



Sightless Children Club News

MARCH 2020

THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS:

- REMEMBER TO SHARE AMAZON SMILE WITH YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY
- A VIRTUAL CLUB MEETING VIA WEB X IS SCHEDULED FORMONDAY, APRIL 20TH AT 7:00. WATCH YOUR EMAIL FOR AN INVITATION TO JOIN IN!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Blind Movie Critic 2
- Another Erik? 3
- “Cruising” Ralph Teetor 4
- Please Remember 4

So Many Things to Miss

There are just so many things to miss during the corona virus pandemic: freedom, hugs & handshakes, movies, restaurants, haircuts, and of course, unlimited access to toilet paper! More than any of these, perhaps we miss the social interaction that Americans have always taken for granted. Here at SCC, we certainly

miss getting together with you for our monthly club



meetings, and hope to be able to restart them soon. In the meanwhile, it seems we could all use a bit of good news, inspiration, and hope

for the future. With that in mind, this newsletter is filled with stories about individuals who have done great things despite, or even because of, blindness or vision impairment. We hope you'll be able to forget COVID-19 for a bit, sit back, relax, enjoy, and be inspired!

Last month at SCC...Whoopie for IEPs

The business portion of the February club meeting included a financial report, details on efforts to sell the building, and

the cancellation of the proposed adaptive Easter egg hunt due to scheduling constraints. We hope to have this

activity next spring. Next, club members shared practical ideas for IEP meetings while enjoying...what else? Whoopie pies!

Blind Movie Critic



Meet Tommy Edison

"I'm not distracted by all the beautiful shots and attractive people. I watch a movie for the writing and acting."

By its nature, film is a visual medium. You would think an art form intended primarily for the eyes wouldn't interest a blind person, but you would be wrong. Not only does Tommy Edison watch movies, he reviews them on YouTube. Even though he was born without vision, Edison has always loved film, and when he started posting reviews three years ago, his videos attracted thousands of viewers. Even Roger Ebert gave Tommy two thumbs up. Edison has given his take on every-

thing from *The Hunger Games* to *Reservoir Dogs*, but he approaches movies differently from most film fans.

"I'm not distracted by all the beautiful shots and attractive people," he once said. "I watch a movie for the writing and acting." Since he only judges what he can hear, Edison doesn't care for CGI-heavy action blockbusters. On the other hand, he's a big fan of *Die Hard*.

Even more fascinating than his reviews are the videos on his second channel, where he answers

interesting questions from his viewers, such as how a blind person learns to smile, whether blind people can understand descriptions of color, and whether Edison would want to see if he was granted the ability. Simple yet profound, Edison's personal vlogs give an amazing insight into the world of the blind.



This section includes a comic picturing a blind man walking past a large print sign that says, "Important, please read braille sign" and an arrow pointing to a Braille strip. (Of course the blind man has no idea the braille strip exists!)

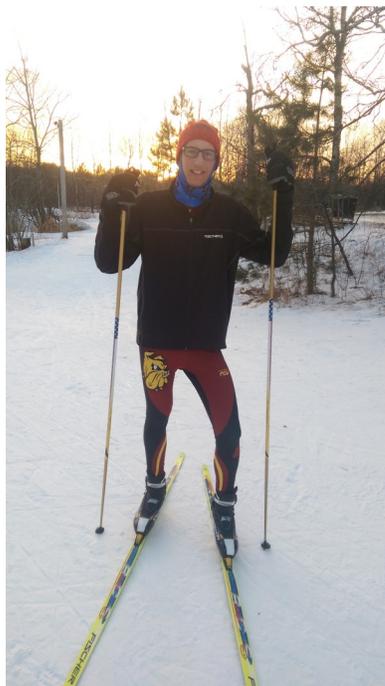
“Home is a shelter from storms...
all sorts of storms” William J. Barnette

Following in the Steps of Erik

Weihenmayer

We’ve already told you about Erik Weihenmayer, the blind adventurer who scaled Mount Everest, but he isn’t the only visually challenged superhuman laughing in Mother Nature’s face. Meet former Royal Navy sailor Alan Lock. Growing up, Lock dreamed of becoming a submarine officer, but during training, he lost his eyesight in six short weeks to macular degeneration. Lock views the world through “frosted glass with blind spots” dotting his vision, but he wasn’t going to let a little thing like blindness bring him down. Inspired by his disability, Lock set out to conquer the world.

Between 2003 and 2012, he competed in 18 marathons, climbed Mount Elbrus, and became the first blind person to row across the Atlantic Ocean. Still not satisfied with his list of awesome achievements, Lock decided to try something even cooler—literally. With the help of two sighted friends and a guide, the 31-year-old set off from the Antarctic coast, determined to ski to the South Pole. Hauling a 60-kilogram (130 lb) sled around his waist and battling freezing winds, Lock and his companions traveled 960 kilometers (600mi) over 39 days, snacking on dehydrat-



Erik Weihenmayer isn’t the only visually challenged superhuman laughing in Mother Nature’s face.

ed foods and chunks of butter. Not only did he become the first blind person to reach the South Pole, he earned over \$25,000 for charities that help the visually challenged.

Please remember to tell your friends and family how they can support the mission of SCC through the amazon smile program.



All they have to do is go to the Sightless Children Club website and click on the link!

“Cruising” With Ralph Teetor

Anyone who’s ever driven a car owes a debt of gratitude to Ralph Teetor. During the 1940s, he invented one of the most useful features in your automobile: cruise control. That’s extremely impressive, considering that Teetor went blind at age five. He lost his vision in a shop accident, but that didn’t stop him from tinkering and building things. In fact, it gave him an edge that sighted inventors lack. Not only could he better concentrate on his tasks, he wasn’t constrained by what his eyes told him was standard or acceptable. He was free to create whatever he saw in his mind, and he created

quite a few cool things in his day. In 1902, the 12-year-old built a car out of spare parts. After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania in 1912, he developed a new kind of fishing rod and reel, a locking mechanism, and a method of balancing steam turbine rotors in torpedo boat destroyers. Eventually, he opened his own corporation, which specialized in piston rings, but his greatest achievement came during World War II, when he was riding in a car driven by his lawyer. As the story goes, the attorney couldn’t talk and drive at the same time. Whenever he started talking, he eased off the breaks. When he

stopped, he stepped on the gas. This erratic driving quickly nauseated his blind passenger. Frustrated with his friend’s inability to drive, Teetor came up with the concept of cruise control. Ten years later, he was applying for a patent, and soon after, it started showing up in Chrysler automobiles. Today, nearly every car on the road has cruise control, all thanks to a blind inventor and a lousy driver.

