QUE PASA

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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.)

# SPOTLIGHT ON ITALY

By Mary Willows

It is difficult to write a review of my trip to the Tuscany region of Italy without reviewing the tour company as well. So, I will attempt to focus on my viewpoint as a blind person travelling in western Europe.

“Spotlight on Tuscany” is the name of a guided tour in the Tuscany region of Italy. The tour company is called “Collette Tours.” It was an eight-day tour which included Florence, Lucca, Pizza, San Gimiano, Sienna and a couple of optional side trips which I did not take.

If you are travelling abroad for the first time, I highly recommend that you pay the extra money for a guided tour package. Your airfare, transportation, hotels, most of your meals, and daily local guides are all included. When you don’t really know where to go and how to get there, this makes the trip less stressful. This way, you can concentrate on the geography and where you might like to return to in the future. Driving and public transportation require a major research project with many hours on the computer or phone to work out the details, so leave it to the tour company. All you have to do is show up with really good walking shoes on your feet.

This particular tour cautioned people that there was a lot of walking, and they were not kidding. In ancient times, cities were defined by huge walls. Those walls still exist. This meant that the bus could not get to the starting point of our walking tour. We usually had to hike up a hill just to meet the local tour guide and begin walking on cobblestone roads and up many steps to tour ancient churches and look out over the Tuscany Valley.

As a blind person travelling with a friend, you must make a choice about self-guided tours. If your friend will be driving, you will not have the benefit of someone describing the terrain, and I did not want my friend to be burdened with reading maps. In my case, I want to know everything, so driving is not an option. I want to know about the geography, the size and color of the houses, the animals, farmlands, restaurants, nature, etc.

Another thing to consider is whether or not your tour will stay in one hotel and go out on day trips or move to a new area every day, which requires packing up all of your belongings and having your suitcase outside your door every morning by 7:00 A.M. I did that last year and found having a home base with day trips to be far more enjoyable, because you could actually unpack your suitcase, wash out clothes and hang them up while you are gone, and get to know the local shops and restaurants.

The reason I chose the Tuscany region was simply because my neighbor made it sound so fabulous. I like to try new foods and experiences. On this trip we went to a winery where Chianti wine is made. We drank our fair share and ate the wonderful Italian cheeses. Another day we went to a farm where we made our own Posta and Tiramisu. That was a wonderful experience which I will never forget. (See recipe at the end of this article.)

When we went to Lucca, we were allowed into a preserved World War II German bunker. You could have heard a pin drop: no one spoke during the tour. We all listened for the sounds of the German soldiers and the people who were imprisoned there. It was eerie and so educational. The interior was tunnels with gravel floors and dirt walls. I learned so much about the role of Italy and America during the war. We passed cemeteries where only American soldiers were buried. The American flag flew over many of the graves. I could just imagine young American men who went over to this beautiful region of the world and never returned home. That was really sad.

I came home with a burning question, and that is, “Where was Pinocchio born?” And where did Geppetto live? When we toured Pizza, there were Pinocchio-themed shops everywhere, so we surmised that it must have been Pizza, but now I want to watch the movie again and actually pay attention to that detail.

After reading about the Tuscany region of Italy, I decided that it was a good starting point for my tours of Italy. I had so many unforgettable experiences: I was able to touch Michelangelo’s “David”; stand next to the leaning tower of Pizza and understand what it is; meet with the farmers who make Italian cheese; drink Chianti poured out of the oak casks; relax in a public bath, which was exactly what my sore feet and knees needed; and of course, pick up a little of the language and traditions. I will never order chicken parmesan again in an Italian restaurant in the States, because native Italians don’t even know what that is: it doesn’t exist there.

One tip that I would like to share with you about long-distance trips is to bring compression stockings and slippers to where on the plane. When we got to the gate, we changed into our stockings and scruffy lightweight slippers, which made a very long ten-hour flight much more bearable. I packed some tactile dots in case I needed to mark a microwave or thermostat in the hotel. Also, I packed an extra folding cane in case the one I was using broke. Lastly, I recommend buying “packing cubes.” I ordered them online from Amazon but also found them in TJ Max. The cubes are of varying sizes. That way, you can match and fold outfits when packing at home, and you don’t have to worry about coordinating tops and pants or skirts when you arrive at your destination. All of your toiletries are in one bag so you do not have to dig around to find your toothbrush and toothpaste. In fact, I suggest that you pack pajamas and toothbrush in your carry-on, because those long flights are draining.

So happy travels to you. “Chow.”

Tiramisu Recipe

Ingredients:

1 package Lady Fingers

1 cup coffee (we used expresso)

1 cup Mascarpone (similar to cream cheese)

2 eggs, separated

2 heaping tablespoons sugar

1 teaspoon good vanilla

Cocoa powder to dust the top of the Tiramisu

Chocolate shavings for the top

Directions:

Separate the eggs (whites in one bowl and yolks in another).

Add sugar to yolks. Add Mascarpone and beat with a whisk or electric beaters for about 5 minutes. (We used a whisk.)

Beat egg whites until stiff.

Slowly add the whites to the Mascarpone mixture using a whisk until all is combined.

Dunk Lady fingers in the coffee. Just give it a quick dunk.

Layer Lady Fingers in the pan.

Cover Lady Fingers with half of the custard mixture.

Dunk and place another layer of Lady Fingers on top, and cover with remaining custard.

Dust with cocoa powder and sprinkle a few chocolate shavings on top.

Put it in the refrigerator during dinner so the flavors can mingle.

Enjoy.

# FIRST ANNUAL NFB FRIENDS AND FAMILY BBQ A GREAT SUCCESS!!

By Sarah Villavicencio

On Saturday, June 8, 2019, we held our 1st annual NFB Friends and Family BBQ. It was awesome, with over 55 people in attendance. Special thanks to Harold and Martha for their many contributions and all their hard work. Thanks to Ernie and Albert for grilling the burgers, to Brianne and Ray for grilling hotdogs, and to Krista and Sarah for serving and keeping the line going. To everyone who brought side items, they were wonderful. And thanks to the Albuquerque Chapter for providing the restroom facilities. To the BBQ team who did the planning and were there from setup to breakdown, we could not have done it without you: Ray, Sarah, Krista, Martha, Ernie and Albert. With a team and membership such as ours, successful events happen. Our superstar chapter participant of the day was Brianne--you rocked it!

A surprise watermelon eating contest was held, and the participants were some of our great leaders: State Affiliate President Adelmo Vigil, Albuquerque Chapter President Tara Chavez and her First Vice President Ernie Esquibel, and West Mesa Chapter President ShaRon Dandy and her Vice President German Benitez. Ernie, eating a whopping 3 pounds, was the winner!! All participants received a souvenir watermelon plate, and the winner received a watermelon beach ball. We also had live music provided by Martha, Ruth and friends.

This BBQ was a nice gathering of old and new friends coming together. Let’s do it again next year, bigger and better. Get those ideas flowing!

# YOU SAID IT

For this issue of Que Pasa, we asked readers to respond to the following question:

What was your favorite thing about the state convention, and why?

Here is what our readers said:

\*Presentations at the banquet give me great pleasure. When a student is given a scholarship for future education, and when a family of a blind child is chosen to attend the NFB convention, I am very pleased. Our youth are our future!

\*My favorite part was working the tables at the exhibit room.

\*I really like the change in the program, it kept my interest in the seminars and topics. I was able to attend more presentations this year. I believe the change made a difference.

\*Ron and Jean Brown--knowledgeable and friendly. Attitude of those attending--two ladies invited me to sit and visit with them.

\*I hadn’t been to a state convention in over 10 years. The atmosphere was positive and I liked the new location. It was great and look forward to next year.

\*Sincere and thoughtful tone of the entire convention, and also the Friday night dance classes.

\*I enjoyed our National Rep, Ron Brown: very down to earth and easy to listen to. One of the best reps we have had in a long time. The bar area in the hotel was a nice place to relax with a drink and hang out with friends and meet other attendees while waiting in line to use the coupon for a free drink.

\*I was surprised this year to be reunited with not one, but two of the ladies I used to cheer with at NMSVH. GO BEARS! After twenty years it was as though no time had passed. We shared our stories and relived old memories, and I know that no matter how much time goes by, I will always love them.

\*I really liked the great lineup of speakers. I thought that it was a very good agenda.

\*Hotel was much nicer and there was more room. Everything else on the property was fun. And the food was much better.

# BLIND SENIORS PREPARE FOR THOSE GOLDEN YEARS

By Pat Munson

Senior Action Group Energy (SAGE) is a division of the National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico. At the SAGE 2019 meeting held at the state convention, the focus was necessary documents and choice of housing needed for those "Golden Years."

To survive and thrive in one's older years, money does help. Some folks never imagine they will age one day; if they are lucky, they go "through the golden gate" and enjoy many happy years after retirement.

These days, many older folks must leave states such as California to stretch their funds. Many have landed in Nevada, Arizona, Idaho or New Mexico, where housing is much cheaper. AARP advises folks who move to another state to put their possessions in storage and spend at least six months in a rented room or stay with a friend to ensure the weather and such are desirable in the new location. Some people would never be happy in Idaho where the snow can last many months; others would not like parts of Arizona with its summer heat.

When a person is younger and still employed, saving for one’s housing needs during retirement is a must. If one is old and has little funding, they may have a long wait for Medicaid housing. In the meantime, maybe a family member or friend might help. Again, AARP suggests one might rent a room in a home and share housework and shopping. There are groups that screen homes and prospective renters.

Caroline Benavidez, SAGE vice president, has moved to a large home she and her husband share with his sister, her husband, Caroline's daughter and her three teenage daughters. They assist one another.

If a senior does not want to care for a home, apartments are set aside for old folks in most communities with relatively cheap rent. Some buildings have meals, but of course the expense is greater. The most expensive apartments are the ones that have both meals and housekeeping. If more care is required, there is assisted living, nursing care and memory units, sometimes in the same building; however, those can be very costly.

For older blind persons, having access to stores and doctors is a major consideration. Also, public transportation that runs 365 days a year is helpful.

It is necessary to have a Will. Even if one only has a doghouse and some clothes, that person should let someone know what kinds of arrangements they want carried out after their death. Who will dispose of clothes and other belongings? Maybe one wishes to be buried next to the pet that used the doghouse years back. A person is never too young to have a Will in place. If one's wishes are more complex towards the end of life, details can be expressed in a document entitled "MOST" or another titled "Five Wishes." It is also prudent to discuss one's wishes with family or friends. Those who own property and other assets might need a lawyer.

The business meeting concluded the activities. Elections were held with the following results: President, Veronica Smith; Vice President, Caroline Benavidez; Secretary, Pat Munson; Treasurer, Urja Lansing; and Board Member, ShaRon Dandy.

Many of you reading this might wonder why preparing for the retirement years is important to younger persons. Perhaps you know someone older whom you could assist. Or, maybe, you are older than you would like to admit ...

Come join us at our next NFBNM state convention; we have a lot of wisdom about managing life's challenges!

# PASTOR JAY AND LAURA ARMSTRONG HONORED BY THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

Note: The following write-up was published in the Paradise Hills United Methodist Church bulletin, along with a picture of the pastor, his wife, and Don and Nancy Burns.

Since March of 2008, Paradise Hills United Methodist Church has opened its doors to a local chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico (NFBNM). The West Mesa Chapter holds its meetings the second Saturday of each month. Chapter members have been able to make coffee in the kitchen and for larger events have been allowed to use the Fellowship Hall. During the banquet of the recent statewide conference of the National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico, Pastor Jay and Laura were honored for their continued support of the West Mesa Chapter.

The members of this local chapter want the congregation to know about the important work this organization does. The right to vote independently, the education of blind children, and other civil rights are addressed by this group. These meetings are open, and any interested person is welcome to join us on the second Saturday of each month from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon. We are happy to share our goals and our advances in the community and throughout the nation. The National Federation of the Blind is a nationwide organization. We are not a social get-together, but we are an organization "OF" the blind as opposed to an agency "FOR" the blind.

Thank you to Paradise Hills United Methodist Church for your ongoing support and please join us on the second Saturday of any month.

ShaRon Dandy, President, West Mesa Chapter National Federation of the Blind.

# GET AROUND GET AROUND, A BLIND PERSON GETS AROUND

By Pat Munson

I try to arrive at state and national NFB conventions at a quiet time; my thinking is that perhaps if "sighted folks” are in meetings, sleeping, or otherwise busy, I can look around the lobby and meeting room areas without being asked what I am looking for. I want to find items that will not move. Then when I am confused, I can locate one of them and figure out where I am. I look for carpet, which might mean there are seating areas nearby, or plants, which indicate a doorway is close at hand.

Typically, the check-in counter is near the front door or doors. I look for eating areas, knowing that often the bar will be close by. Also, I listen for music or TV, which is in the bar. Some lobbies have waterfalls, but a nice person might turn them off thinking the blind wouldn't like them ... wrong.

Usually the elevators are near the lobby, and meeting rooms might be down long carpeted halls from there; I think hotels use carpet so noisy shoes and talking will not be so distracting in the meeting rooms.

I always use my cane looking for stairs or pretty pools that are interesting for sighted folks. I am told those fish are very pretty as they move through the water in those forever areas full of water.

Another habit I have is that after I have chosen a seat at a banquet table, I stand with my long arms reaching carefully forward, looking at the center of the table for salt, sugar, butter and rolls so I can ensure I get the latter. I further look with my fingers for salad dressing boats. Then I sit and scout out my napkin: there are many places I have found that item. I finally find silverware, water, salad and dessert.

I have been using this practice for a thousand years, so I am very knowledgeable at my task. Join me and watch!

# LAND OF ENCHANTMENT

By Carlos J. Sanchez

Author’s Note: This poem was inspired by the great creator, our heavenly father.

You might see the tree moving as the wind blows gently through,

but I am the wind that passes through.

Some might see the bird landing,

but he whispers to me ever so softly.

You might notice the pinecone that sways ever so gently

but the fruit inside feeds my soul.

Some might notice the cactus from a distance

but I can smell the flower pouring out its love to the Desert.

You might notice the rapid Waters running

but beneath the rocks and the soil, it quenches my thirst.

Some might notice the Stars above

but I can still see through the darkness.

There is a light that shines from within,

remember I'm your light.

Some might notice the mountains from a distance

but I painted this picture for the world to see.

You might notice the sun's rays glowing from the horizon

but with all that I am, it's only my reflection.

# OF DREAMS AND REALITY

By Nancy Burns

The word "blind" is one of the most emotionally-charged words in our language. We of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) are mostly oblivious to this fact, until some incident brings us up short and causes us to revisit the reason for this phenomenon. Federationists have become quite comfortable with this five-letter word “blind,” but the same is not true for the general public. As I walk down the sidewalk, and a passer-by tells me that I am amazing, I once again wonder why my mother did not name me Grace.

Labels have become an integral part of our generation. Women's rights, men's rights, disability rights, minority rights, and on and on. Why not just "people's rights?” And, taking this a step farther, what about “politically correct?” Does it ease the public conscience to call us visually impaired or sight impaired rather than just "blind?” Perhaps to the mind of the public, it just softens and hides the real meaning of the word blind. We, in the NFB, do not need that word to be softened. Changing the words does not change reality.

The members of the NFB know that blindness is not the characteristic that defines us. The general public tries to define blindness based on the lack of accurate information about blindness, and based on misconceptions about blindness that have been around not just for decades, but for centuries.

The National Federation of the Blind was created in 1940 by a brilliant and forward-thinking young blind man. Dr. Jacobus tenBroek was a student of Dr. Newel Perry, who was an innovative blind teacher. Dr. tenBroek realized that the blind of this country have the right to self-expression and the ability to strive toward first-class citizenship. This outstanding young professor experienced discrimination, even with his phenomenal scholastic achievements. He dreamed of a nation in which the blind would have a voice in their own future. At the time, this was not a commonly held philosophy.

Lack of exposure to blind people by the sighted public explains some of the misconceptions. The best estimate is that about 2 percent of the population is blind or visually impaired. The ongoing goal of the National Federation of the Blind is to educate the general public that we are simply people who happen to be blind. Qualified blind people hold positions such as attorneys, teachers, technology experts, homemakers, and jewelry makers.

The National Federation of the Blind is a nationwide organization with headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland. There are state affiliates, such as the National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico. Within the state affiliates are numerous local chapters. The scope of this organization reaches from coast to coast and from north to south. The dedicated members of this organization are all hard-working people who strive to educate the general public that blindness is not the characteristic that defines our lives. We simply attempt to educate others that it is okay to be blind.

# GOOD EATING

## CHICKEN ENCHILADA CASSEROLE

By Christine Hall

1 dozen corn tortillas

1 large can enchilada sauce (red or green)

4 chicken breasts boiled and diced

1 onion chopped

1 15-ounce can pitted black olives, sliced or chopped

1 lb grated cheddar & jack cheese mix

Method

In an 11-by-13 glass baking dish, place 4 tortillas cut into triangles.

Cover with 1/3 of the sauce. Add one half of the cut chicken. Sprinkle some cheese, onion and olives on top. Layer with 4 more tortillas, add 1/3 of the sauce and remaining chicken. Sprinkle cheese, onion and olives on casserole, setting aside 1/4 cup cheese and olives for topping.

Place remaining tortillas, sauce, cheese and olives on top.

Bake at 350 degree for 45 to 50 minutes.

## CHOCOLATE CHIP FRENCH TOAST

By Veronica Smith

Here is a treat you can eat any time and not feel guilty. Hope you enjoy!

In a smaller bowl, combine the following ingredients:

3 cups whole wheat flour

1/2 cup protein powder

1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/3 cup mini semi-sweet chocolate chips

1-1/2 teaspoons cinnamon

In a separate bowl, combine the following ingredients:

2-1/2 cups sugar-free vanilla almond milk

6 large egg whites or 3/4 cups egg substitute

1 tablespoon melted low-calorie butter

1 tablespoon maple extract

5 packets no-calorie sugar, like Splenda Naturals

Mix the two bowls of ingredients together until well-blended.

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Prepare an 11-by-13-inch baking pan with nonstick spray and set aside.

Pour batter into pan and smooth it out to make it even.

Bake for 10 minutes or until golden brown.

Let cool slightly, then cut into ten strips, then cut each strip into four pieces each.

Serving size: 4 pieces.

# USEFUL WEBSITES, APPS, AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

By Jim Babb

www.getinvisiblehand.com

Once downloaded, this app runs in the background when shopping online. It notifies you of discount codes, coupons, etc., and therefore saves you money on the purchase.

www.allett.com

World’s slimmest wallets for him or her. This makes what would be a fat wallet very thin, and they are very durable. They are made in California.

www.brandify.com

This app, for iPhones only, allows you to view comments from buyers on comparison of brand-name products with store brands.

www.atscares.com

or call 615.562.0043

They sell a variety of medical alert devices with 2-way voice communication. The best part is that there is no monthly fee for monitoring; most companies charge $30.00 a month or more.

# MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

July 7-12, 2019: National Federation of the Blind National Convention, Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada

February 10, 2020: Washington Seminar Great Gathering-In, Washington, DC