# Focus On ACBI

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# A Publication of the American Council of the Blind of Indiana

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## Ways to contribute to the American Council of the Blind of Indiana:

Those much-needed contributions, which are tax-deductible, can be sent to ACBI, Attn: Cindy Brooking, 676 VFW Road, Mitchell, Indiana 47446 or through our website noted above.

Vehicle donations: 1-800-929-8659. You can donate cars, trucks, vans, and boats. Live operators are on hand 7 days a week and it includes free pick-up.

Consider including a gift to ACBI in your Last Will and Testament.

## Contents

[Focus On ACBI 1](#_Toc210059525)

[Ways to contribute to the American Council of the Blind of Indiana: 2](#_Toc210059527)

[From Your President 3](#_Toc210059529)

[ACBI Statewide Picnic was a Blast! 4](#_Toc210059531)

[Upcoming ACBI Events 5](#_Toc210059533)

[Corn Casserole Recipe from Picnic 5](#_Toc210059535)

[Setting Up NLS BARD on Lady A 6](#_Toc210059537)

[Contact Information for the ACBI Board 10](#_Toc210059539)

## From Your President

## By Rita Kersh

Being a leader in any organization involves overseeing all aspects of the organization. The better an organization functions, the better the head of that organization feels about the work they’ve achieved.

One of my concerns that constantly pops into my head is that I rarely hear from our members about ACBI. What I mean by that is, if members feel something we do, like the statewide picnic, is a great idea or that they really enjoyed the picnic and the fellowship. Or if something isn’t working for them, like the Focus newsletter isn’t accessible or they’re not even receiving it. These are just samples of feedback that our members could share with me.

If you feel there is something ACBI should be doing differently or if there is a suggestion that we’re not doing that you feel will make us a better organization, please let me know.

I’m a very open-minded person and will be glad to listen.

Another concern I have is for our chapters. Now that we’ve lost the Heartland Chapter, I was hoping those members would consider joining the Hoosier All State or SCAVI chapter. Our chapters are not growing, we’re losing people. Part of this is due to our membership growing older and members are passing away, but lack of interest is another reason people are not joining our chapters or staying with them.

Each chapter has a constitution and bylaws they should be following to conduct chapter business. All chapters have set dues amount within their bylaws that should be collected annually to include those individuals in the workings of the chapter. Chapter members are the ones who become the leadership of each chapter, so dues play an important role in membership.

Of course, to become a chapter member, a person must become a member of ACBI and ACB first, which involves paying dues. Again, this makes them a working part of the organization. Committees are an example of the working parts of ACBI.

There are so many ways we can improve the workings or operation of ACBI, but I can’t do it alone. The board members cannot do it alone. We need all of us to make it work.

## ACBI Statewide Picnic was a Blast!

## By Rita Kersh, president

The only bad thing about our picnic at Lafayette’s Munger Park was that it was windy and chilly. Everything else was wonderful!

Maggie and Jonathan King were the picnic planners this year and did a terrific job with everything. We found out that Jonathan can cook, or at least grill hamburgers and hot dogs. They both worked the whole time setting out all the food and wrapping up everything afterward, plus helping those of us who are blind in filling our plates, encouraging us to take an extra hot dog or hamburger since there were so many and checking on us to see if we needed anything else.

We only had eleven people attending this year, with a couple of late comers. Besides me, we had Cindy Brooking, Maggie & Jonathan, Anita Kurucz, Rich and Regina Vonderhaar, Mary Stores, Mel Wobschall (with Kevin and Ian coming later), Pat Tussing and her driver Tom. So, these numbers were a bit disappointing compared to past state picnics. However, I was very happy to see all those who made it.

Cindy was our auctioneer and helped us raise $275 towards the convention fund. We had a nice variety of auction items, too.

A few people went walking on the mile long walking trail at the park. The trail goes around a pond with a fountain in the center. This is a really nice park.

## Upcoming ACBI Events

## By Rita Kersh

Saturday, October 25, 10:00 a.m. (ET) ACBI Board Meeting zoom call (Zoom link will be posted on the Indiana list or contact a board member)

Friday, November 14-Sunday, November 16, ACBI-ACBO joint state convention in Stronggsville, OH. Registration should be out soon for in-person and virtual attendance.

## Corn Casserole Recipe from Picnic

## By Mel Wobschall

At the ACBI statewide picnic, many people really enjoyed the corn casserole I brought, and they asked for the recipe. Here it is:

* 15-ounce can whole kernel corn, drained
* 1 14.7-ounce can cream corn.
* 1 8.5-ounce package dry cornbread mix
* 1 cup sour cream
* ½ cup butter, melted
* 2 large eggs, beaten.

Directions

1. Gather all ingredients and preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
2. Lightly grease a 9x9-inch baking dish.
3. Stir whole and creamed corn, cornbread mix, sour cream, melted butter, and eggs together in a medium bowl until well combined.
4. Spoon mixture into the prepared dish.
5. Bake in the preheated oven until the top is golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, about 45 minutes.
6. Serve and enjoy!

## Setting Up NLS BARD on Lady A

## By Mary Stores

Editor’s Note: Google Gemini wrote a basic guide to getting My Talking Books set up, and I have modified it to put in my own experience.

You’ve heard about setting up your Lady A so that you can listen to audio books from the National Library Service’s BARD program, but you wonder how easy it will be. Well, wonder no more! This article will help you get it set up quickly.

Please also note that the term lady A will be used so as not to set off any Amazon devices.

### Initial Registration

Before you can use the skill, you must be a registered NLS BARD user and sign up for Lady A access. You can [sign up for Alexa access](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/mtb-open-beta) here. The form will ask for:

* your Name
* Your BARD email address (the one you normally use to log into BARD)
* The phone number attached to your Amazon account (the one your Lady A uses)

All fields are required to be filled out in the survey. Skipping anything will cause a delay in receiving access to the skill.

Wait for Confirmation: After submitting, you may need to wait a short time for NLS to process your request and link your accounts.

### Supported Lady A Devices

The Lady A device list that NLS has verified support for is:

* Amazon Echo (2nd Generation and above)
* Echo Dot (2nd Generation and above)
* Echo Show 5 (2nd Generation and above0
* Echo Flex
* Alexa App on Android
* Alexa App on Apple iOS

I have an Echo Studio 360, and although it’s not on the list, the My Talking Books Skill works fine on it. Therefore, it might be worth getting the skill set up on your Amazon device, even if it isn’t listed.

### Enabling the Alexa Skill and Logging In

Once you have your registration confirmed, it's time to set up your Alexa! You can do this with your voice and your phone. Please note that you will need access to both the app on your phone and your Alexa device for this next part to work.

1. Go to your Lady A device and say the command to start the skill: "Alexa, open My Talking Books.”
2. You will then be asked to confirm a few details and be directed to the Lady A App on your phone for the next step.
3. On your smartphone, open the Amazon Lady A app (the one you use to manage your device).\
4. Look for a Notification: You should see a notification or card on the main screen or when the screen on your phone is locked of the Lady A app related to the My Talking Books skill. Double tap on it.
5. Grant Permissions: The Lady A app on your phone will ask for permission to use your name and email address. You must double tap to select the button to "Save Permissions."

Note: This very necessary step allows the skill to know who you are and link to your BARD account.

### Complete Login with Your Voice

1. Go back to your Lady A device and say the command to open the skill again: "Alexa, open My Talking Books.”
2. Provide Your Phone Number: Lady A will now ask you for your 10-digit phone number (the one attached to your Amazon account). Say it clearly and slowly.
3. Choose a verification Code Method: Lady A will ask if you want to receive a code via text message, phone call, or email. Choose the one that's easiest for you.
4. Once you have the code, say the open command again: "Alexa, open My Talking Books."
5. When asked, speak the code slowly and clearly.

Success! Alexa should now say that you are authenticated and logged into the skill.

### Using My Talking Books Skill

Now for the fun part! You can talk to Alexa to start reading.

The [NLS BARD main smart speaker page](https://www.loc.gov/nls/how-to-enroll/sign-up-for-bard-and-bard-mobile/welcome-to-my-talking-books/) contains links for reading and navigation commands, so I won’t go into a lot of details here. However, here are some quick commands to get you started, and you can ask your device for help by saying, “Help” once in the My Talking Books skill as well.

### Basic Commands to Try

To start: "Alexa, open My Talking Books." (You will hear a brief sequence of notes as the skill opens).

To find books: "Tell My Talking Books to list my bookshelf."

To search for a title: "Tell My Talking Books to search for the book The Great Gatsby" or “Search book title Witness in Death.”

To start reading a book: "Tell My Talking Books to play my most recent book."

To stop: "Alexa, stop." (This is an Alexa command, not a My Talking Books command)

Reading Controls

Pause: "Alexa, pause."

Resume reading: "Alexa, resume reading."

Go back in time: "Tell My Talking Books to jump back one minute."

Go forward in time: "Tell My Talking Books to jump forward 30 seconds."

Move chapters: "Tell My Talking Books to go to the next chapter."

Set a Sleep Timer: "Tell My Talking Books to go to sleep in 15 minutes."

Leave My Talking Books: “Alexa, stop.” You will be asked what to do next, and you can say “Stop.” You will then hear a short sequence of notes when Lady A exits the skill.

## Contact Information for the ACBI Board

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