

NEBRASKA COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED
PUBLIC MEETING

Omaha, NE

Saturday, February 4, 2006

Approved Minutes

(Note: While, as always, tapes of this meeting are available from NCBVI offices, a portion of this meeting did not get recorded due to technical difficulties.)

Call to Order and Introductions: Barbara Loos, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners, called the meeting to order at 9:15 AM, apologized for the late start due to problems with technology, welcomed everyone including the new commissioner, Darrell Walla, and read through the agenda.

Commissioners Present: Barbara Loos, Lincoln; Bob Burns, Omaha; Darrell Walla, Omaha; Bill Orester, Lincoln; Nancy Oltman, Hastings.

Commission Staff in Attendance from Lincoln: Dr. Pearl Van Zandt, Executive Director; Val Peery, Administrative Assistant; Bob Deaton, Deputy Director of Independent Living; Carlos Serván, Deputy Director of Voc Rehab; Fatos Floyd, Nebraska Center for the Blind Supervisor; Connie Daly, Lincoln District Supervisor.

Staff from Omaha: Nancy Flearl, Omaha District Supervisor; Kathy Brown-Hollins, Voc Rehab Counselor; and Shawn Djernes, Program Specialist.

Members of the Public Present: Hubert Paulson, Lincoln; Ryan Strunk, Lincoln; Jim Jirak, Omaha; Jo Genit, Omaha; Sherry Manthe, Omaha and Janis Compton, Omaha.

Announcement Concerning Public Comments and Tapes of Meetings, Lunch Arrangements and Other Logistics: Loos called everyone's attention to the times noted on the agenda for Public Comment. Loos stated that Hubert Paulson tapes the meetings and distributes the tapes to each office—something the Board appreciates greatly. Loos stated that a big thank you was owed to Flearl for providing coffee and rolls, and for arranging for the pizza and salad for lunch. Oltman was thanked for bringing homemade fudge.

Minutes of the November 19, 2005 Meeting: Orester moved minutes be adopted and approved. Burns seconded the motion. Loos stated that the minutes should be corrected to include that the organization Van Zandt referred to in her report was “National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB)”. The Board agreed and the vote to approve the minutes as amended was unanimous.

Focus Topic - New Staff Training:

Dr. Pearl Van Zandt, NCBVI: Van Zandt stated that prior to the meeting she had sent information to the Board about what training was about, why we do it and our philosophy in training new hires. Van Zandt stated that new staff spend three-four months as students in the Nebraska Center for the Blind where they learn blindness skills under structured discovery and are given the opportunity to do some teaching and to improve their skills. She then asked Shawn Djernes, who has been with NCBVI for about a year and Kathy Brown-Hollins, who is still in training, to give their perspective on their initial experience with NCBVI as new staff members. Van Zandt spoke of her own staff training and what a great experience it was for her. Van Zandt reported that although training is a huge commitment of time, it gives new staff members a solid understanding of and belief in what the Commission is about.

Public Comment: There was continued discussion of the focus topic. Comments were also made concerning having summaries of focus topics, photos, and blurbs concerning who and what we are on the NCBVI web site for the benefit of internet surfers.

Report from the Chairman:

Loos reported that she had not yet replied to the letter from vendor, Randy Swanson, in response to the Board's letter about Braille on vending machines, partly because she wanted the Board to publicly agree upon a response. Burns agreed to draft a reply which Loos would edit and send, after getting approval via e-mail from the Board. Loos acknowledged that it would have been best for her to respond to the letter with an explanation of this approach to correspondence. Consensus was that future correspondence should receive immediate acknowledgement.

Loos stated that she did not receive any feedback except a thank you from the email inquiry she sent along with the Annual Report to RSA in Washington, DC, but she did get it in before the deadline. With the thought that it is better to submit something unnecessary than to be delinquent in proper reporting, the Board agreed to continue providing the Annual Report to RSA until directed differently.

Loos stated that she attended the auditor's exit interview on January 19, 2006, and the State Rehab Council's conference call on January 30, 2006.

Loos stated that she had sent Westin-Yockey a poinsettia plant from the Board and had spoken to her sister who reported that she is doing much better following the accident in which she was hit by a car while waiting for a bus.

In December, Loos attended PacMate training and had the opportunity to sample the cookies and to see the white canes that the Center distributed to bus drivers. She stated that the video that was broadcast on Channel 10/11 would be shown later during the meeting and commented on how pleased she is when people get out and give back to the community.

Loos stated that the Board appreciated Jan Brandt's message regarding her temporary leave and wished her well. The Board also enjoyed receiving anniversary letters regarding Mike Rains, Connie Daly, Robert Newman, Elaine Kavulak, Bob Shankland, Mary Davis and Glenn Ervin. Loos also acknowledged the Board's receipt of Van Zandt's letter of resignation from the Radio Talking Book Board and expressed appreciation of her long time of service to RTB.

Loos stated that the Board appreciates Dottie Wilmott's good work regarding Social Security reimbursements and likes knowing that Nancy Coffman's efforts with technology have been rewarded with a scholarship.

Loos stated that the Board appreciated Cheryl Poff's Hand in Hand update and was pleased that Poff received affirmative confirmation from the Governor's Office regarding having two interpreters at the Deaf-Blind Awareness Ceremony. Loos thanked Floyd for her efforts in sending the Center Evaluations and the Project Reports that were missing. She also thanked Peery for the updated staff listings.

Public Comment: There was further discussion concerning the Deaf-Blind Awareness Week Ceremony. There was consensus that the Board contact the Governor to thank and commend him for sponsoring this event. Commendation was offered to Poff for her leadership in the Oakview Mall shopping event that was held on December 10, 2005.

Loos asked if there was a motion concerning writing to the Governor. Orestor moved that a letter be written to the Governor thanking him for supporting the Deaf-Blind Awareness Ceremony. Walla seconded. The vote was unanimous. Loos stated that she would write the letter.

Break: The Board took a 10-minute break and reconvened at 11:00 AM.

Report from the Executive Director:

Van Zandt welcomed Walla as the newest Commissioner and Oltman as newly re-appointed to the Board and stated that their terms would expire December 31, 2009. She stated that she values their commitment as well as that of all the other Board members.

Van Zandt stated that there has been a new development in Social Security reimbursements. She stated that previously we were not reimbursed for Center costs. She announced that the President of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) contacted her and stated that retroactive to 2000, Social Security will reimburse Center costs.

Van Zandt reported that, for the first three months of the new fiscal year, we served 448 Voc Rehab clients, with 12 successful closures and we served 370 Independent Living clients, with 54 successful closures. This is a total of 818 clients served. Van Zandt reported that the Center has served 133 full-time clients and reported this was the same total as November 2005, but November's total was incorrect. The Center has 77 in competitive employment, 19 homemakers and 25 students. She reported that 88.8% are employed (71% competitively employed; 17.5% homemakers), 18.8% are students, and 9% are not working.

Van Zandt reported that there are three staff members who are currently taking voluntary furloughs. She reported that Brown-Hollins will finish her Center staff training on February 17, 2006 and will begin working in the Omaha office as a Voc Rehab Counselor on February 21, 2006. Van Zandt stated that Sherrie Bruegman and DeAnn Johnson will be taking an on-line Voc Rehab Assistants course from Lighthouse International.

She helped consult on this new training project . There will be no costs for their training. Van Zandt reported that there have been two sessions of Resilience Training conducted since Dr. Roberts spoke at State Staff last year. Hubert Paulson has taped the book from this training but, although the master tapes are fine, some of the copies may need to be replaced as he experienced some problems with the tape duplicator. She asked that if anyone has tapes that cut off speech from either this book or from the last Board meeting (November 19, 2005), to let her know.

Van Zandt reported that the new immigration building in Lincoln will open February 21, 2006. Ron Wilton has been running the facility to a limited number of security staff and plans are to have all equipment ready by February 20, 2006. Van Zandt reported that there has been a lot of vandalism to the vending machines at the rest areas along the interstate and that work is being done to minimize this. The Dept. of Roads notifies Terry Harris when a rest area is closing and he in turn will inform vendors so that merchandise and money can be removed. Van Zandt reported that one vendor was sent a written notice, per Rule Chapter 3, of possible action for being late on submitting monthly reports and payments. She reported that another vendor was sent a letter of reprimand for accounting and inventory problems following our audit of his operation. Both letters sent included expectations and timelines for the vendor.

Van Zandt stated that she attended a legislative breakfast sponsored by the National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska (NFBN) and a luncheon sponsored by the American Council of the Blind of Nebraska (ACBN). Both were excellent and very productive.

She stated that she had good conversations with senators and that Senators Engel and Cudaback said they would like a tour and she also hopes for the Appropriations Committee to tour as a group, having received some commitments in that direction.

Van Zandt stated that the Alumni Association surprised Floyd by presenting her with a \$500 check for the Nebraska Center for the Blind. They had raised this money from donations and from selling t-shirts and sweatshirts. The group intends to continue selling the merchandise and to do other projects in the future.

Van Zandt reported that the Mentoring Project is doing well and that there are 19 matches. She mentioned that the next cycle will begin in January 2007.

Van Zandt stated that progress is being made with staff computers and all offices should soon be set up on the server. Work continues on both accessibility and basic operational issues. She mentioned that, if someone sends her an email message and doesn't hear back, she/he should call or contact her and not assume she received the message.

Van Zandt stated that she, Deaton and Serván (primarily Deaton), have developed a survey so that staff can reflect on the things they feel good about, what they are proud of, what motivates them, etc.

She informed us that Deaton would be conducting interviews with every staff person, if possible, over the next several months.

Van Zandt stated that she has received the electronic 107 Monitoring Review Report for fiscal year 2004. She reported that all issues raised have been resolved and accepted except for the memorandums of understanding with the institutes of higher education. Van Zandt stated that she would send a copy to the Board.

Van Zandt reported that the RSA wants a conference call set up with herself, Deaton, Serván and the team in Washington.

Van Zandt reported that the State Plan is due July 1, 2006. She will be sending a draft to the Board and would appreciate feedback.

Van Zandt mentioned that the State Staff Meeting will be held April 4-6, 2006. She asked if the Board would like to attend as a unit or individually and if Commissioners would like time on the agenda. Topics will include Social Security benefits planning, NIS, and other items.

Public Comment: Discussion continued concerning the State Staff Meeting. Commissioners agreed to discuss attendance later in the meeting. A question was raised about the vendor bid at the Offutt Air Force Base. The questioner was informed that it ultimately was not an option for NCBVI. The new web site and the email address for contacting the Commission Board were discussed. The site is: www.ncbvi.ne.gov. The address to reach Commissioners is: commission-board@nebraska.gov. There was discussion of reading Legislative Bills and other PDF files with Adobe Acrobat Reader.

Old Business:

Budget Update: Van Zandt reported that staff continues to do a good job at providing services and keeping expenditures minimal. She stated that, due to limited resources, we will be handling some programs a little differently this year. WAGES will be five weeks instead of six. The first week will involve orientation activities and the other four weeks clients will have jobs. Salaries will be paid by the WAGES workforce fund. She stated that the cost from our budget will be about \$25,000, from the Social Security fund. Project Independence costs about \$4,000 and we will be using Part B funds and some portion of the trust fund for youth, received from K. D. Robinson. The last Winnerfest was a combination of our traditional event and the mentoring kickoff. It was paid for out of the Mentoring Grant. She stated that this year Winnerfest will be held in March and that basic support funds will be used. The cost will be \$3,500. Regarding Home Teaching Plus, Van Zandt stated that the change to mainly group curriculum-based sessions has worked well for older blind persons in the Omaha and Lincoln Districts. In North Platte, there are too many miles and too few people to utilize the group-based curriculum, so that District will have a program more like Home Teaching Plus, but not quite as long or expensive. Districts will be in charge of when they will do their curriculum-based teaching and

expenses will be charged to case service plans. There will be more expenses in the North Platte District, but costs will be between \$4,000 and \$5,000 versus previous Home Teaching Plus costs of \$10,000.

Van Zandt reported that our Budget Deficit Request is being considered. She will attend the Appropriations Committee Hearing on Tuesday, February 7, 2006. We originally requested funds for a full year, but by the time of their decision there will only be a quarter of the year remaining, so the request has been modified to \$111,000 for this year and \$562,483 for 2006-2007. Van Zandt stated that she and Bill Brown met with Lt. Governor Sheehy, Gerry Oligmueller and our new budget liaison, William Scheideler. They asked good questions. Van Zandt stated that it is important to continue working with senators to educate them throughout the year and not just at budget time, so that when budget time comes, they will understand what needs to be done.

Website Update: It was decided that the Webmaster would continue to submit monthly statistics in his reports, but would make note of specific data from the busiest week of each month. Webmaster Jim Jirak reported that our site is in the process of being converted from Word to Dream Weaver. Jirak and Djernes both described the site's new layout and the links. Djernes stated that the mission statement will be moved to the top of the homepage. Anything related to the website should be sent to webmaster@nebraska.gov. An additional link for focus topics, having separate pages for donations and frequently asked questions, having a search box, and having quick links so readers can look up specific sections without having to read entire pages were discussed. Paulson will see if it would be possible to put the audiotapes of Board meetings on the website. Commissioner biographies were also discussed. It was decided that the Webmaster's reports no longer need to be included with the minutes.

Jirak and Djernes requested that everyone view the site and send them their comments. Jirak was recognized and thanked for all the hours he has voluntarily devoted to the website. Djernes was also thanked for his assistance in the conversion of the site and for his creativity in its new look.

Lunch break: The Board took a short break and reconvened at 12:50 pm.

Status of Rehab Update: Loos reported that the Board had received Van Zandt's update, but no one had anything new to report.

Friends of the Commission Update: Orester reported that he has not yet contacted Friends, but a review of its regulations is due in 2007. It was decided that Orester would try to meet with Friends and report back to the Board at its May meeting.

NIS Update: Loos stated that she is happy to hear that Wes Majerus has begun his job with the State. Van Zandt stated that his present position is temporary, but the hiring process for the permanent position will be completed by May. He has been keeping us apprised of his concerns and people are listening to his recommendations and respect his expertise. She stated that Bill Brown attends all NIS meetings and is in the NIS User Group, so is keeping abreast of how NIS is moving forward.

NFB-Newsline® Update: No report.

New Commissioner Packet Update: Burns stated that he would forward the passed motions concerning the Executive Director's salary to Peery and the Board. Van Zandt stated that she had brought three copies of the described version of the Center video, The Life You Choose. One was specifically for Walla, as a new Commissioner. Burns stated that he has a copy. Peery distributed the other two and will mail one to Orester. Van Zandt stated that she had also brought print copies of our four Rule Chapters so each Commissioner could have a complete set. They are available in alternate formats for those who prefer that. Most everything else is on the website. Walla stated that he is fine with reading the material on the website, so isn't requesting other media. Loos stated that the mission statement and the job duties of Commissioners, which include touring the Center, are on the website and asked Walla to review them thoroughly. Walla stated that, although he was a student in the Center in 1998, he would like to tour it to see how things are being done now.

Status of Braille on Vending Machines: Burns stated that he attended the last Committee of Blind Vendors meeting and reported that, although some vendors wanted to hear about creative ideas, there were others who were not interested. Some suggested that a consumer group could help vendors put Braille on machines. Burns made a motion that a directive be sent to the vending committee and/or Terry Harris requesting how many machines at each site have Braille and, if not, to state machines not marked and reasons why. Orester seconded the motion. There was discussion of whether vendors are independent business people or employees of the Commission. Van Zandt stated that she could direct Harris and Don Ward to take an inventory when they were at the sites.

She also mentioned that, when new vendors come on board, this should be discussed and new vendors should be encouraged to use Braille on the machines. Reasons for the Randolph-Sheppard Act were also discussed and the need for this to be part of vendor training. Burns modified his original motion to ask Van Zandt to instruct Harris to complete a survey of the vending sites to include machines completely Brailled, those with some Braille and explanations of why Braille isn't being used and/or labelers are being refused in those places where there is none and forward the responses to the Board. Orestor seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor. Burns stated that the Board doesn't want to be adversarial, but does want to be insistent. If NCBVI knows the location of machines which aren't Brailled and why they aren't, then when creative ideas for putting Braille on them come up, they can readily be passed along and put into practice immediately. Van Zandt stated that more vending machines are Brailled today than in years past, so progress has been made. She stated that the fact-finding status assessment would be done and added that she thought training, including vendors familiarizing themselves with the Randolph-Sheppard Act, is a good idea which will be implemented. The Board decided that the letter to Swanson mentioned earlier should be sent to all vendors. Loos and others commented on the importance of the impact Nebraska Business Enterprises vendors make in educating the public about the abilities of blind people. All agreed that training concerning this role should be provided to vendors.

Status of Randolph-Sheppard: Nothing new from the national level was reported. Further discussion occurred concerning the Committee of Blind Vendors meeting in December which Burns attended.

Public Comment: Comments continued concerning vending machines. Van Zandt encouraged Commissioners to attend the blind vendors' meetings whenever possible.

New Business:

Committee of Blind Vendors Meeting, December 2, 2005: Discussed earlier.

NCBVI Audit Report: Van Zandt stated that she had received the draft report and, prior to signing, it would be reviewed for errors by herself, Bill Brown, Dave Robinson and Peery. She stated that the organizational chart is an old one and will be replaced with the new one. Loos stated that the mission statement is incorrect (it was an old one, too). Van Zandt reported that the auditors were at the Commission for over three weeks. Everyone was very accommodating and she commended Brown, Robinson and Peery for doing a great job. Van Zandt discussed the seven areas the auditors noted as needing improvement:

1. Segregation of duties over fixed assets
2. Controlled environment
3. Legislative restrictions of appropriations
4. Timesheets
5. Travel
6. Allowance policies
7. Reconciliation of bank records to the NIS

Van Zandt stated that Brown sends budget reports to supervisors monthly and she will begin sending them to the Board also.

Nebraska Center for the Blind Holiday Giving Video: The Board viewed the video twice. The second time through, Van Zandt described the visual portions of it. She then informed the Board that Center students also took goodies to the Governor's and Lt. Governor's offices.

Focus Topic for Next Two Meetings: It was decided to change May's Focus Topic, "Counselor/VR Client Relationship and How It Works", to the August meeting and have May's be Budget Training, since that meeting will be held in Lincoln. November's Focus Topic will be How the Business Office Works.

Public Comment: The Board was asked to clarify its intent for the August Focus Topic. Commissioners were asked to describe their computers' specifications so that budget training could be individualized based on the equipment each one uses. The placement of specific items on the web site was discussed. The Commission's year-end report will be posted and assigned a link. The Board doesn't need to approve each posting, but will inform Van Zandt if a particular document or other item is desired.

Final Announcements (including Date and Location of May Meeting): Loos stated that she appreciated everyone's input and thanked everyone for attending. Loos thanked Connie Carlow for sending and revising the agency calendar. Board members will attend the State Staff Meeting on April 4, 2006 and be on the agenda for questions and answers. Walla will tour the Nebraska Center for the Blind the morning of April 4th. Loos will consider participating in the next SRC conference call and stated that, for now, she will remain on the mailing list.

Paulson experienced a problem with the third tape of the meeting, so said that discussion on tape would be out of order. The next meeting will be held May 6, 2006, in Lincoln. Center students will be providing lunch. The August 5, 2006 meeting will be held in North Platte and the November 18, 2006 meeting will be in Lincoln.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Val Peery, Administrative Assistant

Barbara Loos, Chairman

NCBVI Board of Commissioners

NCBVI Center Training Program for New Staff

Before the explanation of the NCBVI staff training program, it is necessary to briefly discuss the expectations we hold for our new employees before their training begins. The focus is not necessarily upon their expertise in blindness or rehabilitation in general, although such a background can sometimes be helpful. Our primary focus is on the individual's openness to new ideas, interest in learning, and adaptability. We well understand that everyone carries with them certain preconceptions regarding blindness, whether normally sighted or blind, and challenging these beliefs is, in our view, even more critical to effective training than full competence in the non-visual skills which each staff trainee is expected to have developed by the time their training is completed. For this reason, when selecting new employees, we are careful to look for indications of this sort of openness and flexibility.

The selection process begins with a screening tool that is based upon relatively common measures of experience and education. In order to evaluate a potential employee's openness and adaptability during the interview process, we utilize a series of carefully designed questions and a brief sleep-shade experience. The questions are, of course, shaped by the nature of the specific position; however, they are also designed to shed some light into the individual's understanding of people and the manner in which people learn and grow. There are also questions that are intended to draw out some of the individual's general understanding and beliefs regarding blindness, willingness to consider other points of view, and reasons for being interested in this type of work. For example, these questions may include scenarios that involve a student in the Nebraska Center for the Blind seeking a visual confirmation or assistance in performing a task during training that can and should be performed by the student utilizing non-visual alternatives. The potential employee may then be asked what is the most effective approach to working with this student in this circumstance or what might be the reasons the student is requesting this type of assistance. Other questions may focus on the degree of value the individual places upon the role of vision in successfully performing a task or the level of responsibility and control that the consumer and rehabilitation professional should each take in their relationship.

The brief sleep-shade experience must be conducted with great care. The true purpose of this exercise must be at the forefront of the experience and every possible precaution taken to assure that it does not reinforce any of the misconceptions or fears the individual may already be harboring. This process begins with the individual being provided with a pair of sleep-shades and a proper length cane. Then the individual is given some time to adjust to wearing the sleep-shades during which the instructor explains both the purpose and limitations of this experience. It is critical that the potential employee is given the necessary information to understand that this experience is not intended to provide a true representation of blindness or in any way to lead to an understanding of the challenges related to blindness. Rather, the experience is intended to provide them with some understanding of the training process our employees undergo and the true reasons we utilize this approach. The role of the sleep-shades in the training program is explained and the potential employee is exposed to some basic "Structured Discovery" methods. Then a very basic cane travel lesson is provided normally involving developing a couple of basic cane techniques. This is usually followed by having the individual walk the length of the Nebraska Center for the Blind hallway. In this controlled environment, the probability of success is very high and frustration is kept to a minimum. This allows for the individual to have the opportunity to consider personal feelings regarding this type of training and for staff to develop a sense of the individual's level of comfort and adaptability. We have found that this approach has helped to reduce the number of staff trainees that have left employment during the training process.

The initial phase of the training on average lasts three months or somewhat longer. Through our experience we have found this is approximately the period necessary for the average individual to obtain a level of mastery over the non-visual skills and to have enough positive experiences with non-visual functioning that many of the myths and misconceptions regarding blindness that they may have held will have been effectively challenged.

This portion of the training is conducted within our Orientation and Adjustment Center, during which new employees are expected to participate fully in this immersion experience alongside the clients attending the program at the time. This includes staff trainees properly utilizing the sleep-shades eight hours per day, five days a week, throughout the course of this phase of their training. Also, participating in all skill training areas, attending all Center activities, actively participating in philosophical seminars and discussions, extensive readings based upon a consumer-driven, positive view of blindness, observing Center clients as they learn and grow, and direct exposure to the high expectations held and the instructional approaches utilized by staff when working with consumers.

This approach to the training of employees is not motivated by an interest in sensitizing them to the limitations presented by blindness or in any manner intended to promote care-taking behaviors. Indeed, it is the very opposite of these beliefs and behaviors we intend to instill in our employees because our overarching goal is to empower our consumers. In order for this to happen successfully, our employees must themselves be fully aware and firmly convinced that blind persons can achieve true independence and equality given training that is based upon a philosophy that focuses on developing these five critical elements. The first of these critical elements is a firm belief in one's ability to be independent and self-sufficient. Next, the individual must develop mastery over the non-visual skills, most especially those skills related to effectively gathering information from the environment and problem-solving. Then, there is a critical need for blind persons to develop a good understanding and appropriate methods for dealing with the reactions generated through the myths and misconceptions held by the general public, including blind persons themselves. It is also critical that staff members have a clear understanding of the need for blind persons to have a level of social and personal qualities that are equal to or greater than their normally sighted counterparts. The final element is the importance of blind persons developing the sense that they truly can give back to society as fully participating members of their community.

In order for blind persons to be able to fully develop a positive understanding and effective skills related to their blindness, there must be strongly held expectations for them as blind people, especially by those professionals that will be assisting them to reach these goals. We are firmly convinced that our staff cannot come to hold such strong expectations for the people they serve without personal direct experience that truly demonstrates that competent non-visual management of the world is a normal part of everyday life for blind persons.

NCBVI Center Training Program for New Staff

Before the explanation of the NCBVI staff training program, it is necessary to briefly discuss the expectations we hold for our new employees before their training begins. The focus is not necessarily upon their expertise in blindness or rehabilitation in general, although such a background can sometimes be helpful. Our primary focus is on the individual's openness to new ideas, interest in learning, and adaptability. We well understand that everyone carries with them certain preconceptions regarding blindness, whether normally sighted or blind, and challenging these beliefs is, in our view, even more critical to effective training than full competence in the non-visual skills which each staff trainee is expected to have developed by the time their training is completed. For this reason, when selecting new employees, we are careful to look for indications of this sort of openness and flexibility.

The selection process begins with a screening tool that is based upon relatively common measures of experience and education. In order to evaluate a potential employee's openness and adaptability during the interview process, we utilize a series of carefully designed questions and a brief sleep-shade experience. The questions are, of course, shaped by the nature of the specific position; however, they are also designed to shed some light into the individual's understanding of people and the manner in which people learn and grow. There are also questions that are intended to draw out some of the individual's general understanding and beliefs regarding blindness, willingness to consider other points of view, and reasons for being interested in this type of work. For example, these questions may include scenarios that involve a student in the Nebraska Center for the Blind seeking a visual confirmation or assistance in performing a task during training that can and should be performed by the student utilizing non-visual alternatives. The potential employee may then be asked what is the most effective approach to working with this student in this circumstance or what might be the reasons the student is requesting this type of assistance. Other questions may focus on the degree of value the individual places upon the role of vision in successfully performing a task or the level of responsibility and control that the consumer and rehabilitation professional should each take in their relationship.

The brief sleep-shade experience must be conducted with great care. The true purpose of this exercise must be at the forefront of the experience and every possible precaution taken to assure that it does not reinforce any of the misconceptions or fears the individual may already be harboring. This process begins with the individual being provided with a pair of sleep-shades and a proper length cane. Then the individual is given some time to adjust to wearing the sleep-shades during which the instructor explains both the purpose and limitations of this experience. It is critical that the potential employee is given the necessary information to understand that this experience is not intended to provide a true representation of blindness or in any way to lead to an understanding of the challenges related to blindness. Rather, the experience is intended to provide them with some understanding of the training process our employees undergo and the true reasons we utilize this approach. The role of the sleep-shades in the training program is explained and the potential employee is exposed to some basic "Structured Discovery" methods. Then a very basic cane travel lesson is provided normally involving developing a couple of basic cane techniques. This is usually followed by having the individual walk the length of the Nebraska Center for the Blind hallway. In this controlled environment, the probability of success is very high and frustration is kept to a minimum. This allows for the individual to have the opportunity to consider personal feelings regarding this type of training and for staff to develop a sense of the individual's level of comfort and adaptability. We have found that this approach has helped to reduce the number of staff trainees that have left employment during the training process.

The initial phase of the training on average lasts three months or somewhat longer. Through our experience we have found this is approximately the period necessary for the average individual to obtain a level of mastery over the non-visual skills and to have enough positive experiences with non-visual functioning that many of the myths and misconceptions regarding blindness that they may have held will have been effectively challenged.

This portion of the training is conducted within our Orientation and Adjustment Center, during which new employees are expected to participate fully in this immersion experience alongside the clients attending the program at the time. This includes staff trainees properly utilizing the sleep-shades eight hours per day, five days a week, throughout the course of this phase of their training. Also, participating in all skill training areas, attending all Center activities, actively participating in philosophical seminars and discussions, extensive readings based upon a consumer-driven, positive view of blindness, observing Center clients as they learn and grow, and direct exposure to the high expectations held and the instructional approaches utilized by staff when working with consumers.

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In order for blind persons to be able to fully develop a positive understanding and effective skills related to their blindness, there must be strongly held expectations for them as blind people, especially by those professionals that will be assisting them to reach these goals. We are firmly convinced that our staff cannot come to hold such strong expectations for the people they serve without personal direct experience that truly demonstrates that competent non-visual management of the world is a normal part of everyday life for blind persons.

Discussion Topics for Philosophy Sessions

Section I by Bob Deaton

Carlos and I alternate facilitation of philosophy sessions with new staff members whenever our schedules permit. Please refer to the syllabus for a listing of reading assignments for each week during the first three months of new staff training.

In the sessions I facilitate, I also focus on topics related to but not specifically covered in the reading assignments. These topics are as follows:

Week 1: Getting to Know Each Other: I talk about myself and what I do, and encourage the new staff person to share his or her background and thoughts about blindness and what kind of services a rehabilitation agency for the blind should provide. Also discuss the structured discovery approach to teaching the skills of blindness and the overall goals of rehabilitation.

Week 2: Evolution of Societal Attitudes: A look at how the structure of society, from simple to complex, impact prevailing societal attitudes about blindness.

Week 3: Dealing with Loss: Examines Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's model of the grieving process and the stages people move through toward an acceptance of loss. Focuses on how an understanding of this process can facilitate the rehabilitation process.

Week 4: Microcounseling: Examines the critical elements of the therapeutic relationship including unconditional positive regard, congruency, consistency, confidentiality, confrontation, and immediacy. Focuses on why these elements are important in the rehabilitation process.

Week 5: Active Listening and Effective Communication: Discusses the "Parents' Effectiveness Training" model for effective communication. Focuses on listening skills and levels of interaction promoting communication. Also discusses the content of what people say on the levels of action, perception, belief, understanding, and motivation.

Week 6: Focus on counseling of older individuals who are blind. When possible, Nye Bond participates in this discussion.

The above outline does not include discussion topics covered in the sessions facilitated by Carlos.

There may be interruptions in the ideal schedule of philosophy sessions for one reason or another in which case discussion topics are sometimes doubled up.

Section II by Carlos Serván

I use the Socratic method to stimulate thinking and discussion. The first readings talk about the importance of having a fundamental belief about what we do. Also we talk about the definition of philosophy and its roots. Here we discuss issues such as the need for sleepshades, the need for long trainings, the importance of role models, etc. Simultaneously, we go over the evolution of rehab and analyze why the changes and why there is some resistance to change.

Later we talk about the agency and our history and compare our training and services with other states and why the difference. Some of the readings we use are by leaders in the rehab profession such as Mr. Omvig, Dr. Jernigan, Dr. Schroeder and Dr. Wilson. Here we try to see the relation of societal misconceptions and the unemployment rate, low self esteem, etc. We also discuss the expectations of the public schools and employers. We emphasize the fact that the blind are part of society and share the same misconceptions. The stages a client goes through in order to be independent. How critical is to couple skills with a fundamental belief that blindness can be reduced to a level of an inconvenience. We discuss the need to empower consumers and what empowerment means, etc.

During the discussions, we do role playing to show some of the real cases we encounter everyday.

The latter part of the training, we talk about the importance of partnership. We tie this with empowerment and the importance of a good relationship with public officials.

Section III by Dr. Pearl Van Zandt

At some time during the training period, I spend at least one session with the new trainee. We usually discuss how our field has evolved over time, how our approach differs from many states, and why. The discussion also covers the importance of all aspects of our agency working together – the field, the center, and our various jobs.

We also have the person spend one or more sessions with our founder and former director, Dr. James Nyman. This gives the new staff trainee a great opportunity to explore many facets of our approach to blindness services as only Dr. Nyman can.

List of Materials New Staff Read for Discussion during Training

Individual readings are made available to the staff trainee in various formats, including electronic, cassette tape, or print. The list below shows the format versions we have and the name of the item.

Electronic and Tape 1. Definition of blindness

Electronic and Tape 2. Use of the blindfold

Tape 3. Great debate

Electronic and Tape 4. What is Good training Omvig

Tape 5. Left handed dissertation

Tape 6. Freedom 1

Tape 7. Freedom 2

Electronic Tape 8. Handicap and characteristics

Tape 9. Nature of independence

Tape 10. Dish washing tape

Tape 11. Master of the inn

Electronic 13. Pearl's article national speech

Electronic 14. Pearl's article NFB speech

Electronic 15. Definition of structured discovery Dr. Nyman

Electronic 16. Basic support regulations for rehab act

Electronic 17. Rehab act

Tape 18. Choices

Tapes 19. NFB Banquet speeches from 1973 to 2001

Tape 20. Blood borne

Print 21. Pearl's dissertation

Electronic 22. Personnel regulations

Electronic 23. Labor Contract

Electronic 24. Joann Wilson's speech in Albuquerque

Electronic 25. An open letter to blind person

Electronic 26. What do you mean Blind? By Jeff

Electronic 27. The history of cane travel

Electronic 28. Structured Discovery Chapter 4

Electronic 29. Structured Discovery by Dr. Nyman

Electronic 30. Jernigan Politically Correct

Electronic 32. Importance of post-secondary education by Fred

Tape Electronic 33. "Empowerment, High Expectations, and Partnership" - Schroeder

Electronic 34. Most asked questions by Jeff

Electronic 35. Open letter how to find a job

Electronic 36. Philosophical underpinnings of effective rehabilitation by Fred

Electronic 37. Proper training and center training philosophy by Jeff

Electronic 38. Who moved my cheese by Spencer

Tape 39. In terms of equality

Tape 40. Concepts and misconceptions

Tape and electronic 41. "Philosophical Underpinnings of Effective Rehabilitation" - Schroeder

"Tape and electronic 42. Politics and Rehabilitation" - Schroeder

Tape and electronic 43. "Empowerment & Personal Conviction" - Wilson

Tape and electronic 44. "The Future of Rehabilitation" – Wilson

Electronic NCBVI staff training program Nashville paper by Center staff

Electronic the role of sleep shade in structured discovery

What is Structured Discovery Learning?

A presentation by James S. Nyman, June 21, 2001.

We did not discover “structured discovery learning” in Nebraska.

“Structured discovery learning” discovered us. When Allan Dodds, of the Blind Mobility Research Unit of Nottingham University in England, visited Nebraska in 1984 to study the methods we employed to utilize blind travel instructors, he concluded that the best description he could apply to the learning strategies was “structured discovery learning.” The method, he later reported, inverted the relationship between instructor and student as practiced in the mainstream of the orientation and mobility profession so that the focus was on the learning ability of the student rather than the knowledge base of the instructor.

I said that “structured discovery learning” discovered us. What I mean by this paradox is that Nebraska had evolved a method of instruction that embodied a shift in philosophy in rehabilitation generally rather than the conscious adoption of the latest learning theory in education. Several features of that philosophy can be selected to illustrate what it was that Dodds found in his study, later reported to the Royal National Institute for the Blind and in two issues of the New Beacon in 1985.

First, blind persons were regarded as capable of active participation in determining their goals. Second, they could make decisions and solve associated problems. Third, their choices were accorded maximum respect as the determinant of goals to be recognized. Fourth, the counselor did not diagnose and prescribe, but facilitated in the process of gaining full independence. And fifth, achieving full independence was always a meaningful goal. These principles dictated the adoption of a teaching method that fully recognized that the blind individual could and should control the learning process. The instructor’s role was to facilitate this outcome.

I noted earlier that Allan Dodds made a visit to Nebraska to study the use of blind individuals as travel instructors. This practice was a simple application of the concept that the content and method of learning travel was not the result of a sighted orientation and mobility specialist instructing and visually monitoring the performance of the travel student to assure safety and efficiency on the basis of a body of knowledge possessed by the instructor. This meant an early, but complete, shift of the locus of control over the learning process to the student. By the time Dodds arrived in 1984, blind individuals like James Walker, Fred Schroeder and Christine Boone had refined these principles into a method of teaching that received the honorific title of “structured discovery learning.”

1. Like sound rehabilitation, this learning model requires the active participation of the student. It is sometimes contrasted with “guided instruction,” a model that stresses the passively receptive capabilities of the learner. In practice, of course, some judicious mixture of these extremes will mark any sound strategy. A conscientious and well-trained instructor will adjust the mix to best meet the needs of the individual student in different stages of the learning process. What Dodds found, and what had come to characterize Nebraska’s practice, was that the instructor initiated the training by making it clear to the student that success would depend on a decision to take control of the process from the start. A simple choice at the outset sends the message: the student is given the opportunity to select a cane of a length that suits a preferred stride style rather than measuring the cane to match some arbitrarily chosen point on the body, for example, the bottom of the sternum. We conducted an informal research project one day that consisted of measuring the difference between the extreme point of the arc of sternum-length canes and preferred-length canes of blind travelers who ranged in height from 4 foot ten inches to six foot two inches. This experiment yielded the result of an average “zone of choice” of thirteen inches greater for the preferred length cane. In other words, this initial choice frees the student to vary stride and pace in a way that the professionally prescribed length of cane does not. Naturally, as the training proceeds, the chosen length can readily be altered as travel skills improve. Regardless of where the student begins and ends up, this initial choice makes it clear that a choice has been made. It sets the tone for every aspect of the program that follows.

2. As part of his study of Nebraska practice, Allan Dodds took on the role of an early stage travel student. He donned sleepshades and, carrying a recording device, he ventured outdoors with Christine Boone as his instructor. Later, he compared his recorded lesson with one made of a travel lesson conducted by a British orientation and mobility instructor. While a single comparison is not definitive, Dodds is a trained researcher and certified orientation and mobility specialist so that he could make some informed observations. For purposes of this comparison, he coded the interactions between student and instructor into three distinct, but interconnected areas. These correspond to a division of the skills involved in travel, that is, motor, perceptual and cognitive. The comparison, displayed in quantitative terms, disclosed a sharp contrast between the discovery method and guided instruction.

He divides the three types of interactions between student and instructor into those that the instructor feeds to the student and those demanded from the student. While Chris, the Nebraska instructor, fed only two motor skill items to the student, the British one fed forty-three. On the demand side, the difference was relatively minor, three as against two. In perceptual skill, that is, information gathering, Chris fed nineteen items, demanding ten. For the British instructor, the ratio was twenty-five fed and sixteen demanded. Feeding and demanding of cognitive items by Chris came to a total of sixty-one (30 and 31, respectively) but the British instructor fed and demanded only thirteen (9 and 4, respectively).

In percentage terms, this translates into a ratio of feeding to demanding of 53.7% to 46.3% (51 to 44 of 95) in the first lesson. In contrast, the ratio in the second lesson is 77.8% to 22.2% (77 to 22 of 99). Dodds concludes, "What is evident from the table is that the first instructor is maintaining an equal balance between feeding and demanding information, whereas the second instructor is feeding information to the client most of the time, and demanding little in return."

Another way of interpreting the data is that, of the ninety-five transactions coded for the first instructor, only 5.25% pertained to motor skills (5 of 95); 30.5% pertained to perceptual skills (29 of 95); but 64.25% pertained to cognitive skills (61 of 95). In contrast, the ninety-nine transactions recorded for the British lesson can be represented as 45.45% motor (45 of 99); 41.4% perceptual (41 of 99) and only 13.3% cognitive (13 of 99). In other words, in the Nebraska lesson there was a heavy emphasis on the development of cognitive skills on the part of the student while the British lesson exhibited a marked stress on the development of the motor skills involved in travel.

Dodds summarizes his findings from the experiment, "Furthermore, most of the first instructor's lesson concentrates on cognitive problem-solving skills, whereas most of the second instructor's lesson concentrates on motor skills."

3. It has been said that, "One swallow does not a summer make." It is equally true that one experiment does not establish a scientific truth. Nor, does it definitively settle any question of superior teaching method or learning effectiveness. Dodds, however, permits himself to speculate, "The open question in this case is which client ends up the best traveler, and there is no way of determining this now, but I would predict that the first instructor's client would be a much more effectively mobile and independent person than the second instructor's." His conclusion appears to be based more on the nature of the instructional model and the content of the desired learning.

He asserts that, "recent research" shows that the "style of instruction" is significantly related to how the student learns. He identifies three broad guidelines that should govern style: the instructor, first, should not overload the client with information; second, should ensure that the client actively participates in problem-solving; and thirdly, must have the sensitivity to know when it is appropriate to give or demand information.

From his analysis, it appears that the guided instruction model has a tendency to overload the student with information, especially in training for motor skills. The structured discovery learning method, on the other hand, is well designed to optimize the guideline on the active participation of the student.

4. It is difficult to imagine an effective cane traveler who does not possess well-developed problem-solving skills. It is equally difficult to imagine one who lacks good perceptual skills. Sound motor skills in the manipulation of the cane as a sensory tool and orientation device is a motor skill that cannot be neglected. Among blind persons who travel efficiently, safely and independently, a considerable range of variation in the balance of these skills can be discerned. Whatever the balance, however, it is evident that the Nebraska model stresses the overriding importance of the cognitive and perceptual elements of the travel experience.

It is possible to enumerate a number of those cognitive and perceptual skills that are involved in cane travel, but problem-solving is the one most commonly identified. Nonetheless, decision-making, environmental and spatial awareness, memory, generalizing from experience, reasoning on the logic of the built environment and cognitive mapping are also critical.

5. Dodds laments that, "Although no one would disagree that successful mobility involves effective problem-solving, there is not an explicit body of knowledge which can be drawn on to enable a client to solve a problem more efficiently." I take this to mean that there is no well formulated set of rules that can be communicated to the student out of the body of knowledge of the orientation and mobility specialist. By contrast, the motor skills involved in optimally efficient manipulation of the cane are well understood and can serve as the body of knowledge that can be communicated to the student by the instructor. Some scholars and many management consultants have developed a framework for problem-solving.

These frameworks do not serve as a “body of knowledge” that may make the student more efficient in solving problems, but may serve as a systematic set of procedures to expedite solutions for the blind traveler and assist the instructor in devising “structured” situations with which to challenge the student.

One example will serve to stand for all such proposals. Richard Mettler, in *Cognitive Learning Theory and Cane Travel Instruction* (pp. 43-44), divides problem solving into five phases as follows: 1. Recognition that a problem exists. 2. Identification of what the problem is, along with some sense of what would constitute a solution. 3. Relating the problem situation to past experience to categorize it or bring it under some familiar problem type. This involves formulation of candidate hypotheses which would explain the problem and point the way toward a solution. 4. A process of testing the candidate hypothesis. 5. Identification of a solution/explanation which is appropriate to the problem. Implementing a procedure of this sort would require that the student call on a battery of motor, perceptual and cognitive skills that will vary with the variety of situations that are normally confronted. Thus, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic perceptual feedback from the skilled manipulation of the cane in probing the environment may indicate that a problem exists and what kind it is. This information may trigger a memory of similar situations and ways in which previous solutions worked. Other cognitive skills, such as reasoning about the logic of the environment and generalizing from past experience, will come into play in arriving at a solution. The information that is processed in the recognition and identification of problems is consciously generated by the traveler and must be interpreted by the same person. It is feedback that has been described as “intrinsic” as opposed to “extrinsic” information that may be fed to the traveler by some other person.

6. Intrinsic feedback is the key to understanding the structured discovery learning model and to its successful employment. Skilled creation and utilization of intrinsic feedback is the best guarantee of the full independence of a blind traveler. When we speak of “discovery,” it is what the student learns by actively participating in the training process by solving problems.

Cognitive psychologists do not know precisely how intrinsic feedback works, but it is well understood that it contributes to learning. Monitoring and extrinsic feedback by the instructor tends to focus effort on meeting specific performance objectives, but is less effective in facilitating transfer of skills to new and different performances. In other words, initial performance may benefit in contrast with skills learned by intrinsic feedback in the discovery method, but experimental evidence has shown that transfer of problem-solving ability is problematic. Moreover, studies have shown that retention of skills is greater in the case of discovery learning. This is understandable since the individual who learns problem-solving, and other cognitive skills, is more likely to utilize them on a continuing basis in a wider range of circumstances. Success tends to reinforce the learned behavior in constant use when the skills serve the ongoing needs of the individual rather than satisfying the performance expectations of the extrinsic monitor.

7. A well trained instructor will rely on intrinsic feedback to structure situations that will enhance and strengthen the student's cognitive skills. The ability to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each student will determine the nature of individualized training. The success of the student is measured in terms of taking control of the learning process as a key to achieving personal independence. This is a learning method that will serve the individual for a lifetime.

In summary, structured discovery learning is a method for acquiring a set of cognitive problem-solving and perceptual skills by means of actively participating in the learning process on the part of the student. It occurs in consciously structured problem situations to which the student must discover a satisfactory solution. The cognitive techniques employed in the solving process must be reinforced and generalized with the assistance of the instructor. To the extent that the reinforcement occurs, transfer of the skills to novel situations is improved and the duration of retention is extended. Auditory, tactile and kinesthetic feedback generated and received intrinsically by the student is the source of learning rather than extrinsic feedback from an instructor who controls the learning process.

The Experience of Center Training by Kathy Brown-Hollins

I graduated from my client training on Wednesday, November 23, 2005. I returned to the Nebraska Center for the Blind as a staff-trainee on that following Monday, November 28 th. Staff-trainees receive an average of three to four months of training at the Center. It has been more like nine months, for me. The first six months were to learn the skills and practice using them. The last three focused on how I might teach those same skills to another. This extension in my training has permitted me to gain more confidence in the skills and techniques that I had learned. This was evident as I began to work with clients.

The focus of training shifted from myself to those that I would be working with. Guidance and support were offered as I went through this process. The counselors assisted me with improving my problem solving skills as we brainstormed through multiple options of alternative techniques.

The weekly Friday sessions, with the directors, has enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the philosophy behind this agency. We have discussed the history of the blindness movement and how collective action through consumer organizations can bring about change. I became aware of the importance of educating the clients and the general public about blindness.

I will graduate from staff training on February 17 th. This experience has been challenging, yet rewarding as I see the growth in others and myself. The KNOWLEDGE, skills, and philosophy that I GAINED will assist me as I consult with clients as they learn alternatives to maintain employment or search for new opportunities. I will use my own experiences at the Center as an example as I begin to work with others. The training that I have received at the Center has prepared me as I go forward in my career as a counselor.

MATERIALS LIST FOR FEBRUARY 4, 2006 MEETING

- 11-20-05—Jirak: Re: Email from Pearl (has follow-up)
- 11-21-05—VZ: FW: NRA's Washington Wire: HOLD Placed on Senate WIA Bill
- 11-21-05—VZ: FW: follow-up FW: MOU signed (Southeast Community College)
- 11-23-05—Burns: Letter to Venders (has follow-up)
- 11-23-05—VZ: Time Certification
- 11-23-05—VZ: FW: eSight Careers Network - October Press Release
- 11-23-05—VZ: FW: FALL 2005 DOTS NEWSLETTER (from AFB, about Braille)
- 11-23-05—VZ: Braille on Vending Machines (to Committee Members concerning discussion at Board meeting; has follow-up)
- 11-23-05—VZ: RE: SMPID update (State Monitoring and Program Improvement Division; has follow-up)
- 11-23-05—VZ: FW: [NCBVI] Committee of Blind Venders Meeting Announcement (has follow-up)
- 11-23-05—VZ: Friends' Bylaws (has follow-up)
- 11-26-05—Loos: Vendor Letter (has follow-up)
- 11-28-05—VZ: Emergency Situations Policy
- 11-28-05—VZ: Follow-up to Emergency Policy (has follow-up)
- 11-29-05—F. Floyd: FW: test message (concerning our receiving evaluations and articles from Center students; has follow-up)
- 11-29-05—Peery: Revised Staff Listings (has follow-up)
- 11-29-05—VZ: Email from NCBVI with a Virus
- 11-29-05—F. Floyd: article (from Lincoln Journal/Star about Jeremy Richey; has follow-up)
- 11-29-05—VZ: FW: SMPID update (concerning receiving communications electronically; has follow-up)
- 11-29-05—F. Floyd: Peeking.doc (poem by Center student; has follow-up)
- 11-30-05—VZ: FW: NIDRR Director Tingus Announcement Releasing White House Conference on Aging Report (has follow-up)
- 11-30-05—VZ: FW: Associated Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired of Philadelphia, PA. Opens Online Braille Bookstore! (has follow-up)
- 11-30-05—Loos: Letter to Vendors (has follow-up)
- 11-30-05—VZ: Letter from the NCBVI Board of Commissioners (forwarding letter about Braille on vending machines to Committee and others; has follow-up)
- 11-30-05—VZ: Next Week (her schedule; has follow-up)

12-01-05—VZ: FW: Letter from the NCBVI Board of Commissioners (forwarding response from Randy Swanson)

12-01-05—F. Floyd: Alan wheeler graduation article.doc

12-01-05—F. Floyd: Alan wheeler My Community Service.doc

12-01-05—F. Floyd: angie Larson article.doc

12-01-05—F. Floyd: Bonnie Community Service.doc

12-01-05—F. Floyd: bonnie's Graduation Article.doc

12-01-05—F. Floyd: Dave W article.doc

12-01-05—F. Floyd: dave wallick community project.doc

12-01-05—F. Floyd: hatties article.doc

12-01-05—F. Floyd: Center eval (in separate messages—74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86)

12-01-05—F. Floyd: Joy My legacy Of Love by Joy.doc

12-01-05—F. Floyd: Joy's my Community Service.doc

12-01-05—F. Floyd: Kathy Brown article team of angels.doc

12-01-05—F. Floyd: Mary Johnson (Center article)

12-01-05—F. Floyd: peggy's article.doc

12-01-05—VZ: FW: Career Change (concerning Chuck Young's becoming President of Hadley School for the Blind)

12-01-05—F. Floyd: Roys Article.doc

12-01-05—F. Floyd: terry's article.doc

12-01-05—VZ: Another example of our role in helping improve services across the nation. (concerning shop instructor from Colorado Center for the Blind coming for training)

12-01-05—VZ: FW: Latest list of passed NCBVI Board motions (to Val for inclusion in New Commissioner Packet; has follow-up)

12-01-05—VZ: Happy Anniversary Mike (to Mike Rains)

12-01-05—VZ: Happy Anniversary Connie (to Connie Daly)

12-01-05—Loos: Center Reports and Evals (thanking F. Floyd for sending back ones; has follow-up from her)

12-02-05—Loos: Re: Latest list of passed NCBVI Board motions (has follow-up)

12-02-05—Livingston: Commission Board Member Hospitalized (concerning Dorothy's accident; has follow-up)

12-05-05—Loos: Flowers for Dorothy? (yes, sent to all Commissioners; has follow-up)

12-05-05—VZ: RE: Archived Minutes on the Website (has follow-up)

12-05-05—VZ: FW: PD-06-03 - Review of Randolph-Sheppard Program Statistical Information

12-05-05—Loos: Re: CENTER EVAL (thanking F. Floyd for sending 76, which had been missing)

12-05-05—Jirak: Minutes (to Val about how to send them)

12-05-05—Jirak: Webmaster Report (concerning ability to have weekly breakdowns of information; has follow-up)

12-06-05—Peery: Draft Commission Board Meeting Minutes (has follow-up)

12-07-05—Jirak: Minutes (has follow-up)

12-08-05—Oltman: reappointed (has follow-up)

12-09-05—Peery: Governor Appointments (Oltman and Walla to Board; has follow-up)

12-11-05—Loos: Welcome to the Commission Board (to Darryl Walla)

12-12-05—Zierenberg: Shirts for any one?

12-13-05—VZ: Time Certification

12-13-05—VZ: FW: NBE Balance Sheet for September and October 2005 (has follow-up)

12-13-05—VZ: Congratulations and Contact Information (to Darryl Walla)

12-13-05—Loos: Re: November 19, 2005 Draft Minutes (concerning clarification from Pearl and proposed correction by Loos)

12-14-05—VZ: Info to post (concerning Deputy Registrar Training; has follow-up)

12-14-05—Loos: Re: Leave of Absence (response to Jan Brandt)

12-15-05—F. Floyd: Allison's community project (has follow-up)

12-15-05—Loos: Re: Resolution on Executive Director's Compensation (response to Bill Brown, concerning raise for VZ)

12-15-05—Loos: Fw: Resolution on Executive Director's Compensation (to VZ, had forgotten to include her address on previous message; has follow-up)

12-16-05—VZ: Update on Federal Legislation and Budget (has follow-up)

12-16-05—VZ: Happy Anniversary (to Robert Newman)

12-16-05—VZ: FW: CAP and PIP (Corrective Action Plan and Program Improvement Plan; has follow-up)

12-19-05—VZ: New Manager for Lincoln INS Vending Facility (Mr. Wilton; has follow-up)

12-19-05—VZ: Deaf-Blind Project Commemorative Plaque (has follow-up)

12-19-05—VZ: Radio Talking Book Services Board (VZ's letter of resignation from Board)

12-20-05—VZ: FW: RSA-15 Information (concerning Randolph-Sheppard, from Terry Smith)

12-20-05—F. Floyd: Allison's Article.doc

12-20-05—VZ: FW: Deaf-Blind Project Commemorative Plaque (sending message from Loos to staff)

12-20-05—VZ: State Audit (concerning entrance meeting and plans for exit one, at which they would like to have Commission Chairman; has follow-up)

12-20-05—VZ: Meeting about the budget (proposed for December 28; has follow-up, including possible date changes)

12-20-05—F. Floyd: Holiday Giving (concerning Center Students giving white cane ornaments and goodies to bus operators; has follow-up, including arrangements to have video of TV coverage shown at next Board meeting)

12-21-05—VZ: FW: Radio Talking Book Services Board (asking for suggestions; has follow-up)

12-21-05—VZ: Social Security Reimbursement (has follow-up, including note to Dottie Wilmott for her good work)

12-21-05—VZ: Older Blind Services Report and Letter (has follow-up)

12-21-05—VZ: Older Blind Report (forwarding for NCBVI Web Site and NFB-Newsline®)

12-21-05—VZ: Talking Book and Braille Service Advisory Committee (letter of request for applicants from Dave Oertli; has follow-up)

12-22-05—VZ: RE: February meeting room

12-22-05—VZ: RSA-PD-06-03 (concerning Business Enterprises, includes a Policy Directive and NCBVI's reply; has follow-up)

12-22-05—VZ: FW: IM-06-04 (Fiscal Year 2007 Updates and Amendments of the State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program; has follow-up)

12-22-05—Jirak: New E-mail Address - Please Make Note

12-22-05—VZ: Grant awards (for supported employment; has follow-up)

12-22-05—VZ: Budget Deficit (questions from Analyst Sandy Sostad and NCBVI reply)

12-22-05—VZ: Time Certification (has follow-up)

12-22-05—VZ: Previous Email about Deficit Request (notes that spreadsheet answering question 7 still to come; has follow-up)

12-23-05—VZ: The next two weeks (concerning time off; has follow-up)

12-23-05—VZ: Deficit Budget Memo and Spreadsheet (has follow-up)

12-26-05—Jirak: New E-mail Address

12-27-05—VZ: Audit Exit Interview (proposed date; has follow-up)

12-28-05—VZ: Audit Exit Conference (new proposed date; has follow-up)

12-29-05—VZ: Anniversary letter (to Elaine Kavulak)

12-30-05—VZ: Annual Report to the Governor (has follow-up)
01-01-06—Walla: Re: Welcome to the Commission Board (has follow-up)
01-02-06—Zierenberg: Alumni Association Meeting
01-03-06—VZ: test (testing e-mail)
01-03-06—VZ: RE: Congratulations and Contact Information (to Darrell Walla)
01-03-06—VZ: Another Detail about our Annual Reports (includes final version in attachments)
01-03-06—Peery: Commissioners' Information
01-03-06—VZ: RE: Scholarship (received by Nancy Coffman; has follow-up)
01-04-06—Loos: Louis Braille's Birthday
01-04-06—VZ: Happy Anniversary Bob (to Bob Shankland)
01-04-06—VZ: FW: Louis Braille's Birthday (forwarded message from Loos)
01-04-06—VZ: February Board Meeting (requesting information from Jirak; has follow-up)
01-04-06—VZ: In-Service Training Grant Report
01-04-06—VZ: Year End Reports (asking about posting to web site; has follow-up)
01-05-06—Peery: Statutes (those creating Commission; has follow-up)
01-05-06—Jirak: Commission-board@nol.org (concerning adding Darrell Walla)
01-06-06—VZ: Time Certification
01-06-06—Zierenberg: new meeting date
01-07-06—Loos: RE: Notices about Construction (responding to Altman, forwarding to Commissioners as requested; has follow-up)
01-07-06—Jirak: Bio (question concerning placement of Westin-Yockey's bio; has follow-up)
01-07-06—Loos: Re: Commission-board@nol.org (to Jirak; has follow-up)
01-08-06—Jirak: Link online for Suggestion Box (has follow-up)
01-08-06—Loos: Unavailable
01-09-06—Oltman: biographies (has follow-up)
01-09-06—VZ: FW: Suggestion Box (response to Jirak; has follow-up)
01-09-06—VZ: Commission Board Archives (to Nichele Ferreyra, former Commissioner; has follow-up)
01-09-06—VZ: My vacation (has follow-up)
01-09-06—Poff--Hand In Hand Deaf-Blind Feb. 06 meeting.doc (has follow-up)

01-09-06—VZ: FW: VIPS Group Leaders (correspondence with Jirak concerning information on web site; has follow-up)
01-09-06—VZ: FW: Reply to Sandy Sostad (concerning agency funding; has follow-up)
01-09-06—VZ: FW: Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week Request to Governor's office to budget for interpreters (includes message from Poff to Governor's Office; has follow-up)
01-10-06—VZ: Happy Anniversary Mary (to Mary Davis)
01-10-06—Loos: Fw: SRC Annual Report and monitoring update (includes Corrective Action Plan [CAP] and Program Improvement Plan [PIP] information)
01-10-06—Loos: Fw: SRC Annual Report and monitoring update
01-10-06—Loos: Fw: REVIEW & RESPONSE NEEDED - SRC NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OPPORTUNITY! (concerning conference call; has follow-up)
01-10-06—Jirak: Effective Immediately I Nebraska Is Gone
01-10-06—VZ: Letter to Lieutenant Governor Sheehy (concerning budget; has follow-up)
01-12-06—Brown: Deficit Request Status (has follow-up)
01-14-06—Zierenberg: Fw: [Everyone] Summer Employment Opportunity (at Blind Industries and Services of Maryland)
01-14-06—Zierenberg: Fw: Newsletters (from Nebraska Center for the Blind Alumni Association)
01-14-06—Loos: Fw: OPPORTUNITY!! WEB CAST on the State Best Practices for the Employment of People with Disabilities in State Government (from Marlene Malloy)
01-15-06—Loos: NCBVI Annual Reports (sent to Rehabilitation Services Administration [RSA]; has follow-up)
01-15-06—Jirak: Commission Website (has follow-up)
01-19-06—Altman: "O" street construction (has follow-up)
01-19-06—Loos: Fw: Exit agenda (for meeting with auditors)
01-19-06—Loos: Fw: Exit Clarification (from Amy Hock of State Auditors' Office)
01-20-06—VZ: Grant Award (for basic support funds; has follow-up)
01-20-06—VZ: Time Certification
01-20-06—Peery: Public Notice (for February 4 Board of Commissioners meeting; has follow-up)
01-20-06—Loos: Agenda Items
01-20-06—VZ: Listing of Board Members (instructions to Jirak for web site; has follow-up)

01-20-06—VZ: RE: An update on NIS and other issues (includes message from Wes Majerus concerning new job; has follow-up)

01-20-06—Loos: Fw: Staff Suggestion (from Djernes, testing virtual suggestion box, so not anonymous)

01-20-06—Loos: Re: Suggestion Box (thank you to Shawn Djernes)

01-21-06—Jirak: Donate to the commission

01-23-06—VZ: RE: Employment Brochure (response to Jirak; has follow-up)

01-23-06—Loos: Draft Agenda for February 4 Meeting (has follow-up)

01-25-06—VZ: Moving Forward (concerning working with Legislators)

01-25-06—Peery: Agenda (for February 4 Board of Commissioners meeting)

01-25-06—VZ: Online Employment Seminar Announcement (event scheduled for March 30, 2006, 1-5 p.m., EST; Glenn Ervin part of group putting it on)

01-26-06—Zierenberg: Reminder of meeting

01-26-06—VZ: Good News about Deaf-Blind Awareness Ceremony (Two interpreters will be provided; has follow-up)

01-26-06—Djernes: [commission-board] Test new List (has follow-up)

01-26-06—VZ: Friends of the Commission (sending official documents to auditor)

01-26-06—Jirak: Technical difficulties (concerning web site)

01-27-06—Djernes: [ncbvi-announce] New List-Serve Test (announcing move of listserv to ncbvi.ne.gov)

01-27-06—Loos: NCBVI Listserv (questions about transition; has follow-up)

01-27-06—VZ: Focus Topic: New Staff Training at NCBVI (materials for meeting; has follow-up)

0-27-06—VZ: Discussion Topic follow up (concerning her not being in town until Tuesday, so contact Val if have questions about attachments in previous message; has follow-up)

1-28-06—Jirak: Allison (to F. Floyd; link there, but article not; please resend)

01-30-06—Loos: Fw: our web page (forwarding message from Zierenberg about Nebraska Center for the Blind Alumni Association web page)

01-30-06—Loos: Fw: update to SRC Chairs (forward from Jennifer Sheehy Keller from Ed Anthony)

02-01-06—VZ: Happy Anniversary, Glenn! (to Glenn Ervin)

02-01-06—Carlow: 2006 Agency Calendar (has follow-up)

02-01-06—Jirak: Webmaster Report (has follow-up)

02-02-06—VZ: Staff Morale (memorandum to staff about meeting with Deaton to discuss working at NCBVI; has follow-up)
02-02-06—VZ: FW: Your check list of items from last board meeting (from Val to Pearl; has follow-up)
02-02-06—Carlow: [commission-board] Revised NCBVI 2006 calendar (has follow-up)
02-02-06—VZ: Staff Appreciation Day and Other Such Like (has follow-up)
02-02-06—VZ: Time Certification and Leave Report
02-02-06—VZ: FW: blind files (Draft Audit Report; also sent later by Loos)
02-02-06—Loos: Fw: SRC TELECONFERENCE UPDATE (forward from Marlene Malloy)
02-02-06—Loos: Fw: SRC TELECONFERENCE UPDATE (forwarding message from Rhoda Hunter; has follow-up)
02-03-06—Oltman: Pearl's topic at Board meeting (needs files resent, which Pearl did)
02-03-06—VZ: FW: Focus Topic: New Staff Training at NCBVI (resent attachments)
02-03-06—VZ: Articles for Saturday (same as above, but sending one at a time pasted rather than attached)
02-03-06—VZ: Second Article
02-03-06—VZ: Article number three
02-03-06—VZ: Fourth Article
02-03-06—VZ: Fifth Article
02-03-06—VZ: Final Article (has follow-up)
02-03-06—VZ: FW: security memo regarding keys to storerooms and buildings (from Terry Harris; has follow-up)
02-03-06—VZ: Follow-up from the Bullis Presentation
02-03-06—VZ: FW: [rehabnet] CSAVR NEW UPDATE
02-03-06—Loos: Fw: INFO MATERIALS: NAMRC CULTURAL NETWORK NEWSLETTER