## The BVA Beacon

### The New York Regional Group Newsletter

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OFFICERS OF THE NEW YORK REGIONAL GROUP

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WELCOME ABOARD NEW LIFE & ASSOCIATED LIFE MEMBERS

Gerard Damm, Brookhaven; Donald Endres, Vestal;

Warner Murray, NYC PLM; Kenneth Wise, Palmyra

THIS ARTICLE WAS TAKEN FROM THE GULF COAST BLIND REHABILITATION CENTER NEWSLETTER.

Fighting Depression: It’s in the Doing

Erin K. McCrory, Ph.D.

Blind Rehabilitation Psychologist

Depressed mood is commonly associated with vision loss. This comes as no surprise, as vision loss is typically accompanied by greater levels of disability, increased medical bills, loss of independence and difficulty doing activities one used to enjoy. Depressed mood states may be difficult for persons with vision loss to admit, particularly if they are concerned about the impact of their mood on those around them. Indeed, research consistently shows that patients with chronic medical illnesses may suppress their own feelings in order to protect their friends and family.

All levels of visual impairment place persons at risk for depression. Signs of depression include changes in sleep and appetite, disinterest, feeling hopeless, excessive guilt, tearfulness, lack of initiative, difficulty concentrating, irritability, social isolation, decreased energy, trouble concentrating and making decisions, and thoughts of death or suicide.

Fortunately, there are a number of effective treatments available for clinical depression. A recent study conducted by Dr. Barry Rover, a geriatric psychiatrist in Philadelphia, found that adults with age-related macular degeneration responded quite well to a type of therapy called behavioral activation. Simply put, behavioral activation seeks to facilitate awareness between action and mood states, based on the principle that actions cause emotions. Patients are asked to engage in actions that promote positive mood. In this particular study, participants focused their attention on engaging in activities they had once loved (for example, baking, socializing, reading) using adaptive technologies. The study found those persons who engaged in talk therapy and behavioral activation were better able to ward off depression than those persons who received talk therapy alone.

Perhaps this explains the consistent positive outcomes reported by veterans who attend the Gulf Coast Blind Rehabilitation Center, where behavioral activation is a fundamental part of the program. With the aid of assistive devices and adaptive technology, veterans learn skills to engage in previously-enjoyed activities, such as fishing, leatherwork, cooking and related pursuits.

Additionally, orientation and mobility training enhances navigation abilities and restores independence. Though individual and group support is often a necessary and beneficial component of adjustment to blindness, the integration of behavioral activation in rehabilitation services is of tremendous value and shows robust protection against clinical depression.

CURRENCY READER

Coming To You in partnership with the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), Library of Congress, the BEP will begin a pilot program where NLS patrons can pre-order an iBill® currency reader by calling their local Library for the Blind and Disabled or 1-888-657-7323. Once you register, you will be on the list for the first shipment of

readers to be mailed in January. If you are not an NLS patron and would like a currency reader starting January 2, 2015 you can down load the application that will be posted on the following website.

http://www.bep.gov

BVA's NATIONAL EMBLEM EXPLAINED

Thanks to an article in the June 1948 issue of the BVA Bulletin, we know a lot about the meaning and origin of the Association's emblem.

To picture the emblem, think of a sculptured disc.

The face of the disc is a composite of layered symbols inside a red bordered circle. The base if formed by white, fluffy clouds. The next layer features a five-pointed star with each point reaching out to the edge of the circle. To the right of the top point is a blue Christian Cross.

To the left of the top point is a blue Star of David. A red broken bayonet runs vertically, centered on top of the five-pointed star. The top layer of the composite depicts a brown arm reaching from the right and a white arm reaching from the left. In the middle of the emblem, the arms meet in a handshake. Under the hand and the point of the bayonet are the blue capital letters

 "B", "V", "A."

Now that we know what the emblem looks like, let' explore its meaning.

The five-pointed star represents the Armed Forces of the United States. The hands emerging from the background of clouds represent blindness. The clasped hands, one white and the other brown, symbolize the unity of races.

The broken bayonet stands for the fact that blindness resulted from a service-connected injury. The Star of David and the Christian Cross represent the unity of creeds. The initials "BVA" stand for the Blinded Veterans Association.

Thanks to a Bulletin account of an April 12, 1948 meeting, we can go back in history for even more information about the emblem. The meeting was between President Harry Truman and the early leaders of the Blinded Veterans Association.

During the Oval Office gathering, President Truman presented BVA with its official emblem.

In accepting the insignia, BVA National President Jack Brady offered remarks the further explain BVA's symbol. President Brady said, "In this emblem we have tried to express a fact which paradoxically became clearer to us through blindness. Through our years of hospitalization and our close association since that time, we have acquired an insight into the equality of men which we only wish we could pass on to all our fellow citizens. We have learned that discrimination as to color and creed as no foundation in fact.

Blinded veterans have accepted each other simply as fellow human beings with a common problem. When you cannot see, you accept the man you meet on an equal basis, free of all reaction to the color of his skin and of all prejudice as to his Religious belief.

THE OPINION OF THE EDITOR

Hopefully all delegates who represent their regional groups at the BVA National Convention will know the following:

 Roberts Rules, Section 59, Page 589.

 “…[Resolutions Committee] screens and recommends appropriate action on resolutions and original main motions to come before the conventions.”

 Robert’s Rules, Section 59, Pages 616 & 617.

 “Except as the rules may provide otherwise, the Resolutions Committee is required to report all resolutions referred to it, but the committee can, if it wishes, report a resolution with “no recommendations”. If the committee is given the power “not to report” a resolution (thus withholding it from consideration by the committee) a requirement of an unusually high vote within the committee (such as a three-fourths, or two-thirds of the committee members) should always be imposed; and the convention should always be given the power to override such a decision of the Resolutions Committee, and order the committee to report the resolution, by a majority vote.

Want to get crazy with your Apple iOS device? Part 1

Nicole James, M.S.Ed.

CVRT, COMS

Blind Rehab Specialist (iCATS)

Here are some neat, FREE GPS related apps that may get you movin’ and a-groovin’. Check them out:

Talking Goggles

Developer: Sparkling Apps

Description: This app can identify logos, landmarks and CDS, has a video mode that helps you recognize in real-time many things, in picture mode you can take pictures of products and different things and it will recognize it and find related information. The technology of this app is very interesting. This powerful app is improving more and more, try it!

Developer: Accessibility Foundation

Description: With 3D Sound this app can help a low vision or totally blind person get oriented.

***GOD BLESS AMERICA***!