



TAP Tracks Fall 2014

The newsletter of the National Federation of the Blind of Kansas

We are looking for some one interested in becoming the editor of Tap Tracks for 2015.

Please submit materials for the spring newsletter by February 28th 2015 to:

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120 E. 1st St. #3C
Wichita, KS 67202
316-734-4839

From the President's Desk
-- Tom Page, President NFB of KS

Greetings Kansas Federationists,

I am excited to send this note out with our fall newsletter and 2014 convention announcement. Our Kansas affiliate has been busy since the spring update. I will keep this note short and just say check out the chapter reports for more...

We were pleased that 9 members of our affiliate were able to attend our national convention this July in Orlando. Anya Avromenko of Emporia Kansas was honored as a national scholarship winner! (see <https://nfb.org/images/nfb/publications/bm/bm14/bm1408/bm140805.htm>) We laughed, learned, and loved together. We enjoyed the Florida seafood, sunshine and rain.

Some of the highlights for me included learning about the new K-NFB reader which has since been released for i-devices (for more info consult the Apple app store) and learning about how the University of Montana in partnership with the National Federation of the Blind is bringing about a commitment to purchasing only accessible courseware. These and many other presentations informed, entertained, and sparked the imaginations of those in attendance. For more please check out: <https://nfb.org/national-federation-blind-applauds-groundbreaking-agreement-equal-access-higher-education>

Please consider being a part of our state convention which will be held in Lawrence from November 21-23. You will find a draft agenda later in this mailing. This convention will begin our 2015 Kansas federation year. We hope to bring a BELL program (Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning) to Kansas next summer. (see <https://nfb.org/bell-program>) We are also working hard to identify legislative sponsors to ensure continuation of our NFB- Newline program in Kansas. Of course each of our local chapters has exciting plans for 2015. Please join us in continuing to live the lives we want!

Invitation!

-- Convention Committee

The National Federation of the Blind of Kansas would like to invite You To our state convention. The convention will be held November 21, 22, and 23, 2014. It will be in Lawrence, at the Holiday Inn and Convention Center at 200 McDonald Drive. The telephone number for the reservations is 785-841-7077. room rates are \$99 per night. Reservation deadline is October 31, 2014. The NFBKS offers scholarships and stipends to assist those who have a financial need. Please contact the local chapter president for further information on financial assistance to the convention.

This year's national rep will be Jeannie Massay, president of the Oklahoma affiliate and national board member. We are looking forward to welcoming Jeannie to our convention. For more information on Jeannie see her bio in this newsletter.

The convention will begin Friday November 21, at 1:00 P.M. The afternoon will consist of a seminar that will cover such topics as; the ABC's of the NFB, Newline, and the BELL program. In the evening there will be snacks in the hospitality room, resolutions, and vendors in the exhibit hall.

The Saturday agenda will include presentations on: blind women in Chemistry, Unified English Braille, the new KNFB Reader mobile app, and NFB training centers. In the evening we invite you to join us for our banquet and keynote speaker, Jeannie Massay. Following our banquet will be entertainment.

Sunday morning will be the business meeting. This will include: elections, resolutions, and committee and chapter reports.

We look forward to seeing you in November for an informative and fun filled convention weekend.

Meet Your National Representative

Jeannie Massay

Counselor, Advocate, Leader



Jeannie Massay was born in 1968 in Oklahoma City, the youngest of three children and the only girl. She said she was blessed to be a daddy's girl, with brothers who did whatever she told them to do. "They always had my back and were loving and supportive," she said.

Jeannie had good vision for the first thirty-seven years of her life, though she did suffer from severe astigmatism and wore strong glasses to compensate for it. She attended Windsor Hills Elementary School because her mother was a teacher there. "I have been an avid reader all of my life, and because my mom was a reading specialist who worked with sixth-graders, after school I went to her classroom to learn about Pompeii, the pyramids, and all kinds of things younger children didn't normally get to read about."

In junior high she attended Leo C. Mayfield. As a student she was involved in competing in intermural basketball and softball. She was also involved in the Pep Club and Student Council. In ninth grade Jeannie had unexplained weight loss and severe abdominal cramping, but soon the symptoms went away. They would return every couple months, and initially she was diagnosed with hyperglycemia. When she was sixteen the cramping, weight loss, and lethargy caused the doctor to do a blood glucose tolerance test, revealing a blood sugar level as high as 900. A normal blood sugar is considered to be around one hundred, and one is considered to be a diabetic if blood sugar levels exceed 140. She was hospitalized for a week to learn to manage her diabetes.

Jeannie attended Putnam City West High School, where she played competitive softball and performed in the band for three years. She was on the debate team and managed to get A's and B's, which kept her on the honor roll. "Although I didn't do badly, I wish I had done better. I was pretty social and liked to talk to people. I was a pretty well-rounded kid, but it was tough being a diabetic and

wanting to eat like a teenager. Since I wanted to fit in and do what I thought was normal, at times I went to the pizza parlor and the hamburger joints.”

After high school Jeannie attended the University of Central Oklahoma, living at home until her senior year. She thought she wanted to be a political scientist until her first class and then decided this was not what she was meant to do. Instead, she began studying psychology, and in 1990, during a two-week period, she graduated, got married, and watched her husband leave for active military service. Jeannie got a job selling cosmetics in a department store. When her husband Mark was transferred from Fort Knox to San Antonio to go through medical training to be a dietitian, she moved to be near him. After his training was completed, Mark was stationed at Landstuhl General Hospital in Germany, the largest military hospital in the European Theatre.

When Jeannie was eventually able to go to Germany, she loved it: the people, the food, and the opportunity for travel. She taught at a department of defense dependent school, providing instruction in reading, math, and language arts. She also worked with a behavioral management specialist, which led her to think at the time that she did not want to work with children—all the funnier because she eventually came to realize this was her calling and now her job is counseling children and teenagers.

Jeannie and her husband were in Germany just over three years during the Bosnian conflict. When the military began downsizing, Mark was offered early contract closure and both returned to the States. Jeannie went back to selling cosmetics, working at Estée Lauder. She started by working behind the counter, then became counter manager, and then assumed the job of account coordinator, managing seven counters around Oklahoma. When Mark received a promotion, both moved to Alexandria, Virginia, where he managed Marriott contracts for Georgetown University. Jeannie was able to continue her work with Estée Lauder but now she was back to working on the counter. Soon that counter was bringing in \$1 million a year.

Yet another promotion for Mark found the couple moving to Jackson, Mississippi. Estée Lauder helped Jeannie find another job, this time managing multiple counters. The couple was in Jackson for two years, but a merger sent Mark to St. Louis, where he ran the food and conference center for Boeing. Jeannie went to work for a subsidiary of Estée Lauder, Origins, where she worked as the

coordinator for eight stores in Missouri and Indiana. While in St. Louis the couple lived in an old Jewish Temple which had been renovated into an apartment. This she loved. Soon she was given the opportunity to interview as an account executive for Origins, flew to New York for the interview, talked with Mark, and was gratified to learn that his reaction to making a move that would further her career was unequivocal: "You have followed me around for ten years, so now I will gladly follow you."

The couple moved to Memphis, and Jeannie was responsible for the states of Tennessee, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. In this position she managed eighteen counters for Dillard's stores and for other retail establishments. She supervised eighty people and loved the job.

Even the jobs we love the most come with significant drawbacks. Jeannie was traveling more than three weeks each month, and this was tough on her marriage and tough on her physically. "Sometimes I would work so hard that I would forget to eat. I got really skinny and sickly. So, after close to four years of this kind of life, Mark and I agreed that something had to change." She chose to resign her position with Estée Lauder because she could not keep up with the demands of the job without continuing to damage her body. They decided to move back to Oklahoma to be closer to family and friends, drastically improving their quality of life.

Her next job was with the Oklahoma Blood Institute doing public relations and helping to run blood drives. She realized she liked working in this nonprofit organization because she believed in its mission, liked helping people, and felt she was doing something good for society. She worked there for two years before she had a hemorrhage in her eye. When she woke on a Friday morning and found that everything she saw was pink, she thought she was having a problem with allergies, because it had happened before. When the problem had not improved on Monday, she went to the doctor and on that day received 1,000 laser shots in both eyes. Problems with her vision would consume the next year of her life. Every two weeks she was having eye surgeries, procedures, and experimental injections. The frequent laser treatments on both of her eyes meant that she missed a lot of work, and the director of public relations called her in to ask why. No doubt feeling the need to expose her repressed inner doctor, the supervisor suggested Jeannie "get an eye transplant." In the quest to save her vision, she

could not assure her supervisor that her attendance would improve, so she resigned.

Four times during that year of struggle to save her sight, she lost all of her vision. Each time it would return, there would be less of it. Emotionally she tells the story of traveling to a 7 AM Rotary Club meeting and finding that, on that day, she had so little vision that her usual ten-minute trip took forty-five minutes. "I freely gave up driving because I was terrified that I was going to hurt someone else."

"I went through the next six months of surgeries and injections and finally came to the realization that I was mostly blind and it was going to stay that way. I couldn't see to read or to sew, and at that point I had difficulty figuring out anything I could really do. Part of my self-concept is that I am a strong-willed person, but I couldn't see how that strong will was going to save me."

Mark was initially terrified by the onset of her blindness and for a time was very overprotective. Neither of the Massays knew a blind person, and the only thing Jeannie knew was that blind people carried long white canes. The rehabilitation agency had not offered her one, she had no idea where a cane for the blind could be had, so she began using a three-foot carved walking stick her father had used. "Mark and I moved in with my mom because I was familiar with the layout of her house. I started receiving library services for the blind but was on so much medication that I really couldn't read or enjoy the books they sent. I signed up for rehabilitation services and tried to learn something about assistive technology, but only once did a rehabilitation teacher come to my house for fifteen minutes. Not knowing what else to do, I went to the Library for the Blind in Oklahoma City and spent hours there. They offered no formal training there, but I observed other people, listened to what they were doing, and came to understand a bit about the assistive technology used by blind people.

"The one thing I got from the rehabilitation agency that did seem to help was orientation and mobility services. I appreciated my instructor because she showed up for appointments and was the first person I could clearly see who wanted to give me back my independence."

When Jeannie decided that she would need more training than she could get from an occasional home visit by the Oklahoma agency, she looked at residential rehabilitation centers. She considered attending the Colorado Center for the Blind and was given a long white cane, but the information she had heard about the

National Federation of the Blind and the rigor of CCB training, along with biased information and the opinions of her counselor, convinced her that she should attend the Carroll Center for the Blind. She was at the center about six months, and in addition to personal adjustment to blindness training, she also went through an office skills program so that she could learn enough assistive technology to go back to school and get her master's degree. As she gained confidence and a working set of blindness skills, Mark once again saw in Jeannie the fiercely independent woman he'd married. After her time at the Carroll Center, Jeannie went back to school to become a therapist. Working in the cosmetics industry had always been lucrative, but it'd never been her passion. Mark also made the decision to go back to school, and both graduated with their master's degrees at the same time.

After graduating in May of 2011, Jeannie set out to begin the supervision process, part of the requirements for licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in Oklahoma. The requirement consists of working for a minimum of three thousand hours under a counselor who is already licensed. Jeannie encountered discrimination when seeking a job to complete the supervision required for her to pursue licensure. "Although I was equally qualified and had a high GPA, many people saw my cane and assumed that I wouldn't be able to do the job," she said. After going on lots of interviews, Jeannie finally found a job in October of 2011. She began counseling children, adolescents, and their families, who deal with ADHD, depression and anxiety disorders. Jeannie completed the state and national exams in November of 2013 after having had issues gaining her appropriate and desired accommodations. She passed both examinations and will soon receive her Oklahoma state license as a licensed professional counselor.

Jeannie's first association with an organization of the blind came when she joined the Oklahoma Council of the Blind, the state affiliate of the American Council of the Blind. Although she liked some of the people in the organization, she became concerned with how much time they spent complaining about this radical and militant organization known as the National Federation of the Blind. She did just enough research to realize that the NFB gave state and national scholarships, decided that she was as competent and capable as anyone else, and even decided that crazy, militant money was still spendable. She did not win a national scholarship but was invited to attend the 2008 state convention in Oklahoma. There were fourteen people at that convention and, to her surprise, Steve Shelton

nominated her for a board position. During the luncheon speech presented by the national representative from the Federation, Jeannie was touched by the idea of finding something larger than oneself and reaching out to help others.

Although the Oklahoma affiliate did not award her a scholarship in 2008, it did provide resources she could use to attend the national convention. “I was a bit overwhelmed by the three thousand blind people in the Hilton Anatole,” she said, “but once I heard the gavel drop, I knew we had to bring this kind of enthusiasm and the philosophy of the National Federation of the Blind home to Oklahoma. I felt a duty and an obligation to organize a chapter in Edmund, so Steve Shelton, Dick Morris, Selena Crawford, and Dan Frye worked to make the first meeting possible. We had four people attend, and I thought this was great! I told myself we would have an awesome chapter, but at our first regular meeting only the officers showed up. I was disappointed but resolved. The chapter kept growing and pretty soon it came to have twenty and then thirty people on average. We kept at it, and at the same time we worked on developing the affiliate.” Jeannie won a national scholarship in 2009, was invited by President Maurer to attend a leadership seminar, and at that time she told President Maurer that, when she graduated with her master’s degree, she would run to be the state president in Oklahoma.

A third chapter of the affiliate was organized in Ardmore, Oklahoma, in 2010. Two more chapters were chartered in 2012, one in Clinton, the West Central chapter, and the other in Tulsa, the Brady District Chapter. The affiliate has organized a student division and hopes to organize a Parents of Blind Children Division in 2014. In 2011 the Oklahoma affiliate had ten people at the national convention held in Orlando. In 2012 thirty-eight people sat in the affiliate’s delegation, since the convention was just across the Red River in Dallas, Texas. In 2013, once again in Orlando, the number of attendees from the state rose from ten to seventeen.

Jeannie says she has never had problems believing in the teachings of the National Federation of the Blind regarding the need to learn blindness skills. She says that, after her initial loss of vision, what she can see has varied so much that she has never been tempted to put down her cane. “My vision isn’t what I use to live—it is helpful and icing on the cake, but it cannot meet my daily needs for travel and other activities.”

Jeannie Massey was elected to the national board of directors in July 2013. "When I was growing up, and to this day, my mother used to ask me 'What are you?' She taught me to respond in the following way, 'I am intelligent, capable, beautiful, and lots of fun to be with.' This was our way of affirming who I wanted to be and who I could become, and blindness hasn't changed any of it. This is the message I want to share with blind people: that our hopes, dreams, goals, and aspirations are no less real simply because we do not see."

Chapter Reports

At Large Chapter

-- Sharon Luka, Secretary NFB of KS

We are all on the go, very busy, bustling about with bountiful endeavors. In this modern age of technology, we can join an NFB chapter meeting without leaving home.

Teleconference calling is now becoming a normal norm.

I want to invite you to join our monthly at-large call.

We enjoy discussions, sharing ideas of life enrichment, and presidential releases. These tools help us build confidence and skill in changing what it means to be blind.

You can join us by phone. Save travel cost, and gain positive blindness philosophy.

We meet monthly by phone on the third Friday evening at seven pm.

Call and join in at the following numbers:

Regular line:

916 233-4200.

Access pin: 950655 pound (number).

Toll free:

866 476-8702.

Access pin: 950655 pound.

We generally do not meet in July, as this is the month of the national convention.

Hope to see you there!

Jayhawk Chapter

-- Rob Tabor, President Jayhawk Chapter

It's hard to believe that summer 2014 is in the annals of history, but fall is definitely under way and the Jayhawk chapter is a beehive of activity.

First, as many of our Taptracks readers know, we are the hosting chapter for the 2014 annual Kansas state affiliate convention taking place at the Holiday Inn Convention Center at 200 McDonald Drive in Lawrence. Our worker bees are busily buzzing about with preparations for what we hope to be a fantastic and exciting conference.

Although we are busy with convention preparation, we are also planning a variety of activities to enable us to participate robustly in the NFB national Meet the Blind Month public education campaign about the philosophy and programs of NFB. On October 7 Renee Morgan and Rob Tabor will give a short presentation to the Lawrence City Commission, concluding with a reading of the Meet The Blind Month and White Cane Safety Day proclamation which will be signed and sealed by Lawrence Mayor Mike Amyx. The full city commission meeting including our presentation and proclamation will be telecast on WOW! Broadband Cable TV channel 25 and will be archived on the Lawrence City web page at <http://lawrenceks.org/>.

On Friday October 10 Renee and Rob will be interviewed by long time radio broadcast veteran Hank Booth. The interview will get under way at 8:15am on KLWN AM 1320 in Lawrence. Anyone within or outside in the Lawrence KLWN listening area can catch the broadcast interview online at <http://www.klwn.com/> and activate the "listen live" link.

The last event in our local Meet The Blind campaign will be an informational tabling event in the front courtyard at US Bank at Ninth and Massachusetts Street in Lawrence. The event runs from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm and will feature an abundance of braille literature. Luther Fuller, a winner of multiple braille reading contests and son of state affiliate treasurer Bob Fuller, will braille name cards which will enable visitors to our booth to see how their names appear in Braille. We and our visitors will also be entertained by Volition, a local party band, from 1:00pm to 3:00 pm. All financial contributions dropped into the kitty will benefit the Jayhawk chapter.

Last and definitely not least, the Jayhawk chapter will hold its regular monthly meeting on Saturday, October 18, at Independence, Inc., 2001 Haskell Avenue in Lawrence from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Our annual election of chapter officers will be conducted and we will be making lists and checking them twice or more to make sure we stay on track toward a great state convention in November to which we welcome everyone.

Johnson County Chapter

-- Susie Stanzel, President Johnson County Chapter

Since our last publication last spring Bernadette McDevitt has joined our chapter. She is a very unusual woman because she hasn't waited until blindness comes. She still drives but wants to be prepared if her Macular Degeneration gets worse.

Due to health and family problems I was the only member to attend the National convention this year, but I had enough fun for three people. I enjoyed rooming with our friend Cindy Ray from Iowa.

On September 6th Bernadette and I walked with the Kansas City chapter to benefit our chapter. At this point we have brought in over \$600.00. That's pretty good for a morning walk enjoying the most glorious day we could have had. Our members and friends who could not walk donated. My friend and driver Scott Nameth came and brought his two teenagers to help with the walk. Unfortunately they were unable to stay for the great picnic.

I continue to talk with callers and offer encouragement when they think life is certainly coming to an end. We know there is life after blindness!
We will again be having our annual Christmas party at my home on December 20th at 6:00. All are welcome.

The Johnson County Chapter of the NFB of Kansas meets the second Friday of each month at Bethany Lutheran Church at 91st and Lamar. Our meeting starts at 6:30.

South Central Chapter

-- Serena Nickell, President South Central Chapter

The NFBKs South central chapter has had a fairly busy few months. First, several of our chapter members participated in public forums and two city council meetings regarding a proposed one cent sales tax to be voted on in November's election. These items included: economic development, water rights, street improvement and improvements to Wichita's public transit system. We strongly advocated for improvements to the transit system.

The city council only allocated enough funds from the 1 cent sales tax to keep public transit at its current mediocre level of operation.

On Tuesday June 3, from 5:00 to 8:00 four of our chapter members participated in Wichita River Festival's Celebrate Abilities Day. We had a table with NFB literature and a Braille demonstration.

On June 14th the South Central chapter held a fundraiser from 3:00 P.M. to 7:30 P.M. at the Brickyard. We had silent auction items, door prizes and entertainment from Tom Page Trio as well as other guests. We raised a total of \$452 for our chapter. This was the first big event the chapter has put on and we hope to make it an annual event.

National convention took place from July 1-6th in Orlando Florida. The south central chapter had a strong presence with five of our members representing the NFBKs. Those members were: Tom Page, Donna Wood, Serena Nickell, Leonard Silkey and first time attendee Andrew Crane.

Andrew Crane is currently attending Blind Inc. in Minnesota for skills training. He left for training on September 8. This has been a hard fought battle for him and we wish him the best of luck.

National Federation of The Blind of Kansas
State Convention Agenda

November 21-23, 2014

Holiday Inn and Convention Center
200 McDonald Drive
Lawrence, KS 66044
(785) 841-7077
Room rates \$95.00
Reservation deadline: October 31, 2014
National Representative. Jeannie Massay

Friday, November 21, 2014
(Brazilian A and B)

1:00 PM-The ABC's of the NFB (Foundations of the NfB of Kansas future), Rob Tabor
2:00 PM—Newslines (National Representative)
2:30 PM—75 Days of building, Tom Page
3:00 PM—Break
3:30 PM—Kansas BELL Program, (Braille Enrichment Literacy and Learning), Loren Schmitt

Friday evening

5:00 PM—Registration, (hallway outside of Brazilian A and B)
5:00 PM—Hospitality, (Hospitality room)
7:00 PM—Resolutions, (Brazilian A and B)
9:00 PM—Nominating Committee (Brazilian A and B)
6:00-10:00 PM—Vendors, (Brazilian C and D)

Saturday, November 22, 2014
(General Session, Brazilian A and B)

9:00 AM—Invocation: Leonard Silkey
9:05 AM – Welcome, Mike Amyx, Mayor of Lawrence

9:30 AM—National Report, Jeannie Massay
10:15 AM—State Report, Tom Page
11:00 AM—Blind in chemistry, Emily Schlenker
11:30 AM—Reports and Resolutions
Noon—Adjourn for lunch (Lunch will be served in Brazilian C and D)
1:00 PM—K-NFB Reader mobile comes to the i-phone, Tom Page
1:30 Pm—UEB for you and me, Loren Schmitt
2:00 PM—BELL building bridges and partnerships for a brighter future, Envision
Representative
2:30 PM—Break
3:00 PM—Newslines, Where are we at and where are we going?, National
Representative
3:30 PM—Blind Industrial Workers, Leonard Silkey Jr.
4:00 PM—75 days of building, Jeannie Massay
4:30 PM—NFB Training Centers: Why?
Saturday Evening
(Brazilian C and D)

6:00PM—Happy Hour (cash bar)
7:00 PM—Banquet
Key note speaker, Jeannie Massay
Scholarship and Awards presentation
Entertainment (music from Ardys and Bradford) immediately following banquet

Sunday, November 23, 2014
(Brazilian A and B)

9:00 AM—Invocation
9:05 AM—Business meeting
Resolutions
Elections
Committee reports
Committee appointments
Chapter reports
Other business
Noon—Adjourn

Registration for the
NFB of KS State Convention
November 21-23, 2014

Please send registration form and payment to Bob Fuller at 1746 Mississippi St., Lawrence, KS 66044. Please make checks payable to the National Federation of the Blind of Kansas. You can also send the form and make payment to treasurer@nfbks.org using paypal!

If you are registering multiple attendees, please include all names of those you are registering. Please include the total number of registrations and meals.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Pre-registration: [] x \$10.00
Registration at the door: [] x \$15.00
Luncheon: [] x \$10.00
Banquet: [] x \$25.00

Please note if you would prefer a vegetarian meal:

Holiday Inn and Convention Center
200 McDonald Drive
Lawrence, KS 66044
(785) 841-7077
Room rates \$95.00
Reservation deadline: October 31, 2014

When making your reservation please indicate that you want the NFB of KS convention room rate.

Please come and join us in changing what it means to be blind in Kansas.

NFB of Kansas
120 E. 1st St. #3C
Wichita KS 67202

FREE MATTER FOR THE
BLIND & PHYSICALLY
HANDICAPPED