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**2023 52nd Annual State Convention
November 3, 4, and 5 2023**

 **Holiday Inn**

**35 Governor Winthrop Boulevard**

**New London, CT 06320**

**Door Prizes: Door prizes will be awarded throughout the convention. To be eligible, you must be registered and be in the conference room when your name is drawn.**

**50/50 raffle tickets will be sold throughout the day and the winner will be announced at the end of the Banquet. There will also be Basket raffles. Be prepared to buy tickets to try and win your favorite Chapter basket. The affiliate will be selling coasters with our name and logo on them for $5.00 each throughout the weekend. There will be a special table for sales in the conference room with sweets for sale as well on Friday night.**

**We will also be offering bottles of cold water for $1.00 throughout the entire convention. A much better price than the Hotel!**

**Guide Dog Relief Area: From the elevators turn left and take your first left and then an immediate right. Continue straight down a long hallway until you come to a set of glass doors. Go through the doors and up a set of four stairs to the exterior set of glass doors. Once outside go straight across the paved area until you find the grass. Once you are done relieving your dog return the same way. There is a trash container on the right side of the glass doors before you re-enter the hotel. Go down the stairs and through the double-glassed doors. Walk down the long hallway until you reach the end, take a left and then your first right to return to the elevators.**

**We would like to thank our generous sponsors:**

**Platinum Sponsor:**

****[**www.oakhillct.org**](http://www.oakhillct.org)

**Silver Sponsor: Retina Consultants, PC**

**National Representative: Gary Wunder, former National Board member and Editor of The Braille Monitor**

**President: Maryanne Melley
National Federation of the Blind of Connecticut**

[**www.nfbct.org**](http://www.nfbCT.org)

**Facebook: National Federation of the Blind of Connecticut**

**Friday, November 3rd**

**6:00p.m. – 7:00p.m.; Chapter Presidents meeting, The Harbor Room**

**7:00p.m. – 10:00p.m. We will have a social gathering in the Ballroom with a cash bar and entertainment from Jim Cronin, Judy Potter, and all of you!**

**6:00p.m. – 10:00p.m. Student Division meet and greet in the Winthrop room. Pizza and refreshments will be served.**

**7:00p.m. – 10:00p.m. The Vendor Fair will be taking place next door to where we will be gathered in the Ballroom. Please take time to visit our vendors.**

**Saturday, November 4th, 2023**

**CTABS (Connecticut Association of Blind Students) Meeting in the Winthrop room 2:00-3:00.**

**CTAGDU (Connecticut Association of Guide Dog Users) Meeting in the Winthrop room 3:30-4:30.**

**8:00a.m.- 9:00a.m. Full Breakfast Buffett (This is not the Hotel breakfast)**

**9:00a.m. - Call to order, Pledge of Allegiance, NFB Pledge**

**9:10a.m. – Announcements; I would like to extend my sincere thanks to this years’ convention committee, Jim Cronin, Chair, Larry Chase, Allison Arbuckle, Beth Rival, Kristen Dockendorf, Marilyn Wenzel, and Jim McCollum. In addition, we need to thank our donation mailers. Charlie Rival, Cheri Duquette, Glenn Miller, Carol Lemieux, George Reed, and Richard Ireland. Without all work and dedication, we would not be in the strong financial position we are in.**

**Let us observe a moment of silence for our member who passed away last year, Chris Kuell, and even though he was not a member, our beloved Steve Famiglietti.**

**9:20a.m. Deb Reed – Nominating Committee Report**

**9:25a.m. – Gary Wunder, National report.**

**9:55a.m. – Manahil Jafri, National Association of Blind Students (NABS) Representative-Update from the National Student Division**

**10:15a.m. - Hear from our Harlow and NFB of CT Grant Winners**

**10:20a.m. – Jim Cronin, Fit Break**

**10:25a.m. - Maryanne Melley; Presidents Report**

**10:45a.m. – Isabel Rosario & Nathanael Wales; Uber/Lyft Panel Discussion**

**11:05a.m. – Matt Geeza; CT Library for Accessible Books**

 **11:15a.m. – Justin Salisbury; Disability as an Identity for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programing**

**11:30a.m. – Lori St. Amand; BESB**

**11:45a.m. – Al Elia; NAGDU (National Association of Guide Dog Users) Lawyer. Updates on Air travel and Uber.**

**12:00p.m.- 1:00p.m. Break for lunch**

**1:00p.m.- Chelsea White; The Seeing Eye, Ben Cawley; Guiding Eyes, Lauren Berglund; Guide Dog Foundation, Gretchen Fisher Orr, Fidelco – Panel Discussion**

**1:30p.m. – Brianna Rigsbee – Apple Specialist**

**1:45p.m. – Marc Anthony Gallucci, Esq.; Center for Disability Rights Connecticut, The Centers Advocacy for persons with Disabilities**

**2:00p.m.- Jim Cronin; Fit Break**

**2:05p.m.- Jeffrey Rumpf; Pegasus Therapy Horses**

**2:20p.m. - Ronnie Behringer; TVI**

**2:30p.m. – John Wardzala; Mobility Services Director, O & M trainer for persons with visual impairments including CVI**

**2:45p.m. - Deb Reed; What’s New with NFB Newsline**

**3:00p.m. – Gary Allen; BESB Adult Services Rehabilitation Specialist**

**3:15p.m. – Jim McCollum; Legislative Initiatives that Effect the Blind**

**One Minute Message**

**The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. You can live the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back**

**3:30p.m.- 6:00p.m. Break**

**6:00 p.m. Banquet Dinner,**

**Invocation: Maryanne Melley**

**Master of Ceremonies; Justin Salisbury**

**Keynote Address; Gary Wunder**

**Presentation of 2023 Scholarships:**

**Nathanael Wales**

**Mary Silverberg**

**Scholarship Finalists:**

**Lizzy Cappelli**

**Yew  (Johnston)  Siang Cheong**

**Helena Damas**

**Elijah  Dionne**

**Jan Feyen**

**Scholarships:**

**Woodward Memorial Scholarship**

**Howard E. May Memorial Scholarship**

**C. Rodney Demarest Memorial Scholarship**

**Doris Higley Memorial Scholarship**

**Zukowski Family Foundation Scholarship**

**Sunday, October 31, 2023**

**8:00a.m.-9:00a.m. LaLuna Lounge; Breakfast,**

**9:00a.m. LaLuna Lounge; Call to order; Business Meeting**

**Roll Call**

**NFB Pledge**

***Reports:***

***Joe Kolczynski; Reading of 2022 Business Meeting Minutes, Vote on Acceptance:***

***Treasurers Report: Cheri Duquette, vote on report.***

***ABPVI (Advisory Board Persons with Visual Impairments): Mary Silverberg***

***SRC (State Rehabilitation Council): Deb Reed***

***BCAC (Bureau Consumer Advocacy Committee): Melissa Thompson***

***PAC (Pre-Authorized Contribution) Plan: Len Schlenk***

**New Business:**

**Museum of the Blind Peoples Movement: Maryanne Melley**

**Birdies for Charity: Mary Silverberg**

**Conversion to QuickBooks; Cheri Duquette**

 ***Washington Seminar Appointments; Mary Silverberg and Joe Kolczynski***

***Donations Update; Cheri Duquette***

***Vote on Grant/Travel Expense amount for Washington Seminar; Explanation of New Name; Maryanne Melley***

**Resolution 2023-01 Accessible Absentee Ballot Voting**

**Read by Joe Kolczynski**

**WHEREAS the ability to cast a secret and anonymous ballot is a cornerstone of our democracy that enables citizens to vote their conscience without fear; and**

**WHEREAS Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that voters with print disabilities must be provided an opportunity to mark and return their by-mail ballot privately and independently at home that is equal to the opportunity provided voters without disabilities; and**

**WHEREAS the state of Connecticut in 2020 produced a fillable pdf that was only accessible to blind, low vision and print disabled people who used a screen reading software known as JAWS, the pdf was not accessible to Apple and Android users; and**

**WHEREAS in addition blind voters had to print out the 2020 ballot, sign it and the interior envelope which is a barrier because many blind voters do not own printers, and they need sighted assistance to verify that the ballot printed correctly, compromising the privacy of the ballot.**

**WHEREAS the state of Connecticut opposes fully accessible vote by mail, and therefore the right of voters with print disabilities to vote by mail privately and independently, solely based on unfounded security concerns; and**

**WHEREAS thirty-two states currently permit military and overseas (UOCAVA) voters to return their marked ballot either by email, fax, or web portal; and**

**WHEREAS twenty-eight states currently permit blind and low-vision voters to mark their by-mail ballot using a remote accessible vote-by-mail (RAVBM) system, but only thirteen states (Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Utah, and West Virginia) have passed state laws or have been ordered by a federal court to permit voters with disabilities to return their marked ballots electronically; and**

**WHEREAS states that do not permit electronic return of ballots require that ballots that are marked using an RAVBM be printed out and returned by regular mail, or placed in a ballot drop-box, which is a barrier that prevents many voters with print disabilities from exercising their right to vote by mail privately and independently; and**

**WHEREAS the most used RAVBM, OmniBallot from Democracy Live, is a Web portal hosted in the federally approved Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud, which has been approved by the US Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, National Security Agency, Central Intelligence Agency, and other US federal government intelligence agencies to secure nationally sensitive documents and data; and**

**WHEREAS Synack Security, the nation’s premiere security testing company, has conducted continuous penetration testing of the OmniBallot portal since 2020, and a Synack Security report, dated July 27, 2022, indicates that recent testing by over four hundred independent security testers found just one low-risk security vulnerability, which was later confirmed to be fixed and no longer present in OmniBallot; and**

**WHEREAS ballots electronically returned on the OmniBallot portal are encrypted, protected from being changed or overwritten, and securely stored until the election’s office prints out and tabulates the ballot; and**

**WHEREAS the Democracy Live OMNIBallot RAVBM portal has been deployed in over four thousand elections in ninety-six countries since 2010 with no security breaches, and is the most deployed RAVBM in the US; and**

**WHEREAS the Enhanced Voting System, another RAVBM portal commonly used in the United States, has incorporated Microsoft ElectionGuard, an end-to-end verification system, that permits the voter to verify their submitted ballot from the time it is submitted to when it is counted: Now, therefore,**

**Now, therefore,**

**BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind of Connecticut in Convention assembled this fifth day of November 2023 in the city of New London Connecticut that this organization demand that the state of Connecticut make a vote by-mail ballot that is fully accessible by blind, low-vision, and voters with other print disabilities, privately, and independently, and to amend their position on fully accessible vote by mail to reflect the actual security status of the state-of-the-art systems currently in use, and to reflect the requirements of Title II of the ADA.**

**Vote on Resolution**

***Location for our 2024 State Convention***

***January Board meeting, where and when?***

***Chapter News***

***Elections; Gary Wunder, Moderator***

**Any member nominated from the floor should have already agreed to serve prior to this convention.**

**Nominees from the committee and from the floor will have one minute to state why they feel the affiliate should vote for them. The one-minute time will be strictly enforced.**

**Elections: Results will be given to our national representative Gary Wunder if there is a vote off.**

**Positions up for election:**

**Board Member; Allison Arbuckle**

**Board Member; Veronica Allston**