



PERISCOPE

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

Summer, 2026

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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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From the Editor's Desk

By Alison Smitherman

Welcome to the Summer, 2026 issue of the Periscope. We hope you enjoy reading all the wonderful articles that were submitted. This issue includes information about all that has been going on in our organization and its chapters, news from NRTC and Talking Book Services, our upcoming MCB Picnic, and other items of interest.

I want to thank those of you who contributed articles for this issue of the Periscope, as well as those who were responsible for its formatting and distribution. Without your hard work, this newsletter would not be possible.

As a reminder, articles for the Fall, 2026 issue are due in to me by no later than August 21, 2026.

In the meantime, enjoy the beautiful summer weather, and please stay out of the heat as much as possible.

Happy Reading!

President's Message

By Jane Peets

Hello, everyone. I hope you are all doing well and enjoying the warm weather.

On May 9th, MCB held our annual conference and business meeting at the Holiday Inn Trustmark Park in Pearl, MS. I would like to thank Christie Reader for her help in planning our event. Thanks also to Wanda Allen, Linda Brown, and the young ladies who helped with registration, 50/50 ticket sales, and helping to serve the buffet. Juanita and Joe Bishop provided centerpieces for the tables, Mother's Day balloons, and individual long-stemmed roses in memory of Juanita's mother, Ethelene Stubbs, and Juanita was our auctioneer for the MCB auction.

Our speakers this year were: Rosie Gibson from Addie McBryde Rehab Center, Miranda Loper from MLC Talking Book Services, Donovan Beitel from MIB, Pam Dollar from MS Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities, and Lamarlon Wilson, Superintendent of MSDB.

Our scholarship recipient this year is Lucy Dick. She attended our luncheon and related some of her experiences during her first year in college.

During our business meeting, Ralph Smitherman agreed to be our delegate to the ACB convention, Mike Duke, alternate, and Ken Maddox, representative to the nominating committee. Two three-year board members were elected by acclamation: Ken Maddox for a second term and Juanita Bishop, first term.

In the coming weeks, I will be reviewing committee appointments for 2026/2027. If any member is interested in serving on a committee, please contact me. We need our members to stay involved and active in our efforts to benefit the blind and visually impaired citizens of Mississippi. Our next state board meeting is scheduled for June 20 at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom. Meetings are open to all members.

Until next time, my best wishes for a super summer!

Mississippi Council of the Blind

Annual Convention Highlights

By Recording Secretary Ralph Smitherman

The Mississippi Council of the Blind held its annual convention on Saturday, May 9, 2026, at the Holiday Inn in Pearl, Mississippi. The morning sessions began at 9 AM. There was an invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, and a welcome by President Jane Peets.

We heard the Treasurer's report, and following this we heard from the following speakers, namely:

Rosie Gibson from Addie McBryde,

Miranda Loper from the Mississippi Library Commission,

Donovan Beitel from the Mississippi Industries for the Blind,

After a break,

Pam Dollar from the Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities,

LaMarlon Wilson from the Mississippi School for the Blind.

When the morning sessions ended, we enjoyed a nice Scholarship luncheon.

After lunch we held our annual business meeting. The minutes from 2025, and the Treasurer's report were approved. Committee reports as well as the chapter reports were given. We conducted unfinished business and new business. This year we would elect two three-year board members, and the following people were elected: Ken Maddox who is serving his second term, and Juanita Bishop who is serving her first term. There were twelve door prizes drawn this year; thanks to the chapter in North Mississippi, the Jackson chapter, and the state organization for providing the door prizes. When the business meeting ended, we held our auction; then, the convention ended.

Let's Have a Picnic!

By Jane Peets

Hi, everyone. Save the date, October 10, 2026, for our MCB picnic at pavilion 8, Leflore's Bluff State Park.

Hope to see you all there!

Northeast Mississippi Chapter News

By Bill Shelton

Greetings from North Mississippi. We hope all are well.

We presently have fifteen members. As summer approaches, we hope all will be able to enjoy the coming good weather, whether you are gardening, attending sporting events, or just soaking up the sun. We hope all can get out to enjoy the many activities planned in your area, celebrating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Have a great summer and Fourth of July!

Bill Shelton, President MCBNM

Jackson Chapter Highlights

By Gary Cooper

Hello, everybody!

Hopefully, everyone is staying dry as we are having heavy and much rain these days here in Mississippi.

We really enjoyed seeing everyone at the MCB State Convention during the early part of May.

Our MCB Jackson Chapter is still serving strongly to others in need with over 60 members currently.

We continue to have chapter board meetings and socials every other month.

Looking forward to our next gathering.

Gary Cooper
MCB Jackson Chapter President

A Note of Sympathy

Since the last issue of the Periscope, MCB and the Jackson Chapter lost one of our beloved, long-time members. Randy Thompson passed away on March 2nd at the age of 81. Randy served as an educator and wrestling coach at the schools for the blind in both Mississippi and Tennessee, and more recently, as a blind vendor with the Business Enterprise Program. Randy was very much involved in MCB, as well as

his local Lions Club and his Church. He was a friend to many of us in MCB and will be greatly missed. Our deepest, heartfelt sympathies go out to Randy's wife Bonnie and all his extended family in Mississippi and Tennessee.

Help Shape *Be My Mentor*

Taken from *Quarterly Connections: News from the NRTC, Spring 2026*

Calling *Be My Eyes* Users & Volunteers
(U.S. & Canada):

The NRTC on Blindness & Low Vision is conducting a research study to design *Be My Mentor*, a new *Be My Eyes* feature focused on short, one-time career-focused sessions for people who are blind or have low vision.

If you're a *Be My Eyes* user or volunteer, age 18+, living in the U.S. or Canada, we'd love your input. Take a [short survey here](#).

This study has been reviewed by Mississippi State

University's HRPP and granted an Exemption Determination (Study # IRB-25-476).

(Editor's Note: If you are unable to access the link to the above-referenced survey, contact the NRTC at 662-325-2001 to inquire about other possible ways to access it.)

Virtual Summer Events for Adults

By Miranda Loper

Director, Talking Book Services

Mississippi Talking Book Services presents summer programming for adults hosted by the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled and the Braille Institute. This year's theme is *Unearth a Story* — an invitation to explore the histories, landscapes, and voices hidden just beneath the surface of the world around us. At the heart of this year's programming is a deep focus on the National Parks Service and America's public lands, woven throughout an exploration of ecology, environment, and stewardship; human stories embedded in place; and the role of science, observation, and memory in how we understand the world around us.

What's Included

The program runs for 9 weeks, from June 15 through August 11, 2026, and features two exciting ways to participate:

Webinars - Live conversations over Zoom with authors, artists, national park rangers, and other compelling voices.

- Kickoff event on June 15th at 3:00 PM CST
- The rest of the webinar sessions will be held every other Tuesday at 3:00 PM CST, starting June 16th
- Patrons register once to access the entire series

Narrated Soundscapes - A truly special collaboration between Braille Institute Library, National Parks Service Rangers, Library of Congress sound designers, and select NLS network librarians who narrated their own state's episode.

- A new Soundscape will be dropped on Braille Institute Library's Summer Reading Program page every other Monday, starting June 22nd
- Once posted on webpage, each one stays available so patrons can explore at their own pace.

To sign up for these programs by phone or online, call Mississippi Talking Book Services at 601-432-4151 or email talkingbooks@mlc.lib.ms.us.

Introducing the Live Read App

Live Read helps people with visual impairments read printed text in their daily lives. It uses the camera in your iPhone to detect words and speak them aloud, making reading easier.

Live Read turns your camera into a personal reading companion. It instantly finds printed text and speaks it aloud, giving people with visual impairments an easy way to read independently. No setup, no clutter

Read anything around you, from mail and books to signs, menus, and labels. Live Read makes everyday reading effortless at home or on the go.

Designed for accessibility. Every part of Live Read is built for ease and use. Just open the app, point the camera, and it starts reading automatically. Tap anywhere to stop or reset, or swipe to move between lines. Turning on VoiceOver will replace the swipe gestures with buttons.

Features:

- Automatic reading: Text is detected and spoken aloud in real time.
- Tap or swipe control: Tap to stop or reset. Swipe left to repeat a line or right to skip ahead a line of text.
- Customizable speech: Choose from natural Apple voices and adjust speaking speed.
- Works offline: Reads instantly without an internet connection.
- Multi-language support: Recognizes printed text in 50+ languages.
- Private and secure: Live Read never saves or sends anything you scan. All processing happens instantly and entirely on your device.

Disclaimer: Live Read is not a medical device. Text recognition results may not always be accurate or complete. Please use your own judgment and verify information when needed.

A Quote to Ponder

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” - Gandhi