



GEM STATE MILESTONES

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HOW WAS YOUR RIDE?

Alison Steven

Friday evening, one day before the 2018 Cycle for Independence, Lisa got a call from a new contact. Martin had a tandem he could offer and Lisa had a rider who needed it. Bensen, a blind 12 year-old, and his dad wanted to ride for the first time in the 10 mile race and needed a bike that would work for someone with additional physical disabilities. Thanks to Martin, now Brad and Bensen were set. The day dawned sunny and a balmy 60 degrees and Bensen was ready and excited! And we knew that because of his signature cry of “Wahoooo!” It turned out that the bike was not ready as it was not the right size for Bensen, but Martin, without batting an eyelid, pulled out his duct tape, grabbed a couple of water bottles and adapted the bike, then taped Bensen’s feet to the pedals. Then the Bensen, Brad BELL Ringers team was ready! So, with their new coach, Martin, riding at their side, they set off up the first hill of the route. Now as a new tandem cyclist in the Cycle for Independence, Brad was maybe not quite as fit as he would have liked, and with Bensen on the bike the first hill proved a little too much. Martin to the rescue again. Brad and Martin switched places and Bensen put his arms around Martin’s waist for stability and off they went. You will have to ask Martin if his hearing has returned to normal as his ear was pretty close to Bensen’s cheer as they sped round the route. “Wahoo!” I think we have a couple of new regulars for the Boise NFB Cycle for Independence!



Photo: Bensen watching his bike being modified



Photo: Dana Ard, NFB State President

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Dana Ard, NFB President

Our 2019 state convention will be in the Boise area, but the location and dates have not been finalized as of yet. I am awaiting bids for three locations in Boise. I have received bids from two other locations, but I believe that the proposed room rates are too high for our membership to manage, unless we decided to shorten the convention so that members are staying two nights rather than three. I am confident that I will receive bids that will allow us to have the exciting convention schedule we have become

accustomed to during my presidency. The convention will be held sometime during March, April, or the first weekend in May. The weekends of Easter and the LDS general conference are eliminated from consideration.

During our state convention, I was elected as the delegate to represent our affiliate at our national convention in Orlando. Susan Bradley was elected as alternate. Fifteen Idaho federationists attended the convention, including our two national scholarship winners, Seth Lowman and Matthew Turner, who both were awarded \$3,000.00 scholarships. I was pleased to spend time getting to know Matthew over dinner one evening. Seth and I attended the Blind Musicians' committee meeting, and he performed a jazz keyboard solo in the Showcase of Talent, which I attended. The convention agenda has something for everyone. I enjoyed the pre-convention NF-BE Healthy Fair, where I learned some new exercises to do on my stability ball. I also started shopping for Christmas at the NFB Krafters marketplace. I am always inspired by President Mark Riccobono's report on the first day of our general session. The NFB is certainly changing the world for the better for the blind. My favorite speaker was Joanne Gabias, who gave a delightfully upbeat and informative talk about being raised by her blind parents. I personally know both Paul and Mary Ellen Gabias and I know they must have been very proud of her presentation. The topic of the banquet speech was Diversity in the National Federation of the Blind. President Riccobono used examples of women who were instrumental in our Federation history to illustrate the value of diversity. As always, I visited with many old friends and made new friends. Our 2019 national convention will be in Las Vegas at Mandalay Bay. I hope we can bring a delegation of at least 40 federationists to this convention. We need to start saving now. Our state treasurer, Harry Gawith, will open a savings account to help people save for the convention. You can send or give Harry funds that you want to save for the convention. He will put the funds in the savings account and track the individual funds on a spreadsheet. At

the time of the convention, the saved funds will be returned to each person who has given the funds to Harry. Our state affiliate will help some, but if forty people attend, the funding will be limited.

In addition to convention, I met with students at the College Days expo, sponsored by the ICB-VI. I also taught a Toastmasters Interpersonal Communications course to students at the ICBVI SWEP program. This is the tenth year that Toastmasters materials have been used as part of the SWEP program. I taught Braille writing as part of the Boise BELL program, and I coordinated the recreational activity morning for the SWEP and BELL students. One exciting part of this program was partnering with Mike Harvey, the director of the Idaho Tennis Association, to have a blind tennis activity. Mike and his assistant, Jackson, enjoyed working with the kids and plan to be back next year. Our other activities included beep baseball, tandem bikes, corn hole toss, and soccer. This activity gets better every year, and I want to thank all the volunteers, chapter members, and participants who made this event a success. Following the event, SWEP staff put on a barbecue followed by a presentation from Guide Dogs for the Blind.

The Snake River Valley chapter of the National Federation of the Blind will be having a banquet and celebration in honor of White Cane safety day on October 13 in Idaho Falls. The state board meeting will be held on that day in Idaho Falls, as well. Please check the state website and the Idaho listserv for further details as they become available.

As you can see, the National Federation of the Blind of Idaho is involved in many projects and activities to change what it means to be blind. I invite you to come and join us as we build the National Federation of the Blind.

BOISE BELL ACADEMY 2018

Alison Steven

Invest in your future
And Keep Your Life on Track
Invest in one another.
Put something in and you'll get something back.

The song rang through the hallways of St. Joe's Catholic School for two weeks at the end of July, accompanied by the joyful sound of homemade shakers, rain sticks and tambourines. Once more, the NFB BELL Academy was in session! 10 students (9 boys and one girl), 7 teachers, 6 transition students from ICBVI, 1 lunch lady, 1 high school volunteer from Bishop Kelly, 3 guest teachers, 1 volunteer helper, 2 van drivers, and 1 coordinator came together to invest their time in building strong, independent and confident blind youth. The students worked hard at their



Photo: BELL Participants visiting Mini Joys at Hidden Springs

Braille (most of the time!), enjoyed being creative in ADL, explored the beginnings of Science in STEM class and traveled North, South, East and West in mobility

We enjoyed some wonderful field trips including a visit to a fire station (where the crew were called out to a fire right in the middle of our tour), visits to Babby Farms and the Mini-Joys miniature ponies, Ceramics and Shop at the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and a visit to the BEP café out at the Police Training School with Daniel Solis. It was particularly charming to take part in the Pirate Adventure Yoga class (If you want to know more ask Marcie Chapman). And we rounded out the two-week program spend-

ing the pennies earned through hard work in class at Marcie's store, where everyone came away happy.

Amid all the fun and productivity, Six on Our Side came and spent two hours filming and interviewing to put together a special that was shown on Sunday August 5th on Channel 6 and Channel 9. Michelle Edmonds, the reporter, was in awe at the transformational work that was happening in our program.

The BELL Academy truly is an investment by all in the future, not just for the participants but also for the teachers. This year six students from the Pre-Employment Transition Services with ICBVI spent time planning and organizing the program with Alison and then assisted the teachers in their classes, gaining invaluable

skills and loving their time with the kids. Words cannot express how much is owed to all those who gave of their time, love and energy to make this program such a wonderful experience. A huge thank you to the entire team that worked so tirelessly.

We did not need an abacus for us to know that the whole was much more than the sum of its parts.

DOORS OPEN FOR TJ AND LESLIE

Leslie Mora

As the faint strains of “Pomp and Circumstance” came from beyond the door at the end of the hallway, I had to wonder at the irony of making it through to graduation only to arrive to the ceremony either late or not at all. I was honestly torn between feelings of pride, happiness, and relief, but on the other hand: anxiety, fear, and frustration. Then it came to me that now as all the other times that had come before, it would all work out. To my tremendous joy and relief, some of my fellow classmates got us to the door, and suddenly, the person who was to walk with us arrived. The ceremony was wonderful and to me, it was made even more so, because I was graduating with my fiancé beside me.

I have to admit that at the time, when our guide had not appeared, I was very close to shedding some tears. I had a moment where I wondered if everything really always had to be a battle. I thought to myself, “Can’t just one thing go off without a hitch. Can’t I have a moment without having to modify something? Being blind can be so annoying sometimes!” I also have

to admit that I look back and laugh at my mental theatrics, because if it was not blindness, it might be something else. Blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or holds you back, right?

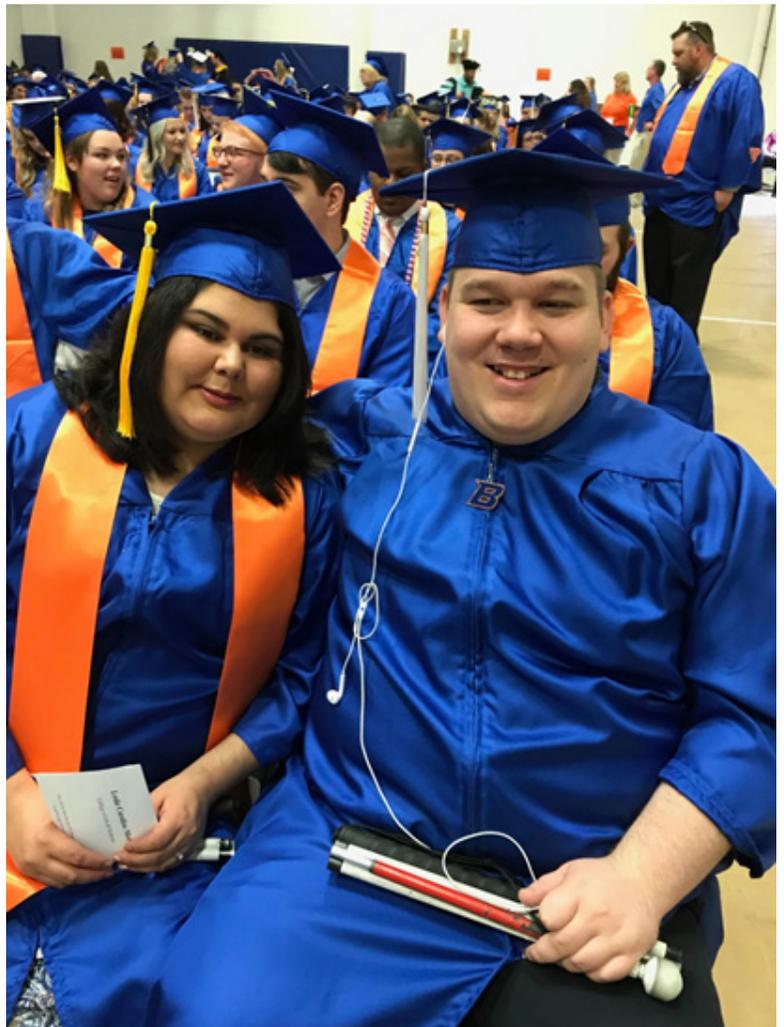


Photo: Leslie and TJ at graduation ceremonies at Hidden Springs

My journey to graduation was not always easy, and sometimes, it felt as if it was taking me forever to reach that goal. There were times when I felt discouraged and wanted more than anything to give up. Accessibility battles were fought. Most were won and still others were lost. Life lessons were learned. My brain absorbed and processed a great deal of information. For a time, things became routine and I wondered, "Leslie. What are you doing with your life?"

I would be lying if I said I did it all on my own. I had so many wonderful people in my life to support me, encourage me, assist me, remind me of who I was and why I needed to endure. My family was always there to hold me up when classes and homework took their toll. Halfway through my college experience, I became involved with the National Federation of the Blind and met great warriors, teachers, friends, and mentors.

There are three words that the National Federation of the Blind uses that I see so clear-

ly in my life as I reflect upon my time as a student. They are love, hope, and determination. Yes. Getting through college can be hard. Yes. I struggled sometimes. However, as cliché as this may sound, it was worth it.

As I walked through that final door into Taco Bell Arena at Boise State University with the majestic sounds of "Pomp and Circumstance" booming all around me and our friends and family cheering our success, I felt proud and joyous. As the choir I used to be in sang our Alma Mater so beautifully that my pent-up tears finally made their brief appearance, I realized that it may have taken me seven years, but I made it through. We'd done it. Now my goal of graduating from a university is behind me, and a big unexplored world is before me. With love, hope, determination, and with the knowledge I gained, I go forth to see what is in store for me.



BAKER'S RECIPES

Tips and techniques around the house

by Lisa Baker

Wow! This has been a hot summer, but I was still able to get a few tandem bike rides in. Tandem bike riding is a fun way to get out and enjoy the outdoors and it can accommodate almost any level of bike rider. So whether you have never ridden a bike before or have not been on one for a while, I have collected quite a few contacts of people who have tandem bikes that are willing to captain a "blind guy". The only thing you need to be able to ride is willingness and a helmet. The "stoker" is the person that rides on the back and they are responsible for peddling, of course, and putting your arm out to notify vehicles when you are turning. Also not wiggling around too much! But a good strong front rider, "captain," can accommodate a bit of wiggling. We are now moving into fall and we will continue to have some great weather for riding. Please contact me if you are interested. 208.867.2150 or by email at lbaker@icbvi.idaho.gov

HEARD BIRDS *(Ed. Note: The following article is by guest contributor, Susan Ford)*

Steve Bouffard - Curator of Birds, Orma J. Smith - Museum of Natural History - College of Idaho

On Saturday, June 16, Al and Anna Schneider invited the Treasure Valley Chapter to their home where we gathered on the back porch to listen to birds. Anna really went above and beyond the call of duty, fixing breakfast snacks for the group. She fixed muffins, scones, fresh fruit, and other goodies. Persons attending included Dana Ard, Leslie Mora, TJ Squires, Susan Bradley, Susan Ford, Larry Sebranek, Erin Olsen, and her mother. Steve Bouffard guided us in listening for bird sounds; he is an ornithologist working at the College of Western Idaho.



We heard and were able to identify these birds and fowl: house finch, house sparrow, northern flicker, black-billed magpie, American robin, American kestrel, killdeer, brown-headed cowbird, mourning dove, Eurasian collared dove, song sparrow, yellow warbler, and mallard. Many of us thought we would have to get up very early to hear birds, but we heard an amazing group.

The yard was cool and comfortable. The company was pleasant. The subject was both entertaining and informative. Thank you so much Al, Anna and Steve for providing us with a bit of new knowledge and more than enough good food.

CVS TALKING LABEL PROGRAM

Ed. Note: Originally published in the BRAILLE FORUM, July 2018

As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance accessibility and usability of prescription medications, CVS's local pharmacies now have the ability to dispense controlled substance medications with the Access-A-Med talking prescription labels. Patients seeking Access-A-Med labels for controlled substances should contact their local CVS pharmacist, who will work to obtain the Access-A-Med device and get it to the patient. This may take a day or more, depending on availability. CVS will continue to dispense non-controlled prescription medications with ScripTalk talking labels through cvs.com. CVS patients can sign up for ScripTalk labels for non-controlled substances by calling 1-888-861-4363. Patients who prefer to have non-controlled prescription medications with the ScripTalk labels sent to their local CVS stores for pick-up can make that request through cvs.com.

As with any new effort, there may be bumps along the road. Please share your experiences, both good and bad, by emailing Kim Charlson at Kim.Charlson@perkins.org or Lainey Feingold at lf@lflegal.com. If you don't have email, you can leave a message for Lainey at (510) 548-5062. When writing, please be sure to include the location of your local CVS store.

NEWSLINE SURVEY

Ramona Walhof and Allan Schneider

In an effort to learn more about usage of NFB Newsline R, attendees at the 2018 NFBI State Convention were asked to fill out a short survey. There were six questions. 36 people filled out the survey, and these are the results.

1. Are you aware of NFB Newsline R? 35 yes; 1 no. (Instructions said that anyone answering no to this question need not answer the rest of the questions.)
2. Do you need help learning to use NFB Newsline R? 31 no; 4 yes;
3. Do you know your identification code and security code? 25 yes; 6 no; 3 left it blank; 2 have it programmed in their phones.
4. Do you use the service? 5 left it blank; 6 no; 2 infrequently; 9 sometimes or weekly; 8 often or yes; 6 every day.
5. What device do you use to access NFB Newsline R? 12 cell phones; 11 landline or home phone; 4 computer; 6 left it blank; 3 listed multiple devices.
6. What part of NFB Newsline R do you like best? Everyone who answered this question said news. Many specified local news; some specified other things in addition: 1 tv guide; 2 magazines; 1 the variety; 2 particular out-of-state papers; 1 national and international news.

