



GEM STATE MILESTONES

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RAISING EXPECTATIONS AND INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES.. 2018 STATE CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

Dana Ard, NFBI President

This year's state convention, held in Twin Falls, April 26-28, was packed with information, enthusiasm, and plenty of good humor. Thanks to the Edelstein Corporation, and Sandy Streeter and family, we were able to award five scholarships this year totaling \$10,000. We were able to have a student track during part of the convention; we now have a Community Services Group, and a student division. We were able to talk with parents and begin the discussion and planning of a future workshop for parents and blind children. In addition, we raised approximately \$4,000.00 at our on-line and live auctions. To view the entire convention agenda, and hear excerpts from our many excellent speakers, visit www.nfbidaho.org/live.

Thursday night opened with a reception for all attendees. We all enjoyed talking with old friends and meeting new people attending the convention. Our resolutions committee met following the reception.

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Photo: NFB Idaho President, Dana Ard and National Representative Joe Ruffalo

HEARD BIRDS

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

Spring and early summer are the best times for listening to bird songs. In addition to the usual calls that you can hear all year long, the males are lustily singing to attract mates and to challenge all other males over territories. This is the best time of year for birding by ear. Mornings are best, especially early morning. The abundance of morning songs can be overwhelming; it is referred to as the dawn chorus. Around dawn there could be dozens of birds singing all at once, a wonderful cacophony of natural sound. By mid-morning things will have slowed down considerably, but there is usually enough activity to keep things interesting.

A leisurely walk through any habitat will be rewarding and relaxing. But there is another way to take in the dawn chorus. Pick a calm morning, put on a jacket, pour yourself your favorite warm beverage, and pick comfortable place outside to just sit and listen. You can start before sunrise and stay

as long as you want. The sounds will change over the morning. Males of some species sing one song before dawn and other songs later in the morning. The earliest songs are often territorial challenges directed at other males. Later they switch to songs to woo females. Now in mid-April is not bad, but it will get better in May and early June.

Now I am hearing American robins, house finches, Eurasian collared and mourning doves, starlings, crows, song sparrows, red-breasted nuthatches, cedar waxwings, black-capped chickadees, California quail and an occasional western screech owl.

Northern flickers and downy woodpeckers use their tapping as territorial claims. You'll hear them pecking away. They like to find something that resonates well, like metal siding or roof flashing and utility poles, to magnify the sound. You can often identify woodpeckers by the pace and duration of their pecking.

My favorite morning song is the slow warbling of the robin – it slows me down and mellows me out. Later on we will hear yellow warblers, western tanagers, black-headed grosbeaks, Brewer's blackbird, American and lesser goldfinches and others.

Happy Listening!



Photo: Northern Flicker

SCHOLARSHIP WINNER HIGHLIGHTED

Erin Olsen



Erin Olsen became an NFB member in Fall 2016 after learning about NFB as a student at the training center at ICBVI in Boise. She probably began losing her vision to retinitis pigmentosa (RP) about a decade ago but wasn't diagnosed until four years ago. Since joining she has become an active member, participating in fundraising and community events. She has been elected to the board for the Treasure Valley Chapter for 2018 and has agreed to be a "Treasurer in Training" for the Idaho affiliate, hoping to be elected to the position at the 2019 State Convention.

Recently, Erin has arranged to begin a Community Service Division for NFB Idaho. She facilitated a discussion at state convention and members have expressed enthusiasm to formally begin the dafter it is approved at the 2019 state convention. In the meantime, they will act as an NFB Group and begin projects this year.

Erin has been married for 28 years and has a 27-year-old son. Together, they enjoy outdoor activities. Earlier this month, they attended the Climbing on Things event at Gowen Field where they got a hands-on opportunity to experience Blackhawk helicopters. Erin sees these types of events as a way of helping her family better understand how blind people can still experience things, just sometimes differently than sighted people.

Erin worked as the founder and CEO of her own computer training company for 26 years. She was honored with several awards over her career including Most Innovative Service Company and Small Business of the Year awards. In October 2017, she closed that company and accepted a position with the Idaho Commission on Aging as their Education Specialist. The job and education program are completely new. She is envisioning, designing, and developing education for older Idahoans, caregivers, and other healthcare workers. It brings Erin full circle as she began her working career as a CNA and nursing student before entering the technology field. Now she is incorporating her instructional design and technology skills to deliver health-related education to help Idahoans age successfully.

Erin is working on her 2nd Master's degree in education. She has one more year to complete that degree. She will then begin a doctoral program in education at Boise State. The two programs will overlap by a semester so she will be very busy next year!

Erin's pursuit of education reflects her dedication to helping others help themselves to be the best they can be in whatever situation or circumstance they currently find themselves. Her own desire and wish for others to be a BLUR is what keeps her positive attitude in place. BLUR stands for Beyond Living Under Restriction, which she coined also as the term to describe blind people living life to its fullest. All of us should strive to be a BLUR every day.

(Editor's note: Erin is one of five students awarded scholarships at the 2018 NFBI State Convention. Others will be highlighted throughout the year)

ICBVI CONDUCTS NEWSLINE SURVEY

Allan Schneider

Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired's Raelene Thomas conducted a survey of registered newsline users in Idaho. Of the 513 delivered surveys, 78 were returned. Of those 78, 29 indicated they used newsline and 49 said they did not.

Most of those who responded that they used it said they used it mostly for local news and that the service is easy to use. The survey indicated the frequency of usage varies greatly among users. The range was from once a month to several times a day. Of the 78 respondents, most (51) indicated that they got their news mostly from television.

(Editor's note: NFB Idaho conducted its own survey at the NFBI State Convention. Results of that survey will appear in the summer issue.)



Clip art of a telephone



BAKER'S RECIPES

Tips and techniques around the house

by Lisa Baker

Happy spring! I thought I would share my new favorite app, the Seeing AI app. It is a free app developed by the Microsoft Corporation that uses Artificial Intelligence. It has several very useful features. The first one is short text which can be useful for reading text if you just want to quickly identify something, like a piece of paper or possibly a food item. My favorite use is quickly identifying mail. It makes it a great way to weed out the junk mail without having to open and scan every piece of mail. The second one is a document reader which will take a picture of a document and read the text to you. I love the fact that you can hold the camera above the document and will tell you if the camera needs to be moved to the left, right, top, or

bottom assisting you with getting the whole document. It also will then tell you to hold steady while it takes the picture. I still really love the KNFB reader, but this is quite a good document reader for the price! The third product captures the bar code on household items. I love the fact that it makes a beeping sound as you point the camera around letting you know when you are getting close to the bar code. Once again, I have used Digit Eyes successfully for years, but you can't beat free! These three features are the ones I use the most, but it also has some other useful features; a light detector, handwriting reader, money reader, color identifier, facial recognizer, and a scene recognizer. I highly recommend that if you don't have it already, you download it on your iPhone and check it out. As far as I know it is not available for Android yet.

The other app I wanted to mention is AIRA. This is a great app with a lot of applications. The app comes with a pair of light weight fashionable glasses embedded with a camera connected to a live trained professional. This professional can assist with things like mobility routes, shopping, household projects, and anything you might need sighted assistance with. The professional is available 24 hours a day and they offer several price packages with introductory bonus minutes.

1. BASIC \$89 - 200 Three-Month Intro Minutes/ 100 Regular Minutes
2. PLUS \$129 - 400 Three-Month Intro Minutes/200 Regular Minutes
3. PRO \$199 - Unlimited Three-Month Intro Minutes/ 400 Regular Minutes
4. PREMIUM \$329 - Unlimited Three-Month Intro Minutes/ Unlimited Regular Minutes

I have not personally tried it yet, but it has great reviews and the more I think about its endless uses, I am definitely going to give it a try. If there is anyone, who may have used the AIRA app already, I would love to hear your thoughts. It is available for the iPhone as well as the Android.

RAISING EXPECTATIONS... *Continued from page 1....*

Four resolutions were passed by the committee and presented to the convention where they also passed.

On Friday, the first presentation by Garren Aubrey, president of the Portneuf Chapter, helped us all to get to know him better, as we reflected on why we are all proud members of the National Federation of the Blind. President Art's report acknowledged the accomplishments of the affiliate throughout the year and stressed the importance of including a national focus during chapter meetings. I was deeply moved by the sincerity and commitment of our two legislative representatives, Christy Zito and Maxine Bell. Christy is a freshman legislator, and Maxine will end her long and distinguished legislative career in December. I learned an important lesson from representative Bell and that is that we can't just depend on our legislative luncheon to inform legislators about our issues. No one contacted legislators who were not at the luncheon, even those whose committees have prominent roles in issues important to us.

From now on, I will talk to those legislators who will be responsible for our legislation, and not assume they know what we want. I always benefit from the reports from our three agencies serving the blind. We are fortunate to have a separate agency serving the blind in Idaho, as well as our own talking book program. The National Federation of the Blind of Idaho advocated for these programs, and we continue to advise them today.

Our blindness product and services expo featured many new products, and much information. The evening documentary “Do You Dream in Color?” showed the determination of four blind students and their families, as the students transitioned into adulthood. Following the movie, a panel of members from the Palouse Empire Chapter, reflected on questions raised by the documentary and gave us much to think about.

The Saturday morning session featured three panels: students talking about their transition from high school into college; parents successfully raising their blind children; and parents struggling to get Braille and other services for their blind children. Senator Lee Heider, chair of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee, assured us that he would help with any bill that we bring to his committee, which could include a parental rights bill, if we choose to create one. Alison Steven talked about her role as transition coordinator with the Commission for the Blind, including how some of the transition students will be able to work in the BELL programs this summer. Al Schneider provided an informative talk on birding by ear. This is another way for blind people to become involved in the community.

Our national representative, Joe Ruffalo, had three presentations: his national report, where he updated us on issues from our national office that involve all of us; a presentation “Something Up My Sleeve” where he talked about bringing people into our movement through friendship and involvement; and his banquet speech, where he talked about his journey through vision loss and how the NFB has impacted him. Joe’s definition of NFB is “Never Felt Better”. Gretchen Spooner, director of Education at the Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind, updated us on their programs.

Vickie Bateman, Mai Nguyen, and Russell Smith were elected to board positions at our annual meeting. Dana Ard was elected as the delegate to the national convention, and Susan Bradley was elected alternate delegate.

The final presentation on Saturday afternoon was from Central Idaho Chapter president, Mai Nguyen, who talked about her experiences coming to America from Vietnam. Her sincerity and humor provided the perfect ending for our afternoon session.

Mike Gibson, our banquet MC, kept us engaged with his humorous family stories. Joe Ruffalo’s speech provided depth and fun as only Joe can. I was moved by the gratitude and insight of

the scholarship winners. The awards meant more than just money. Our PAC chair, Jan Gawith, helped us to move ahead of Utah in contributions. Susan Ford presented the awards for this year's braille-a-thon. Our event ended with a competitive live auction.

I wish to thank everyone who made this convention a success, including hosts, Central Idaho Chapter, as well as all the committees, and everyone who came and/or participated in any way. We met our goal! We Raised Expectations and Created Opportunities and we continue to build

HELP OTHERS LIVE THE LIFE THEY WANT SUPPORT THE CYCLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

Al Schneider

May 19, 2018 will mark the 20th Anniversary the largest fundraiser in Idaho for the blind and visually impaired, the Cycle for Independence. Although this is not a race, it features 10-mile, 25-mile, and metric century rides, followed by music, food, prizes, and comradery. The event raises money for the blind of Idaho, but just as important it is an opportunity for sighted people to meet and mingle with blind people and see them accomplishing all facets of this endeavor from cooking to registration to manning water stops and so on. This year organizers are looking for 400 participants, the largest turnout in many years. To reach that number, the event coordinator is asking NFBI members to promote the ride in any way they can. One simple idea is to participate yourself and ask family members to join with you. Another way is to promote the event on your Facebook page, then ask you "Friends" to "Share" with their friends and create a sort of pyramid action. Direct people to the web site:

cycleforindependence.org





| Route | Cost (Individual) | Check-In | Start |
|------------|-------------------|-------------|---------|
| 100 Metric | \$40 | 7-7:45AM | 8:00 AM |
| 25 Mile | \$40 | 8-8:45AM | 9:00 AM |
| 10 Mile | \$30 | 8:45-9:15AM | 9:30 AM |

Preregistration ends May 15, on-site available ride day

River Glen Jr High | 6801 N Gary Ln, Boise

Registration and Route Maps at www.cycleforindependence.org



BBQ, music, and famous socks as always!



Answers Insurance | Benchmark Dentistry | Dr. Dwight Hansen
 Friends of the Weiser River Trail | Kranz Chiropractic | Michelle Hitch DDS | Northwest Dental Center
 Sock Guy | Shu's Idaho Running Company | Voya Financial Advisors