QUE PASA

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Adelmo Vigil, President

E-mail: nfbnewmexicopresident@gmail.com

(575) 921-5422

James Babb, Editor

E-mail: jim.babb@mysero.net

(505) 291-3112

Tonia Trapp, Assistant Editor

E-mail: nfbnewmexicosecretary@gmail.com

(505) 856-5346

ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

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# PREAMBLE

The National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico (NFBNM) is a 501(c)(3) consumer organization comprised of blind and sighted people committed to changing what it means to be blind. Though blindness is still all too often a tragedy to those who face it, we know from our own personal experience that with training and opportunity, it can be reduced to the level of a physical nuisance. We work to see that blind people receive services and training to which they are entitled and that parents of blind children receive the advice and support they need to help their youngsters grow up to be happy, productive adults. We believe that first-class citizenship means that people have both rights and responsibilities, and we are determined to see that blind people become first-class citizens of these United States, enjoying their rights and fulfilling their responsibilities. The most serious problems we face have less to do with our lack of vision than with discrimination based on the public’s ignorance and misinformation about blindness. Join us in educating New Mexicans about the abilities and aspirations of New Mexico’s blind citizens.

(Adapted from NFB of Ohio newsletter.)

# EDITOR’S NOTE

by Jim Babb, Editor

Hello fellow Federationists and other Que Pasa readers,

I hope you enjoy this edition of Que Pasa, the newsletter of the National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico. The articles contributed by you help make this newsletter a success. I wish to thank Assistant Editor Tonia Trapp, who finalizes and compiles the submitted articles for this newsletter. She also reads this newsletter onto New Mexico Newsline.

Have a great holiday season!

# PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

by Adelmo Vigil, President, NFB of New Mexico

Greetings Federation Family:

We are fast approaching the holidays. It is a great time to reflect on all that we have accomplished in 2017. I want to take this opportunity to wish everyone blessings through the holidays and a happy new year.

In November, we conducted our leadership training seminar. I want to thank everyone who helped plan the seminar, as well as everyone who participated in it. The purpose of this event was to help our chapter and division leaders expand their skills to grow the organization at the local level.

The members of our affiliate have been very busy participating in Cardtronics testing to determine if their ATM machines are truly accessible. They have also held many Meet the Blind Month activities.

It is not too early to begin planning for our state convention in 2018. The convention will be held at the Sheraton Albuquerque Uptown, APRIL 19 through April 22, 2018. Let's work at making this the largest gathering of blind New Mexicans in our state affiliate.

We call on members of each local chapter and division to help us move forward and grow as an affiliate. We can change what it means to be blind for children, youth and adults of all ages in New Mexico and throughout the country.

The National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. We can live the life we want; blindness is not what holds us back.

# THE 2017 WHITE CANE BANQUET: A WHITE CANE DAY CELEBRATION

by Nancy Burns

The atmosphere was tinged with enthusiasm as Federationists filled a private room at the El Patron restaurant. This event was planned and hosted by the West Mesa Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico. The occasion was the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the White Cane Law. New Mexico played a high-profile role in this historical event, as then-Governor David Cargo signed the law into effect in 1967.

Chapter President Don Burns shared the fact that he had obtained White Cane proclamations from the mayors of Rio Rancho and Albuquerque as well as from Governor Martinez.

The highlight of the event was the guest speaker, Stephanie Kean, Field Representative for Congresswoman Michelle Lujan Grisham. She brought regards from the Congresswoman and commended the NFB for our positive work in protecting the rights of blind people who use a white cane or guide dog. Her comments were well received.

Caroline Benavidez, 1st Vice President of the NFBNM and retired school teacher, shared her thoughts as a professional woman about the importance of her white cane. Tara Chavez, President of the Albuquerque Chapter, spoke about her roles as a mom and working woman and talked about the importance of her guide dog in that context. Arthur Schreiber, President Emeritus, recounted the difficulty in obtaining the passage of this important law. Curtis Chong, Treasurer of the NFBNM, read the proclamation from his Braille copy.

All of these presentations were given before Ms. Kean had to leave for another event. We thanked her for attending and expressed our appreciation for bringing comments from Congresswoman Lujan Grisham.

West Mesa Chapter members had decorated the tables with miniature white canes and provided two door prizes. This event highlighted the history and importance of the White Cane Law and the important role played by the National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico. The White Cane Law plays a key role in allowing us to live the life we want.

# SIGNIFICANT HAPPENINGS IN THE WORLD OF NONVISUAL ACCESS TECHNOLOGY

by Curtis Chong

The Demise of Window-Eyes

On May 15 of this year, long-time users of the popular Window-Eyes screen reading program were stunned by a widely-distributed email sent from GW Micro declaring that sales of Window-Eyes had ended in the United States and Canada. Users of Window-Eyes were advised that they could use this program as long as it continued to work for them, but they were warned that as the Windows operating system and applications changed over time, Window-Eyes might not function adequately to meet their needs. Window-Eyes users were told that they could migrate to the JAWS for Windows screen reading program, and for many, this migration could happen without cost.

Readers of Que Pasa should know that both GW Micro (the company which developed and sold Window-Eyes) and Freedom Scientific (the company which developed and now sells JAWS for Windows) were merged into a larger organization called the VFO Group, a company which now owns GW Micro, Freedom Scientific, AI Squared, and Optelec. Consequently, the demise of Window-Eyes, while disappointing, came as no surprise to individuals and organizations closely watching the access technology market.

On a positive note, if you have been a long-time user of Window-Eyes and are worried that you will need to learn a plethora of new commands for JAWS, you can be reassured that most of us don't really use many Window-Eyes commands as we operate the computer every day. You can continue to use just about every keyboard command you know because those commands are built into Windows and the programs you use on a daily basis. Those commands work as well with JAWS as they do with Window-Eyes.

JAWS 2018: A New Number and a Significant New Feature

On October 25 of this year, Freedom Scientific released the latest version of JAWS for Windows. With this release, version numbering for JAWS has now changed. Prior to this release, the most current release of JAWS was numbered 18. The latest release of JAWS is now called 2018, and the next release will be dubbed JAWS 2019, which will probably come out in late October of next year.

JAWS 2018 now offers support for the Microsoft Edge web browsing program, which comes with Windows 10. Significant as this support is (Microsoft Edge was released more than two years ago, and JAWS support for this browser has been a long time in coming), in this writer's opinion, there is another feature which comes with JAWS 2018 which most blind users will find more significant. Simply put, JAWS 2018 can now function as a basic print-reading program, complete with the ability to capture printed text through a scanner or using the Freedom Scientific Pearl™ camera, the price for which has been reduced from over $700 to around $300. Not only can printed information be captured through a scanner, but JAWS has the ability to recognize when text has been printed in multiple columns and can render that text in a format that is more readable to the nonvisual user. For some of us, this means that basic reading of printed information can be achieved without expensive software such as OpenBook or Kurzweil 1000, both of which cost nearly $1,000.

Important Information for Users of Mozilla Firefox

In an article called "THE NEED TO USE MORE THAN ONE WEB BROWSER IN WINDOWS," published in the September, 2017 edition of Que Pasa, I mentioned that Mozilla Firefox was one of the two best web browsing programs to be used with screen reading software. I have had to revise my opinion about Firefox in light of an October 25, 2017 blog posted by Freedom Scientific. In this blog, nonvisual users are warned that Firefox Quantum, a release of Firefox scheduled to be released on November 14, will severely hamper the ability of JAWS users to surf the Web. If you want to read all of the gory details, point your browser (assuming that it is still working<smile>) to this link:

http://blog.freedomscientific.com/2017/10/25/important-information-for-users-of-mozilla-firefox/

According to the blog, "...we recommend switching to the Extended Support Release (ESR) of Firefox as work on the accessibility issues continues, because even when you are running assistive technology that supports Firefox Quantum, performance with Firefox will be much worse than you are used to."

Fortunately, for Firefox users who don't want to switch to another program, there is a workaround. This involves installing the Extended Support Release of Firefox, which can be found at https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/organizations/. The Quantum changes are not scheduled to be rolled out for this release until the second quarter of 2018, at which time all of us hope the performance issues with Firefox Quantum will have been fixed.

# A REVIEW OF THE YELP REVIEWERS IN ALBUQUERQUE

by Mary Willows

Over the past five years or so, there has been a trend in disability awareness called “Dining in the Dark” which has been considered very controversial in the blind community. Some think that it is abhorrent and counterproductive. Foodies believe that it is educational while being entertaining at the same time.

For those who may not be familiar with the website called “Yelp," it is a means for consumers to review local restaurants and businesses. Recently, Curtis Chong and I were asked to represent the NFB of New Mexico at a restaurant called Torino’s located on Jefferson in Albuquerque. Both of us were apprehensive, but being committed to public education about blindness, we went to dinner at Torino’s on November 11.

When Curtis and I arrived, we were met by the Marketing Coordinator for Yelp Albuquerque, Howie Kaibel. Mr. Kaibel introduced us to the owners of Torinos restaurant and we took off to preview the layout and discuss the menu. Some of the details were not what Curtis and I would have recommended, but the important part was to let them know that we would introduce the dinner guests to blindness and make sure that the experience was positive. I am glad to report that this was the goal for Howie and the Torinos managers, Daniel and Jenna, as well.

The dinner guests were people who frequent the Yelp website to review restaurants and other businesses in Albuquerque. There were twenty blindfolded, hungry people in the restaurant. Howie introduced Curtis and me, and then the fun began. Curtis described how one should find place settings on the table. He did an excellent job of directing people to the water glass and wine glass without spilling. Then the first of four courses was served. There was no doubt by the sounds of moans and smacking lips that the food was outstanding. Participants described the flavors to each other as though they had never eaten such a wonderful meal before. The owners of the restaurant were quite pleased with the responses. When the food was all gone, participants were asked to take off the blindfold and share the experience. Some people had questions about the food and others asked questions about blindness. The discussion topics covered the gamut. We talked about guide dogs and assistive technology, and I even gave the participants a crash course in Braille reading.

Yelp Albuquerque will be following up with Adelmo Vigil, President of NFBNM, to send a donation to the affiliate and see if we can add a link to the Yelp website to tell us whether a particular restaurant offers Braille menus. All in all it was a very good experience.

# USEFUL WEBSITES, APPS, AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

[http://www.dmaconsumers.org](http://www.dmaconsumers.org/)

This is the website for the Direct Marketing Association. Go to the mail preference service and register if you do not want mail from their members.

Also:

[http://www.optoutprescreen.com](http://www.optoutprescreen.com/)

Register here to stop most of the bank-type solicitations.

<http://www.charitywatch.org>

This is the giving season, so you will receive solicitations from many charities. Go here to see if the particular charity gives at least 90 percent of what they receive to the intended charitable purpose.

<http://www.zello.com>

This app turns your smart phone into a walkie talkie. It has been useful in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, when large segments of the cellular network are down.

Free 2-day shipping websites:

Go here and check the stores they service. These sites are what is called fermium, meaning the basic service is free and there is a charge for more advanced services.

[https://express.google.com](https://express.google.com/)

[http://www.shoprunner.com](http://www.shoprunner.com/)

[https://duckduckgo.com](https://duckduckgo.com/)

I have used this Google-type search website several times and find it useful. It promotes that it does not put cookies on your computer and does not track you.

# MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

* December 22-31, 2018
  + NFB Independence Market will be closed
* January 28-February 1, 2018
  + Annual Washington Seminar to be held at the Holliday Inn Capitol. The Great Gathering will take place on Monday January 29.
* March 31, 2018
  + Deadline to apply for NFB scholarship awards ranging from $3,000 to $12,000. For information go to [www.nfb.org/scholarships](http://www.nfb.org/scholarships)
* April 15, 2018
  + Deadline for applications for the Dr. Jacob Bolotin Award
* April 19-22, 2018
  + National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico State Convention, Sheraton Uptown, Albuquerque, New Mexico
* July 3-8, 2018
  + National Convention of the National Federation of the Blind, Rosen Shingle Creek, Orlando, Florida