NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

OF MICHIGAN

STATE CONVENTION

October 18: 20, 2013

Hilton Grand Rapids Airport Hotel

4747 28th Street SE

Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49512-1915, USA

TEL: 1-616-957-0100

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The ultimate goal of the National Federation of the Blind is the complete integration of the blind into society on a basis of equality.

This objective includes the removal of legal, economic, and social discrimination and the education of the public to new, and more accurate, concepts concerning blindness. It means the right of the blind to work along with their sighted peers in the professions, skilled trades, and regular occupations.

FRIDAY October 18

1:00 -- 5:00 SENIOR SEMINAR—Mary Wurtzel, Board Member, National Federation of the Blind of Michigan, Salon A-B

3:00 -- 7:00 REGISTRATION, -- Mike Powell, First Vice President, National Federation of the Blind of Michigan and Paulette Powell, outside Salon A-B

4:00 – 6:00 RESOLUTIONS-- Dave Robinson, Board Member, National Federation of the Blind of Michigan. Board Room. Send Resolutions to drob1946@gmail.com

6:30 STUDENTS! MEET FOR DINNER IN HOTEL LOBBY

7:00 -- 9:00 STUDENT SEMINAR, -- Jordyn Castor, President, Michigan Association of Blind Students Selected Restaurant

6:30 REGISTRATION, MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF GUIDE DOG USERS

7:00 -- 9:00 MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF GUIDE DOG USERS, -- Larry Keeler, Chairman, Michigan Association of Guide Dog Users Salon D

6:30 REGISTRATION, MERCHANT’S DIVISION

7:00 -- 9:00 MERCHANT’S DIVISION-- Terry Eagle, President, Merchant's Division National Federation of the Blind of Michigan Kentwood A-B

9:00—10:00 MEMBERS AT LARGE CHAPTER, Dave Robinson, Board Member, National Federation of the Blind of Michigan Salon A-B

The Lansing and Ann Arbor Chapters will hold 50 - 50 drawings. Tickets are $1.00 each or six for $5.00. The drawings will be on Sunday morning before Adjournment.

The Ann Arbor Chapter is selling Whoozit wristbands for $5.00.

The Western Wayne County Chapter is selling 2014 Calendars with reprints of paintings in them for $3.00.

SATURDAY October 19

7:00 – RESOLUTIONS, [If needed] Dave Robinson, Board Member, National Federation of the Blind of Michigan in Spinnakers Restaurant

7:30 to Opening of General Session REGISTRATION – Mike Powell, First Vice President, Outside Salon A-B

All General Sessions, the Banquet, Auction, Devotions and the Board Meeting are held in Salon A-B.

Child Care is in the Thorn Apple Room. Child care will be available at State Convention at the following Times: Friday, 7:00 to 9:00 during Division meetings. Saturday, fifteen minutes before until fifteen minutes after the morning and afternoon sessions plus the Banquet. This means from 8:30 to 12:15 for the morning. Also from 1:30 to 5:15 in the afternoon and from 6:45 until fifteen minutes after the Banquet adjourns. Sunday, from 8:45 until 12:15.

8:45 OPENING SESSION -- We will start on time with a door prize.

INTRODUCTION of State Board

INTRODUCTION of Participating Members

2013 SCHOLARSHIP WINNER INTRODUCED

STAR Spangled Banner, Terri Wilcox, Secretary, National Federation of the Blind of Michigan

PLEDGE of Allegiance

9:00 -- 9:45 NATIONAL REPORT, Joe Ruffalo, President, National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey and Board Member, National Federation of the Blind Board

9:45—10:00 Questions from Members

10:00 -- 10:15 BSBP NEWS, Director, Bureau of Services to Blind Persons, Ed Rodgers

10:15—10:30 Questions from Members

10:30 -- 10:45 BRAILLE AND TALKING BOOK LIBRARY, Scott Norris

New products and services will be demonstrated from the Library including the new I-Phone App for reading digital books.

10:45–11:00 Questions from Members

11:00--12:00 DEMONSTRATION OF NEW ICE VOTING MACHINE, Steve Delongchamp, Vice President, Election Source, Grand Rapids Michigan

12:00 – 1:45 AFFILIATE ACTION LUNCHEON, Dave Robinson

1:45 -- 2:00 ANNOUNCEMENTS, DOOR PRIZES

2:00 -- 3:00 TRANSPORTATION PANEL, J.J. Meddaugh A T Guys

Developing and Promoting Efficient, Safe, and Reliable Transportation for the Blind: Progress, Challenges and Opportunities

Doug Boone, President, D. Boone Consultants, LLC.

Michael Bulthuis, Public Outreach Coordinator - Community Engagement,

ITP/the Rapid

Kathryn Gray, Coordinator, Transportation for Michigan - Trans4M

3:00 –4:00 Panel: WORK TO WELFARE The Current Trend in Michigan for the Blind Terry Eagle, President Michigan Association of Blind Merchants, Fred Wurtzel, President Emeritus, National Federation of the Blind of Michigan, Christine Boone, Attorney at Law, Joe Ruffalo, President, National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey

4:00 -- 4:20 BRAILLE CAMP 2013, Terri Wilcox, Secretary, National Federation of the Blind of Michigan

4:20 — 4:40 NEWSLINE FOR THE BLIND, Georgia Kitchen, Coordinator, Newsline for the Blind of Michigan

4:40 – 5:00 INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES IN TEXAS, Jordyn Castor, Student, Computer Science, President Student Division National Federation of the Blind of Michigan

6:00 -- 7:00 SOCIAL HOUR WITH CASH BAR

7:00 -- BANQUET

NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE, Joe Ruffalo

AWARDS

SCHOLARSHIP Presentation, Terri Wilcox, Secretary, National Federation of the Blind of Michigan

Jackson Chapter Charter

Grand Rapids Chapter Charter

AUCTION,

Please bring auction items for the Saturday evening Auction after the Banquet. Baked goods are especially appreciated.

Joseph Ruffalo, Jr.

(Massage Therapist, Community Leader, and Activist)

Born July 6, 1949, in Montclair and raised in Bloomfield, New Jersey, Joseph Ruffalo, Jr., had already graduated from Bloomfield High School, attended Montclair State College, and served America in Vietnam, where he earned a Bronze Star, before he learned in 1976 that retinitis pigmentosa would slowly claim his vision. For six years he continued his work as a manager in a Thom McAn shoe store, but by 1983 he began looking for guidance about how to achieve greater proficiency and control over his life as a blind adult.

The staff at the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center (JKRC), then located in Newark, told him he should not learn to use a cane, read Braille, or master any adaptive devices because he still had enough vision to do without them. Though eager to obtain the necessary skills, at the time Joe believed he had no recourse but to adhere to the advice of the only professionals he knew. Not until 1986 did he learn to use a cane, and he accomplished that by teaching himself. While at JKRC, Joe discovered a talent for baking, which led to a successful nine-year career as the owner of a pastry business.

In 1988 Joe tentatively attended his first NFB chapter meeting in Newark. He reports that after ten minutes he knew that his life was about to change dramatically. Realizing that the NFB was a place of fraternity and empowerment, empathy and accomplishment, Joe says, �I saw blind people doing things I wanted to do. They were holding jobs, volunteering, and achieving in every pursuit.� This was the beginning of Joe's own growth and achievement. In 1990 he became second vice president of the New Jersey affiliate; two years later he was first vice president; and by 1993 he was president of the NFB of New Jersey, a position he maintains to this day. �It is a tremendous honor and responsibility to promote positive attitudes about blindness and the abilities of blind people, � Joe comments.

But Joe's community involvement has not been limited to the National Federation of the Blind. He has been a leader in the Lions Club for over eighteen years, serving as president for three. He has also held positions as zone/regent chair and serves on the District 16-E cabinet. In the Knights of Columbus Joe has held the positions of guard, warden, and deputy grand knight, and while in the Cub Scouts of America he has been both a den leader and cub master. As past president of the Special Education Parent and Professional Organization and past chairman of the board of trustees of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, he has further worked to assure the full integration of people with disabilities into society.

Joe attended the Therapeutic Massage Center to obtain certification in massage therapy and from 1998 to 2000 provided massage for staff, patients, and visitors at Clara Maass Medical Center in Belleville, before moving his practice to a private office. He has served as a consultant to the Somerset School of Massage, making recommendations to staff and students and answering questions about training methods for blind students.

Joe also works to smooth others' transitions from dependence to independence as a leader in two programs sponsored by the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. He is employed by the First Occupational Center of New Jersey as a program specialist in the Senior Community Independent Living Services (SCILS) program, which identifies people over age fifty-five in Essex and Ocean counties who have experienced vision loss, with the goal of teaching independence skills so that these seniors can remain active in the community and independent in their homes. As state program director and northern region coordinator of the Leadership, Education, Advocacy, and Determination (LEAD) program, administered in partnership with Heightened Independence and Progress, Joe provides mentoring activities for blind teenagers and their families.

Joe’s many contributions to the community were recognized in November 2000 when he was honored with the Partnership for Progress Award at the New Jersey Commission's Believe and Achieve ninetieth Anniversary celebration. In July 2001 his leadership in the blindness community was again acknowledged when he was elected to the board of directors of the National Federation of the Blind. In October of 2002 the State of New Jersey honored Joe by presenting him with the New Jersey Vietnam Service Medal.

Joe has always been encouraged and supported by his wife of twenty-eight years, Judy, and his two sons, Joseph and James. In his spare time Joe likes sports of all kinds, especially baseball and basketball, and enjoys hosting Thru Our Eyes, an Internet radio program (www.thruoureyes.org) that highlights blindness issues, discusses technology, and promotes positive attitudes about blindness.

Joe’s life and work express his commitment to the blind and their struggle for equality in society. His achievements stand as an example for others, like those of the Federationists who deeply impressed him at his first chapter meeting. He achieves and grows, facing every challenge with energy, enthusiasm, and common sense. In so doing, he exemplifies his belief that �one of the most important things for members of the blind community to do is to teach the public that blindness is only a characteristic. With the proper training, skills, attitude, and techniques, blindness can be reduced to a physical nuisance.�

SUNDAY October 20

The Lansing and Ann Arbor Chapters will hold 50 - 50 drawings. Tickets are $1.00 each or six for $5.00. The drawings will be on Sunday morning before Adjournment.

8:30 -- DEVOTIONS, Terri Wilcox.

Board Meeting, National Federation of the Blind of Michigan

Quorum

Introduction of Participating Members

SECRETARY'S Report, Terri Wilcox

TREASURER'S Report, Mark Eagle

ELECTION of Board Position 1

ELECTION of Board Position 2

ELECTION of Board Position 3

ELECTION of Board Position 4

PRESIDENTIAL REPORT ON NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF MICHIGAN, Larry Posont, President, National Federation of the Blind of Michigan

Resolutions, Dave Robinson

NATIONAL Convention - Where and When?

FUND Raising -- National Convention?

STATE Convention - Locations for Next Year?

WASHINGTON Seminar 2014?

STUDENT DIVISION REPORT

Merchant’s Division Report

Guide Dog Committee

CHAPTER Reports

NEW Business:

OLD Business:

12:00 ADJOURN the Board Meeting

WHO are the Blind that Lead the Blind?

Larry Posont, President National Federation of the Blind of Michigan

Before December 1, 20812 Ann Arbor Trail

Dearborn Heights, MI 48127

After December 1, 2013,

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Board Position 1 David Robinson

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Board Position 2 Sarah Norwood

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Board Position 3 Mary Wurtzel

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Board Position 4 Nicholas Wilcox

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Thank you for attending the forty-fourth annual State Convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Michigan.

National Federation of the Blind of Michigan

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