State President’s Update

March, 2018

It’s time to get excited about our 2018 National Federation of the Blind state convention to be held April 26-28, 2018. It will be held at the Red Lion Canyon Springs hotel, 1357 Blue Lakes Blvd. N, Twin Falls, Id. 83301. Room rates are $81.00 plus 8% tax for singles, doubles, triples, and quads. A full breakfast is included for all who stay in the hotel. Please call 208 734-5000 to make your room reservations. The cut-off date for reservations is April 1, (April fool’s day) and I’m not foolin, so do it right away. I have not heard that credit cards are being charged a fee, but remember if you use a debit card, and a fee is charged, it may be taken out before the convention, and will not be credited back for 5-7 days after the end of convention. This only applies to debit cards, so I would suggest if you are asked for a credit card number, give a credit card number not a debit card number. The registration form is on the website. Registration will be $20.00, board dinner $15.00, and the banquet is $30.00. Banquet selections are either prime rib or salmon.

Our convention theme is Raising Expectations and Creating Opportunities. We will have a reception on Thursday night with lite snacks. Come and see old friends and make new ones. The agenda is shaping up nicely. Joe Ruffalo, the National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey president, is our national representative. We have been working together on some fun and educational presentations. We will hear from blind parents, members of our Idaho legislature, challenges for blind children in education, new innovations in technology and much more. Our blindness product and services expo promises to have more technology than in the past. We will have a student seminar, planned and conducted by blind students, as well as a meeting for parents to discuss the fall seminar which is being planned for parents and blind children and teens. Our senior division will also meet. Our Friday night activity will be fun and educational, and of course, we will have goodies. The high point of convention will be our banquet with our scholarship awards, and address by Joe Ruffalo. Our on-line auction will be in progress, and we can help people to bid if needed.

January was an exciting month with our Legislative luncheon, with 75 members and legislators in attendance. We requested the legislature to fund the Idaho Talking Book program, and also provided information about the National Federation of the Blind of Idaho. Al Schneider, chair for the Treasure Valley Cycle for Independence, encouraged the legislators to get involved and ride in the event.

Ramona Walhof, Mai Nguyen, and I traveled to Washington D.C. for the Washington Seminar. Mai is the new president of the Central Idaho chapter. Mai immigrated to the United States from Vietnam when she was 17, and she found the Washington Seminar to be a real learning experience. We were able to speak personally with both of our senators, but spoke with staffers on the representative side. You can read about the issues on the NFB website, [www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org).

On a sad note, Noel Newhouse, the vice-president of the Idaho Gems, died on February 26. His service will be on Tuesday, March 6, at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, on the corner of Orchard and Cassia streets in Boise, at 10:00 A.M. Noel was a long-time dedicated federationist, and will be greatly missed.

I hope to see everyone at our state convention. Let’s come together to raise expectations and create opportunities.

Dana Ard, President

National Federation of the Blind of Idaho

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