When I first heard about trying to set the Guinness World Record creating an umbrella mosaic, I really didn’t understand just what a production it would be. As a member of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) for over 30 years, I immediately signed up to be a part of it. As the big day came closer, I began to think about what I had gotten myself involved with, like enduring humidity which is something I dislike, and having to stand for a long period which at the age of 72 is something I try to avoid if possible. So my enthusiasm soon became rather negative about the whole situation.

When the big day came, Sue and I made our way down to the lobby of the Rosen Center Hotel where I found a very long line waiting to go outside to form the Mosaic. To be frank, my attitude was not that of an energetic long time Federationist, but that of a grumpy old man who was finding it very hard to be enthusiastic about the whole process. I tried to hide my emotions; after all, we do anything for the Federation. As the line slowly moved out to the parking lot, I could feel my back warning me about how uncomfortable I felt, and when I walked outside, the humidity became very apparent: feeding even more negativity. I kept telling myself, in another hour it will be over and I will have fulfilled my commitment. I have to admit that I was very impressed with the outstanding organization of those almost 2500 persons participating in this world record.

(Continued page 9)
Greetings, Fellow Federationists and readers of this newsletter. I’m truly excited about having our new editor Al Schneider, who I know will bring this newsletter to new heights. He has many great ideas, and we can all help by contributing our ideas and feedback to him.

The 2016 NFBI state convention will be held April 22-24 at the Red Lion Hotel in Lewiston; 621 21st St., Lewiston, Idaho 83501; 208 799-1000. Room rates are $89.00 if you mention that you are reserving your room for the NFBI state convention. This is a time to meet new people, become educated about important issues for the organization, and get re-inspired to live the lives we want. I am planning a technology and services expo for Friday. The event will feature technology vendors, blind service providers, and most importantly, information and demonstrations including NFBI Newsline and the KNFB reader. I will be mailing to doctors, schools, senior programs, ICBVI clients, and others inviting them to take part in this event. The NFBI has a positive message which we need to get out to blind people and their families and friends. If you have ideas for places or people to contact about this event, please contact me. We will have social activities Friday evening and an informative agenda on Saturday and Sunday morning. Of course, we will have our banquet speaker. Begin thinking about who you would like to invite to this event, and think about the banquet speaker. We had three BELL (Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning) programs in Idaho this summer. They were held in Boise, Idaho Falls and Moscow. The Moscow program was new this year, and was a weekend camp for blind children and their families. Much great learning occurred and many new friendships were formed and strengthened.

Twenty individuals from Idaho attended the NFB convention in Orlando, Florida in July. Three participants in the ICBVI college day program, Alana Leonhardt, Bryant Walker, and Sierra Schmidt were given scholarships to attend the convention. They met with students from around the country, got a feel for what the NFB is all about. We had a Jernigan scholarship winner, Lizzie Lawson, and her 4 year-old grandson Bradyn. Bradyn had fun and learned from experiences at NFBI camp, and Lizzie learned that blindness will not limit Bradyn in achieving his life’s goals and dreams.

I have attended two recent meetings concerning transportation issues for our state. Several NFBI members have been assisting a young blind couple who have a 2 month old child and were in danger of having their child removed from their home for safety concerns. As a result of the training and guidance of federation members, the baby remains with his parents.

Our state board met on September 26. Thanks to Kevin Pirnie and others, our website is updated. We have an active fund raising committee, and we will be giving away three scholarships to blind college students at the state convention.

It’s an exciting time to be a member of the National Federation of the blind.

Central Idaho Chapter will be holding a pizza party get-together with contacts from the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired and students from the Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind in Twin Falls at Idaho Pizza Company on Wednesday, October 28, 2015 starting at 5:30 PM. I am attempting to get on a local radio station for Meet The Blind Month, but have not been able to firm up a date yet.

Yours in the Federation.

Russell Smith, President

As it is known, the Panhandle Chapter has been hanging on as a thread for the past several years. I have taken the time as an individual to know Tim over some time and have tried with him to get things going here in Coeur d’Alene. This year Mary Ann won one of the scholarship awards from the state, and getting to know her and Tim has helped re-start the Panhandle Chapter up here in the Coeur d’Alene area. We had a meeting in September and got to know each other and the kids of each other’s family. The day wasn’t great so the park idea got cancelled at the last minute, and we had an indoor meeting at McDonald’s where the kids had fun playing and enjoyed themselves also. Tim has a daughter who is also blind, and this is good to let the public be able to know that, and for her to be seen as a child who wants to have her say in life also. The Chapter is going to have a meeting at the Carver Farm area next month, so as to get out and let the public see how blind individuals interact and also have fun. This is going to be an interesting day in the corn fields. I wonder if the light matters.

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We had a busy spring and summer in the Treasure Valley Chapter. Our Cycle For Independence was in May after the State Convention. It was a successful event. Chapter members participate by riding or volunteering. We have many volunteers from the community that come and participate with us. We did our usual door prizes in July. We were able to collect a good variety of door prizes at National Convention. We had some birding events that were arranged by Al Schneider and Steve Boufford. Steve came and did an interesting demonstration at our chapter meeting and several members were able to go to the park and listen. In July, we had our traditional event with the SWEP students and staff. We met at Ivy Wild Park and played Beep Baseball, kicked soccer balls into a net and rode tandem bicycles. Following our fun at the park we went to the Commission and shared a nice lunch. Everyone had fun visiting and eating. We continue to have our presentations “My Blindness Myself” once a quarter. This is where one of our members tells the chapter about themselves, including why they are a member of the NFB. We now have a Braille Book Club appropriately called The BBC. Readers include all ages—from young readers from our BEST Club to readers from the Chapter.

SNake River Valley Chapter
Sandy Streeter, President • streeter.sandy@gmail.com • 208-643-0764

Members of the Snake River Valley Chapter have been very busy. In June and again in August, we had a booth at the Farmers’ Markey. We shared information about blindness and our organization as well as selling cook books and chico bags. Also in August we enjoyed our annual picnic. After some socializing and making sure our tummies are full, we play bingo. There is much fun and laughter. On October 3rd we held our annual book fair at Barns and Noble. Children, and adults, can have their name brailled on a bookmark. The bookmarks can then be decorated with stickers. This is a great fundraiser for our chapter. We receive a percentage of the store’s sales that day as well as online when the purchaser is using our promo code. At our October meeting we had the pleasure of hosting our state affiliate President, Dana Ard, and Fundraising Chair, Ramona Walhof. They were accompanied by their driver Lezlie Rivers.

Elections were held at the October meeting with these results: Sandy Streeter, President; Kevin Pirnie, First-vice-president; Lynn Kneip, second-vice-president; Vickie Bateman, treasurer; Larry Bateman, Secretary; Wanda Jolley, Board Member; and, Jason Bernert, Board Member.

The Snake River Valley is a great chapter and I am pleased to serve as the President. What’s that saying? “A Chapter who works together, stays together.”

MOVING FORWARD -
A Rookie at National Convention 2015
Alison Steven

It feels like I barely made a dent in what was available when attending a National Convention. There was the overwhelming range of choices that leaves you frozen like a deer in the headlights. There was the fact that I was in the biggest hotel I have ever seen with the most blind people in one spot that I have ever encountered—and I did encounter a good few more than I intended to encounter! There were so many different meetings and activities to choose from, food options, route options, UPS volunteers hollering to tempt me somewhere else. And yet, in the midst of all this there were peaceful encounters with old friends and serendipitous interactions with people who would become new friends. I quickly realized that the only way I was going to get anything out of my time in Orlando was by just continuing to move forward, make choices swiftly and grab opportunities when they arose.

I am very thankful that I had done some preparation beforehand such as visualizing the layout of the hotel as described in the Agenda, and downloading the entirety of the agenda to my iCal on my phone and then deleting events and meetings until I was left with a more manageable list of choices. I was also glad to have the advice and comradery of Idaho NFB friends to help me navigate through each day.

During the main meetings, I found many of the speeches inspiring and eye-opening, not the least of which was Mark Maurer’s talk The Nature of Blindness, and Mark Riccobono’s banquet speech, The Determination of Value and the Reflection of Hope.

As I reflect on this magnificent and crazy week, I realize that my initial mobility motto for convention, which was “Keep moving forward”, has become my motto for this phase of my life. Inspired by so many blind and visually impaired who are there for each other and reaching ahead to all the new challenges and opportunities, I intend to “keep moving forward” in all my dreams and plans and connections. Thanks to all who made this convention such a special time for me!
LISTEN UP!
A look at Listening to Newsline
by Ramona Walhof

If you are not currently reading newspapers and magazines through NFB Newsline using a touchtone telephone or i-phone, you have a wonderful opportunity waiting. Sign up for the service through the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (just ask your rehab counselor) or the Talking Book Library. In-state newspapers include the Idaho Falls Post Register, the Idaho Statesman in Boise, and the Spokesman Review Idaho Edition for North Idaho. There is also a section for Associated Press articles that originate in this state. More than 300 newspapers from all parts of the country are available. Some Spanish newspapers are covered as well. More than fifty magazines are also offered. There is a section on blindness information which includes the new electronic book entitled Live the Life You Want, celebrating 75 years of history of the National Federation of the Blind. New magazines and newspapers are being added regularly, and each is announced on the service. Most recent addition may be the Lions Magazine.

If you have already signed up and forgotten your identification code or your security number, the ICBVI can look them up for you. Or you can call NFB Headquarters at 410-659-9314 to request Newsline information. If you want to experiment to learn more about the service, You may call the regular NFB Newsline number: 888-882-1629; when the voice asks for an identification code, press 000999; for a security code, enter 9999.

In addition to newspapers and magazines, Newsline offers TV listings and job listings in your area. When you call the demo number, you will be prompted to find the publication you want, then you will have choices to find the material that interests you. These prompts make it easy to use the program. The first item on the main menu is the help section which includes many commands such as speed up or slow down, spell words, change voice, skip to the next article, and more.

Those who use an i-phone can download an app instead of using the telephone itself. The phone service is simpler to use than a standard computer, but includes far more information than you can possibly read. If you wish to speak with a Newsline user, you may phone me at 208-342-3066 or others who may phone me at 208-323-6112; Jan Gawith, 208-338-1595; Larry Sebranek at 208-323-6112; Jan Gawith, 208-342-3066 or others who use the service.

NFB AND ICBVI COLLABORATION ON COLLEGE DAYS SUCCESSFUL
by Laine Amoureux

ICBVI and NFBI partnered this year to plan and host the ICBVI College Days program. NFBI provided financial support for evening activities and an additional staff member to provide direct services during the week-long event. NFBI also provided the opportunity for participants who were interested to attend the NFB National Convention in Orlando FL.

Six students, ranging in age from 17 – 27 participated in the activities throughout the week. Participants represented the Coeur d’Alene, Lewiston, 3B and Twin Falls regions of the state.

The program provides experiential learning opportunities for participants to test the skills and tools they believe will aid their success in college and beyond. Students are introduced to technologies, strategies, and mentors to assist them throughout their post-secondary journey, and encourages participants to consider how the skills and tools may transition from post-secondary to employment environments. The idea is to provide a safe environment for participants to identify any limitations they may have, any barriers that they may encounter, and to find tools/strategies for overcoming both.

Participants were introduced to academic and social environments and challenges, and encouraged to find a balance. Social activities included bowling, a trip to a local mall/outdoor entertainment area, Alive After Five and First Thursday art exhibits, hosting a networking lunch, participating in panel discussions with mentors in similar fields and traveling together for meals. Academic environments included a lecture on budgeting, disability student services, library services on campus, resources, social media/networking and Interviewing. Students were encouraged to take notes in all sessions, and were periodically quizzed. The quizzes were presented in a few different ways to challenge participants to use different skills, and ensure that they had the ability to first, use different tools for accomplishing a required task and second to challenge students to advocate for their needs if materials were provided in a format that was inaccessible to them at their current ability level or with their current/available tools.
Hello fellow Federationists. My name is Earl Hoover and I have been a member of the NFB since October 2011. Since joining, I have been very active in the Idaho affiliate. I currently serve as the 2nd Vice President on the state board as well as 1st Vice President for the Treasure Valley Chapter. In this capacity, I am pleased to serve as the Event Coordinator for Cycle for Independence. I have served for 3 years now and have had great mentoring in this role from Ramona Walhof and Mary Simms-Pollet.

In addition to serving in the NFB, I am married and have 2 children. I also attend Boise State University where I will complete my undergraduate degree this spring and will then attend the University of Idaho where I will complete graduate work in Vocational Rehabilitation. I enjoy fishing, camping and Ham Radio. With Ham Radio, I am active with the Voice of Idaho Club and Idaho ARES, the Amateur Radio Emergency Service. This service provides emergency communications during natural disasters and national or local emergencies. Some of our members were deployed to assist with communications on fires we had this summer.

I love the Federation, what it represents, its philosophies and the members who comprise it. I hope to serve for many years in whatever capacity I can.

A special thanks to the following organizations for the design and printing of Gem State Milestones:

- Pets Best
- Stoltz
HEARD BIRDS – FALL 2015
By Steve Bouffard, Curator of Birds, Orma J. Smith Museum of Natural History, The College of Idaho

The breeding season is over and adult males have stopped singing, but Fall still offers good listening opportunities. Most of the calls will be chip notes, flock contact calls, and alarm calls. These may be challenging to identify, but with a little persistence you can identify most birds. You may hear some breeding songs that sound a little off. These are usually young males practicing for next spring. They learn their song from their father while in the nest and need to practice so they can sing the right song next spring. Don’t get the song right and you don’t get the girl next year.

Right now many songbirds are migrating and you may hear some of them for the next few weeks. We have a few western tanagers left; you can identify them by their sputtering call. There’s still a few warblers around. Later we will have only yellow-rumped warblers, which stay for the winter. They have a distinctive chip note. Eurasian collared doves are still cooing and giving their raspy whines. Other birds which will be here all winter include belted kingfisher, northern flicker, downy woodpecker, black-capped chickadee, American and lesser goldfinches, house sparrow, European starling, song sparrow, American robin, American crow, California quail, white-crowned sparrow, house finch, black-billed magpie, and cedar and Bohemian waxwings. A few American kestrels, bald eagles, and red-tailed hawks will be around too; you may hear them also. Canada geese and other waterfowl will be making noise too. Later this fall common goldeneyes will show up on the river. These ducks are often called whistlers because of the sound their wings make when flying. You may also hear the loud squawk of the great blue heron along the river.

Whether you can identify bird calls or not, get out and enjoy the fall with all its sounds, smells, and feelings.

Happy Listening.

STUDENTS GROW THROUGH SWEP PROGRAM
Leanne Starr, SWEP Coordinator

Another successful year of the SWEP program has come to a close. There were a lot of good memories made, happy employers and wages earned. Here are some of the highlights of this year’s program.

We had a variety of employers this year and one new one as well. The new employer we placed a participant at was Vintage Cycles in Garden City. Both participant and employer were pleased and have asked us to work with them again next year. We were excited to have 4 participants at the YMCA this year; one worked with the aquatics department while three others worked in child care ranging from 1st grade to 6th grade. We look forward to re-contacting them next year and working with them again in the future as well as the other employers Botanical Gardens, Computers for Kids, Ada County Housing Authority, Boise Parks and Recreation, Ada County Assessor’s Office, The Bridge Café and The Galley. They were all great to work with and several expressed excitement about continuing with the program next year. We had 16 staff members, seven of them were returning staff members that helped the program run smoothly.

The participants were able to participate in several planned activities as well as plan some activities for themselves. Boise Parks and Recreation was great to work with again this year. They helped provide an opportunity for the participants to do some Dutch oven cooking, tubing, learning the sport of goal ball, and, of course, the favorite, white water rafting. Some of the other activities we participated in were the road rally, bird watching, Toastmasters, learning the game of beep ball, soccer and tandem bike riding with the NFB, kickball with NWABA, tour of BSU and seeing what they have to offer, and cooling off in the pool.

Everyone seemed to have a good time, and there was a mix of emotions as some students were excited to go home and yet sad to leave the program and the new friends they had made there. Most of the participants seemed to grow more independent from the SWEP experience and to be away from home.
Many blind children cannot imagine what life could be like, what opportunities might be available or what potential they might have to live the life they want. The NFB Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning (BELL) Program, Boise, 2015 endeavored to start a process of imagination that could end with Emilia traveling Asia, Gareth giving keynote speeches, Caleb designing appliances for the home. Just imagine how enriched our society will be with confident, skilled, eloquent and educated young blind people with a drive and a passion to influence their environment. With activities and lessons in Braille reading, writing, mobility and non-visual skills, and supplemental field trips and activities such as building robots, grooming and leading miniature ponies and participating in a scavenger hunt and pizza party with the Summer Work Experience Program students, I believe the NFB BELL Program has given the 11 young participants a glimpse of the possibilities in the world beyond their view.

The BELL Program is only one small contributor to the education our young people need to equip them to fulfill their potential but it is such a delight to have the privilege of working, playing and becoming life-long friends with these unique individuals. Many thanks to all who contributed to making the 2015 BELL Program such a success!