



## **NextGen Insight**

**Volume 4, Issue 1  
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Publications Committee Chair: Greg Lindberg

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Title Page Image Description: Background - Black night sky with dim stars in a horizontal rectangle. Foreground - All text is in white font. NextGen spans the width of the image with the N and G capitalized. ACB is in capital letters above the word Next. A yellow star is shooting out of the top right corner of the letter x and hovering over the word Gen. Underneath and spanning the width of the word NextGen are the words Develop Lead Elevate (1/3 of the font size of ACB NextGen) with a dot between each word.

“Peace of mind happens to a man only after he has developed deep insight, only after he starts seeing the things in the right perspective.”

– Sam Veda

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## **President’s Message**

Dear ACB Next Generation Family,

Welcome to 2024! I know we are already a month and a half into the year, but we are still at the beginning of what I feel is something special. As we move into rhythms of stability, structure, and authenticity, we are also moving toward transition. At the same time, there is plenty of excitement we can anticipate this year. Hopefully you can feel my personal excitement while reading my message.

Five years ago around this time, I found myself in a room in Alexandria, VA with so many of you ready to invest in our affiliate. I remember the excitement and the anxiety of starting something new. As I reflect back on this time, I can’t help to think that the time between then and now went by so quickly, yet so much has occurred. I am now in my last year as president, and as one of the founding members of this organization, I’m so proud of everything we have accomplished. In the beginning, the odds were

not in our favor. There were people trying to talk us out of becoming an organization out of fear of failure. It was rather difficult to find the support we needed, but there were supporters ready to step in and assist. The work to build the organization became easier as new talent began to roll in. New members brought innovation, and current members kept traditions alive. Together, this combination continues to keep us thriving. I plan to spend the rest of this year savoring every minute I can in this organization – the celebrations, the members, the milestones, and even the storms we brave.

This past December, new board members were elected, and new committee chairs were appointed. I would like to welcome Michael Babcock from Oregon, Amber Grant from Tennessee, and Vika Trussell from Georgia to the board of directors. I would also like to welcome back Lindsey LaVere from Michigan and Hindley Williams from Maryland who are starting their first full terms on the board. Another recent change which occurred before Christmas was the appointment of a new secretary. I would like to welcome Kristen Kelling as our newly appointed secretary. At the same time, it was very hard for me personally to say goodbye to three board members, even though they are still sticking around. I would like to thank Cassie Trospen, Moe Carpenter, and Shane Aguilera for their service to our Board of Directors. Here is

some good news about these three individuals: Cassie will continue to serve as a co-chair of our Convention Committee with Melanie Sinohui. Moe will continue to serve on the Fundraising Committee as she welcomes Lindsey LaVere as her co-chair. Shane Aguilera was asked by Matt Selm to co-chair the Membership Committee. Congratulations to everyone! May this year bring you joy and blessings on your individual leadership journeys.

I am so excited to share an exciting event coming up in less than a week. We are teaming up with 30 ACB Leaders to bring our members an exclusive opportunity to network. Registration is open for our first-ever Leadership LinkUp, which will be held on Wednesday, February 21 from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Eastern, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Pacific. This is a members-only event you definitely want to attend. Watch the email list for more details.

Have you registered for DC Leadership yet? Whether you are attending in person or virtually, you are sure to receive lots of useful information. It's a powerful experience if you can attend in person; however, I am extremely thankful that ACB offers a virtual option. An announcement from our Membership Committee regarding this event is also included in this newsletter, and details are being shared on our email list.

Before we know it, April will be here, and it will be time to “Spring Into Auction.” Our Fundraising Committee is hard at work planning the event, seeking donations, and making sure everyone has a wonderful time. Stay tuned for more information, and plan to join us on Sunday, April 7 at 7 p.m. Eastern, 4 p.m. Pacific.

Speaking of Spring, it will soon be time to lace up our shoes – or should I say flip-flops – as the ACB Next Generation Allstars team gears up for our fourth year participating in the ACB Brenda Dillon Memorial Walk. I love this fundraiser. It celebrates the life and legacy of Brenda Dillon, the person who started the ACB Walk and a well-known leader within ACB. I’m honored for this to be my third year serving on the ACB Walk Committee, and to have been appointed as co-chair. I enjoy planning this event and learning about the history behind it.

One final thing I wanted to bring to your attention is our Parliamentary Bootcamp. As your president, I believe it is important to provide you with educational opportunities to help you grow and develop not just as a member, but as a leader as well, if that is your desire. Each Tuesday in May, we will be partnering with ACB leaders to provide a hands-on learning experience for our members to learn about parliamentary processes and procedures. Topics will range from discussion and debate of resolutions and

amendments, Robert's Rules of Order, and possibly even a mock meeting. Please watch for more details as the date approaches.

Wow! Lots of wonderful things are happening in our organization. None of this would be possible if we didn't have a wide range of talents and interests within our leadership and our committees. The energy here in NextGen is outstanding.

May this year bless you as you find your place in our organization!

Warmest regards,  
Amanda Selm  
President, ACB Next Generation

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## **2023 Annual Meeting and Election Results**

by Hindley Williams

In December 2023, ACB Next Generation held its annual business meeting. At that meeting and online in the days following, the membership voted on key amendments as well as board members.



The affiliate was scheduled to elect board members, since officers were still in the middle of their terms. After elections, however, our secretary, Cassie Trosper, decided to step down. As a result, we now have a new secretary in addition to the five new board members. We thank Cassie for her dedicated service to ACB Next Generation. We are also grateful for the enumerable contributions of Moe Carpenter and Shane Aguilera, both of whom did not seek reelection this year.

The newly filled positions are as follows:

- Secretary: Kristen Kelling
- Board Member: Michael Babcock
- Board Member: Amber Grant
- Board Member: Lindsey LaVere
- Board Member: Vika Trussell
- Board Member: Hindley Williams

Three out of four of the proposed amendments this year passed and are now part of Next Generation policy. The three amendments are:

- Website has been established as a committee and is no longer a subcommittee
- Members must now be a dues-paying member of ACB Next Generation for a minimum of six months before running for the board

- The affiliate is now authorized to offer lifetime memberships (final details still being established as of the publication of this newsletter)

The amendment that did not pass is:

- Cohabitation/conflict of interest

Thank you to all ACB Next Generation members who voted in this year's elections. Your votes ensure our affiliate can establish policy and elect board members, and your votes and opinions matter.

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## **New Board Member Bios**

### **Michael Babcock**

As an expert in audio and customer service, Michael's career is built on a passion for technology and helping others understand its uses. As a co-founder of "Unmute Presents," a live technology Q&A on ACB Community every Tuesday, he is committed to making technology approachable and user-friendly. He believes in empowering individuals to confidently navigate the digital world, simplifying the complexities of technology to enhance learning and exploration.

## **Amber Grant**

Amber Grant resides in the Nashville, TN area but is originally from New Jersey. She has been a member since 2020 and has served on the Publications Committee since 2023. She loves to read and write and enjoys serving on the committee so she can share her unique experiences with others. Amber works for the Department of Children and Families where she assists people with their Medicaid and Food Stamp benefits. Prior to her current role, she worked in a call center and has been a website accessibility tester. In her spare time, she loves to hang out with friends and family, listen to music, attend concerts, and travel (she has been to almost every U.S. state).

## **Vika Trussell**

Vika, residing in Sharpsburg, Georgia, thrives as the co-chair of the Public Relations/eCommunications Committee and serves on the Programs Committee. Passionate about shaping the future for young blind and visually impaired leaders, Vika embraces her role in the Next Generation affiliate. Beyond her community involvement, she finds joy in reading, spending time with family and friends, and listening to music. Vika is a dynamic individual, weaving together her volunteer commitments with a rich tapestry of personal interests and connections.

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## **Membership Renewal Announcement**

by The Membership Committee

If you have not yet done so, we encourage you to renew your membership for ACB Next Generation for 2024, and bring a friend along too. Joining ACB Next Generation not only provides you access to our numerous member perks, programs, events, and other opportunities, but you can be a part of one of the greatest affiliates in ACB. We hope you will renew, and please encourage your friends to join our growing affiliate in 2024.

If you need to update your information before renewing your membership, please complete the updated membership application so we can capture some additional demographic data for ACB. The application is available at <https://acbnextgeneration.org/membership/>.

If your information is up to date, then you can pay your dues for 2024 at <https://checkout.square.site/pay/2c25a2ac-64f0-4d44-9c21-ffeec411a04b>

Please only make one payment through this link. Dues are only \$15 per calendar year.

We look forward to another great year with you along for the ride as a member of ACB NextGen!

If you have any questions, feel free to contact [membership@acbnextgeneration.org](mailto:membership@acbnextgeneration.org).

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## **2024 ACB NextGen “Spring Into Auction” Announcement**

by The Fundraising Committee

Hello ACB Next Generation,

This is Megan Meigs from the ACB NextGen Fundraising Committee. We would like to thank you all for your support last year, from our first-ever auction in April to our Pure Haven fundraiser which closed out in December.

We have another fun year ahead, kicking off with our second-annual Spring Into Auction which will be held on Sunday, April 7 on Zoom and streamed on ACB Media. Be on the lookout for more information and how to register. In the meantime, if you would like to donate something for the auction, we would love to hear from you. We hope to showcase a variety of items for our members to bid on. So, if you bake, knit, crochet, have another special skill that you would like to share, or if you have

gift cards or other items that you would like to offer, please reach out to us by February 29 at [Fundraising@acbnextgeneration.org](mailto:Fundraising@acbnextgeneration.org). We would also appreciate donations of funds for shipping costs for certain items.

Thank you again. We look forward to another great year with you all!

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## **Announcing a Relaunch of the ACB NextGen Mentorship Program**

by The Membership Committee

The ACB NextGen Membership Committee is excited to relaunch the Mentorship Program for our members here in 2024. We initially launched this program at one point but did not get as much interest as we had hoped. So, we have decided on a new approach this year to try to get more members engaged in this initiative which we believe is critical for the future of our organization and ACB Next Generation's involvement in ACB at large.

Be on the lookout on the ACB NextGen email list for more details about how to get involved as either a mentor or mentee in this exciting program.

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## **Take Part in the ACB Leadership Conference**

ACB's 2024 Leadership Conference will be a hybrid event. ACB's Board Meeting, Presidents' Meeting, Legislative Seminar, and Capitol Hill Visits will take place between Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, and Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, at the Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel in Arlington, VA.

### **Conference Registration**

Registration to attend the DC Leadership Conference in-person will cost \$95 for those who register by Monday, February 5, or \$125 for those who register on or after Tuesday, February 6. Registration includes the conference registration fee, a welcome reception on Saturday, March 2, and luncheon meals on Sunday, March 3, and Monday, March 4. Deadline to register for in-person attendance is Friday, February 23, 2024.

Registration to attend the DC Leadership Conference virtually costs \$25 and includes the conference registration fee. Deadline to register for virtual attendance is Friday, February 23, 2024.

To register, please visit [members.acb.org](https://members.acb.org). Log in to your account or create an account by clicking the "Create an Account" button. If you have an account but can't remember your username and/or password, please call our Minnesota office at (612) 332-3242 or our Virginia office at (202) 467-5081. Once you have logged in, visit the "DC Leadership Registration" link at the top of the page, read through the instructions, and hit the "Begin with Preferences" button. To register by phone, please call our Minnesota office at (612) 332-3242 or our Virginia office at (202) 467-5081.

## **2024 Legislative Imperatives**

- Websites and Software Applications Accessibility Act - S.2984 and H.R.5813
- Communications, Video, and Technology Accessibility Act – S.2494 and H.R.4858
- Medical Device Nonvisual Accessibility Act – H.R.1328
- Medicare and Medicaid Dental, Vision, and Hearing Benefits Act – S.842 and the Medicare Dental, Vision, and Hearing Benefit Act – H.R.33. H.R.33 is the House companion bill to S.842, although it has a slightly different title.



## **Schedule of Events**

- Friday, March 1: Afternoon Tour (TBD) and Evening Open House at the new ACB Office in Alexandria, VA
- Saturday, March 2: Board Meeting (9:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET) & Evening Welcome Reception
- Sunday, March 3: President’s Meeting (including luncheon) (9:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET) & Evening Dine Around in Pentagon City
- Monday, March 4: Legislative Seminar (including luncheon) (9:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET)
- Tuesday, March 5: Attendees may visit Capitol Hill to meet with their representatives.

Please visit <https://www.acb.org/acb-2024-leadership-conference> for hotel information and more details about the Leadership Conference!

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## **Financial Assistance for DC Leadership Conference**

by The Membership Committee

The American Council of the Blind DC Leadership Conference is an opportunity for ACB to gather and hear updates on the various advocacy imperatives and issues facing the blind and low vision community. Many state

affiliates also take the opportunity to meet with their congressional delegation and ask for their support of proposed legislation.

Keep in mind that preregistration closed back on Monday, February 5. As of this publication, registration is now \$125 for in-person attendees and \$25 for virtual attendees until it closes on Friday, February 23.

ACB Next Generation is excited to offer financial assistance for its members to attend the DC Leadership Conference. For those who need financial assistance, we will reimburse the preregistration fee of \$95 for in-person or \$25 for virtual participants to attend DC Leadership. Assistance will be given on a first-come, first-served basis. We anticipate providing assistance for two in-person and five virtual attendees.

In return, we require that you are a currently paid member of ACB Next Generation for 2024 and that you tell us what you found interesting or what you enjoyed about the seminar. You will be asked to participate in an interview about your experience as a guest on our Next Up with NextGen Podcast and to contribute your thoughts in writing to our ACB NextGen blog.

After you register for DC Leadership, please send a copy of your receipt to [treasurer@acbnextgeneration.org](mailto:treasurer@acbnextgeneration.org) and to [membership@acbnextgeneration.org](mailto:membership@acbnextgeneration.org). Please note that reimbursement will be issued after the event in early April and only after we have verified your participation with the podcast and blog.

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## **It's a Great Time to Get Connected and Build a Strong Leadership Foundation!**

by Kenneth Semien, Sr. and edited by Melanie Sinohui

Complete your online application to become a member of the Class of 2024 Durward K. McDaniel (DKM) First-Timers or the Class of 2024 ACB JPMorgan Chase Leadership Fellows by submitting an online application for consideration by April 3, 2024.

Prepare to experience an array of opportunities to learn and grow personally as you connect with other like-minded individuals. We'll get together in Jacksonville, FL for the 63rd annual ACB Conference and Convention from July 5-12, 2024 and become more familiar with ACB's wealth of inclusive convention activities.

The Class of 2024 DKM First-Timers will be able to enjoy the privilege of connecting with members of previous classes, ACB leaders, and others from around the nation.

The Class of 2024 ACB JPMorgan Chase Leadership Fellows seeks to identify five curious ACB members who have demonstrated leadership potential and have an eagerness to enhance their lives and others they meet through personalized leadership development activities.

To be eligible for consideration for both awards, each applicant must meet specific requirements, which include being age 18 or older; blind or visually impaired; an ACB member in good standing (current on membership dues), and for the DKM First-Timers award, never attended an in-person ACB national convention. Applicants must be able to travel independently, navigate the convention hotel, and request support when necessary. Another step of eligibility will be the expectation of undergoing a 30-minute interview with a team of DKM committee members during mid-April. In addition, a letter of recommendation from a state or special-interest affiliate president must be submitted and should include specific references to the applicant's demonstrated leadership potential and contributions. Please refrain from asking your chapter president to submit a letter of recommendation.

The DKM program and ACB honor recipients by funding round-trip air travel and supporting transportation, hotel accommodations (double occupancy), per diem allowance for meals and incidentals, leadership institute, reception, banquet tickets, the general convention registration fee, and other activities determined by the committee. Optional tours and other fun activities are not covered by the program.

The responsibilities of each recipient include, but are not limited to, attending the full week of conference and convention activities from Friday, July 5 through Friday, July 12; participating in daily general sessions and the Keys to the Convention seminar, along with special-interest and committee seminars, while interacting with ACB leaders and fellow members.

Apply by clicking the following link:

<https://forms.gle/Maqx45pBsDw4dk5y5> and Letters of Recommendation should be submitted to Kenneth Semien, Sr., via email at [semien.k@outlook.com](mailto:semien.k@outlook.com).

All questions should be sent to DKM Chair Kenneth Semien, Sr., [semien.k@outlook.com](mailto:semien.k@outlook.com), or dial (409) 866-5838.

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## **Cosmic Committee Corner: Advocacy Committee**

by The Advocacy Committee

The ACB Next Generation Advocacy Committee is committed to tackling various issues, including transportation, video game accessibility, internal ACB issues, and other relevant concerns. One of our primary objectives is to replicate successful advocacy initiatives from other countries, leveraging their unique approaches to address challenges related to blindness.

Another crucial focus is to enhance the advocacy skills of ACB Next Generation members, empowering them to effectively advocate for themselves and others. This entails providing a comprehensive understanding of advocacy principles and strategies to enable our members to champion positive change. We are open to taking on any advocacy issue or project that ACB Next Generation members may have. We believe that by utilizing everyone's diverse experiences and approaches to issues, we increase our chances of successfully resolving the advocacy challenges we face as a committee.

Feel free to contact the Advocacy Committee with any questions or suggestions on advocacy efforts by emailing [advocacy@acbnextgeneration.org](mailto:advocacy@acbnextgeneration.org).

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## **KCBNG Update**

by Joey Couch

Hello from the Bluegrass state!

Like most everyone, we are waiting for spring to show itself. The holidays were very quiet for us, but we got rolling with the new year.

On January 25, we had a very well attended Thursday night huddle call. This call focused on the various ways one could use streaming services to listen to the audio description tracks of movies. Our Thursday night huddles are held on the fourth Thursday of the month at 8 p.m. ET, and information about these events is sent out to the ACB Next Generation email list.

We are also encouraging our membership to get involved with the DC Leadership Conference coming up in March, and we are planning to Dine Out at a local restaurant in April.

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## **My Experience as a Guide Dog Handler at Universal Studios Florida**

By Greg Lindberg

Back in December, I had the opportunity to visit Universal Studios Florida in Orlando for the first time in many years. In addition to returning after all that time, I also returned as a guide dog handler. I was a bit nervous about this, wondering how my experience with my partner-in-crime guiding me would go and whether I was even making the right decision to bring her along.

I researched some info online and found a helpful service animal page on the Universal website. However, like with anything, you do not exactly know what to expect until you arrive somewhere in person and can experience it firsthand.

When we arrived, it was quite a long walk to the entrance from the parking garage. It had been a while since Goldie and I had been on moving sidewalks, a.k.a. people movers – so that was a bit of an adventure, especially when we reached the end of each one and had to jump off. But there was a regular path you could also walk if you did not want to use them.



It was neat to see the kennels they had for service animals while their handlers enjoyed some of the rides. My friend and I went on the Hollywood Rip Ride Rocket, one of the tallest and fastest rollercoasters in Florida and potentially the United States. I was able to put Goldie in one of the kennels, and an attendant stayed with her in the same room where the kennel was housed the entire time. This put me at ease knowing someone was right by her side while she was in there. The attendant mentioned that the kennels are large enough to fit a miniature horse.

Some of the rides actually do allow service animals on board, including one of *The Simpsons* rides and others that have enough room for these animals and are not as intense as the coasters. It is nice that they offer this option in some cases, but it depends on how comfortable the handler feels about bringing their animal onto the rides and how the animal will manage them.

One particular challenge that I discovered, however, was getting to the relief areas. The park has two of them, but you have to walk quite a long way to get to even one of them. In my opinion, they should have one of these areas closer to the front of the park.

Overall, I thought it was a mostly positive experience bringing Goldie to a theme park for the first time. I might

consider leaving her behind if I knew I was going to ride a bunch of rides or planned on walking around the park a bit more than normal. I just try to avoid leaving her at home or with someone when I can, but I know there are cases when bringing a guide dog somewhere is simply not in the cards for a variety of reasons.

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## **Blog and Podcast Roundup**

by Greg Lindberg

In addition to publishing the NextGen Insight, the Publications Committee also produces blog posts and the Next Up with NextGen podcast. Below is a roundup of recent blog and podcast content.

### Blog Posts

Passion Project Portal: Maria Kristic (by Hindley Williams):

<https://acbnextgeneration.org/2023/10/25/passion-project-portal-maria-kristic-by-hindley-williams/>

5 Helpful Tips for Blind and Visually Impaired Travelers (by Amber Grant):

<https://acbnextgeneration.org/2024/01/15/5-helpful-tips-for-blind-and-visually-impaired-travelers-by-amber-grant/>

Passion Project Portal: Liz Bottner (by Greg Lindberg):  
<https://acbnextgeneration.org/2024/01/23/passion-project-portal-liz-bottner-by-greg-lindberg/>

Next Up with NextGen Podcast

Discussing Reiki with Nick Silver:  
<https://acbnextgeneration.org/2024/01/11/discussing-reiki-with-nick-silver-a-blind-licensed-massage-therapist/>

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## **NLS Patron Announce Service**

Want to get the latest news and updates from the National Library Service (NLS) including information about upcoming events and projects? Introducing Patron Announce, a regular email listserv service from your Patron Engagement Section (PES) team which includes timely information about NLS program, services, and products. New announcements arrive straight in your inbox a few times a week.

If you are interested in signing up, please send your name and email address to PES at [NLSPES@loc.gov](mailto:NLSPES@loc.gov). You can unsubscribe from the listserv at any time.

(Reference URL: <https://www.loc.gov/nls/services-and-resources/patron-services-and-events/#Patron-Announce>). This page also lists info for other things that may be of interest, including recordings of past “Many Faces of BARD” and Quarterly Patron Corner events.

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## **Autonomous Vehicles- So Much More than a Cool Date Night Notion: Part 1 – Look Ma, No Hands!**

by Ron Brooks

Ron Brooks lives in Phoenix, is a long-time member of the ACB, and a 30-year veteran of the public transit industry where he is focused on making bus, rail, paratransit, and other services accessible and equitable for people with disabilities. As a believer in the power of emerging technologies to transform lives, Ron regularly writes and presents on the potential of autonomous vehicle technologies. To learn more find him on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ron-brooks-066b174/>.

### **Introduction – It All Bega on Date Night**

I have spent 30 years working in the public transit industry to make transit and paratransit services more accessible for people with disabilities, and I’ve spent a more than fifty-

year lifetime being first low vision and then blind. And when the time finally came to take my wife of 27 years (who is also blind) on a date in a Waymo autonomous vehicle that didn't have a nosy driver interrupting our quiet conversation or using his rear-view mirror to watch us hold hands in the backseat, I thought I had died and gone to Heaven.

That was January of 2023, and since then, I've taken dozens of trips around Phoenix using Waymo One, a commercial rideshare service operating throughout portions of Phoenix and the nearby suburbs of Tempe, Chandler, Gilbert, and Mesa. I've visited coffee shops, gone shopping, run downtown for meetings, enjoyed additional date nights with Lisa, and even gotten myself, my guide dog, York, and my baggage to the Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport for a number of business trips, including a trip I just took to New Orleans last month. I have also written and spoken about autonomous vehicles (Avs for short), and I've been a voice within my industry and within the disability community for the quick development and deployment of Avs in the most accessible and inclusive manner possible.

As a writer and public speaker, it's essential to gain the attention of my audience, and Avs make this easy. Put simply, Avs are new and cool, and everyone has opinions

about them, ranging from “You wouldn’t catch me dead in one of those things,” to “I’ll buy one as soon as they’re available.” I love the engagement, but there’s also a good bit of ignorance and uncertainty about what Avs are, about the extent to which they’re accessible, about whether or not they’re actually safe, and even about whether they really exist. Yep, there are people who actually believe that Avs are a giant hoax—not real at all. So when I was invited to write a piece on Avs for the CCLVI’s newsletter, I gladly accepted, and here it is—in two parts. Part 1 will focus on the meaning of “autonomous” and on some of the potential use cases for this rapidly evolving technology.

## **What Does Autonomous Mean?**

The terms “Autonomous Vehicles” and “Autonomous Driving” mean very different things to different people. For example, if you ask the average American, “Name a type of self-driving car, most will answer “Tesla.” In point of fact, most, if not all, vehicles built and sold by Tesla are not really autonomous. A driver is required to intervene frequently, and failure to do so can have catastrophic results. To create some clarity around what “autonomous” means, the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) created a scale which is laid out in an SAE publication titled “Levels of Autonomous Driving.” The scale ranges from 0 (no autonomy) to 5 (full autonomy). Most so-called “autonomous vehicles” fall somewhere in-between. For

purposes of our two-part discussion, we will focus on SAE Levels 4 and 5 because both levels refer to vehicles that operate autonomously—no driver required. The only difference is that vehicles classified as SAE Level 4 can only operate inside a geofence—an area that is fully mapped, and SAE Level 5 vehicles, at least in theory, can operate anywhere. (BTW in case you're wondering, most Tesla vehicles operate at SAE Level 3 autonomy, which means that the vehicle can operate autonomously sometimes and requires human intervention at others.)

## **Potential Uses for Autonomous Vehicles**

Given that the ultimate goal of AV manufacturers is to replace human-operated vehicles, the potential use cases for Avs are the same as for human-operated vehicles. Put another way, if you can imagine a way that someone might use a car, truck, SUV, van, or bus, then an AV should eventually be able to do the same thing. Of course, some of these use cases will come more quickly than others. Here are a handful of passenger transportation use cases where Avs may begin operating more quickly.

- Service that circulates within a residential community, office park, along a resort corridor, or within a university or medical campus – These environments are typically (although not always) relatively small and controlled by

a private entity, which makes mapping and service deployment easier. The types of vehicles providing these services are often small minibuses or vans which can operate on a planned route and at a relatively slow speed of about 35 miles per hour or less. A number of AV providers have already operated pilot projects just like this, including a gated residential community in Southwest Florida, the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida, a circulator in Yellowstone National Park, and others.

- **Microtransit** – Microtransit refers to an app-based on-demand transportation service that operates within a relatively small defined service area. Although no two microtransit programs are exactly the same, most allow customers to use an app or a call center to call and request a trip between either their pick-up address or a nearby street corner and a nearby transit center or station. AVs are not yet providing microtransit, but because many of the characteristics of circulator services and microtransit are similar, it is likely that microtransit will be an early use case for AV technologies and services.
- **Rideshare Services** – There are a number of AV service providers, including Waymo, Cruise and Xoox who are developing vehicles which are tailor-made for rideshare



fleets—think Uber and Lyft without drivers. Both Waymo and Cruise have launched full operations within select markets—although as of this writing, Cruise operations are suspended in the wake of an accident where a woman knocked into the path of a Cruise vehicle by a human-operated vehicle) was also struck by the Cruise vehicle. In both cases, services operate much like other rideshare services. Customers download a mobile app, which they can then use to request trips, monitor the status of their rides, and then pay for service. The mobile apps also allow customers to carry out other functions that are specific to autonomous vehicles, such as locating the car once it has arrived, unlocking the car door, and getting navigational assistance between the drop-off location and the customer’s ultimate destination, which may be located away from where the vehicle is able to safely park.

- Pre-scheduled and On-demand Paratransit - A growing number of transit agencies are incorporating the use of rideshare services like UZURV, Silver Ride, Uber, and Lyft into their paratransit programs, and in 2019, Valley Metro, the local transit agency serving the Phoenix area, conducted a pilot program bringing AV service provided by Waymo into its RideChoice paratransit on-demand program. Meanwhile, Access Services in Los Angeles is also working to bring AVs into its ADA paratransit

program, so there is definitely interest for expanding the use of Avs to transport older adults and people with disabilities.

## **Coming Up in Part 2**

Vehicles are becoming more autonomous, and there are lots of potential ways we can put them to good use. But what about accessibility? And what about safety? In the next installment of our two-part series, we'll explore both topics and provide some thoughts on when you might encounter one of these autonomous vehicles in the wild just outside your front door.

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## **Want to Win a \$10 Gift Card?**

This year, The Publications Committee is giving out a \$10 gift card to one lucky reader of each issue of the NextGen Insight newsletter! All you have to do is read it and answer the following two questions:

1. What was your favorite article in this issue of the Insight and why? Please explain with a thoughtful response (at least two sentences).
2. What type of content/article would you like to see in an upcoming issue of the NextGen Insight?

Please be specific with your answer as we want to ensure we are serving our readers with informative, useful, and interesting content.

Please email your responses to these two questions by Friday, March 1 to [publications@acbnextgeneration.org](mailto:publications@acbnextgeneration.org). One lucky winner will be selected and contacted with their prize. Happy reading and good luck!

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## **Calendar of Events**

Everyone is welcome to attend these events by accessing the Zoom mobile app, visiting the Zoom website at <https://zoom.us>, or calling (312) 626-6799, and entering the appropriate meeting ID and passcode.

You may sign up to receive reminders and Zoom details by subscribing to the ACB Next Generation email list.

Please send a blank email to

[main+subscribe@acbnextgeneration.groups.io](mailto:main+subscribe@acbnextgeneration.groups.io)

In addition, many ACB Next Generation events are listed on the ACB Community Call schedule.

### **February 2024**

15 - February NextGen Insight published

21 - Leadership LinkUp (members-only event) – 7 p.m. ET

24 - Saturday Night Live Hangout - 7 p.m. ET

### **March 2024**

1-5 - ACB DC Leadership Conference

11 - ACB Next Generation Board Meeting - 8 p.m. ET

16 - Saturday Night Live Hangout - 7 p.m. ET

19 - Monthly Education Program - 8 p.m. ET

## **April 2024**

7 - ACB Next Generation Auction – TIME TBD

8 - ACB Next Generation Board Meeting - 8 p.m. ET

16 - Monthly Education Program - 8 p.m. ET

27 - Saturday Night Live Hangout - 7 p.m. ET

## **May 2024**

13 - ACB Next Generation Board Meeting - 8 p.m. ET

15 - May NextGen Insight published

21 - Monthly Education Program - 8 p.m. ET

25 - Saturday Night Live Hangout - 7 p.m. ET

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DISCLAIMER: The opinions expressed in the content of this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the opinions of ACB Next Generation as an organization.

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The NextGen Insight is published four times per year: (February 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15) in a digital format via email and posted to our website the following month. Send newsletter items for consideration to [publications@acbnextgeneration.org](mailto:publications@acbnextgeneration.org).

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## **How to Reach Us**

Email Address: [ACBNextGen@gmail.com](mailto:ACBNextGen@gmail.com)

Phone Number: (202) 524-0909

Website: <http://www.acbnextgeneration.org>

Social Media:

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