLS cartridge, CD, and email. When filling out your MCB membership form, please be sure to indicate in which format you would like to receive your newsletter so that we can get it to you in the format you prefer.

I hope you all enjoy the nice spring weather, and I look forward to seeing you at the convention in April!