President’s Update

December 2018

I hope everyone is enjoying a rich holiday season filled with all those activities that are meaningful for you. Now that there is respite from much of the busyness of the season, we need to get ready for the federation excitement of 2019, and there is plenty of excitement to be had including our legislative luncheon and Winter Board meeting, our state convention, our national convention in Las Vegas, the braille-a-thon and much more.

Our Winter Board meeting and legislative luncheon will be held January 21-- (Martin Luther King day--) at the Red Lion Downtowner hotel 1800 W. Fairview Ave, in Boise, phone 208 344-7691. The board meeting will begin at 9:00 AM. A continental breakfast will be provided for board members, so members should arrive by 8:30 to get food and be ready to start the meeting promptly at 9:00. Free coffee is available until 11:00 AM For non-board members to enjoy if they wish. Our legislative luncheon will begin at 11:30, with the program starting around 12:00 PM. These times are an estimate as the legislators can be delayed for many reasons. Our topics this year include funding for the Idaho Talking Book program, and the ICBVI Independent Living program including the probable loss of some funding, and its implications for consumers. I have met with Sue Walker, librarian for the talking book service and Ann Joslin, state librarian, as well as Beth Cunningham, ICBVI administrator. I have written a letter to the governor and governor-elect urging funding for the Idaho Talking Book program. I will be writing fact sheets on these issues, and am looking for a couple of people who can talk to the legislators about how the talking book program, or the independent living program has impacted your life and made a difference for you. Please contact me if you have an impactful story to tell or know someone who does. The cost for the luncheon is $25.00. The meat will be pork loin. There will be a vegetarian/gluten free option. Contact Jan Gawith at 208 342-3066 to let her know you are coming, and your meal preference. Make checks payable to the National Federation of the Blind of Idaho, and send to Harry Gawith at 410 Ave. H., Boise, Idaho 83712. Getting checks ahead of time is helpful. We need our members at this event. Our legislators, like most people, don’t have an understanding about blindness. Our luncheon provides a great opportunity to educate, both on our issues, and on blindness in general. I look forward to seeing you there.

Our state convention will take place in Boise, March 21-23 at the Holiday Inn, 2970 Elder phone 208 344-7444.

Room rates are $99.00 per night plus 6% sales tax. Breakfast is not included with the room. Reservations can be made now. This convention will be unique as we will be holding a workshop for families of blind children in combination with our convention. Parents will participate in special workshops designed around their needs, as well as being involved in key sessions of our convention. We will have a reception for attendees on Thursday night, and will have a vendor expo on Friday afternoon. More details are being worked out, so stay tuned.

As many of us know, our NFB national convention will be at Mandalay Bay resort in Las Vegas, July 7-12. The Idaho affiliate is co-hosting this convention with the Nevada affiliate. The affiliates are responsible for planning and staffing the host affiliate hospitality room, and information table, conducting the opening ceremonies for the convention, and determining the entertainment for the special evening event during the convention. Teri Rupp, the Nevada president, is connected with individuals in Las Vegas entertainment, and she will be investigating different options. The national convention will never be closer to Idaho than Las Vegas. As a hosting affiliate, we need members to plan to attend. If you will be attending for the first time, you are eligible for the Jernigan Scholarship for first- time attendees. Please go to <https://nfb.org/images/nfb/publications/bm/bm18/bm1811/bm181118.htm> for more details.

I will be attending the Washington Seminar with Erin Olsen from Treasure Valley chapter. The proposed topics for congress include; Access Technology Affordability act, which will provide a refundable tax credit for persons purchasing adaptive technology; The Accessibility Standards for medical and Exercise Equipment, and home appliances; and Disability Employment Act, which will create new opportunities for employment, and continue to work to eliminate section 14c from the Fair Labor Standards Act. The fact sheets should be out soon. The Great Gathering In will begin the event on January 28. A reception for congress will be held on January 29.

Our national office has developed a process to honor current members of our organization, and to welcome new members in. Existing members will receive a specially commissioned coin. Chapter presidents will determine how the coins will be presented. A three step “on boarding process” will be initiated for new members. Steps include the pre-membership faze, the welcome ceremony, and the new member orientation. K’Lynn Hand is membership chair and will have new information as it comes out. I must submit membership information for all existing affiliate members to our national office by January 15. Chapter presidents have been emailed the spreadsheets which must be filled out and sent to me so that the information can be passed on to our national office. To date, I have received 1 spreadsheet. Our national office has been working for several years to have an accurate data base consisting of all the various lists of individuals involved in our many services including convention registration, publications, NFB Newsline®, the free white cane program etc.

Our updated membership information will help make this data base more complete and accurate. We will also be able to access more information that can help build our membership.

The Idaho Braille-a-thon begins January 4. Sign up by completing the information which Susan Ford sent out on the listserv, or call her at 208 376-1727 to get signed up. I always read more braille during this event. I find reading braille for pleasure relaxing.

We need to start gathering items for our on-line auction. Restaurant certificates, hotel stays, and gas cards are good items. They sell well and they are easy to ship. We need items from all over the state. Board members, and others coming to the legislative luncheon, can bring items if you have them

I wish everyone a happy new year. 2019 will be a dynamic year for the Idaho affiliate. Let’s recommit our energy and hard work as we build the National Federation of the Blind.