

GEM STATE MILESTONES

Summer 2016

A Publication of the NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF IDAHO

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2016 CYCLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

This year's Cycle for Independence, the Treasure Valley Chapter as well as NFBI's largest event (it's our largest fundraiser, too!), was again a cheerful and successfully executed venture. There were over 325 riders, and the event brought in over \$10,000. Many thanks to coordinator Earl Hoover, and the many, many volunteers needed to perform the multitude of tasks necessary to carry out this lively, engaging experience. And thanks, also,

to the hundreds of participants. See photos of the event throughout this edition of the Gem State Milestone.

Available in large print, email, Braille, Newsline or on our website: www.nfbidaho.org

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

The 2016 NFB of Idaho State Convention was one of the largest in recent history with 85 people registered for the banquet. Our Friday classes and product and information expo were well attended by Federationists and people from the community. The Friday night open mic activity introduced us to many talented Federationists with acts of music, comedy and even dramatic reading. We had a broad range of speakers, including several of our own members. Our national representative, Pam Allen, was inspirational, and our National Association of Blind Students (NABS) representative, Mike Ausbun, led a discussion on building intergenerational chapters. We had 14 students in attendance, including our scholarship winners: Leslie Mora, Alana Leonhardy, and Seth Lowman.

During our banquet, Joe Thompson, President of the Palouse Empire Chapter, was presented with the Frank Smith Award, and Sue Walker, from the Idaho Talking Book Department, was presented with the Harry and Jan Gawith Service Award.

At our Sunday business meeting, Mike Gibson was elected to complete the term of Second Vice-President, and Joe Thompson was elected to complete Mike's board term. Chris Jones, Russell Smith and Kevin Pirnie were re-elected to board positions. Three resolutions were passed. Resolution 2016-01 states that Nemeth code should be used by all Idaho

entities teaching math to the blind in Idaho. Resolution 2016-02 commends

ICBVI counselors for their work in getting NFB scholarship applicants, and resolution 2016-03 encourages increased collaboration between IESDB and ICBVI to ensure smooth transitions and vocational success for blind youth.

The 2017 state convention will be held March 23-24 at the Wyndham Gardens Hotel in Boise. The convention committee will work on the convention throughout the year, so if you have ideas, let me know.

Since returning from National Convention, I participated in the ICBVI College Days, I am working with the SWEP students on communication skills using the Interpersonal Communications Series Toastmaster materials, and I demonstrated Trekker Breeze GPS to students attending a science camp for blind students in Boise as a useful tool, but not a replacement for good orientation and mobility skills.

Idaho will have three BELL Academies this summer: in Idaho Falls, Boise and Coeur d'Alene. On July 23, the Treasure Valley Chapter held an activities morning for SWEP students and BELL Academy students. The activities included Beepball, soccer, tandem bicycle riding, and a corn toss game. We also served lunch to all those involved. Throughout, we served as mentors to the students.

At our NFB National Convention, I was impressed by the energy of the youth who were confident and self-assured. Getting

started with the positive attitude and training that NFB provides will result in success for our youth. One of the highlights of the convention for me was seeing a young woman from Indiana in our 2016 scholarship class. She is beginning her senior year in college studying to be a special education teacher.

We had many thought provoking speeches by our national leaders, as well as updates on

state of the art technology. Julie and her son, Carver Andersen, attended the convention funded in part by a Jernigan scholarship. I urge anyone who has never attended the convention to apply for a Jernigan scholarship. Nothing will teach you about the NFB like a national convention. We must work to help more people attend. I wish everyone an enjoyable, relaxing summer!

BAKER'S RECIPES

Tips and techniques around the house

by Lisa Baker

Since we are enjoying another beautiful summer in Boise, I thought I would share with you a fun potato salad recipe. Another option for your outdoor barbeques!

About 6 cups, total, of white and sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes

- 1/2 cup, plus 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly-ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon fresh oregano, chopped
- about 12 ounces fresh or frozen green peas
- 6-8 green onions, tops and bulbs, sliced
- 2-3 medium jalapeno peppers, chopped
- 1 large red bell pepper, chopped
- 1/3 cup black olives, chopped
- corn from 3 ears of corn(cooked on the grill)
- 1/3-1/2 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 3 tablespoons fresh orange juice
- 1-2 teaspoons chipotle chili pepper powder
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika

Notes:

You can use black beans rather than peas. You can also add feta or grape tomatoes.

1. Pre-heat oven to 425 degrees F.
2. Combine potatoes, 2 tablespoons oil, salt, black pepper, cumin, chipotle, paprika, and stir to uniformly coat.
3. Place on baking sheet, 1 layer only.
4. Bake 30-40 minutes, stirring occasionally, until fork-tender and beginning to brown. Remove from oven, transfer to large bowl, and allow to cool.
5. Add peas, corn, onions, peppers, olives, and oregano.
6. In a small bowl, combine oil and juices, plus more chipotle and paprika if desired. Whisk to a smooth vinaigrette.
7. Pour vinaigrette over all ingredients, stirring very gently to avoid mashing potatoes.

Chill.

8. Serve with cilantro on the side.

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STATEWIDE SENIOR PICNIC

Sharon Henderson, NFBI Senior Division Secretary

Vel Slotten, president of the NFBI Senior Division Group, is sending a message and invite to all Seniors, family, and friends to come and join us at our annual August pot luck picnic.

The picnic will be held at Rock Creek Park in Twin Falls on August 6th starting at 11:00 AM.

You're asked to bring yourself along with others and "Yummy Food." For further information or directions, please call Vel Slotten (208) 345-1018 or Chris Jones (208) 308-8876.

There will be lots of visiting, games and music. If anyone would like to bring their instruments, that would be great! Hope to see you there!!!



INDEPENDENCE

PART 1:

Rebecca Grace Scott

Working a Seeing Eye dog has definitely given me a wonderful experience. Especially since I did not think that I could even apply let alone be accepted until I was at least sixteen. However, on June 27, I got on a plane from Boise and left for the Seeing Eye. I am fourteen-years-old and I have wanted to work a Seeing Eye dog for a very long time. Both of my parents have had guide dogs and my mom currently has a Seeing Eye dog. I am extremely blessed to have a Seeing Eye dog. The main reason for my acceptance was that the high school that I will be attending next year is very large. It is set up like a college campus and is old, with crumbled sidewalks, uneven walkways, and a lot of students. With my vision deteriorating, I am finding out that my cane just will not work with these situations.

I enjoy working with my dog, Danika. She is a very sweet chocolate lab. There were some issues in the beginning, but that is to be

expected. Before I came to the Seeing Eye, my mom told me that the experience is a good one, but has many ups and downs emotionally. When you arrive, you are excited to be there and to receive your dog. Finally, when you get your dog a few days later, it can be both relieving and anxious. You will have good days and bad days, like when your dog does better than you could ever hope for, or worse than the cat would do. So far I have experienced both, and my advice is to, "Keep on keeping on." Keep on going and get through it. Talk to your instructor and work things out. Whether you have had a guide dog or not, the experience of having one is wonderful. I am thankful to be at the Seeing Eye and even more thankful for the journey that has just begun.

INDEPENDENCE

PART 2:

Britt Raubenheimer

After losing my first guide, Whit, on March 14, I am back at the Seeing Eye. On June 29, I was matched with Huger, a little yellow lab. I miss Whit. He was my companion ex-



ploring new cities, cuddling in hotel rooms, and working in the house and office. He also made my work as a scientist easier.

Canes can be great; for example, to probe to find the third doorway. But I also found every parking meter, garbage can, lamp post, tree, and bicycle on the sidewalk! Hugger has us zipping around the obstructions and crowds again. It feels wonderful!

The “find” command was a big benefit with Whit. I could name our location as “posters” in a meeting hall with 2000 scientists, leave to go to a presentation, then tell Whit “find posters”, and we’d go back where I wanted. The Seeing Eye now uses clicker training to teach the dogs to find an object or place. I’m told the dogs can generalize to similar objects. For example, they have been taught to target doorknobs on any door, anywhere. My first goal is “trash.” No more wondering what to do with that used

pick-up bag in a new city! Whit was a great traveler, and enjoyed exploring new cities, including Honolulu, London, and Seoul. Of course, there were benefits to traveling dog free. My carry-on was half the weight without 5 days of kibble, dog bowls, a brush, a toy, and relief bags. But I also like having a friend to say “it’s all right, don’t stress” when our plane gets cancelled. I’ll choose the warm nose and fast pace of a guide dog anytime.

I will always miss Whit, and be thankful for his guiding me through my career, and showing me how to continue doing my work. But Hugger and I will find a new route to learn about our beaches and coasts. I am sad to have lost my friend, Whit, nervous to start over again, and excited to continue to explore with Hugger.

ED. Note: We’ll check in with Rebecca and Britt’s progress in the fall issue, and then again in the winter issue.

NFB FIGHTS FOR RIGHTS OF PARENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Al Schneider



In 2010, a Missouri couple had their two-day-old baby taken away because both parents were blind. There were no allegations of abuse, just fear that the parents would be unable to properly care for the child. Because the couple was determined to be “unfit,” they were only allowed to visit their child two or three times a week and only if the foster parent was present.

The problem started in the hospital when the mother had trouble breast feeding the child, a common problem for first time mothers. An attending nurse wrote: “The child is without proper custody, support or care due to both parents being blind and they do not have specialized training to assist them.” This note set into motion what was to be a 57-day battle for the parents to retain custody of their daughter.

The National Federation of the Blind hears of cases almost every week of blind people’s child custody being challenge by misinterpretations from social workers to other family members. Most often the cause is low expectations relative the abilities of blind people and a lack of understanding about non-visual skills and training.

The characteristic of blindness should not be used to rip these families apart and we can do something about this discriminatory behavior. Through the National Federation of the Blind, we provide legal advocacy, assistance, and training to protect blind parents in cases where blindness is being used to unfairly divide parents from their children. We also undertake advocacy to eliminate state laws that permit blindness to be used to demonstrate inability to parent. Likewise, we are proactively developing resources and training to reach more social workers, family court personnel, hospital staff, families, and others to break down the misconceptions and strengthen understanding about the capacity of the blind to be great parents.

(Mark Riccobono, President, National Federation of the Blind)

The NFB may also be able to help with services like Newsline, a free phone line that reads magazines and newspapers for the blind. Another service is the KNFB reader, an app which converts printed text to audio. The Federation has also provided legal representation in some cases. But most importantly, the NFB can help blind parents find the federal, state, and local services and representation available in their region.

There is much help available and attitudes are changing, but the issue is still pervasive. Low expectations for the blind has as its roots, misunderstanding. And in the legal system, the problem is systemic.

Clearly, the legal system is not protecting the rights of parents with disabilities and their children. Fully two-thirds of dependency statutes allow the court to reach the determination that a parent is unfit (a determination necessary to terminate parental rights) on the basis of the parent's disability. In every state, disability may be considered when determining the best interest of a child for purposes of a custody determination in family or dependency court. A nexus should always be shown between the disability and harm to the child, so that a child is taken from a custodial parent only when the parent's disability is creating a detriment that cannot be alleviated. However, this is not the reality.

*(Open letter to President Obama from Jonathan Young
PhD, JD, Chairman of National Council on Disabilities)*

Ed. note: For additional help outside the NFB, GOOGLE Disabled Parenting Project

CHECK YOUR LOCAL LISTINGS

What's happening around the state by chapter presidents

Palouse Empire Chapter of the NFB

Joe Thompson, President joet@uidaho.edu We have been meeting in the back room at a coffee shop in Moscow. Erin and Matt Jepson, who have adopted a blind child from Ethiopia are collecting new and used canes to be sent to Africa. Matt is scheduled to go to Ethiopia this summer to distribute the canes and work with the blind there. If anyone has a cane to donate, please contact me at (joet@uidaho.edu) and I will get you in touch with Erin.

Justin Vonner had a knee replaced and is still on the long road to recovery. When he

is fully recovered, he is going to have the other one done, then a hip joint replacement. Good thing he's an awesome singer/song writer. He'll have a lot of time to ponder new material. I think some of his new stuff may be a bit blue. Shane Hyde and I went to Boise to help out with College Days at the ICBVI. There were about 14 budding college freshmen, anxious and earnest and somewhat apprehensive to start a new phase of life. The ones going to BSU are in good hands with Mike Gibson and the SDS office.

Cinda Blair had cochlear implant surgery last month and is waiting for the world of sound to start drumming.

PHONE APPS ENHANCE LIVES

A multi-part series focusing on phone apps

The camera on your mobile device can do a lot more than take snapshots. You can use a variety of apps to turn your device into an electronic magnifier, a scanner, or an object and color identifier. Though we're focusing on apps for users with low vision, the scanning and identification apps listed here are also accessible with TalkBack, making them great choices for those with complete vision loss.

AMagnify from MPaja

AMagnify (free or \$1.31, Android 2.2 or later) uses your device's camera to zoom in on what it is pointed at. Magnify text, freeze the image you've taken, and invert the magnified image. The paid version removes ads. You will find many magnification apps in the Google Play store. AMagnify is a great choice because it is both extremely simple to use and offers great features.

Shelly Brisbin, Reprinted from AccessWorld,

www.afb.org/aw BRAILLE FOR KIDS IN NORTHERN IDAHO

Becky Sherman, Director of Northern Idaho BELL

We, the National Federation of the Blind of Idaho (NFBI), are excited to announce that we are running the first, ever, Braille Enrichment for Learning and Literacy (BELL) Academy in Coeur d'Alene this year! We are planning afternoon activities that reinforce what the students are learning. We're ready for a fun-filled week of Braille and socializing!

We are planning for six students at this time, and invite more children, ages four to twelve to join us. The dates of the event are August 8 to August 12. We will be hosting the activities from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM at 1470 West Hanley Ave, Coeur d'Alene.

The classes include: Braille reading, Braille writing, orientation and mobility, and nonvisual daily living skills such as pouring, measuring, making sandwiches, managing/ folding money and so on.



HEARD BIRDS SUMMER 2016

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

Things are a lot quieter in the bird world now that the nesting season is over. Still there are birds to hear and some are still singing. In the past couple weeks. I have heard house finches, house sparrows, starlings, crows, American goldfinches, mourning and Eurasian collared doves, downy woodpeckers, and California quail in my yard. Hummingbirds are starting to migrate south - that means you are more likely to hear some in town if you have a hummingbird feeder. They give a soft chip sound, especially louder and more rapid when they are fighting over who gets to drink at the feeder. You can also hear the buzzing sound of their wings. Along the Greenbelt things are quieter, too, but you can still hear song sorrows, house wrens, and yellow warblers. Adult waterfowl, especially the geese, are quieter now too. All waterfowl shed their flight feathers all at once during the summer. For a month or so they are flightless while the feathers grow back. They tend to be quieter while they are flightless - no sense in attracting attention to yourself if you can't fly. Their feathers are fully formed about the same time as the young begin to fly. Geese are regaining flight now and their honks will become more prevalent as they become more mobile. Happy Birding.

MEET THE BOARD - HARRY GAWITH

A Series Introducing the NFBI State Board

Harry Gawith

Harry graduated from Oregon State University in 1973 with a degree in Industrial Arts Education. He then went to work as shop teacher in June of 1973. After teaching several years, he quit to become cook and book keeper for Jan's cafeteria until she retired.

He, of course, retired soon after and went to work for Terry's Vending, 20th Century Bowling Alley, and Warm Springs Golf Course. He is still working at the golf course.

Harry joined the Federation in 1973 and has attended every national convention since with the exception of the Denver one. He was elected NFBI State Treasurer in 1975 and has held that

office ever since. "I can't get out of it." Our NFBI Treasurer also plays a key role in the Cycle for Independence.

A very active, outgoing man, Harry is always on the move exuding energy and fun. His hobbies include bowling in the winter, and golf whenever weather allows. He used to hunt, but golf has taken over. He is an avid BSU Bronco football and basketball fan.

KIDS GET "PACKED" FOR COLLEGE

Laine Amoureux (College Days Coordinator) with Al Schneider

The 2016 College Days experience was literally packed not only in the number of participants, but in the quantity and quality of the sessions. The event ran Monday through Friday, June 20 to 24 with high powered session all day every day.

The purpose of the ICBVI- sponsored College Days program is to help our clients, who plan to or are already attending college, gain the knowledge, resources and skills necessary to be successful in college. The program blends informational sessions with hands-on activities for developing self-advocacy, self-determination, public speaking, networking, leadership, team work and activities of daily living together to provide a balanced and fun experience.

Sessions included how to search for schools and scholarships, writing scholarship essays, knowing the various offices on a college campus, a Toastmasters presentation, informational interviews, job searches and more. Session leaders and panelists included two ICBVI Board members, ICBVI employees,

former and current blind college students, and successful professionals, both blind and sight-



ed.

This year we had 14 participants from around the state. Twelve of the participants stayed in the Clearwater Suites at Boise State University, and were responsible for making their own breakfast, packing their own snacks and planning/preparing all the materials they may need for the day.

The Educational Access Center (EAC) hosted several of our sessions, and was instrumental in identifying speakers to provide information about campus resources available to students. The Department of Labor

arranged Informational Interview opportunities for all of our participants. Participants had the chance to ask questions of professionals in their field of interest about the tools and resources they need to take advantage of in college to be successful in the field.



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