State President’s Message for December, 2015

I hope everyone had a healthy and happy holiday season, with time to relax between all the activities of the season.

Our legislative luncheon is fast approaching and we need all federationists to plan to attend. The event will be held in Boise at the Crystal Ballroom, 802 W. Bannock, beginning at 11:30. We will hold the first part of our winter board meeting at the ICBVI 2nd floor conference room beginning at 8:30 with snacks and socializing with the agenda beginning at 9:00. Members who are able will walk to the luncheon location. I am currently working on additional vehicles and drivers. If you will have a vehicle, could you let me know how many passengers you could take? Speakers are lined up to present on our 3 topics including the Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind (IESDB), the Idaho Commission for the Blind (ICBVI), and public transportation. I will give a brief presentation on who the NFB of Idaho is. Since we have limited time, all presentations will need to be short, around 5-7 minutes. We will have fact sheets and copies of our NFB accomplishments newsletter for our legislators. I greatly appreciate the help of Jan Gawith, who is chairing this event. The cost of the luncheon is $25.00. Meal choices are teriyaki chicken or a chef salad. Please call Jan Gawith at (208) 342-3066 with your meal choice. You can send your check to Harry Gawith at 410 Ave. H., Boise, Idaho 83712, or pay at the door.

Besides planning the legislative banquet, I have been setting up the appointments for the Washington Seminar. We now have 3 appointments confirmed, and only need to hear from Senator Risch. We will have 4 issues to discuss this year: the Time Act (HB188 or S2001, Accessible Instructional Materials in Higher Education Act, Space Available HR2264, and the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty for people with print disabilities. Fact sheets should be coming out soon. Washington Seminar will take place January 25-28.

I am happy to report that our Schwan’s fundraiser has raised over $500 so far. Beginning on December 16, we earn 5% from each order placed with Schwan’s. This will continue for 90 days. I don’t know about others, but I used this opportunity to try new things, and friends who received my Schwan’s gifts for Christmas were very pleased. We now need to start getting adds for our convention agenda. This can be a good money maker, but it takes work.

Alison Steven and Becky Sherman attended the BELL accadomy seminar in Baltimore in December. The information was very helpful and will be used to make our BELL programs better than ever this summer.

Our state scholarship application is now on the website. Check it out and let Russell Smith or I know if you encounter any problems. Thank you to all who worked on this project.

I have been contacting potential speakers and working with the hotel for our April convention. Remember the dates are April 22-24 at the Red Lion Hotel in Lewiston. The address is 621 21st Street, Lewiston, Idaho 83501, phone (208) 799-1000. Be sure to state that you are registering for the NFB Idaho convention and are requesting the room rate of $89.00 for singles, doubles, triples, and quads. Room reservations must be in by March 22.

The braille read-a-thon has started and currently has 10 participants. It’s not too late to join. The event goes from January 4-March 4. Readers of all levels are able to participate. Please contact Susan Ford, chair, at (208) 376-1727 if you want to join or need help finding materials. Remember all participants will win a cash prize presented at the state convention.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the legislative luncheon.

Dana Ard, President

National Federation of the Blind of Idaho