

GEM STATE MILESTONES

Winter 2018

A Publication of the NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF IDAHO

Allan Schneider, Editor • Garden City
aaschneider@hotmail.com
(208) 870-4831

Dana Ard, President • Boise
danalynard@q.com
(208) 345-3906

FALL—2019

President's Address

Dana Ard, NFBI President

Photo: Dana Ard



These last three months have been very busy and exciting for the National Federation of the Blind of Idaho. In early July, our affiliate cohosted our national convention with the Nevada affiliate in Las Vegas. I was one of four speakers who had the privilege of presenting during our welcoming ceremonies. I talked about meaningful experiences with my federation friends from my Braille teacher, who was NFB of Idaho president in the 1950's-60's, to helping a federation member from Florida with flute techniques. I talked about the importance of embracing diversity in our federation family, emphasizing that we are not "cookie cutter" federationists. I enjoyed getting to know the other speakers who all had moving messages about how the federation has impacted their lives. Another highlight was serving in the affiliate hospitality room. I was the greeter

and welcomed people in. I enjoyed meeting and conversing with people from all over the country. Prior to the beginning of convention, I was invited to a dinner hosted by our national president, Mark Riccobono. The food was excellent, and I enjoyed getting to know our president and the other attendees in a less formal setting. As always, the convention featured many informational and inspirational speakers, many of whom will be featured in our Braille Monitor magazine throughout this year.

The 2020 state convention will be held in Idaho Falls, at the Shiloh Inn, April 16-18, 2020. Room rates are \$94.00 for one or two people in a room. An additional \$20.00 per night charge will be added if more than two people are in a room. The address for the Shiloh is 780 Lindsay Blvd., Idaho Falls, 83402, phone 208 523-0088. The 2021 convention will be at the Red Lion Downtowner, March 25-27. Room rates will be \$119.00 per night. The contract for the 2021 convention has been signed.

Our fall board meeting was held September 21 in Idaho Falls. Frank Skogsberg, from Treasure Valley chapter, was appointed to fill the board position left open due to the death of Becky Sherman. Russell Smith resigned from the board following 12 years of service. We appreciate his dedicated service. The position will remain open while I seek an appropriate candidate. Russell will continue to serve on our state scholarship committee. Speaking of state scholarships, the board passed a motion to give four scholarships in 2020. We will have two tiers of scholarship winners; first time applicants and repeat applicants. We will no longer award more than two scholarships to a given individual. The top scholarship winner will have expenses paid to attend our national convention. In order to encourage more attendance at both our national and state conventions, individuals wishing to attend will be able to request a specific amount from the state affiliate based on need. A committee is currently working on procedures for this.

I am sure that many readers of this newsletter know that my husband, Mike, died suddenly on August 26. He had a hemorrhagic stroke and had no warning signs or

other indications. As you can understand, his loss after 30 years of marriage, has been very hard. I am deeply thankful for friends, neighbors, and my various communities including our wonderful federation family for all the support that I have been given.

As you can tell, these last three months have been very busy and productive for our affiliate. I look forward to more exciting events as we celebrate the accomplishments of our affiliate, and continue to build the National Federation of the Blind of Idaho.

Meet the Board: Susan Bradley

A series featuring the NFBI Board members

Photo: Susan Bradley

I was raised on my family farm just east of Idaho Falls/Ammon, Idaho. I attended Hillview Elementary School and Bonneville High School. I am one of five children. My dad had RP and at that time they thought it was a male recessive genetic disease. In looking back, I always had trouble in the dark with things like camping and I wasn't any good at playing murder in the dark. My dad attended the Assessment and Training Center in 1976 where Jan Gawith was his Braille instructor and Harry Gawith was his shop instructor.



In December of 1976 I met a Navy man, Scott Bradley, and fell in love. We were married on July 2, 1977. We moved to Vallejo, California in September of 1978 so that Scott could report to his submarine USS Parche that was stationed on Mare Island Naval Base. Our first daughter was born in October 1978 at Travis Air Force Base. Our second daughter was born in August of 1980 in Idaho Falls while Scott was out to sea on the submarine. Scott got out of the Navy and we moved to Idaho Falls so that he could report for his job at the Idaho National Lab. I was a stay at home mom while our girls went to Temple View Elementary. I decided to go to work while

our girls went to Hillcrest High School. I worked for a dentist, Ed Payne DDS, between 1995 and 2000. I enjoyed my work there. It was a small office and the dentist didn't have everything computerized. I was planning on going to school to either be a dental assistant or a dental office secretary when the dentist retired but in the summer of 1999, I was properly diagnosed with RP like my dad had and I was very legally blind at the time. I immediately stopped driving. I had met Dana Ard in 1998 through the SILC Conference and she was the first one I called when I was diagnosed. At that time, we knew that it would be best if we moved to Boise to be close to the ICBVI so that I could attend the Assessment and Training Center and also because the National Federation of the Blind had a chapter in Boise and not in Idaho Falls. Dana told me about the National Federation of the Blind and plugged me into the State Convention that was in Pocatello the spring of 2000. So, we packed everything up and moved to Boise in the fall of 2000. Shortly after moving to Boise, Jan called me and told me that she and Harry would be picking me up for the chapter meeting and I joined the chapter at that first meeting. I started classes in January 2001 at the Assessment and Training Center. My first position with the chapter was calling members to remind them of the chapter meeting. I was soon voted to be the chapter secretary and to be a state board member. While attending classes at BSU, I was able to attend Washington Seminar and National Convention. I have had the opportunity to attend Washington Seminar several times and I have attended most of the National Conventions since 2001 taking some time off when my daughter Cathi was married in 2007 and then taking the summer of my 40th anniversary to spend it with Scott. We usually celebrate our anniversary before I go to National Convention and again after I get back since I am usually gone on our anniversary. I have learned so much by traveling with my friends to various NFB functions. I enjoy rooming with Dana and others. I remember the time that Alison and I attended a training for BELL Academies and had to stay over at the National Center because of a big winter storm. We were able to get new flights with a connection in Salt Lake City instead of Minneapolis. We spent one evening playing Braille UNO and drinking mocha's out of the big coffee machine in the National Center. I have two grandchildren, Easton and Nora. I love spending time with them when I can.

In December of 2014, I started working part time at the Commission on Aging which is located on the 3rd floor of the ICBVI building. I really enjoy my work there and have many connections throughout the building. At this time, I am the President of the Treasure Valley Chapter and Secretary for the NFBI Board. I enjoy my work with the NFB and I have many wonderful friends whether they are in Idaho or elsewhere in the country.

Heard Birds – Fall 2019

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

Photo: Song Sparrow



Birds aren't singing as much in the fall, but there's still plenty to hear. Geese are more vocal now after being quiet most of June and July. Geese, as with all other waterfowl, molt all their flight feathers in early summer, and are flightless for about a month while they grow new feathers. Needless to say, they are quiet and secretive while they are flightless – no sense attracting attention to yourself when you can't escape

by flying. Their feathers have regrown and they are moving around and making their loud honking calls.

You can also still hear chickadees, goldfinches, nuthatches, crows, magpies, quail and others around town. They are giving various kinds of calls, like alarm and flock contact calls. You can usually identify the species by their calls. What you won't hear are the typical spring songs. True songs are given in spring and summer by the adults, usually the male, but also the female in some species. It's used to claim territory and attract mates.

Surprisingly there are birds singing right now. If you try to identify the species by the songs, you find they don't quite match any recordings of local birds! What gives? It's the young males practicing for spring. Young males learn the proper song for their species as nestlings from listening to their fathers and other males nearby. That song gets imprinted in their brain. They spend the summer, fall and winter trying match the sounds they make with the imprinted song in their mind. It's just like human babies, knowing what sounds to make, babbling over and over until they get it right. It takes lots of practice, several months or more for birds, a couple years for humans. I've been hearing some odd songs that turned out to come from juvenile Song Sparrows. Their songs were quite pretty to my ear, in

fact I think prettier than typical Song Sparrow songs. But they are not proper breeding songs; they won't impress the girls next spring. They've got a few months left to perfect their songs. These odd songs present us a delightful challenge to identify and to marvel at the maturation process from bird baby talk to adult songs.

The Journey

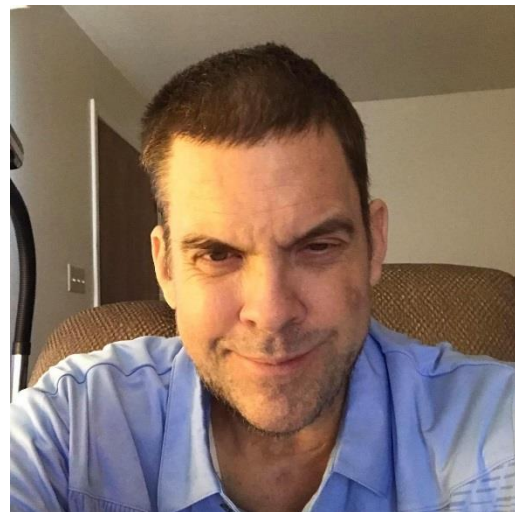
Sean Malone

I could say my journey in my life begins on June 12, 1968--which it does--but I will fast forward skipping the normal childhood and adulthood years until I was diagnosed with diabetes 21 years ago; that's when this journey begins. Begin the lifestyle change that would lead me into the not knowing what would become.

Photo: Sean Malone

I started losing my eyesight in April 2009, not knowing that everything that I had known being a sighted individual would change. I believed I had suddenly lost my independence--which I came to know is not true, but the journey of opening doors and avenues for me that I would never believe had begun.

And then eight years ago and my kidneys started failing and I soon began dialysis while still grieving for the changes the loss of eyesight had presented. After a long bout with depression and weight gain, I was approached by a social worker who started talking about a kidney transplant. Now the journey was trying and hoping that one day it would happen.



Though accepting everything that was going on was not easy, and at times I felt hopeless and lost, I never stopped believing in trying and stayed hungry and strong. My hope was that the day would come, that I would not need to be attached to the machine that was keeping me alive three days a week.

I had to undergo a colonoscopy and they found a mass growing. Although benign, it still had to be removed for I had to have a clean bill of health. Another trial along the way but still never giving up hope. In January I had a successful removal of the part of my colon that needed to come out and I healed quickly. In early April I received a call that I had waited so long to hear. I had gone active on the kidney transplant list being told it could be anywhere from 10 weeks to 6 months. It was actually only three weeks which is the quickest they said they have ever seen.

On April 18 I got the call and travel to Salt Lake City from Idaho Falls Idaho for a skirt surgery scheduled April 19. After all the years of hoping and waiting and preparing myself, it finally was happening. How many prayers and hopes and dreams were finally answered. And I'm now on the road to recovery.

I would like to encourage all out there struggling with the same disease and not knowing and being scared and growing tired and weary to never give up believing because brighter days are ahead. Everything that I have gone through, and you are going through is so worth it. To be given the gift of life from somebody who loves theirs is truly a lovely experience. The passion in me is to help you never give up hope and believing.

And what really helped me and can also help you is a strong belief in God. I have been truly shown that God is love, kindness and patience, and miracles truly do work. The pleading I did many times on my knees in prayer with tears was finally answered, and it can be the same for you. We can truly live the life we want.

SWEP----2019

Larry Henrie

Photo: SWEP kids whitewater rafting



This year the SWEP had 9 participants. 6 young ladies and 3 young men. 5 from Eastern Idaho, 2 from Twin Falls, 1 from Lewiston and 1 from Coeur D Alane. They were an exceptional group to work with in the program.

They worked at Computers for Kids, Life's Kitchen, St. Vincent's DePaul, Simply Cats, Idaho Commission for Libraries, The Bridge Caf , Riverside Hotel, Ashley Senior Manner and the Idaho Botanical Gardens. A survey of both participants and employers indicated that both were very pleased with how things went this year. One example, of many, is the young lady positioned at the Bridge Caf . She stated that the employer helped her to understand what her abilities were and she can be a success and be productive independently. She expressed to the coordinator how much she learned at her job and very much appreciated her employer.

There were 28 staff. 9 educators, 4 future social workers, 3 future nurses, 3 future doctors, 1 lawyer and the rest in various occupations. **The program employed 9 visually impaired individuals, ranging from functionally blind to total blindness.** The staff formed a very functional team and served the participants well.

The program was a great success this year.