

**TAP TRACKS**

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

**Spring/Summer 2023**

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Please submit materials for the Autumn/Winter 2023 issue of TAP TRACKS by August 15th 2023 to:

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**From the President**

**-- Tom Page**

Greetings Kansas Federationists and friends! It has been a very active spring. We have been called upon to interact with the state legislature on several bills which had the potential to harm blind citizens as well as working on our own legislative priorities.

In collaboration with the disability rights center of Kansas we and other organizations successfully rose to oppose a bill that would have extended tax credits already in use by sheltered shops to shops who hold special wage certificates. These certificates known as ‘14c certificates’ allow the payment of sub-minimum wages to disabled employees.

We were also called upon to oppose legislation that would severely limit a citizen’s right to sue under the ADA in Kansas. Sadly, although the bill was weakened, it was passed into law. The weakened version is limited to lawsuits regarding web access. It allows a web site owner to counter sue if the complaint is judged to be abusive by the court. We hope that DRCK will join us in continuing to challenge the existence of such a law.

Finally, in state news, we have made substantial progress on our NFB-Newsline funding bill. With the help of Sen. Mary Ware (D, Wichita) and Sen. Rob Olson (R, Olathe) we have had a bill introduced and referred to the senate utilities committee. Our bill is alive in this committee and we hope to have a hearing early in the next session.

There is so much to report that I cannot do it all here. I should mention in brief that our Washington Seminar delegation was successful in meeting with the Kansas congressional delegation. Since our meetings we have had several Kansan’s sign on to our bills. We will continue urging our Senators and representatives to get on board as the session continues.

The National convention and our own Kansas state convention are swiftly approaching. The National convention will take place in Houston from July 1 to July 6. Our state board has authorized grants of $1500 to qualifying applicants. Consult with your local chapter president for more information. The National convention offers education, fellowship, and fun at a scale unavailable anywhere else. For more information please check out: https://nfb.org/get-involved/national-convention

Our state convention will take place in Wichita November 4-6. We will meet at the Holiday Inn (Rock and Kellogg). You will receive more information as the convention approaches. We are planning a variety of activities including a Seniors Seminar so stay tuned…

I want to commend our membership and leaders state-wide for the excellent work we have been doing in Kansas to improve the lives of blind citizens. Please keep up all the great work you are engaged in!

**A sweet time in Salina**

**--Kevan Worley**

At the recent state convention in Salina, the editor of the NFB Kansas newsletter challenged the affiliate to write articles. She looted to the chocolate challenge. The first to submit articles would receive candy. It was a sweet convention. So I thought I would submit reflections.

From arrival to adjournment, the National Federation of the Blind of Kansas convention, the annual federation family reunion was everything a convention should be. Serving as National Representative appointed by president Riccobono is always a joy and a true honor. It’s been a while since I was President Riccobono’s representative for our Kansas affiliate. I observe that over this past decade-plus, you have continued to build the National Federation of the Blind in significant ways. Your outreach and advocacy to service providers, businesses, and the public have changed lives. This affiliate has real spirit. It’s clear that you have been doing the hard work and the heavy lifting to make it possible for more blind residents of the Sunflower State to live the lives they want. I have to compliment your tremendous president Tom Page and your leadership team. With enthusiasm, heart, determination, and love, you will continue to change the landscape of Kansas for all blind people, from students to seniors and seniors who are always students. What a joy it always is to reconnect with our federation family members and come to know new members of our organized blind movement in Kansas. Thank you for your gracious welcome. Thank you for your kind parting gift. I had no idea that Russell Stover’s was made in Kansas. It seems that I got my chocolate for an article in advance. Thank you. I’m eating a piece back in my hotel room. My flight from Salina Sunday evening was canceled. So I am experiencing one more day of fine hospitality at the Garden Inn by Hilton. I would note that Russell Stover’s was founded in Denver but moved to Kansas City in 1933. I guess all I can say is I had a sweet time in Kansas. I thank you for that, and keep up your great work.

Russell Stover Chocolates has been an American classic since 1923. Our boxed chocolates have been part of family traditions and gift-giving for decades. We're proud to be a part of your holiday traditions, life celebrations, and your everyday indulgences.

Russell Stover chocolates are still handcrafted in small batches, using original recipes created by a company by company founder Clara Stover, in the kitchen in her Denver bungalow home.

**A Touch of Philosophy and More From North-Central**

**--Michael Coone**

Founded on the guiding principle that blind people have an inalienable right to independence, the National Federation of the Blind began in 1940 and is the largest organization of blind people in the U.S. Members stress that they have a full capacity and power to live the lives they choose and transform their dreams into reality. Only blind people can themselves legitimately speak for the blind community.

NFB offers training and assistance through its many programs and centers for education throughout the country. They partner with National and State lawmakers to advise and advocate for legislation to advance disability rights and equal access in all areas of life. Recently, the Kansas NFB helped in the passing of a bill known as “The Blind Parent’s Bill of Rights”. This law protects blind parents from arbitrarily having their children taken from them if an individual or agency thinks they are unfit because of their blindness. This took years and much patient work by NFB members and is the crown jewel of this year’s Legislative Session.

NFB has partnered with groups that design driverless vehicles and worked to have auto makers include sounds in the ultra-quiet electric cars (so blind people as pedestrians could hear them). They are always active at local levels on accessibility issues in voting and having textbooks for the blind in high school and college.

The definition of blindness for the NFB is anyone who has had a change in their vision which significantly alters their way of living. Not all blind people are totally blind, and every blind person wants to be as accomplished and fulfilled in their lives as any sighted person. With training and encouragement, blind people do great things.

My wife is the local chapter president here in Salina. Margaret has a Doctorate in Occupational Therapy from Creighton University, and is one of many, many blind people I know who lead amazing lives. Their Conventions have an incredibly diverse group of people who have risen to vital careers and important roles in their communities through their courage and with the help of NFB and others.

THE TRAVELING TOOTHPICK

-- Sharon Luka

Marking glue had not been born

When I puzzled a way to know,

If my Swiss steak stew or bread of corn

Was baking on high or low.

To the dial I applied a toothpick yea wide,

To show 350 degrees.

Cakes, cookies, breads and pies,

I could now bake these with ease.

For a larger apartment I moved down the hall,

With no thought of my trusty stove.

But before the next cake was ready to bake,

The toothpick was on the move.

As a friend and I sat in friendly chat,

Wheels were heard in the hall;

The landlord smiled as he wheeled down the aisle,

My stove, toothpick and all!

**The Washington Seminar Experience**

**--Bruce Roberds**

I thank the NFB of Kansas for the opportunity to experience Washington Seminar this year and to represent our membership as we lobby our representatives and senators for legislative issues effecting blind and visually impaired people all over the United States. While the trip was fun and enjoyable the primary purpose is to do work on behalf of the National Federation of the Blind.

Prior to leaving for Washington DC I studied the fact sheets for the three issues we were to talk to our legislators about. Our three issues were: 1.” Medical Device Nonvisual Accessibility Act” 2. “Website and Software Applications Accessibility Act”, and 3. “Blind Americans Return to Work Act”. After reading the fact sheets, I had additional questions I felt I needed to be familiar with such as what is the difference between class I, class II, and class III medical devices. What are the details of the work trial period and the grace period for Social Security Disability? And how does the “earnings cliff” breakdown into an hourly wage as well as how it compares to current benefits being paid. So, I researched those questions. In addition, I attended two training sessions via Zoom put on by national. The second session included two mock meetings to give us examples of how to conduct a meeting with the legislators. I also attended a training session sponsored by our Kansas legislative director Rob Tabor. This training session also included a mock meeting featuring Suzie Stanzel, Donna Wood, and Rob Tabor. Who all did a great job by the way and are all experienced in the legislative process. Before leaving town I also looked up each of our representatives and Senators committee and subcommittee assignments as well as any recent legislative action taken that might relate to our issues.

Now came the day to leave for Washington with a stop and transfer in St Louis. Everyone was on board buckled in and ready to go when the pilot announces that our flight was cancelled due to bad weather in St Louis. No worries though, the airline rerouted me through Chicago and I arrived in Washington only one hour later than the original plan. I had just got checked into my hotel room, and it was time to attend yet another training session which included yet another mock meeting and reports on the latest developments related to our mission for the week. I only had about a one-hour break then it was time for the Great Gathering In meeting where we were given briefings on last minute developments on the legislative issues and other topics of interest to the Federation.

For the next three days Capitol Hill was bombarded with white canes and guide dogs. We had NFB members visiting the offices of all of the representatives and Senators from all fifty states. From Kansas I was accompanied by Tom Page, Tom Anderson, Patricia Stillwell, Michael Nava, and Andrew Crane. Our first meeting was scheduled for two o’clock the next day with Representative Davids but we received a call the night before asking us the change to eight thirty in the morning in order that Representative Davids could meet with us herself rather than having us meet with one of her aids. Of course, we made that adjustment. We were able to meet with Senator Marshall as well the next day. The rest of the Kansas delegation we met with their legislative aids. We received a warm welcome from all of the members of the Kansas delegation which included Representatives Davids, Mann, Estes, and LaTurner, also Senators Moran, and Marshall. While we did not achieve a commitment from anyone to cosponsor any of our legislative pieces at this time, they all seemed to be genuinely interested in our legislative agenda. All in all, I felt that we had really good meetings with our Representatives and Senators; all of our presenters were well prepared and gave a good presentation of our three legislative matters.

After all of our meetings were over, I scheduled a tour of the Capitol Building. I got to see all three rotundas in the building and statuary hall. Also included in the tour were the old house chamber and the old Senate chamber. The tour also included a brief history of the Capitol. Then just before I left to come home, I visited the African American History Museum where they accommodated me with a private guided tour.

I very much enjoyed this trip. I think we made some good headway with our legislators; time will tell just how much though. I loved representing the NFB in this capacity, and I again thank the Kansas affiliate for the opportunity to serve our members in this way.

**South-Central**

**A Year in Review**

**--Donna Wood**

The South-Central Chapter of the NFB of Kansas began the year of 2022 still meeting virtually. In the spring it was decided to start meeting in person again. The chapter met at the downtown Envision offices on Main Street on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 6-8 PM.

The chapter members participated in the Washington seminar, which was held virtually. Members also joined, Others across the state, in a letter writing campaign to our state legislature in support of our Blind Parent’s Rights Bill. This campaign being successful, we were given a hearing in Topeka. During this hearing, several of our members attended and gave testimony. Our efforts were affective and the state of Kansas now has a “Blind Parent’s Bill of Rights”.

The South-Central Chapter is also working at the local level to make changes in Wichita. The Chapter has hosted Mayor Brandon Whipple twice now, at our monthly meetings. Along with our legislative, advocacy and fund-raising activities, we still found time for fun. We got together a couple of times at local restaurants and in December we had a Christmas party. A party bus transported members to Dianne Hemphill’s community club house. We ate, played games and had a gift exchange.

The beginning of 2023 Chapter elections were held and the new officers are as follows: President Roshunda Holt; Vice-President Brandon Murphy; Secretary Emily Schlenker; and Treasurer Tom Page. The Chapter is also looking at a new meeting location at the Envision Art Gallery, 801 E. Douglas ste. 106 Wichita, KS 67202. For now, we will continue to meet the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 6-8 PM. If you are interested in more information on The National Federation of the Blind of Kansas South-Central Chapter please contact Roshunda Holt at (316) 390-8393 or msshnda@gmail.com <mailto:msshnda@gmail.com>. The South-Central Chapter invites you to join us and help build the National Federation of the Blind of Kansas.

**Loren Bush Bio**

**--Roshunda J. Holt**

There is just something about having a friend. I would like to tell you all a little bit about a dear friend of mine, who just had a birthday in February! Miss Lauren Bush was a student of Butler in 2010 and returned again in 2019. She will be Graduating Culinary school this upcoming May of 2023, where she will be getting her Associates in Applied Science, a Culinary Arts Degree. Before she went to take on the task of creating delicious cuisines, she went to the Nebraska Center for the Blind in 2015, where she learned how to navigate with more independence and received the BVI training she needed to be more confident in this world of opportunities. She used these skills to go to college and has the ability to navigate around town on her own and make things happen for herself, which was something she had hesitation with before learning sleep shade skills at NCBVI.

Thanks to her new found talent of cooking, she was able to obtain a job at Violas Pantry, a small local pasta shop in Wichita's downtown area. She enjoys challenging herself in the kitchen and stepping outside of creating standard dishes. Her passion really leans towards baking, which means cookies are always fun for her to make and give as gifts.

Despite her Retinitis Pigmentosa and Bardet Biedl Syndrome, Lauren has been able to overcome her obstacles in life and is thriving as an adult. She has been active at Envision Inc. in Wichita KS since she was about 14 years old and now at 33, she is active in the Envision Arts Department where she currently has a mixed media painting in the works and has even sold her crafts during Envision's Annual Holiday Sale. One of her pastimes would be knitting scarves while relaxing in front of the TV, and spending time with her family.

We are excited to have Lauren return to the NFB South-Central chapter. She has eagerly taken the lead to head our fundraising committee and has already organized and executed her first meeting with the other fundraiser members. If you happen to come across Lauren at one of the conventions, take the time to have a chat, I bet she has some interesting culinary stories she can share!

**NFB Of Kansas In Communities of Faith**

**By Tom Anderson**

At our September meeting, Tina Jenkins from Eudora, Kansas spoke with us about her involvement in the Pro-Life movement, her activity in the Catholic Church, and about the miraculous recovery that she had following an accident that she had when she was hit by a truck.

In October, we listened attentively to a presentation from Sandy Jenkins from Lutheran Braille Workers. This organization produces the New International Version and the English Standard Version of the Bible in Braille. They also produce other Christian literature. She spoke about the hunger for the Word of God which visitors at the exhibit booth at the NFB convention have. This is certainly encouraging.

In November, we had a meeting at the state convention of the NFB of Kansas. We worshiped God in song. Tom Anderson had a message regarding mercy shown by Jesus to a tax collector, a person despised by the religious leaders in Israel. The officers of the Division were reelected by acclamation. they are: Tom Anderson, President; Cheryl Miller, Vice President; Donna Wood, Secretary-Treasurer.

We did not have a meeting in December due to holiday activities.

In January, 2023, Lynda Anders spoke with us about deliverance she experienced from the power of darkness and the overcoming power of Jesus Christ.

The NFB of Kansas In Communities of Faith Division meets the first Thursday of the month, by conference call, at 7 PM. Join us by dialing in at (916) 235-1420 and entering the pin 879925 pound key.

**Senior Division Update**

**-- Dianne Hemphill**

NFB of Kansas Senior’s Division welcomes those experiencing blindness or vision loss seeking to improve their lives as aging senior’s. Perhaps we can provide useful ideas and techniques used by the most independent individuals who are, themselves, living the “life they want” with significant loss of vision. Our monthly conference calls cover meaningful topics and knowledgeable speakers. Many of our current members are active in their communities as well as living their most independent lives. We can help identify the most useful and reputable resources, best technology for those seeking something specific or just needing to know what’s out there and being “there” for those experiencing difficulty adjusting to this new life they’re confronted with.

Please call us the fourth Tuesday evening, 7 PM, of each month at: 1-916-235-1420 plus 879925 pound.

Officers are: President, Dianne Hemphill Vice-President, Susie Stanzel Secretary, Tom Anderson Treasurer, Rob Tabor.

**Johnson-Wyandotte Chapter Update**

**--Tom Anderson**

Donna Wood spoke with us at our September meeting regarding our upcoming state convention which will take place in Salina, Kansas from November 4-6. Tom Anderson appointed a nominating committee for chapter elections which will take place in November. Those serving on the committee are: Linda Anderson, Chairperson; Don Mulik, and Kermit Kircoff. We listened to Presidential Release 519.

At Our October meeting, the nominating committee presented its report. Tom Anderson read an article entitled A Definition of Blindness by Kenneth Jernigan. He also informed the chapter about the introduction of a bill which would make websites and phone apps accessible. We listened to Presidential Release 520.

Several chapter members attended the state convention in Salina, Kansas. Those who attended were: Tom. Anderson, Linda Anderson, Jody Mulik, Don Mulik, and Susie Stanzel. In addition, Michael Nava, a member of the SILCK board attended the convention. Michael Nava joined the chapter and was officially voted in as a member at our November meeting.

At our November meeting the following people were elected by acclamation as officers of the chapter. Tom Anderson, President; Susie Stanzel, Vice President; Jody Mulik, Secretary; and Don Mulik, Treasurer.

We listened to Presidential Release 521.

We had a combination Christmas party and birthday party celebration for Martha Kelly, a veteran Federationist. Martha has been a member since 1955 and is 88 years old. We had a great meal at Jack Stacks Barbecue and we had a gift exchange as well.

Patricia Stillwell joined the chapter in December.

At our January, 2023 meeting, we voted in Patricia Stillwell as a member. Rob Tabor spoke with us about participation in the Donated Services Program of the NFB. Don Mulik read the fact sheets to us which will be presented to the Kansas congressional delegation at the Washington seminar which will take place from January 30 to February 2, 2023. Three chapter members will be going to the Washington Seminar. They are: Tom Anderson, Michael Nava, and Patricia Stillwell. We will discuss the results of the Washington Seminar at our February meeting.

The Johnson-Wyandotte County Chapter meets the 2nd Friday of the month at Denny’s restaurant at 10480 Metcalf Ave. Overland Park, KS 66204 from 6:30-7:30 PM. For further information please call President Tom Anderson at (303)842-9661.

**VIP Online Toastmasters**

**--Brandon Murphy**

What is VIP Online Toast masters, you ask? Well, dear reader, have you ever heard of the public speaking group Toastmasters International? Let’s just say that you HAVE heard of this group, and, if not, Google them and I am sure you will increase your knowledge. VIP Online Toastmasters is a club geared towards the blind and visually impaired (BVI) community and was created by Ted, a blind man from New York & his sighted wife, Gina, who helps facilitate the meetings and is the go-between for VIP Toastmasters and Toastmasters International. The purpose of VIP Online Toastmasters is to bring the Toastmasters International experience to those who are blind and visually impaired. We meet every Sunday between 2-4pm C/3-5pm E virtually on Zoom and the meetings are very structured and heavily time oriented but not at all stuffy or boring. There are roles that members can sign up for or, as guests, they can participate in Table Topics—which is impromptu speaking for 1 to 2 minutes. Here are a few other roles:

-Timer

The Timer keeps track of how long each person speaks for.

-Ah Counter

The Ah counter keeps track of any “filler words”, i.e., so, and, but, so, like & you know as well as other fillers

-Grammarian

The Grammarian is tasked with keeping track of any verbal grammatical errors as well as stating the Word of The Day and who uses it when they speak.

I am a member and I can say that it has greatly helped me in both my professional & personal life. If you would like to learn more about Toastmasters International, visit wwww.toastmastersinternational.org, and, if you want to learn more about VIP Online Toastmasters, or, are curious about attending a meeting, there are a couple of ways to join us and here is the information:

Meeting Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85418803399?pwd=NVNyY3ZSaEIwWVV3QXE2dG1LaWdBUT09

Dial by your location

+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 854 1880 3399

Passcode: 425202

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us.”—Emerson

**Jayhawk Chapter Update**

**--Rob Tabor**

During the first calendar quarter of 2023, the Jayhawk chapter has been conducting its regular monthly meetings via teleconference using the Kansas affiliate’s teleconferencing system. This is due for the most part to the winter season and the possibility of inclement weather. We hope to return to on location meetings with cloud-based participation beginning with our regular April meeting.

Due to the unfortunate passings of Pat Slick and Tamara Kearney, and Jim Secor moving to Johnson County, the chapter is now down to eight members.

However, we are working on strategies toward increasing our membership in the Lawrence Douglas County area.

The Jayhawk chapter meets on the second Saturday of the month at 4:00 PM, next location to be announced. The chapter’s officers are president, Renee Morgan; vice president, Cheryl Miller; secretary, Lynda Anders; treasurer, Brenday Latare.

Any questions about The Jayhawk chapter may be directed to Renee Morgan by phone at (785) 424-4734, or by email to rmorgan@willowdvcenter.org.

“LIVE THE LIFE YOU WANT”