



PERISCOPE

**A Quarterly Newsletter sponsored by the
Mississippi Council of the Blind, Inc.
Winter, 2021-2022**

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Tax deductible contributions may be sent to:
MS Council of the Blind
P O Box 31112
Jackson, MS 39286

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 601-672-0973.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Ralph Smitherman

Hello, everyone. I hope all is well with everybody. I hope all of you are enjoying this nice weather we are experiencing. Winter will soon be upon us! Wow!

I want to thank the Convention/Picnic Committee for a great convention we had on October 30, this year, at the home of Eddie Turner. I think there were around fifty people who attended. Good food, good fellowship and we held a lively business meeting. In our auction, we raised around \$600. Many thanks to all who participated.

2022 will be here soon; and, plans are in the works to hold a regular convention during the month of April--if we can secure

the hotel! It will be nice to have a convention over a weekend. So, I hope everyone reading this article will plan to support the Mississippi Council and attend.

A list of the Officers and Board will be listed in another article in this newsletter.

Don't forget to pay your dues, the deadline to have them to our Treasurer is February 15, 2022. If you are a local chapter member, just pay your dues to the local Treasurer, and in turn, said Treasurer can send to the state the appropriate money. If you are a member at large, just send your dues to Rene Virden, our state Treasurer.

The state Board will meet again in January of 2022, by the Zoom platform; thereby beginning another calendar year for us.

Now, I want to thank everyone for their support; our organization works because of the membership. It is a pleasure to serve as President of MCB! Remember, it is not about me, it is about us!

2021 MCB PICNIC & BUSINESS MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

By Wanda Allen

The 2021 Picnic & Business Meeting was held October 30, 2021 at the home of Eddie Turner in Ridgeland, MS. The great fun & fellowship started around 11:00 a.m. with lunch catered in from McAlister's. The attendance was greater than expected with the

total being around 50.

After lunch, MCB got down to business with the Annual Business Meeting. The Treasurer's Report and minutes were approved as were all Committee and Chapter Reports. The next year's Convention was established, if at all possible, to be located at the same venue: the Holiday Inn Trustmark Park in Pearl, MS. Shooting for April 2022. Dates will be announced soon.

Followed by ELECTIONS! Here are the results of this year's elections.

Officers - President: Ralph Smitherman (second term); Vice-President: Ken Maddox (second term); Recording Secretary: Jane Peets (first term); Corresponding Secretary: Wanda Allen (first term); Treasurer: Rene Virden (third term).

Board Members: One Year – Kris McNair & Robert Thomas; Two Year – Ella Reed & Alvin Daniels; Three Year – Pshon Barrett; Past President – Eddie Turner (second term).

After the Business Meeting – Halloween Costume Contest time: demonic clown, witches, a pumpkin, a voodoo priest & priestess, a vet and her feline, even a 70's disco fever dude came to show off their costumes, but the winner was Randy Thompson, the inflatable hot dog.

And finally rounding out the day with... The AUCTION: with continued laughter and fun, Juanita Bishop served as our auctioneer. With some friendly bidding competition, the auction

raised \$605 on items and \$100 in donations. Thanks to the Chapters & Members that donated items.

Thanks to everyone who made this year's Picnic a great success!

MCB OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

NOVEMBER 1, 2021, MAY 31, 2022

Submitted by Ralph Smitherman

OFFICERS:

**PRESIDENT: RALPH SMITHERMAN, SECOND TERM,
2021/2023, FULL**

HOME: 601-825-8076

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2021/2023, FULL**

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**RECORDING SECRETARY: JANE PEETS, FIRST TERM,
2021/2023, FULL**

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EMAIL: janepeets@yahoo.com

**CORRESPONDING SECRETARY: WANDA ALLEN, FIRST
TERM, 2021/2023, FULL**

CELL: 601-720-4237

EMAIL: wandacallen64@gmail.com

TREASURER: RENE VIRDEN, THIRD TERM, 2021/2023,
FULL

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CELL: 601-937-5461

EMAIL: rvirden40@gmail.com

BOARD MEMBERS:

1-YEAR: KRIS MCNAIR, FIRST TERM, 2019/2022, FULL

HOME: 601-544-5640

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1-YEAR: ROBERT THOMAS, SECOND TERM, 2019/2022,
FULL

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CELL: 601-278-6605

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2-YEAR: ELLA REED, FIRST TERM, 2021/2023, FULL

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EMAIL: ereed730@gmail.com

2-YEAR: ALVIN DANIELS, FIRST TERM, 2021/2023, FULL

Cell: 601-813-1424

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3-YEAR: KENNETH REED, SECOND TERM, 2021/2024,
FULL

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3-YEAR: PSHON BARRETT, FIRST TERM, 2021/2024
FULL

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IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: EDDIE TURNER,
SECOND TERM, 2021/2023, FULL

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CHAPTER REPRESENTATIVES:

HAZLEHURST:

MCBNM:

JACKSON:

WITH DEEPEST SYMPATHY...

Since the printing of our last Periscope, MCB has lost two of its beloved members: Billie Jean Keith and Janet Erickson. Let us

remember the families and friends of these dear members in our prayers as they go through this time of great loss.

Billie Jean Keith

Billie Jean Keith was a great lady and friend to many of us in the MCB family. She was originally from MS, moved across the pond to England for a time, and then returned to MS in the 1980's and was very active in MCB, even serving a term as President. She also worked as Director of Radio Reading Service of MS. She later married Bud Keith and moved to Virginia, where she remained active in ACB for many years. In recent years, Billie Jean moved to Florida to be closer to family. For more details, see the exert from her obituary below:

Obituary

Billie Jean Bridges Keith

Former Virginia resident Billie Jean Bridges Keith, 83, died Sept. 27, 2021, in The Villages, FL.

Billie Jean was born on July 24, 1938, to Wallace and Ethel Bridges, in Winona, MS.

She lived in several cities, including New York City, NY; London, England; and Jackson, MS; before landing in Arlington, VA.

While living in Mississippi, Billie Jean was a member of the Council of the Blind and worked for Radio Reading Service of MS, a branch of MS Public Broadcasting. After moving to Virginia, she attended Saint John's Episcopal Church and spent years working for the Blinded Veterans Association.

Mrs. Keith is survived by her sister, Dona May; brother Wallace Benjamin and Barbara Bridges; 1 son, Thomas Hill; 1 daughter, Caroline Fortenberry, and 3 grandchildren, Haleigh, Natalie, and Anna Fortenberry.

She was preceded in death by her parents and husband, Mr. Raymond "Bud" Keith.

Janet Moffett Erickson

Janet Erickson was one of our dear members from the MS Gulf Coast and was very active in our Gulf Coast chapter for many years. She always had a smile and a kind word for everyone she came in contact with. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Janet's husband, John, who is also an MCB member, as well as all her

other loved ones, during this difficult time. Below is an excerpt from Janet's obituary:

Obituary

Janet Moffett Erickson, age 68 of Gulfport, passed away on Sunday, October 31, 2021.

She was a native of Gulfport and graduated from Gulfport East High School. Janet was a member of Mississippi Council of the Blind and member of Handsboro United Methodist Church.

Janet was preceded in death by her father, Elwin Moffett; her mother, Dolores Byrd; and her stepdad, Jim Byrd.

She is survived by her husband of 42 years, John Erickson; her sister, Trena Wyatt (John); her nephew, Conner Smith; her niece, Alexa Smith; her great nieces, Adelyn and Avery Smith; and her cousins, Valerie Straub and Billy Lacy.

MISSISSIPPI INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND NOW HIRING

Mississippi Industries for the Blind is looking to fill the following positions, and they encourage qualified blind or visually impaired individuals to apply:

Manufacturing Operator -Jackson, MS

Mississippi Industries for the Blind is seeking blind and legally blind employees to work in our manufacturing facility in Jackson, MS. Mississippi Industries for the Blind is an agency of the State of Mississippi and qualifies for state benefits including health insurance, life insurance, state holidays, vacation, sick days and the state's pension plan for fulltime, permanent employees.

Duties Include:

General assembly work either by hand or by using automated machinery that has been equipped with safety features to assist the operator to work safely and effectively. This is an entry level position and training will be provided.

Minimum Requirements:

- Must meet the Ability One requirements for legal blindness
- Must be dependable
- Have reliable transportation to/from work
- Pass a drug test
- Hours are Monday – Friday 7:30 am – 4:00 pm

Manufacturing Operator -Meridian, MS

Mississippi Industries for the Blind is seeking blind and legally blind employees to work in our manufacturing facility in Meridian, MS. Mississippi Industries for the Blind is an agency of the State of Mississippi and qualifies for state benefits including health insurance, life insurance, state holidays, vacation, sick days and the state's pension plan for fulltime, permanent employees.

Duties Include:

General assembly work either by hand or by using automated machinery that has been equipped with safety features to assist the operator to work safely and effectively. This is an entry level position and training will be provided.

Minimum Requirements:

- Must meet the Ability One requirements for legal blindness
- Must be dependable
- Have reliable transportation to/from work
- Pass a drug test
- Hours are Monday – Thursday 7:00 am – 5:30 pm

Note: For the below-listed position, MIB is looking for legally blind individuals only at this point as ZoomText is needed...JAWS is not yet available for these jobs. Also, you must live in the Jackson-metro area and be willing to work in the MIB Call Center to apply.

MIB Customer Service Opportunity

We are very excited to introduce a new job opening at Mississippi Industries for the Blind. This is a great opportunity for those who are blind or visually impaired to work in a professional environment while achieving their goals of gainful employment. Below are some of the skills and abilities to be successful at this position.

- Ability to process information quickly and accurately.
- Ability to handle routine customer transactions.
- Ability to work under time constraints.
- Ability to understand and apply new concepts.
- Ability to analyze information and evaluate results.
- Ability to effectively deal with complex customers.

- Ability to create positive customer relationships by defusing angry and upset customers.
- Attention to detail-documentation and follow-up.
- High school diploma or GED
- At least 1 year of customer service experience preferred.
- Knowledge of PC and internet applications
- Microsoft Office applications
- Excellent telephone tact and diplomacy
- Excellent written, verbal and interpersonal communication skills
- Proficiency in keyboarding/data entry
- Time management skills (dependable, accurate, and detail oriented)
- Successful completion of Background check
- Ability to work full time hours
- Reliable Transportation to and from job site.
- Ability to attend 100% of the required weeks of training

Final candidates for this position will need to successfully complete drug screening and a background investigation.

Job Type: Full-time

If you are interested in any of these positions listed above, please send resumes to HR@msblind.org.

MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND ANNOUNCEMENT

Tuesday, November 9, 2021, Mississippi School for the Blind will wrestle against Saint Andrews Episcopal School. It will be on the campus of Mississippi School for the Blind in Roberts Gym at 6:00 PM Central. There is a \$5 charge for admission.

Homecoming festivities will occur on Friday, December 3, 2021-Saturday, December 4, 2021. Please stay tuned for an agenda concerning homecoming.

NEW MADRID EARTHQUAKE - A GREAT BOOK!

by Jan Hawthorne

I remember in the 1980s, many government agencies were focused on emergency preparedness. This was the first I heard of the possibility of action along this fault which runs from Missouri through Arkansas and Tennessee. The last major activity along this fault was in 1810 causing the Mississippi River to run backward and creating Real Foot Lake in Tennessee.

This suspense novel describes the lives of 4 families at the time of the quake and its aftermath.

I chose this book because it was almost local featuring St. Louis, Memphis, and parts of Northwest Mississippi. As many book reviewers say, it is unputdownable! Try it for yourself.

Below you will find the book, annotation and NLS ID number. I could not get the spelling of the author's name as it was in a link from the description.

New Madrid Earthquake:
A Disaster Thriller
DB103752

When the New Madrid fault zone generates a series of massive earthquakes, the Atwood and Chandler families must fight to survive. Strong language and some violence. 2020.
(BARD book information)

ONCE AGAIN WE PAUSE
by Lucile E. Teske

Whatever else we lose throughout the years,
Let us keep Christmas, shining and apart,
And cast aside grim worries and dark fears
To feel a stir of joy within the heart.

If dreams have failed and disappointments throng
While problems seem too difficult to face,
The muted cadence of the angels' song
Renews again this blessed time of grace.

May hearts be listening when the joy bells ring
New courage, faith, and hope on Christmas morn,
As once again we pause, remembering
That unto us the Prince of Peace is born.

EDITOR'S CONER

Thanks to all of you who contributed to this issue of the Periscope. Whether you submitted an article or took part in the distribution and mailing of the newsletter, your assistance and hard work are greatly appreciated.

The next issue of the Periscope will be our Spring, 2022 issue. Articles for this issue will be due in to me by no later than **February 21, 2022**. My mailing address, as well as other contact info, is located at the beginning of this newsletter.

Until next time, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Warm regards,

Alison Smitherman
Periscope Editor