Blinded Veterans Association
76th National Convention
Session Schedule
All Times Eastern
Platform Zoom

Date & Time: Thursday, August 12 (11:00am – 4:30pm)
Audience: National Board of Directors / National Staff
Session Title: Business Meeting

Date & Time: Friday, August 13 (11:00am – 4:30pm)
Audience: National Board of Directors / National Staff
Session Title: Business Meeting

Date & Time: Monday, August 16 (11:00am – 11:45am)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: VetTec – Getting Familiar with Zoom and Adaptive Technologies
Presenter(s): Brian Harris (DD-2), Kevin Jackson (DD-6), and Paul Mimms (Ombudsman)
Description: This session will educate blinded veterans, regardless of the technology they prefer, to navigate the Zoom platform and be comfortable attending the upcoming BVA convention and beyond. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Monday, August 16 (11:45am – 12:30pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: Caregivers – Learning and Sharing Ideas!
Presenter(s): Rev. Edna Dixon (BVAA – Vice President), Patricia Hail (BVAA – Reporter and Past President), Kelli Golden (BROS – New Mexico VAMC), Trudie Valdez (VIST – New Mexico VAMC)
Description: Moving from “Independence + Acceptance = Dignity” into “Worlds in Confluence” with Knowledge and Advocacy. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Monday, August 16 (12:30pm – 12:45pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: Department of Defense Shared List (Exploring Federal Employment for Persons with Disabilities)
Presenter(s): Elizabeth W. Starek (Disability Program Specialist)
Description: This session will explore federal employment opportunists for persons with disabilities via an overview of the shared list (a unique resource for individuals inside and outside the federal government allowing for resume submissions and hiring manager engagement). This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Monday, August 16 (12:45pm – 1:00pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: Industries for the Blind and Visually Impaired – We Work to Help Those Who Serve
Presenter(s): Michele Repischak (Recruiter)
Description: At Industries for the Blind and Visually Impaired (IBVI), our employees inspire us with their pride, passion, and commitment to excellence. Every new customer, every new order, provides us with opportunities to create more jobs for the blind and visually impaired. Coming on board with IBVI means joining a team of professionals who realize the key to a fulfilling career is teamwork. Each person brings unique skills, stories and experiences that strengthen the IBVI culture and make us who we are. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Monday, August 16 (1:00pm – 1:30pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled, Library of Congress
Presenter(s): Gabrielle Barnes, Communications and Outreach Editor
Description: The National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS), Library of Congress, provides braille and talking books and magazines to eligible readers, who live in the U.S. or its territories or are U.S. citizens living abroad. Individuals may be eligible for the program if they are blind or visually impaired, or have a temporary or permanent visual, physical, perceptual, or reading disability that prevents them from reading regular print. Library materials are distributed through a network of cooperating libraries, where they are circulated by postage-free mail. Braille and talking books are also available for download through the BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) website and the BARD Mobile app.

Date & Time: Monday, August 16 (1:30pm – 2:00pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: The Low Vision Shop: The Shop with A Vision
Presenter(s): Bari Azman, Diane Ducharme
Description: This session will cover an in-depth exploration of The Low Vision Shop’s quest for providing exclusive, outside of the box items that will reshape the future of living with a sight impairment. We will share our philosophy of how blindness does not equal a lack of vision. Our products are hand-picked to enable people with sight impairment to achieve their highest goals and pursue a life that they may not have imagined for themselves. The Low Vision Shop is where you will find both low- and high-tech solutions to everyday challenges. Whether you are looking for the new Omni-Sense cane tip to hit the streets in smooth strides, an OrCam to identify your prescriptions, or an eSight to enhance your sight. Please join us so that we can assist you with improving your independence and enhancing your quality of life.

Date & Time: Monday, August 16 (2:00pm – 2:45pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: OneClick Politics – What is Grassroots Advocacy and Why Does it Matter?
Presenter(s): Chazz Clevinger (CEO, OneClick Politics), Jim Vale (National Service Director, Veterans Benefits & Policy) and Erin McConnell (Deputy Director of Policy)
Description: It takes a dedicated team effort to win on Capitol Hill, BVA staff cannot pass legislation alone. OneClick Politics is the force multiplier for BVA’s government relations team by involving our members in a grassroots advocacy campaign. By contacting their respective members of Congress, with effective messaging crafted by our government relations team, OneClick Politics provides an easy tool for BVA members to help deliver the message to win co-sponsors and votes to get legislation passed. Learn how you can make a difference with just a few clicks on your smart phone or PC. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Monday, August 16 (2:45pm – 3:00pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: iBill Currency Readers
Presenter(s): Lydia Washington, Lead Public Affairs Specialist and Tracy Garrett, Public Affairs Specialist
Description: The Bureau of Engraving and Printing provides iBill currency readers, free of charge, to all eligible blind and visually impaired U.S. citizens and national residents, as well as two mobile apps – the EyeNote for iOS and IDEAL Currency Identifier for Android – to assist with the denomination of U.S. currency notes. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.
Date & Time: Monday, August 16 (3:00pm – 3:45pm)
Audience: Membership
Session Title: Regional Group Leadership – Do’s & Don’ts
Presenter(s): Brian Harris (DD2), Monaca Gilmore (DD3), and Darryl Goldsmith (DD5)
Description: This session will focus on motivating membership and creating effective leadership at the local level. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Monday, August 16 (4:00pm – 4:30pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: Projecting Power Through Knowledge: Bookshare Shows You the Way
Presenter(s): Anthony Candela (Bookshare Outreach Coordinator)
Description: With well over a million volumes and a tech-savvy audience to tap its library, Bookshare and blind/visually impaired Veterans make a great match. Learn how to join Bookshare and download books, the technologies available to do so, and the advantages having Bookshare in your armamentarium can bring to your life. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Monday, August 16 (4:30pm – 4:45pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: The Descriptathon Approach: Co-creation of Audio Description as a Media Accessibility Strategy
Presenter(s): Brett Oppegaard (Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa)
Description: This session will focus on making public places, such as national parks, more accessible for people who are blind or have low-vision. The UniDescription Project, www.unidescription.org, has been developing a co-creation strategy during the past few years, during which park staff and BVA members can collaborate on writing these descriptions and sharing them with the public. That process, called a Descriptathon, is a fun and friendly competition to determine who can "describe it best," and our next Descriptathon is coming up Oct. 26-28, if you want to get involved. We already have made more than 130 National Park Service sites more accessible through this process; you can listen to these descriptions on your smartphone by searching "UniDescription" in your app store and downloading the free app. This time around, the Descriptathon will feature teams from the U.S. National Park Service, National Parks UK, Parks
Canada, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and The Kennedy Center. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Tuesday, August 17 (11:00am – 11:45am)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: BVA Women's Veteran Group & Resources
Presenter(s): Monaca Gilmore (WVG Chair), Elizabeth Holmes (WVG Committee), Michaun Harrison (WVG Committee), Marlene Davis-Lilly (WVG Committee), Jeanine Murphy (WVG Committee), and Erin McConnell (BVA Deputy Director of Policy)
Description: This session will provide an overview of BVA’s Women's Veteran Group’s mission, activities, impact, and available resources. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Tuesday, August 17 (11:45am – 12:30pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: Caregivers, Spouses, and the VA – Eligibility & Opportunities
Presenter(s): Lauriann Stoker (Caregiver Support Program, Mann-Grandstaff VAMC) and Thomas McGuinness (LICSW, Caregiver Support Program, Mann-Grandstaff VAMC)
Description: Eligibility and programs of importance for Caregivers, Spouses, and Veterans available in confluence with the VA. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Tuesday, August 17 (12:30pm – 1:00pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: The Vets First Podcast, Communicating Research to Veterans
Presenter(s): The hosts of Vets First, Levi Sowers, PhD and Brandon Rea
Description: This session will feature a discussion around the Vets First Podcast, focusing on its unique ability to effectively communicate the latest VA sponsored research to veterans, their families, and caregivers. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Tuesday, August 17 (1:00pm – 1:30pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: NSITE a Vision for Talent Addressing Employment and Training for BVI and Veterans
Presenter(s): Billy Parker (NIB Program Director Employment Support Services) and Ned Rupp (NIB Veteran Affairs Specialist)
Description: National Industries for the Blind (NIB) recently launched NSITE to
address workforce development needs for BVI and Veterans. NSITE provides a continuum of employment services that connect employers with talented, dedicated people who are blind, visually impaired, and/or veterans to meet their workforce needs. As you move through the hiring process, NSITE is with you every step of the way to ensure that finding the right employee-employer match is as smooth and seamless as possible. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Tuesday, August 17 (1:30pm – 2:00pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: Independence with OrCam
Presenter(s): Dr. Bryan Wolynski (OrCam Clinical and Professional Relations), Carlos Pere (President, BVA Florida Regional Group)
Description: Conversation between Dr. Bryan and Carlos about the benefits of the OrCam MyEye device in everyday life, with a demonstration of the features as well as a discussion on what’s coming next from OrCam. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Tuesday, August 17 (2:00pm – 2:45pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: Department of Veterans Affairs Loan Guaranty Service
Presenter(s): Jason Latona, Chief Specially Adapted Housing (SAH)
Description: This session will explore the VA loan guaranty housing grant programs available to B/VI veterans. This will be an interactive session with question-and-answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Tuesday, August 17 (2:45pm – 3:30pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: Independence is a Family Affair
Presenter(s): Penny L. Nechanicky (Executive Director Prosthetic & Sensory Aids, VA Central Office), Amber Arrington (Executive Assistant to the National Director, Prosthetic & Sensory Aids), Rae Hail (Guide Dog Handler’s Committee Co-chair) and Paul Mimms (Guide Dog Handler’s Committee Co-chair)
Description: Successful integration of a guide dog as a vital family member for enhanced independence for all. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Tuesday, August 17 (3:30pm – 4:00pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: Vispero Presents Magnification: From Optical to Desktop Solutions
Presenter(s): Charlie Madsen (Strategic Account Manager – VHA) and Bill Kilroy (Managing Director – US Sales)
Description: During this session, Charlie and Bill will discuss the broad range of Vispero’s magnification solutions from handheld optical magnifiers to desktop video magnifiers. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Tuesday, August 17 (4:00pm – 4:45pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: VA Programs/Opportunities for Veterans that Spouses/Family Caregivers Need to Know
Presenter(s): Travis Wilson (VIST Boise VAMC)
Description: This session will focus on the integral role VIST Coordinators play in identifying relevant programs and opportunities available to B/VI veterans empowering their Independence, while promoting support, acceptance, and confluence within the family unit. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Wednesday, August 18 (11:00am – 2:00pm)
Audience: Membership
Session Title: First Business Meeting
Description:
• Invocation
• Pledge of Allegiance
• Welcome and Response
• Virtual Roles of Convention
• Report of Credentials Committee
• Finance Report Executive Director and SmithBucklin
• Minutes of the 2019 Tulsa National Convention
• Report of the National Board of Directors
• Necrology Report
• Nomination of National Officers
• Virtual Roll Call: Registered Delegates / RG Presidents / Members
• Election of National Officers
• Installation of National Officers

Date & Time: Wednesday, August 18 (2:00pm – 2:30pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: Intracortical Visual Prosthesis Study: A Phase 1 Clinical Trial to Determine the Feasibility of a Human Cortical Visual Prosthesis for People with Blindness
Presenter(s): Gislin Dagnelie, Ph.D. (Associate Professor of Ophthalmology, JHU Lions Vision Research & Rehab Center Johns Hopkins Hospital) and Dr. Philip R. Troyk (Executive Director, Pritzker Institute of Biomedical Science and Engineering)
Description: This session will provide information about a research study to determine the safety of an investigational brain implant called an Intracortical Visual Prosthesis (ICVP) that may help people who are blind perceive some light. Restoring vision is not the goal of this study and should not be the expectation. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Wednesday, August 18 (2:30pm – 3:00pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: Magnifiers That Make a Difference: Eschenbach Optik of America
Presenter(s): Joe Buttazzoni (Eschenbach West Region Sales Manager)
Description: This session will focus on new and unique Eschenbach magnification solutions, empowering those experiencing vision loss to more effectively accomplish their daily living tasks. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Wednesday, August 18 (3:00pm – 3:45pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: Department of Veterans Affairs Blind Rehabilitation Services
Presenter(s): Dr. Michael Williams (National Program Data Analyst, Blind Rehabilitation Services, VA Central Office) and Ms. Ella Hart (National Program Consultant, Blind Rehabilitation Services, VA Central Office)
Description: This session will explore the VA blind rehabilitation programs and services available to B/VI veterans. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Wednesday, August 18 (3:45pm – 4:30pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: An Overview of Vision Research at the Veterans Affairs, Office of Research & Development  
Presenter(s): Lina R. Kubli, Ph.D. (Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Research & Development)  
Description: This session will explore the VA Vision Research & Development state of the science. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Thursday, August 19 (11:00am – 11:45am)  
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public  
Session Title: Bylaws & Resolutions – Why They Matter and How They Work!  
Presenter(s): Joe McNeil (National VP), Kevin Jackson (DD-6), and D. James Hindle III (Parliamentarian)  
Description: This session will focus on exploring the rules and regulations of an organization defined by the bylaws. The bylaws also define the structure of the organization, its purpose, how the organization runs its affairs, and the duties and responsibilities of those involved. Resolutions are used for many things, and the bylaws require resolutions for various tasks or decisions. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Thursday, August 19 (11:45am – 12:30pm)  
Audience: Membership  
Session Title: 2021 Bylaws Committee – Session 1  
Presenter(s): Elizabeth Holmes (Co-Chair), Kevin Jackson (Co-Chair), and D. James Hindle III (Parliamentarian)  
Description: This session will focus on a review of proposed bylaw amendments as submitted by the Membership and Regional Group Committees. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Thursday, August 19 (12:30pm – 12:40pm)  
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public  
Session Title: Platinum Sponsor Greeting  
Presenter(s): Tomer Bar (OrCam Technologies, Business Development & General Manager North America).

Date & Time: Thursday, August 19 (12:40pm – 12:50pm)  
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public  
Session Title: Platinum Sponsor Greeting  
Presenter(s): Vanda Non-24
Date & Time: Thursday, August 19 (12:50pm – 1:00pm)  
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public  
Session Title: Awards Recognition  
Presenter(s): Brigitte Jones (BVA Administrative Director)  
Description: Major General Melvin J. Maas Award (Mr. Tom Miller), Irving Diener Award (Mr. Tracy Ferro), David L. Schnair Volunteer Service Award (Mr. Dennis Currie), BVA Certificate of Appreciation (Ms. Debra Gilley), BVA Certificate of Appreciation (Ms. Tara Travland), BVA Certificate of Appreciation (Ms. Marianne Ryan), BVA Service Award (Mr. Sunny Patel), and BVA Service Award (Mr. David Chiang).

Date & Time: Thursday, August 19 (1:00pm – 1:30pm)  
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public  
Session Title: Father Carroll Virtual Luncheon  
Presenter(s): Micheal A. Hudson (Museum Director, American Printing House for the Blind)  
Description: Blindness organizations and other non-profits have been struggling in the 21st century to maintain their momentum and define their modern role. Mike Hudson will draw on lessons from the Father Thomas Carroll papers to imagine what Father Tom might say to the BVA.

Date & Time: Thursday, August 19 (1:30pm – 2:00pm)  
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public  
Session Title: Cerner EHRM 101  
Presenter(s): Thor Wold (Deputy Director of Veteran and Military Family Engagement)  
Description: This session will explore Cerner Government Solution's new Electronic Health Record Modernization initiatives with the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as provide a roadmap for the future. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Thursday, August 19 (2:00pm – 2:45pm)  
Audience: Membership  
Session Title: 2021 Bylaws Committee – Session 2  
Presenter(s): Elizabeth Holmes (Co-Chair), Kevin Jackson (Co-Chair) and D. James Hindle III (Parliamentarian)  
Description: This session will focus on a review of proposed bylaw amendments as submitted by the Membership and Regional Group Committees. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.
Date & Time: Thursday, August 19 (2:45pm – 3:15pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: Operation Peer Support (OPS) – Who We Are & What We Do
Presenter(s): Kennan Horn (OPS Chairman) and Brian Harris (OPS Committee)
Description: This session will focus on the OPS program, its history, current activities, and future plans. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Thursday, August 19 (3:15pm – 3:30pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: Team River Runner (TRR) – Paddling With A Purpose
Presenter(s): Joe Mornini (TRR Executive Director)
Description: This session will focus on how TRR partners with OPS to provide veterans and their families an opportunity to find health, healing, community purpose, and new challenges through adventure and adaptive paddle sports! This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Thursday, August 19 (3:30pm – 3:45pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: Adaptive Sports Center (ASC) – Enhancing the Quality of Life of People with Disabilities
Presenter(s): Hannah Lang CTRS, MA (ASC Logistics Manager)
Description: This session will provide an overview of the ASC therapeutic recreation program operating year-round, with adaptive activities ranging from mountain biking and skiing to ice climbing and kayaking. Over 6,000 activities are provided annually to nearly 800 individuals who come to Crested Butte.

Date & Time: Thursday, August 19 (3:45pm – 4:00pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: Steamboat STARS – Empowering and Enriching Lives through Adaptive Recreational Activities
Presenter(s): Andrea Mahaffey (STARS Ranch Operations & Groups Manager)
Description: This session will focus on how STARS adaptive recreation programs positively impact the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families, as well as helping individuals discover the outdoors and teach skills to overcome health challenges, as well as develop confidence, self-esteem, and independence.
Date & Time: Thursday, August 19 (4:00pm – 4:30pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: Hear What You Want To See! Envision Smart Glasses - Helping Blind People Master Their Environment
Presenter(s): Lesa Kretschmer and Jose Cintron (Florida Vision Technology)
Description: This lightweight, wearable glass pairs with your smartphone to provide access to print in over 60 languages, describe your environment, help you locate objects, recognize currency when traveling to other countries, lets you call an ally for sighted assistance anywhere in the world, detect light sources, and more! Learn how Envision Glasses can change your life.

Date & Time: Friday, August 20 (11:00am – 11:45am)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: Taking Care of Yourself – So You Can Care for Your Veteran
Presenter(s): Trudie Valdez (VIST – New Mexico VAMC) and Kelly Golden (BROS – New Mexico VAMC)
Description: Activities, Exercise, Respite, Health – and even education – for a better Caregiver experience for Caregiver and Veteran. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Friday, August 20 (11:45am – 12:30pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: Veterans Service Program – Calling All Ambassadors!
Presenter(s): Jim Vale (National Service Director, Veterans Benefits & Policy) and Duayne Driscoll (Deputy Director of Benefits)
Description: Do you have what it takes to be a BVA Ambassador? The VA Blind Rehabilitations Service has identified over 120,000 blind veterans and 1.2 million veterans with low vision, and a large number of these veterans either do not know about the blind rehabilitation services offered by the VA, or incorrectly assume they aren’t eligible because their vision loss isn’t service connected. BVA Ambassadors help get the word out to our blinded veterans and provide valuable benefits information and crucial tips to help make the most of VIST, BROS, VICTORS/VISORS, and BRC services. Ambassadors are the key liaison between B/VI veterans and BVA’s Veterans Service Program. Anyone interested in becoming a BVA Ambassador should attend this session.

Date & Time: Friday, August 20 (12:30pm – 1:00pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: RAZ Mobility
Presenter(s): Robert Felgar (Chief Executive Officer)
Description: This session will describe and demonstrate the MiniVision2 Cell
Phone: A simple cell phone with buttons that is an easy-to-use alternative to the iPhone. Learn how the MiviVision2 is 100% accessible to individuals who are blind. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Friday, August 20 (1:00pm – 1:30pm)
Audience: Membership / BVAA / Public
Session Title: IrisVision – Redefining Vision Loss Possibilities
Presenter(s): Tom Perski (IrisVision VP of Professional and Consumer Outreach)
Description: IrisVision exists at the intersection of digital health and vision science, pioneering a new standard of care where vision health is seamlessly integrated into daily living and accessible to everyone. IrisVision re-defines possibilities for those living with low vision. A life changing, remotely connected smart, visual assistive device, that not only provides sight, but connects people with their world. Tom Perski, IrisVision's VP of Professional and Consumer Outreach and legally blind user of the device, will be providing a personal introduction to IrisVision's revolutionary technology as well as recent innovations to support BVA members with vision loss. This will be an interactive session with question and answer opportunities.

Date & Time: Friday, August 20 (1:30pm – 4:30pm)
Audience: Membership
Session Title: Second Business Meeting
Description:
- Report on Proposed Bylaws
- Roll Call Voting
- New Business
- Adjourn