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Center for Independent Living

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Obama Announces ADAAG Revisions Amid ADA Celebration

Source: New Ability Magazine

Speaking at a White House celebration of the 20th anniversary of the ADA, President Obama announced the release of updated federal regulations implementing the Act's provisions for accessibility.

During the July 26 ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House, Obama announced the updated ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities, the regulations and standards governing design and construction of public accommodations covered under titles II and III of the ADA. Updated regulations will also cover a wide variety of issues, such as sale of tickets for concerts and sporting events, and guidelines for accommodation of service animals.

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ets for concerts and sporting events, and guidelines for accommodation of service animals.

"Beginning 18 months from now, all new buildings must be constructed in a way that's compliant with the new 2010 standards for the design of doors and windows and elevators and bathrooms — buildings like stores and restaurants and schools and stadiums and hospitals and hotels and theaters," Obama said.

- Provisions covering hotel room reservations, including requirements that people with disabilities be able to reserve accessible hotel rooms in the same manner and at the same price as other guests.

The new guidelines also define "service animal" as a dog individually trained to work or perform tasks for a person with a disability. Exotic animals such as monkeys and reptiles, or animals who provide only emotional support, are excluded from this definition.

The revised ADAAG also include a "safe harbor" provision, exempting existing structures from compliance so long as they conform to the previous guidelines. The new regulations would kick in only when the structure is modified or upgraded.

The amended rules also set up a "two-tiered" system under which wheelchairs and scooters must be permitted in areas open to pedestrian use.

At the press conference, Obama said the revised ADAAG clarify many issues that have arisen since the ADA was passed and moves the concept of inclusion for people with disabilities forward.

"To advance opportunity and prosperity for all of our people, to constantly expand the meaning of life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, to move America forward — that's what we did with the ADA," Obama said. "That is what we do today. And that's what we're going to do tomorrow."

To see more remarks on the ADA's anniversary, as well as photos and video, visit the Justice For All website, <http://jfactivist.typepad.com>.

Revisions of the ADAAG include:

- New accessible design standards for a variety of recreational facilities, such as swimming pools, playgrounds, golf courses, amusement parks and fishing piers;
- New standards for courthouses, jails and prisons;
- Guidelines on the sale of tickets for accessible seating, both by venues and by secondary ticket agencies;

New Generation of Hearing Aids

Source: buzzle.com



Hearing aids have been around now, for a considerable amount of time. Well, everyone remembers those puny hearing aids with wires. Those were the good old days when things were not as complicated as they are now, according to the older generation. But welcome to the world where technological advancement is happening every minute. It is so rapid that you cannot match its speed. Bluetooth hearing aids are a proof of one such advancement. Let's tackle what these bluetooth hearing aids actually are.

What is a Bluetooth Hearing Aid

When hearing aids are equipped with this wireless networking technology, they become bluetooth hearing aids. There are two types of bluetooth hearing aids - one is the usual behind the ear one and the other routes bluetooth signals to a proprietary wireless protocol.

Uses of Bluetooth Hearing Aids

- First and foremost, bluetooth enables a hearing aid user, a better compatibility with other bluetooth enabled hands free devices such as with phone headsets, ipods, and etc, faced by hearing aid users.
- Bluetooth hearing aids enhance the listening for the hearing aid users.
- Thanks to bluetooth technology, it is possible to make your cell phones ring directly into your bluetooth hearing aid. Press a specific button on your hearing aid, to receive or disconnect a call, and you don't even need to touch the phone.
- Bluetooth hearing aids consume less power.

Bluetooth hearing aids have ushered in a major revolution in the arena of hearing aids. Although not readily available now, they will be available in the future. This technology will certainly do wonders for hearing aid users what, completely changed the way hearing cell phones users communicate by phone is expected to revolutionize the value of hearing aids to our hard of hearing population.

ADA Auto Club: Roadside Assistance for Drivers with Disabilities By: Bill Kaiser

The founder of ADA Nationwide has provided emergency roadside assistance to people who drive and use wheelchairs since 1998. While providing 1250 road service requests each month from all other auto clubs, Patricia Kosta gained first hand experience with the extreme hardships experienced by disabled drivers when a vehicle she was using broke down.

Patricia Kosta understood people who use wheelchairs and travel are especially vulnerable to the inherent dangers and additional hardship a roadside emergency could involve.



After designing and manufacturing the nations only wheelchair lift tow trucks Patricia realized that the towing and road service industry would not be able to accommodate the national demand for the unique service. The need for training with strategies for passenger accommodation and transport when a vehicle was towed away for repair was required.

With years of research and development behind it, ADA Nationwide Roadside Assistance was created. For the first time in the auto club industry people who drive and use a wheelchair could receive the service required for safe towing and transportation.

Through national partnerships and strategic alliances with multiple network types, ADA has set a new standard for the roadside service industry. ADA Nationwide Roadside Assistance successfully coordinates simultaneous service events each day on behalf of its members and looks forward to every opportunity to exceed the expectation of the service request.

Although ADA Nationwide Roadside Assistance built only ten of our unique patented wheelchair lift equipped tow trucks, the organization has successfully combined its dual service strategy. The use of Para-Transit companies in combination with towing and road service providers allows the transport of members to their destination while their vehicle is towed to a repair facility. Their dual service strategy helps improve the comfort of their members by eliminating the need for them to travel with their vehicle.

Membership includes:

- Wheelchair Roadside Assistance
- Emergency Towing
- Emergency Lift Ramp Service
- Flat Tire Change Service
- Fuel Delivery Service
- Battery Jump Start Service
- Unlock Service
- Locksmith Reimbursements

You can sign up for either for one, two, or three year membership and you will receive a central phone number that is nationwide and open 24/7.

For more information, visit <http://americandriversalliance.com/index.html>.

House Passes Bill to Make Internet More Accessible for People with Disabilities

Source: Washington Post

The House passed a bill aimed at making the Internet and mobile phones more accessible to the people with disabilities through video captions for the hearing impaired and better descriptions of smartphone screens for the blind.

The 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act, which was sponsored by Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), cleared the House on a vote of 348 to 23. Its approval came on the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and as a similar bill works its way through the Senate.

"The ADA mandated physical ramps into buildings," Markey said in a statement. "Today, individuals with disabilities need online ramps to the Internet so they can get to the Web from wherever they happen to be."

Some key points of the legislation:

- It would become easier for the blind to use smartphones with improved interfaces;
- Television shows and movies would have better audio descriptions to benefit the visually impaired;
- Cable television program guides would have easier-to-use selection menus to benefit the visually impaired;
- Online television shows would be required to have closed-captioning;
- Remote controls would have to include an easy-to-use button for closed captioning on broadcast and paid television;
- Internet-based phone calls will have to be compatible with hearing aids;
- Low-income deaf and blind consumers would be able to tap a \$10 million a year program for help in purchasing Internet and telecom services.

Famous Failures

Source: youtube.com

Can you imagine...?

Walt Disney being fired from a newspaper due to a lack of originality and ideas. Disney has become the true landmark of creativity. It is the first word we associate with the brand, along with magic, inspiration, imagination.

Michael Jordan being cut from his school basketball team.

The Beatles being told that their sound is not great and guitar music is on the way out.

All of these people had to overcome fear, and rejection, and numerous barriers before reaching their dreams and making the world a better for us all. So, what about you?

What we can learn from Disney, Jordan, and the Beatles is nobody reaches the top by just falling there! From their examples shows us that by never giving up, never underestimating ourselves, and continuing to strive for our dreams no matter what people think, we too may be able to change the world.

Here is a link of a video with other famous failures: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6hz_s2XIAU

House Approves Bill Removing 'Mental Retardation' From Law

Source: Disability Scoop

Legislation known as Rosa's Law now goes to President Barack Obama, who White House officials say, intends to sign the bill into law.

Under the bill, the terms "mental retardation" and "mentally retarded" would be stripped from federal health, education and labor policy. "Intellectual disability" and "individual with an intellectual disability" would be inserted in their place.

The changes would occur as laws and documents come up for revision over the next several years. Since the alterations would be implemented gradually, the legislation is not expected to incur any cost.

"For far too long we have used hurtful words like 'mental retardation' or 'MR' in our federal statutes to refer to those living with intellectual disabilities," said the bill's sponsor Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., in a statement Wednesday. "Rosa's Law will make a greatly-needed change that should have been made well before today — and it will encourage us to treat people the way they would like to be treated."

The language swap would not alter the rights that individuals with disabilities have, but would merely bring the federal government more in line with a trend toward using the term "intellectual disability." Already the term is used by most states and some federal agencies including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Rosa's Law is named for Rosa Marcellino, a Maryland girl with Down syndrome.

Disability No Barrier for Talented Artist

Source: Disability Scoop

A genetic disorder is leaving Jessica Blinkhorn with increasingly limited control over her body, but that's not stopping her from producing awe-inspiring drawings.

Blinkhorn has spinal muscular atrophy, a condition that over time destroys the nerves that allow for movement. As a child, she was given just three years to live. But today at age 30, she's still kicking and working as an artist.

With the aid of a wheelchair and one arm that works at about 25 percent, Blinkhorn is able to produce amazingly detailed, lifelike drawings, a gift that others call "exceptional." And she is sharing her gift by teaching art at Georgia State University.

Day by day, Blinkhorn says drawing gets a little bit harder, as she develops cysts in her hands that cause pain when they inflame. Not that that's going to stop her, however.

"My life is my art. If I can't draw with my hands, hell, I'll put a pencil in my mouth or tie a stick to my head and put a pencil on that. I'll figure someday," Blinkhorn said.

You can find out more about Jessica and her drawings at the following internet link:

<http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/video/award-winning-artist-overcomes-disability-draw-sketch-art-disabled-11449707>

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This newsletter is available as a hard copy and on audio tape. Consumers may use SICIL's Resource Library for Internet access to read our newsletter.

SICIL is Looking for Readers

In early spring of this year, three members from our blind community started a BOOK CLUB for readers who are blind. The Club meets at the Center every 3rd Monday of each month at 2:00 p.m.

Club members are now sending an open invitation to anyone who enjoys reading and talking about books, authors, equipment that aids readers with low vision, and more. The books that have been selected by the club range from the classics to contemporary, fiction and non, biographies... you name it.

If you are interested in joining, or just trying the club out for size, call Barb Stotlar at 618-457-3318 for more information. You need not be a person with low vision to join. Remember, winter is coming. What better way to spend it than with a great book and talking about books with other readers.

