



# AROUND THE CENTER

## CICBVI NEWS – January 2021

2905 W. Garden St., Peoria, IL 61605

Phone: 309-637-3693

Email: [info@cicbvi.org](mailto:info@cicbvi.org)

Website: [www.cicbvi.org](http://www.cicbvi.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/cicbvi](https://www.facebook.com/cicbvi)

Paula Balistreri, Editor

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

I'm pretty sure we can all agree that we are glad to see 2020 go. It has been a challenging year to say the least. Here at the Center, we have had to close our in-house activities, find new ways to connect, change up our leadership and figure out how to remain lively, useful and relevant. I think we have done that pretty darn well! We have had multiple get togethers via Zoom, we even managed to have some outdoor events, including a wonderful fall picnic and are well on our way to engaging all our patrons in more meaningful ways. We looked at the positive side and took advantage of the time and circumstances to completely paint and clean the Center. We were also able to go through old material and paperwork and begin the huge project of reorganizing files and resources.

So, welcome 2021! While there will still be challenges, there are a lot of new and exciting plans and possibilities on the horizon as we look forward to what is sure to be an even better year for the center!

## PLEASE VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE AND WEBSITE!

**Do you have something you would like to see in the “Around The Center” newsletter? Just call or e-mail (number/address above) with your item!**

## **SPOTLIGHT ON DEANNA BRUCE**

Each month the Spotlight shines on a person connected in some way to the Center. It may be a patron, volunteer, employee or board member. This month the spotlight is on Deanna Bruce, one of our patrons.

Deanna lives in Pekin and is married to Bret. They have three grown children and nine grandchildren, who christened Deanna with a nickname: "Belle."

Deanna has been involved with the Center off and on for around 30 years. She lost her sight at the age of 7 in an accident and doctors told her they expected her to be totally blind due to optic nerve damage. After some time, however, she surprised them all and regained part of her sight – although it was an arduous journey through multiple surgeries, the complete loss of her right eye and dealing with symptoms that are unusual for those with optic nerve damage.

But none of this has stopped Deanna. She worked for around 14 years at the TCRC Sight Center before moving with her family to Nevada. Now back home in Illinois, she enjoys all things outdoors, particularly fishing, swimming and horseback riding. She currently runs a small daycare in her home and says that keeps things lively. She has two cats and a dog – a Yorkie-poo named Comet.

Deanna is also a very good cook - so much so that friends and family members have asked her why she doesn't open a restaurant. As we ended our interview, Deanna was getting ready to bake a home-made banana cream pie with her grandson! Stay tuned – you will be hearing more about Deanna's cooking adventures soon!

## Hi! Its Paula B.

Do any of you make New Year's resolutions? I generally don't but after nearly a year of profound changes that forced more introspection I thought if I could resolve to change something that ONLY I can change, what would it be? As so often happens, I was inspired by a true story:

I purchased a home about 3 years ago to be closer to my daughter and grandchildren – one of whom is Finn, age 5 at that time. Finn is my little buddy and we frequently hang out. On this day, right after I moved in, Finn was over and we were in the backyard where there is an old fashioned clothes line – you know the kind with a T-shaped pole on either end of a long clothes line made of rope stretched between the poles. Finn was looking at it and finally he looked over at me and said “so, Granny, when are you going to open up your zip line?”

Oh, if only I were as cool as he thinks I am.

So, what is my inspiration from this? It is to look at and consider things with a child's sense of wonder and curiosity. To think about the new possibilities and potential of what we generally take for granted. And to not be constrained by the fact that whatever it is may not have been done quite that way before. And most of all to actively seek out the positive aspect – not the negative.

After all, who wouldn't rather go zip lining than hang laundry?

**DID YOU KNOW** – we collect gently used eyeglasses and frames? We pass them along to the Lions' Club who then pass them along to people in need.

**DID YOU KNOW** – we have a lot of audio books available for you to borrow? There are all sorts of titles, including mysteries, adventure and romance. Please call the center if you would like to borrow any.

## **A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU TO UFTRING AUTO GROUP**

As you know, the Uftring Auto Group and the Uftring Ambassadors host a fantastic Christmas party for the CICBVI patrons. This year, for all the right reasons the event could not be scheduled. Instead of a party, Uftring donated one of the most substantial monetary gifts of 2020. We are so grateful for this, especially with donations down due to the pandemic. Uftring has been here to support our work, our patrons and our community and it is very much appreciated.

## **COMING SOON!**

One of the initiatives being spearheaded by Felisa Durr is to increase our visibility throughout the Peoria area. With that in mind, Felisa has spearheaded an effort resulting in a partnership with Unity Point Health to bring their Well Mobile to our Center. The Well Mobile will be offering free Blood Pressure, Cholesterol, Blood Glucose and Pulse Oximetry screenings to the general public right here at the Center. Plans are also in the works for the Illinois Eye Center to partner with us and offer vision screenings. The first Well Mobile date is April 6, with repeat visits the first Tuesday of May, June, August, September and October. Screenings will be offered on a first come, first served basis, from 10:00 AM – noon on those dates. Transportation will be provided for patrons who want to take advantage of this. Stay tuned for more information in the next “Around The Center” newsletter!

## **WINNERS, WINNERS!**

Last month patrons were treated to a Christmas piano concert, complete with a “Name That Tune” style game via Zoom. The team got a perfect score so our guest pianist, Kathy Steinheimer, has agreed to reward them with a “good-bye Covid” party with snacks and fun. The winners were Mark Bean, Xin Lu, Gyla Grigsby, Cora Quinn, Felisa Durr, and Lance Barke. We are looking forward to having another concert of some sort in the Spring and hope more of you will be able to join!

## **PATRON UPDATE**

Is it possible to be both happy and sad at the same time? It is with those feelings that I am sharing the news that our beloved patron, Paul White is moving out of the area. You may recall that Paul has been traveling to Danville and working at the VA three times a week all during this pandemic. The VA has appreciated his dedication and work during this time so offered Paul a promotion to a full time and permanent position. Since this is a Federal position, Paul also gets to apply all his military time and previous VA service so he will be able to fully retire in 7 years with full federal honors and benefits. They even are providing housing for him! Paul says he will miss the Blind Center and being close to his sister, Donna but promises to visit on some weekends and will let us know when he is in town. I have his new address so if you would like it, please call the Center and I will share it with you.

Congratulations, Paul, and best of luck to you as you start this new adventure. You will be missed but will be in our hearts!

## **Happy Birthday!**

January 1 – Dale Anderson

January 5 – Paul White

January 9 – Tom Vogel

Becky Williams

January 11 – Dennis Jurewicz

January 18 – Alice Lopez

January 27 – Otto Johann

January 29 – Carol Klokkenga

January 30 – Kurt Vannaken

January 31 – Chawana Linwood

**CALENDARS** – We still have a few Braille Calendars available. If you would like one, please call the Center – if you get the answering machine, please be sure to leave a message!

## NO-NAME CHICKEN

Here is a super easy and tasty recipe for you to try. The best thing about it is you don't have to measure anything! The following recipe is for two people, but it is easily adjustable for more. You will need:

2 Boneless/skinless chicken breasts -either whole or cut into bite size pieces

1 can of Cream of Mushroom soup

About ½ cup of Sour Crème – but you don't need to measure – just use as much or as little as you like

About ¼ cup Red Wine such as Merlot – again, you don't need to measure – just use as much or as little as you like

A dash of the following seasonings: garlic powder, onion powder, salt and pepper

An equal amount of Minute Rice and water – for two people about 1 to 1 ½ cups should do it – and a pan with a tight lid to fix it in.

Preheat your oven to 350°.

Season the chicken breasts with onion powder, garlic powder, salt and pepper to taste and place in a small baking pan.

Pour the soup over them and stir in a little bit of the wine

Place in the oven for about 30 - 40 minutes – a little less if the chicken is pre-cut

Remove from oven and remove chicken breasts, placing them on a plate for now

Gently stir in the rest of the wine and the sour crème with the soup.

Return the chicken breasts to the pan and place in the oven for another 10 minutes or so.

Meanwhile, bring the water for the rice to a boil. Remove from heat, add the rice, give it a stir and pop the lid on the pan – your rice should be tender in about 10 minutes.

Serve the chicken over a bed of the rice with the sauce over it all. Side dishes could be a nice salad and bread. Enjoy!



## Free Matter for the Blind & Visually Impaired

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### Quote for the Month

"You'll never get bored when you try something new. There's really no limit to what you can do." – Dr. Seuss