

**TAP TRACKS**

**The Newsletter of the National Federation of the Blind of Kansas**

**Autumn / Winter 2020**

**Tom Page, Nicole Taylor,**

**Associate Editors**

Please submit materials for the Spring / Summer 2021 issue of TAP TRACKS by February 15th 2020 to:

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**From the President**

-- Tom Page

Greetings Kansas Federationists and friends! 2020 has presented new challenges to our continued work to bring security, equality, and opportunity to blind Kansans. In addition, the stress put upon governmental and agency systems has brought new challenges in all areas of our advocacy.

In Kansas and across the nation, blind people and our families have struggled to access school materials and appropriate support training ( such as O&M, Braille, computer access, etc.), to receive Vocational Rehabilitation services of their choice in a timely manner, to secure or retain the right to vote independently and privately, as well as a host other issues relates to the COVID-19 pandemic including: access to drive up services, access to health care information and information on the virus it’s held and access to local and national statistics on its spread.

In some areas progress has been made. I am proud to report that after several years of concerted effort we have succeeded in convincing Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) to change their maintenance policy with regard to amount of financial contributions expected from clients receiving SSI or SSDI benefits and attending a residential training or college program. The agency also announced that they would discontinue their current means testing policy. These changes were officially implemented on October 1st of this year. The last Rehabilitation Services Agency report on KRS also includes direction to change two other policies which we have long been opposed to. First, the policy regarding age of transition services was found to be inaccurate. Second, the KRS policy which suggests that residency in Kansas is necessary to receive services was found to be out of compliance with federal code. We will continue to work with the new KRS management to resolve these and other issues.

We can celebrate Senator Jerry Moran’s signing on as a co-sponsor our Access Technology Affordability Act. We are gaining much momentum on this bill and it seems very possible that it will pass during this congress. We all must do our part in the next month to lobby the winner of the current senatorial race to join with Senator Moran and the other bill sponsors. For more information on the ATAA please check: https://www.nfb.org/programs-services/advocacy/legislative-agenda/access-technology-affordability

For many Kansan’s voting in 2020 has been a disaster. Many of our members did not receive a ballot during the spring primary and there continues to be no accessible absentee ballot. Further the voting registration mechanisms and the mechanism to request and verify status for absentee balloting remain inaccessible. Although nationally we have made great progress this year, we have not seen any movement in Kansas. The NFB of KS and 9 other states currently have complaints under investigation though it seems unlikely that anything will happen before the November election.

The NFB of KS brought a parent’s rights bill to the Kansas House this last spring. Unfortunately, it was unable to be considered do to other political wrangling in the assembly. We plan to re-introduce this bill as well as a braille bill this spring. Stay tuned for more information on this initiative.

I know that this has been a very trying time for many of us. More now than ever it is upon us blind citizen’s, to continue to advocate for systems that remove systemic barriers to our progress. Although it has been made as hard as possible for many of us it is vastly important that we find ways around our lack of ballot access and vote! It hurts to give up privacy and independence in the face of potential viral infection but we must let our electoral voice be heard. We will collect our experiences during this dark episode and use them to provide direction to our voting advocacy work in 2021!

I want to close by inviting you to join with us at our virtual 2020 convention taking place everywhere and anywhere on November 6th and 7th, more information on the convention including a bio of our national representative Joe Ruffalo of New Jersey can be found later in this mailing.

**National Federation of the Blind of Kansas State Convention Anywhere and Everywhere!**

-- Donna Wood

Well it is that time of year again. Fall is here and it is time for the National Federation of the Blind of Kansas state convention. 2020 is one of those years that will go down in our collective memories we will recall it as the year of the Covid-19 pandemic. We will think of the bad but then hopefully we will think of the good that happened also. One of the good things is that the NFB did not throw up their collective hands and say well there is nothing to be done we can’t get together for meetings so therefore the work must stop. No, the membership came together and said let’s find alternative ways of Living the Lives We Want. One of those ways was to figure out a different way to hold a convention.

This year’s NFB of Kansas state convention will be held virtually by Zoom. Zoom is an internet conferencing system that can be accessed by your computer, smart phone or landline telephone. Once you have filled out and sent in your registration form just prior to convention an e-mail will be sent to you with a link and/or a telephone number. The link or the telephone number will connect you with the NFBKS state convention through Zoom. You will need to download the Zoom app to your smart phone.

This year’s convention will be abbreviated. We will begin on Friday, November 6, 2020 at 7:00 PM with our resolutions committee meeting and immediately following resolutions will be the nominating committee meeting. All are welcome to join these meetings. There is plenty of time to submit resolutions or ideas for resolutions to Rob Tabor at rob.tabor@sbcglobal.net or call him at (785) 865-9959. Saturday, November 7, 2020 will begin 10:00 AM and the morning session will run until 11:30 AM. We will break for lunch and reconvene for the afternoon session at 1:00 PM. The afternoon session will include our presenters on “Fundamental Rights”. Then following the presenters, we will hold the NFB of Kansas annual business meeting. We will adjourn from the business meeting and come back together at 7:00 PM for our banquet and keynote address. The keynote address will be given by our National Rep. Joe Ruffalo. Joe’s bio is included in this newsletter. Following the address, we will award the Tede memorial scholarships. President Tom Page will then adjourn the NFB of Kansas state convention.

We hope that you will be able to join us this year. If you have questions or concerns please contact your local chapter president. Chapter meetings and contact information will follow this article. Watch for updates and announcements on nfbks.org, home-on-the-range, Facebook, twitter and Newsline.

“Live the life you want”

**Chapter and Division information**

Johnson-Wyandotte County Chapter

Meets the 2nd Friday of the month

From 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM

Bethany Lutheran Church

9101 Lamar Ave.

Overland Park, KS 66207

Chapter President: Susie Stanzel

(913) 339-9114

slstanzel@@kc.rr.com

(During Covid-19 the chapter meets by conference call. Dial (916) 235-1420, participants pin 879925#)

Jayhawk Chapter

Meets the 2nd Monday of the month

From 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM

At Conroy’s Pub

3115 W. 6th St. unit D

Lawrence, KS 66044

Chapter President: Rob Tabor

(785) 865-9959

Rob.tabor@sbcglobal.net

(During Covid-19 the chapter meets by conference call. Dial (916) 235-1420, participants pin 879925#)

North-Central Chapter

Meets the 4th Wednesday of the month

From 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM

At The McKinsey Center

308 Elm St.

Salina, KS 67401

Chapter President: Margaret Finger

(949) 701-9458

Ddinoc1@gmail.com

(During Covid-19 the chapter meets by conference call. Dial (916) 235-1420, participants pin 879925#)

South-Central Chapter

Meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month

From 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM

At Envision Board room

2301 S. Water St.

Wichita, KS 67213

Chapter President: Emily Schlenker

(316) 644-4227

eschlenker@cox.net

(During Covid-19 the chapter meets by conference call. Dial (916) 235-1420, participants pin 879925#)

NFBKS In Communities of Faith Division

Meets the 1st Thursday of the month

By conference call Dial (916) 235-1420, participants pin 879925#

At 7:00 PM

Division President: Tom Anderson

(303) 842-9661

Tanderson81452@gmail.com

Seniors Division

Meets the 4th Tuesday of the month

By conference call Dial (916) 235-1420, participants pin 879925#

At 7:00 PM

Division President: Dianne Hemphill

(316) 201-1323

diannehemphill@cox.net

**Joe Ruffalo**

Born July 6, 1949, in Montclair and raised in Bloomfield, New Jersey, Joseph Ruffalo, Jr., had already graduated from Bloomfield High School, attended Montclair State College, and served America in Vietnam, where he earned a Bronze Star, before he learned in 1976 that retinitis pigmentosa would slowly claim his vision. For six years he continued his work as a manager in a Thom McAn shoe store, but by 1983 he began looking for guidance about how to achieve greater proficiency and control over his life as a blind adult.

The staff at the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center (JKRC), then located in Newark, told him he should not learn to use a cane, read Braille, or master any adaptive devices because he still had enough vision to do without them. Though eager to obtain the necessary skills, at the time Joe believed he had no recourse but to adhere to the advice of the only professionals he knew. Not until 1986 did he learn to use a cane, and he accomplished that by teaching himself. While at JKRC, Joe discovered a talent for baking, which led to a successful nine-year career as the owner of a pastry business.

In 1988 Joe tentatively attended his first NFB chapter meeting in Newark. He reports that after ten minutes he knew that his life was about to change dramatically.

Realizing that the NFB was a place of fraternity and empowerment, empathy and accomplishment, Joe says, “I saw blind people doing things I wanted to do. They were holding jobs, volunteering, and achieving in every pursuit.” This was the beginning of Joe's own growth and achievement. In 1990 he became second vice president of the New Jersey affiliate; two years later he was first vice president; and by 1993 he was president of the NFB of New Jersey, a position he maintains to this day. “It is a tremendous honor and responsibility to promote positive attitudes about blindness and the abilities of blind

people,” Joe comments.

But Joe's community involvement has not been limited to the National Federation of the Blind. He has been a leader in the Lions Club for over twenty-five years, serving as president for three. He has also held positions as zone/regent chair and serves on the District 16-E cabinet. In over twenty-four years with the Knights of Columbus, Joe has held the positions of guard, warden, and deputy grand knight, and was an active member of the Boy Scouts of America for over fourteen years. As past president of the Special Education Parent and Professional Organization for thirteen years and past chairman of the board of trustees of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, he has further worked to assure the full integration of people with disabilities into society.

Joe attended the Therapeutic Massage Center to obtain certification in massage therapy and from 1998 to 2000 provided massage for staff, patients, and visitors at Clara Maass Medical Center in Belleville, before moving his practice to a private office. He has served as a consultant to the Somerset School of Massage, making recommendations to staff and students and answering questions about training methods for blind students.

Joe also worked to smooth others' transitions from dependence to independence as a leader in two programs sponsored by the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. He was previously employed by the First Occupational Center of New Jersey as a program specialist in the Senior Community Independent Living Services (SCILS) program, which identifies people over age fifty-five in Essex and Ocean counties who have experienced vision loss, with the goal of teaching independence skills so that these seniors can remain active in the community and independent in their homes. As state program director and northern region coordinator of the Leadership, Education, Advocacy, and Determination (LEAD) program, administered in partnership with Heightened Independence and Progress, Joe provided mentoring activities for blind teenagers and their families. Unfortunately, the LEAD program was terminated as

of October 1, 2013.

Joe’s many contributions to the community were recognized in November 2000 when he was honored with the Partnership for Progress Award at the New Jersey

Commission's Believe and Achieve ninetieth anniversary celebration. In July 2001 his leadership in the blindness community was again acknowledged when he was elected to the board of directors of the National Federation of the Blind. In October of 2002 the State of New Jersey honored Joe by presenting him with the New Jersey Vietnam Service Medal.

Joe has always been encouraged and supported by his wife of thirty-six years, Judy, and his two sons, Joseph and James. In his spare time Joe likes sports of all kinds, especially baseball and basketball, and enjoys hosting Thru Our Eyes, an Internet radio program that highlights blindness issues, discusses technology, and promotes positive attitudes about blindness.

Joe’s life and work express his commitment to the blind and their struggle for equality in society. His achievements stand as an example for others, like those of the Federationists who deeply impressed him at his first chapter meeting. He achieves and grows, facing every challenge with energy, enthusiasm, and common sense. In so doing, he exemplifies his belief that “one of the most important things for members of the blind community to do is to teach the public that blindness is only a characteristic. With the proper training, skills, attitude, and techniques, blindness can be reduced to a physical nuisance.”

**Helpful Hints for Using Zoom**

Windows Keyboard Commands:

Alt + A: Mute/unmute audio

Alt + V: Start/stop video

Alt + Y: Raise/lower hand

Ctrl + T: Jump to chat with someone

Ctrl + W: Close current chat session

## Mac Keyboard Shortcuts

Command + Shift + A: Mute/unmute audio

Space: Push to talk

Command + Shift + V: Start/stop video

Option + Y: Raise hand/lower hand

Command + K: Jump to chat with someone

\*A full list of [keyboard shortcuts](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/205683899-Hot-Keys-and-Keyboard-Shortcuts-for-Zoom) can be found on the Zoom website. Tips and Tricks

[The Room is Zoom: An Overview for Many of the National Convention Sessions](https://www.nfb.org/images/nfb/publications/bm/bm20/bm2007/bm200703.htm) (July 2020 Braille Monitor article)

[Meet Me in the Cloud](https://mosen.org/zoom/?amp%3Bamp%3Bqid=) (audiobook that provides an accessible tutorial of the Zoom platform)

## JAWS and Zoom Scripts

There are recent updated scripts to help with Zoom for anyone running into issues with JAWS 2020. JAWS 2019 does not have Zoom script support provided by Freedom Scientific and users will need to use the speech on demand feature, which is a toggle using Insert+Space followed by S, to suppress zoom alerts. For JAWS 2020, copy the [ZoomSoftware.jsb](https://www.nfb.org/sites/www.nfb.org/files/image-content/get-involved/ZoomSoftware.jsb) file into your JAWS 2020 settings folder (see instructions below if that folders location is a mystery), paste the file into your JAWS setting folder, and you are almost finished.

Restart JAWS and Zoom and everything should work! Here are a few important additional details that everyone using JAWS and Zoom together will need to take note of:

Make sure both Windows and the Zoom desktop app are up to date. IMPORTANT! When you are in Zoom you will notice when you press ALT+H, and the chat window is toggled open, you will hear notifications, but if the chat window is closed you won’t get the chat notifications. With the chat window toggled open you can then use ALT+WINDOWS+S to mute notifications. For older versions of JAWS, users can download Bryan Hartgen’s scripts, but we can’t speak to their functionality. In the absence of scripts users can also mute notifications by temporarily using INSERT+SPACEBAR, S, to toggle on speech on demand; this will keep JAWS from speaking while someone is listening to a Zoom presentation. To quickly open your JAWS settings folder:

Press INSERT+J to move focus to the JAWS user interface

Press U for utilities or alt+U if you’re in the virtual viewer.

Press X for Explore Utilities A windows explorer window will open, open the folder called “Explore my JAWS settings”. This is where you will paste the attached .JSB file.

Note: All of these fixes will be rolled into the next release of JAWS, and you will then need to delete this file from your JAWS settings folder.

Let’s go out and “Live the Lives We Want”.

**NFB of KS State Convention**

**November 6-7, 2020**

Anywhere and Everywhere

Please send registration form to Ashley Neybert at crazy4chemistry@att.net**.**  If you are registering multiple attendees, please include all names, contact information and e-mail addresses of those you are registering.

Name:

Address:

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City/state/zip code

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Telephone:

E-mail:

(We must have an e-mail to send you an invitation link for Zoom)

Please join us in celebrating living the lives we want!