

 THE MESSENGER

 **VOICE OF THE GRAND VALLEY CHAPTER OF THE**

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF COLORADO**

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1

SPRING QUARTER

**Philosophy**

**The ultimate purpose of the National Federation of the Blind is the complete integration of the blind into society on a basis of equality. This objective involves the removal of legal, economic, and social discriminations; the education of the public to new concepts concerning blindness; and the achievement by all blind people of the right to exercise to the fullest their individual talents and capacities. It means the right of the blind to work along with their sighted neighbors in the professions, common callings, skilled trades, and regular occupations.**

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**To contact our local Federation:**

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**Elaine Davis (Secretary) 970-778-7246**

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**To make donations send check or money order to:**

**Ntl Federation of the Blind of CO**

**c/o Nathan Hecker**

**751 Glenwood Avenue**

**Grand Jct., Co. 81501**

**Your donations are greatly appreciated!**

**Welcome!**

**The Grand Valley Chapter cordially invites you to our next meeting on April 7th from 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at 1129 Colorado Avenue. Of special interest: this month we will be speaking with a representative from Colorado talking books concerning proposed budget cuts to the talking book program.**

**Words from our President:**

**By Nathan Hecker**

Greetings everyone!

We, the Grand Valley Chapter here in Grand Junction, have been busy in 2016 and 2017. We have made great strides in our work: the momentum and progress of our work being an important ingredient to the building of a strong chapter.

During the fall of 2016, I had the pleasure of attending along with 200 plus other individuals last year’s state convention which was held in Denver Colorado. While at this convention, I had the opportunity to tell my story about my blindness. I was elected onto the boards of the NFBCO Blind Parents division, and NFBCO Sports and Rec Division committees each. I am very excited about these great opportunities!

This current year of 2017, has been especially busy and exciting!

Earlier this year, in January, I had the opportunity to attend and participate in the Washington Seminar. The Washington seminar is held in our nation’s capital in Washington DC. I, along with 500 other blind individuals, as representing the National Federation of the Blind effectively marched on Capitol Hill. We spoke to various members of Congress, Senators, members of the House of Representatives, and congressional staff members; with our voice then being heard all across the nation. Some of the issues addressed to members of Congress include: The Accessible Instructional Materials in Higher Education (AIM HE) Act, The Access Technology Affordability Act, Appropriation to the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) for the Purchase of Refreshable Braille Devices, The Marrakesh Treaty, an international treaty to **Facilitate Access** to **Published Works** for Persons throughout the world **Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired**, or who are otherwise **Print Disabled**. I have found the experience of this year’s Washington Seminar to be of great value and very inspiring and I thoughtfully look forward with excitement and anticipation to next year’s Washington Seminar!

In February elections were held with the following board members being elected: President: Nathan Hecker, Vice President: Adele Nolan, Secretary: Elaine Davis, Treasurer: Steven Davis. Adele Nolan is our newest board member and we are all excited to have her on board. We look forward to her talent, insight, and expertise which she will bring to the board.

As to recent news: the Grand Valley Chapter will be meeting at Hilltop at 1129 Colorado Avenue, the first Friday of the month from 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

We are now, as an activity of our chapter, conducting informal Braille classes open to anyone who is interested in learning Braille. These Braille classes are held at the Mesa County library in Grand Junction every Friday morning from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. except for the first Friday of the month. These Braille classes are currently free of charge and will continue being offered on a weekly basis until there is no longer a need for them.

As to upcoming exciting news: We will soon be having our 2nd annual Kannah Creek Firkin fundraiser at the Kannah Creek Brewery located at 1960 North 12th, just east of Colorado Mesa University on 12th Street. The Firkin fundraiser is definitely an enjoyable event. Come join us for good food, drinks, and camaraderie. We hope to see everyone there!

The Grand Valley Chapter in partnership with one touch self defense will soon be conducting self-defense classes for the blind and visually impaired. We are particularly excited in working with one touch self defense in providing these classes. It is projected that these classes will begin sometime in April.

This year the Grand Valley Chapter, under the auspices of the NFB B.E.L.L. Academy will be hosting its first annual B.E.L.L. Camp. The (B.E.L.L.) or Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning camp is a fun filled rich environment providing children ages 4-12 the opportunity to explore and gain confidence in blindness skills. The camp is free and lodging will be provided. The B.E.L.L. camp will be held from June 19th through the 23rd from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. I have had the privilege of helping organize this great camp and I look forward to my work and participation in this year’s B.E.L.L. camp. Registration is open and can be accomplished online. <https://nfb/bell-student-application-form> The Grand Valley Chapter heralds this opportunity as a milestone in presenting a positive image of blindness both for young blind children and for the community at large. We in Grand Junction look forward to working with the B.E.L.L Academy and its staff.

I am heartened at the prospect of the possible opportunity which may be achieved and brought to our community this year. The Grand Valley Chapter has been hard at work in its aim and mission to improve the lives of all blind people. We, the Grand Valley Chapter will continue to strive in our aim to present blindness as a mere characteristic and to ever increase greater opportunity for blind people in this community and elsewhere. If you have any questions about our great organization or any of our current classes please don't hesitate to contact us!

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to all those organizations and people who have given us their support, and who have helped make our chapter what it is today.

**Becoming Uncommon**

**By Steve and Elaine Davis**

This series of articles explores the meaning and achievement of human potential and the roles of society and blind people in achieving their personal human potential and vision.

**The Gift of a New Year.**

An old year has come and gone with its victories and challenges behind us. As we are now well into the New Year, we find that a new spring with its vitality of life and promise is upon us.

The sun in its daily increase of warmth and light may be seen and felt bringing with it the assurance and promise of a new day. The potential and actual promise of life is demonstrated and experienced in the growth and vitality of burgeoning wonderment.

The refreshing greenery as found only in springtime is evident all around us: the trees in their momentary splendor are budding and blossoms are appearing where once there was only barren branch; boasting of new life in its wonder and prosperity.

Birds are returning from their winter refuge and seeking their livelihood in a new awakened world of spring. Soon nests will be built and little families consolidated with each pair of birds being the harbingers of new life.

And just as new spring offers the vitality, vigor, and promise of a new year and its wonderment of life so may our lives, for each one of us in this coming year, be the hope and promise of new life, opportunity, and wonderment. Although the progress and achievements in our lives at any one time may be small or great a sense and realization of accomplishment and meaning may be attained.

The potential and actual promise of life as found in springtime may, for each of us, be also demonstrated, achieved, and experienced in our own lives through the belief in, cultivation of, and the achievement of our dreams, aspirations, and vision. The vision of and in our lives much as the sun in spreading its warmth and light nurtures, provides the meaning in, paves the way for, establishes a general roadmap toward the achievement and realization of our dreams and aspirations. This particular vision, for each of us, as found in our lives also can stimulate us in bringing our dreams and aspirations to their ongoing and full fruition. Our dreams and aspirations as the budding trees of springtime are the potential and the possible meaning of our achievements and accomplishment as may be found in our vision. Our goals and achievements as guided by our particular vision are as birds returning from their winter refuge; our goals, dreams, and aspirations as forming the cement between our vision and its ongoing accomplishment.

We as Federationists believe that blindness is but a characteristic and in itself does not define a person who is blind. Any person is defined by their ideals, by their vision and aspirations, their character, their personality, and to and by the degree to which any person seeks and attains their ideals. A person who is blind is therefore not defined by blindness but by their character, makeup, and vision.

The National Federation of the Blind asserts that all people who are blind possess the right and duty to pursue their desired endeavors and vision. The Federation by ensuring greater opportunity for all blind individuals, by encouraging those who are blind to challenge themselves and their perceived blindness and by educating the nation and the world about blindness and its meaning is aiding in the greater perception and promulgation of a positive image of blindness. This constructive effort and work by the Federation and others is thus providing greater opportunity to blind people resulting in a more fertile ground upon which people may pursue and accomplish their vision. May we therefore seek a clear vision, may we therefore dare to dream, and may we therefore seek for each of us the accomplishment and realization of our particular and unique vision.

The next article in this series will explore the meaning of vision, its formation, its cultivation, and the accomplishment of such acquired vision.

**Words of Appreciation.**

**By Elaine Davis**

The Grand Valley Chapter, in their acknowledgement would like to thank the following people for the many services provided to us.

We would like to acknowledge the Center for Independence for hosting our monthly chapter meetings.

We also would like to note that St. Matthews Episcopal Church has been providing transportation to chapter meetings as well as other NFB events. THANK YOU!

A thank you goes to Hilltop for kindly inviting us to have our March meeting at 1129 Colorado Avenue.

A BIG thank you goes to Kannah Creek for our upcoming Firkin Fundraiser.

We would also like to thank City Market for hosting an upcoming bake sale.

A huge thank you goes to School District 51 for hosting our B.E.L.L. camp this summer.

We would also like to give a much appreciated thank you to Colorado Mesa University for housing our B.E.L.L. camp students and staff.

**Margaret’s Corner**

**By Margaret Williams**

**Chocolate Marshmallow Mug Cake**

3T Brown Sugar

3T All Purpose flour

3T cocoa powder (not Dutch processed)

3T whole milk

3T Canola oil

¼ t Baking Soda

¼ t Vanilla

¼ t instant Espresso Powder (optional)

1 heavy pinch salt

1 large Marshmallow

In a 14-16 oz. microwave safe mug, combine all ingredients except for marshmallow. Whisk with fork until fully mixed. Drop marshmallow into center of mixture. Push marshmallow down until completely submerged. Microwave on high, 45–70 seconds depending on microwave settings. Cake is done when it has risen above rim of mug top, and when top of cake is mostly dry. Let cool for at least 5 minutes before serving. Top with graham crackers, miniature marshmallows, and chocolate chips.

**Effort through Action—the Ongoing Work of our Local Chapter**

**By Steve Davis**

The world around us is always changing. Nothing, even our most familiar things in life, remains the same. It, change--whether it be slow and inexorable, or fast paced and dramatic-- is a fact of life.

In what manner do we, as blind individuals as making our way through life cope with change, whatever it may be? This question has, as always been a concern for all of us and will be, at least for the foreseeable future an ongoing concern and motivation, whatever it may be, affecting each of our lives; for we live in a world of continual change.

What is motivation: Motivation is that force or inner desire, be such for the ill, or for the good, which propels us through life. That motivation which is constructive, which is well informed, and which is based upon some meaning in life can aid in the living of a fulfilling life. That motivation as based upon a destructive outlook, which is based upon a defeating view of life, can and will lead to an existence as fraught with trouble and a poverty of living.

In partially answering the question--how do we as individuals cope with change--it may be stated that an ongoing life of preparation, well informed and bolstered motivation, and a willingness to follow such motivation are the keys to the coping with change.

We, as blind individuals and as the organized blind can take on change, whatever such may be, and apply change to the benefit of ourselves and for the benifit of others. We, all of us, can take on and shape the dynamics of life and live a life based upon well founded and informed motivation

The National Federation of the Blind, in its philosophy, asserts that given the right training and opportunity, all blind people can, if desired, live a successful and rewarding life. It is by the acquiring and confident use of blindness skills, it is by the developing of vision or an overall view and meaning of life,, whatever it may be, it is by the inspiration and aspiration of a dream, however it may manifest itself, and the desire and true willingness to foster and follow such a vision and a fostered and nurtured dream that will both pave the way for and realize a desired course in life.

The Grand Valley chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado, in concert with its sister chapters, then seeks to both establish opportunity for all blind people and for others, and also promotes the positive and skillful use of such opportunity by all blind people. We, as the Grand Valley chapter, then address the question of change by encouraging our local blind in the community to gain skills and to take charge of their lives under an ever-growing possibility and actuality of opportunity.

Over time and circumstance, The Grand Valley chapter, will develop and offer specific informal classes allowing blind people, as may be appropriate, to develop the skills and confidence and motivation to take on change as to their possibility following their dreams. Fore we can all "Live the life we want".

