**The Blind Missourian**

 **August 2020**

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2020 NFB of Missouri Presidential Report

By President Shelia Wright

You and I know that the traditional way to start this report is to say that we have had our most successful year ever. Of course, it all depends on how you measure success, but the way I see it, success is taking the challenges that you find and doing your best to meet them. If you believe my definition of success is correct, then you will have no problem in believing that this is indeed one of the most successful years we have ever had. We have learned just how flexible we can be. We have learned how to continue our work while obeying shelter in place and social distancing. Some of us have gone well beyond our comfort zone in learning to use electronic devices in ways we would never have thought possible six months ago, and the convention we are having is a testament to our ability to adapt to the times in order to do this work of love that binds us together.

When we last assembled in convention at the end of March, the NFB of Missouri was six months into the United States Association of Blind Athletes and Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield’ National Fitness Challenge. There were still two months left in the Fitness Challenge, so some of our earliest activities of the year centered on the challenge as we completed our weekly walking groups, participated in the Kansas City Trolley Run, and conducted a Blind Sports Day at the Missouri School for the Blind.

Our Sports and Recreation Committee, chaired by Robin House, continues to be active. The third annual rafting trip was a big success with twenty-one of us floating seven to fourteen miles down the Niangua River. Such activities serve many purposes. For some it is a new experience, a confidence builder, and travel in an unfamiliar setting. Such trips also build relationships and cohesiveness among us. We are looking forward to our fourth rafting trip which is scheduled to occur August 22 at NRO near Lebanon, Missouri.

The Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning (BELL) Academy has become an annual summer project for children between the ages of four and twelve. In 2019, the BELL Academy was held in St. Louis. Jenny Carmack was the coordinator for our St. Louis program. Although the program was smaller last summer, the children who participated seemed to get a lot out of it. Thank you to the staff that helped with BELL last summer and to Jenny Carmack and Debbie Wunder who are both working in the BELL in Home Edition that is under way. We have four students in this first session of the summer.

Fall is always busy with chapter walks, trivia nights, beach volleyball tournaments, nut sales, picnics, and meet the blind activities. All of this we do while still being active advocates for the blind men and women who need us.

In October, Governor Mike Parson issued a proclamation proclaiming October 15th as White Cane Awareness Day. I ask that you join me in appreciating the work of and congratulating Daniel Garcia and Roger Crome in seeing that this happened. Sometimes we take the little things for granted, but a proclamation from the Governor is a very effective form of outreach and one step in building relationships with elected officials and those who work with them.

On November 16, the anniversary date of the National Federation of the Blind’s founding, our affiliate launched a new program for middle school and high school teens. This group has become known as the Missouri Cane Drivers. You had an opportunity to meet them yesterday as they led our fit breaks. Sveta Ehlers is the chair, and Amberlynn Burnham is the co-chair. Adult mentors are Amy Wilson, Linda Coccovizzo, Jenny Carmack, and Debbie Wunder. We’ve talked about developing a program for this age group for several years. Amy Wilson made sure to turn the talk into action. Thank you to Amy and to everyone who has worked with and participated in getting the Cane Drivers up and running. As we move into the coming months, you will be hearing more about the Cane Drivers. We need to draw in a few adult male mentors so that we can include similar services to male teens as well. If any of you are interested in helping with this project, please let me know. We do need to do background checks on any one who works with minors.

This year we have had contact with several fathers who have custody issues, assisted in IEP meetings for three students, made referrals to Rehabilitation Services for the blind, looked into two employment discrimination cases, advocated on behalf of at least fifteen cases about Blind Pension, talked with hospital social workers, assisted blind people with getting connected with other services, etc.

Our Good Works Committee was able to assist one blind member with a special need to prevent their electricity from being disconnected. She had gotten behind with her bills because of needing prescriptions for which she was being overcharged.

Our Jefferson City Chapter decided they wanted to help our state affiliate to launch a fund-raising project that would get the affiliate off to a big start. They donated $3,000 to the affiliate to purchase a Carnival Cruise Package valued at $3,000.00. Tickets for this drawing are now on sale. Thank you to the Jefferson City Chapter for this generous gift. Tickets are now available and what we need is your help to sell them. The drawing will be at our NFB of Missouri state board meeting on October 3. The prize winner will receive a seven-night cruise, up to $800 for airfare/travel, and $500 for onboard expenses or excursions. Tickets are $10 each. Let’s not let the Jefferson City Chapter down. Our Ways & Means Chair will be providing more information about this later today.

Our 2020 Scholarship fund is as high as I remember it ever being. This is due to chapter donations. The Hentges Scholarship of $500 is an annual donation from the Columbia Chapter and is presented to a female student. Thank you to the Columbia Chapter for your longtime commitment. The Jefferson City Chapter has established a practice of giving a scholarship in memory of the members they have lost. This was a difficult year with the loss of LaVern Toebben, Phyllis Wilson, and Joyce Bullock. We share in your sadness in the loss of these members and celebrate their lives through your chapter gift of $1,500 to our scholarship program. More recently, the Jefferson City Chapter has lost another member. Glenda Elgin is the wife of Rick Elgin; They plan to give a memorial gift in her name in the future. Our thoughts and prayers should be with these families and our chapter members in Jefferson City.

The Missouri Affiliate was well represented at the Washington Seminar. Our team consisted of Christopher Tisdal, Debbie Wunder, Jeff Giffen, Linda Coccovizzo, Carla Keirns, Roman Solano, Seyoon Choi, and the Missouri State President. Our work on the Hill lays the groundwork for our legislative priorities, but it is our follow through with our Congressional Members from Missouri that will determine our legislative success.

 Our Jefferson City Seminar was held February 17th and 18th. The most outstanding thing about the 2020 Seminar was that we had ten enthusiastic members attending their first Jefferson City Seminar. With a total of thirty-two members participating, we had representation from every chapter and were able to visit the office of every member of the General Assembly. There were two bills that got a fast start, but with the interruption of the legislative session, these bills did not make it through. Thank you to Roger Crome, Chair and the entire Governmental Affairs Committee for your work in putting the 2020 Jefferson City Seminar together.

Two weeks prior to our March 26-29 State convention, it became obvious that we needed to postpone our NFB of Missouri State Convention. This was a difficult decision, but within just a few days there were many events being cancelled. Within a few hours of consultation, we were able to reschedule the convention for June 5-7.

I’m sure all of you know the rest of the story, and we are pleased to be holding our first ever virtual convention. Thank you all for working with us to make this come to be a time when we could come together to learn, to encourage one another, and to carry out the work of the National Federation of the Blind of Missouri.

All of us have been affected as we altered plans, work schedules, and practiced social distancing. We rapidly found ways to come together and encourage one another. Zoom has become a common word in our organization. We have re-discovered the art of calling one another just to let our members know we care and help them connect. We have hosted over thirty Zoom Calls in the past eleven weeks. Each Saturday morning, we have held a Missouri Members Connection to discuss new developments with COVID-19 and the impact it is having on us. We talk about happenings throughout the NFB and use this time as a way to connect with one another. Daniel Garcia continues to explore different topics of interest and he continues to post weekly announcements so that other Federationists interested in the topic can join us. Amy Wilson has and continues to schedule Zoom calls and has worked tirelessly with many of us to learn how to use Zoom. As convention has drawn closer, we have held Zoom trainings for both those who were helping to run this convention and those who wanted to be able to join the convention. Jenny Carmack has compiled a list of resources related to COVID-19, and it has been posted on nfbmo.org by our webmaster.

 As your state president, I think there are two things that have become obvious to me through taking the telephone calls we get each day. The first of these is just how much help is needed in the world and how, try though we might, we can’t give everyone what they need. We have no magic cure to restore vision for those desperately looking for that answer. We don’t have the money to afford medical procedures that stabilize or enhance vision, and we can’t even begin to meet the need that people have for glasses. There are injustices that take place because of the perceptions of blindness that exist in the education system, the workplace, and the courts of our land. There are people for whom we can offer little help, for they have let much of their life go by believing that they have never really had a choice to live the lives they want.

 But there is a positive side to the calls we take, and often it is these I think about when trying to maintain perspective. For many who call, we have the answers. For many who call, we provide much-needed hope. Through our work together, we send a strong message that as blind people we care about blind people, and collectively we can do much more than anyone of us standing alone. Sometimes my most well-planned schedule can be derailed by a ringing telephone, but one-on-one conversations are how relationships are made, and relationships are how we change lives.

 I thank you for the relationship that we share, as together we reach out to others for what they need and what they can become.

 I’d like to share one of my favorite parables with you:

One day, an old man was walking along a beach that was littered with thousands of starfish that had been washed ashore by the high tide. As he walked, he came upon a young boy who was eagerly throwing the starfish back into the ocean, one by one.

Puzzled, the man looked at the boy and asked what he was doing. Without looking up from his task, the boy simply replied, “I’m saving these starfish, Sir”.

The old man chuckled aloud, “Son, there are thousands of starfish and only one of you. What difference can you make?”

The boy picked up a starfish, gently tossed it into the water and turning to the man, said, “I made a difference to that one!”

 The National Federation of the Blind 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. Blindness is not what holds us back. You can live the life you want. Let’s go build the National Federation of the Blind of Missouri!

Below are the resolutions passed at the National Federation of the Blind of Missouri virtual convention. There will be more convention articles in upcoming issues.

Resolution 2020-01

A RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING SUPPORT FOR THE

ACCESSIBLE TECHNOLOGY AFFORDABILITY ACT

WHEREAS, technology can play a big role in opening opportunities for blind people, both technology used by the general public and technology specifically designed for the blind; and

WHEREAS, using technology created for those who can see usually requires some adaptive technology that adds to its cost, sometimes exceeding the cost of the mainstream technology itself; and

WHEREAS, technology made specifically for the blind is quite often expensive given its complexity and the smaller number of consumers of the product; and

WHEREAS, getting money for technology can be difficult if, as is often the case, needed equipment cannot be covered by agencies for the blind, Medicare or Medicaid; and

WHEREAS, it is not uncommon for specialized technology to cost from $2,000 to $6,000; and

WHEREAS, the Accessible Technology Affordability Act, H.R. 2086 and S 815 is being considered by the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate respectively and will, when passed, help offset the cost of specialized technology with a refundable tax credit; and

WHEREAS, four members of Congress from Missouri have added their names as cosponsors, but six have not voiced their support through action: Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind of Missouri in Convention assembled virtually this seventh day of June, 2020, that we strongly urge Senator Hawley, Congressman Hartzler, Congressman Clay, Congressman Long, Congressman Smith, Congressman Graves, and Congresswoman Wagner to add their names to this legislation that will create and expand opportunities for blind Missourians and other blind people in our country.

Resolution 2020-02

A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THANKS

FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE

ACCESSIBLE TECHNOLOGY AFFORDABILITY ACT

WHEREAS, technology can play a big role in opening opportunities for blind people, both technology used by the general public and technology specifically designed for the blind; and

WHEREAS, using technology created for those who can see usually requires some adaptation that adds to its cost; and

WHEREAS, technology made specifically for the blind is quite often expensive given its complexity and the smaller number of consumers of the product; and

WHEREAS, getting money for technology can be difficult if, as is often the case, needed equipment cannot be covered by agencies for the blind; and

WHEREAS, it is not uncommon for specialized technology to cost from $2,000 to $6,000; and

WHEREAS, the Accessible Technology Affordability Act, H.R. 2086 and S 815 is being considered by the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate respectively and will, when passed, help offset the cost of specialized technology with a refundable tax credit; and

WHEREAS, four members of Congress from Missouri have added their names as cosponsors, three from the House and one from the Senate: Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind of Missouri in Convention assembled virtually this seventh day of June, 2020, that we commend Senator Blunt, Congressman Cleaver, and Congressman Luetkemeyer for adding their names to this most beneficial legislation that will create and expand opportunities for blind Missourians and other blind people in our country.

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Resolution 2020-03

A resolution regarding CERTIFIED MAIL for BLIND PENSION AND SUPPLEMENTAL AID FOR THE BLIND

WHEREAS, House Bill 1270 and Senate Bill 974 would have ended the practice of sending annual review forms and other material to recipients of the Missouri Blind Pension and Supplemental Aid to the Blind using certified mail; and

WHEREAS, there was no objection to these measures with HB 1270 awaiting third reading on the consent calendar; and

WHEREAS, passing of this legislation would save the state of Missouri thousands of dollars, lessen the workload on eligibility specialists of the Family Support Division, and reduce barriers for recipients: Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind of Missouri in Convention assembled virtually this seventh day of June, 2020, that if a special session of the legislature is called for budgetary purposes, we urge the legislature to pass the elimination of the certified mail requirement, thus saving the taxpayers this unneeded expense.

Resolution 2020-04

A RESOLUTION REGARDING THE URGENT NEED TO FUND

REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR BLIND MISSOURIANS

WHEREAS, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind provides a range of services for blind children and their families because we know that early intervention is key in the development of skillsets that will lead to success in adulthood and that the information and referral services provided are important when guiding parents through the web of resources that are available; and

WHEREAS, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind works with blind men and women continuing in high school and extending through their golden years; and

WHEREAS, in every age group the responsibility of Rehabilitation Services for the Blind is to help a person become or remain as independent as possible; and

WHEREAS, services provided may include learning to travel independently with a long white cane, to cook and clean, to read and write in Braille, to use magnification when sight will allow, to provide powerful technology that produces Braille and spoken output on computers and other high-tech devices, to provide equipment to keep blind people employed, and to provide a wide variety of services to senior citizens who wish to remain in their homes rather than transitioning into assisted living or nursing facilities; and

WHEREAS, a necessary ingredient in a successful rehabilitation case is getting blind people the services they need when they need them, rather than letting them languish in helplessness and to live in isolation, eventually coming to believe that their view of blindness as a tragedy rather than a nuisance or an inconvenience is reality; and

WHEREAS, so well-known is this phenomenon in rehabilitation that it is commonly observed that rehabilitation delayed is rehabilitation denied; and

WHEREAS, every state dollar cut from the agency's budget will result in a four- dollar cut in federal funds; and

WHEREAS, the coronavirus pandemic has placed tremendous strains on our state's budget, necessitating cuts in every program: Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind of Missouri in Convention assembled virtually this seventh day of June, 2020, that we urge the governor and members of the Missouri General Assembly to keep uppermost in their minds the urgency of seeing that blind people get the training, technology, and confidence that will allow for maximum independence, knowing that this leads not only to a higher quality of life but to lesser expense by the state of Missouri when our blind citizens of working age are employed and our senior citizens remain in their homes as long as their physical and psychological states will allow.

Resolution 2020-05

 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING AMY WILSON

WHEREAS, the outbreak of Covid-19 has caused us to switch from in-person meetings to virtual ones; and

WHEREAS, this movement to an electronic platform has necessarily required lots of learning on the part of those who have taken it as their mission to train the rest of us; and

WHEREAS, the person who has made the most significant effort to learn and repeatedly train is our colleague, friend, and Federation family member, Amy Wilson: Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Missouri in Convention assembled virtually this seventh day of June that we offer our highest commendation to Amy for her initiative, persistence, patience, and total commitment to see that our virtual convention would be a success.

Enabling Future Generations While Honoring Our Past

By Eugene Coulter

One of the highlights of our annual state convention is the presentation of scholarships to students. Over the years the program has grown from a time when we scraped together $500 for the scholarship program and that was at times split between two winners, to today when we grant thousands of dollars to worthy students. These scholarships are now given to honor beloved Missouri Federationists from our past to help enable our future generations to achieve their educational goals.

As time goes by fewer and fewer of us are around that remember the wonderful people for whom these scholarships are named. Currently two scholarships are given in memory of past Federationists, they are the John and Rhoda Dower Scholarship and the Mary Lou Hentges Scholarship.

Mary Lou Hentges was a member of the Columbia Chapter for approximately ten years after losing her sight later in life. She was a very active member of the chapter along with her husband Cletus, known by his friends as Clete. She was proud of her role as homemaker and was a wonderful role model to all who knew her. She was a very humble and dignified woman.

When she died in December of 1989, Cletus donated the seed money for a scholarship to be given annually from the Missouri affiliate and funded by the Columbia Chapter. The scholarship was to be awarded to a blind female pursuing a degree in Home Economics or a related field. To be sure that the scholarship was awarded as often as possible, the Home Economics requirement was later removed. Cletus, who was sighted, remained active in the chapter for over a decade until his death, but he had insisted that the scholarship remain only in his wife’s name. It is with great pride that the Columbia Chapter has awarded nearly $15,000 in scholarships in memory of Mary Lou.

John and Rhoda Dower, a blind couple from Saint Louis were instrumental in the founding of the original Saint Louis Chapter as well as the growth of the Missouri Affiliate. John had his own insurance business while Rhoda kept the home fires burning. In the 1970’s he served as President of the Missouri Affiliate.

During his term the affiliate expanded from two chapters to at least a half dozen and we worked on major legislation including the White Cane Law which was the first civil rights law for blind persons in Missouri. He championed insurance reform to allow blind persons to obtain insurance without any additional cost or special riders. As for Rhoda she was with him every step of the way and was a wonderful leader in her own right. She was known for putting on the best hospitality suites and being a very gracious hostess. She made everyone feel at home.

Both of them always took time to educate the next generation on the issues facing blind persons and making all feel welcome and important. When John passed away the state convention unanimously passed a resolution renaming what had been called the Achievement Award to the John Dower Scholarship. When Rhoda passed away a couple of years later the state affiliate scholarships were renamed the John and Rhoda Dower Scholarships as they were a truly dynamic team.

It is important to appreciate our past while looking to the future because without the hard work of those who came before us, we would not have their shoulders to stand upon. John, Rhoda, Cletus, and Mary Lou’s contributions should not be forgotten, and these scholarships are one way to remember their dedication to the federation.

Editor’s note: The following is a feed from Voice of the Nation's Blind Blog

posted on Monday, June 8, 2020

Health in a Time of Pandemic and Protest
Jessica Beecham

 Exercise is key in keeping our bodies functioning optimally, preventing/reducing our risk for disease, reducing obesity, and improving our mental/emotional wellbeing. As blind people we are twice as likely to be obese as our sighted peers which increases our likelihood of developing heart disease, high blood pressure, type II diabetes, certain types of site-specific cancer, sleep apnea, osteoarthritis, depression, and more.
 Adults need thirty minutes per day, five or more days each week, of moderate physical activity. This means that we need to get our heart rate up and keep it up for at least ten minutes at a time. We can achieve this through cardio activities like walking/jogging, swimming, biking, yard work, rowing, elliptical, stair climbing, and more.
 BlindAlive<<https://www.blindalive.com/>>, Aaptiv<<https://aaptiv.com/>>, or Walk At Home<<https://www.youtube.com/user/walkathomemedia>> are a few resources to use while staying safer at home. When we can once again venture out into the community, check out United In Stride<<https://www.unitedinstride.com/>>, Dare2Tri<<http://www.dare2tri.org/>>, Achilles International<<https://www.achillesinternational.org/>>, Ski for Light<<https://www.sfl.org/>>, and United States Association of Blind Athletes<<http://www.usaba.org>> as just a few great resources for getting your heart pumping.
 Our cardiovascular health is important but we also have to stay physically strong and flexible. We should incorporate at least two days per week of strength training and one day per week of flexibility training into our exercise regiments. The “7 Minute Workout” app and Alexa skill, ReVision Training by Tyler Marron<<https://www.facebook.com/groups/492112998046718/>>, the total fit pack (reach out to Maureen Nietfeld<mailto:maureenbassmaster@gmail.com> for more information), and 50 Bodyweight Exercises You Can Do with No Equipment<<https://greatist.com/fitness/50-bodyweight-exercises-you-can-do-anywhere#full-body>> are great at-home resources.
 When you can venture out into the community, consider trying out a free personal training session at your local gym to learn how to use some of the strength building machines and equipment. You might also consider checking out sports like Olympic Poser Lifting, CrossFit, or other strength and conditioning community classes. These are great ways to build community and grow stronger together.  In terms of flexibility, BlindAlive offers a few different yoga options, a full body stretch, and Pilates, and there are several great yoga YouTube and iPhone applications.
 In addition to exercise, meditation and mindfulness can also improve our mental/emotional wellbeing. HeadSpace<<https://www.headspace.com/>> and Calm<<https://www.calm.com>> are great applications for mindfulness and meditation exercises. Mindful.org is also a great website to use as you begin to delve into meditation and mindfulness.
 The National Federation of the Blind of Colorado has held Workout Wednesday and a variety of mindfulness and meditation sessions during the pandemic, and each of our workshops are available on the NFBCO YouTube channel<<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDoy-oiOgRekiRQJUa7a6Tw>>. You should also like the NFB Sports and Recreation Facebook<<https://www.facebook.com/groups/176619816827189/>> group. In addition to our exciting division meeting at national convention, we will be posting lots of workouts, resources, and challenges that you can access and participate in at any time.
 If you have more questions about resources or ways that you can begin making health and wellness a part of your life, feel free to reach out to Jessica Beecham, president of the National Sports and Recreation Division, at jbbeecham@gmail.com.

Sports and Fitness<<https://www.nfb.org/blog-categories/sports-and-fitness>>

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Life Changing Tick Bite

By Carol Coulter

On one of the National Federation of the Blind of Missouri’s Saturday morning Zoom calls, which we started since the COVID outbreak, the topic of insect bites came up. It was suggested that I write an article telling my story. So here it is.

On Thursday, May 28, 2020 I was sitting in my living room when all of a sudden, my leg started itching like crazy. I pulled up my pants leg expecting to see a huge mosquito bite, but instead found a tick. I have had tick bites before, but never one like this. I took a picture of it with my iPhone before we removed it so we could look up what kind it was. It was dark brown in color and had a white spot on its back. It was a perfect match to the Lone Star tick. We found that this tick was not indigenous to our area, but it could cause some nasty diseases, one being an allergic reaction to mammalian meat.

 I went to the doctor the next day to have it checked out because the area was getting red and feverish plus we were leaving Saturday to visit the grandkids in Florida. I told them what kind of tick it was and even showed the picture to the nurse. The doctor and the nurse both kept referring to it as a deer tick which it was not. The doctor thought it had caused a skin irritation and gave me an antibiotic (Clindamycin HCL) and by the way, he said there has never been a case of Lyme disease in this area, which I know not to be true as I know of two people in this state that have had it. This did not bode well for my confidence in his diagnosis and treatment plan. On Saturday, I went to urgent care because it appeared to be getting worse and we were leaving for Florida later that day. I was told to keep taking the antibiotic and was given a cream for the itch. I decided to play it safe and ate only chicken or fish on our drive down. I figured traveling down the highway was not where I wanted to discover I had any type of allergy.

 When we got to Florida on Monday afternoon I went straight to an urgent care because by now my leg had a very large bright red area about the size of the palm of my hand. It was still warm to the touch, very itchy, sort of rough textured and had a couple spots in the center resembling blisters. The doctor told me I was given the wrong antibiotic. He put me on a steroid (Prednisone) and a different antibiotic (Doxycycline Mono) for ten days. I also had the “pleasure” of getting an injection of both before leaving his office. Within twenty-four hours I was seeing improvement. It helped that he listened to me as far as identifying it as a Lone Star tick and that it is more prevalent in the area. The doctor thought this should keep me from getting the allergy, but I thought I had read that proper treatment had to be gotten within a certain time frame and by my calculations I was isn’t sure if I made it or not. I had one or two meals containing beef and dairy, but decided to play it safe until I got back home.

 We got back home on Tuesday June 9, and I made an appointment for Friday the twelfth to see Dr. Franzese an allergy specialist who was actually the author of one of the articles I had read about the tick.

So, on Friday I went to the doctor’s office and learned a few more things about the tick. I found out that people with type B blood have a lesser chance of getting the allergy while type A have an increased chance. Yeah me I am type A. It also makes a difference if you are the tick’s first host or what the tick’s previous host was; it’s best to be its first meal. Also, the Lone Star Tick is now considered more prevalent in Missouri. There is a blood test you can get to check for antibodies to see if you have the allergy. I had my blood drawn; however, it gets sent to the Mayo Clinic so I had to wait five to seven days for the results. If the results came back negative, I would retest in about four weeks to be sure. To ensure there is not a false positive, the blood is tested for an allergy to beef, pork and dairy as well as the antibodies for alpha-gal (alpha-galactose), which causes the allergy. I continued my diet of poultry and fish until the results came back. I got the blood test results back on June 17, and unfortunately; I am positive for the allergy. I am unable to eat mammalian meat (beef, pork etc.) or dairy for at least two years. My levels were low so the doctor doesn’t believe I would have a severe or life-threatening reaction, but wants me to stick to fish and poultry and to be careful of cross contamination. I can be retested in six months. So here is hoping for a better test result next time. Looks like poultry and fish are in my immediate future. Looking for new ideas on how to fix chicken ha ha.

 I want everyone to know about this tick because as I mentioned before, it can create a condition called Alpha- gal Syndrome, which is the allergy to mammalian meat and dairy. The allergy can be severe enough to cause anaphylactic shock. Unlike other food allergies, you may not have a reaction for six to eight hours after eating the meat. It also may take a couple of weeks for the allergy to develop. Because of this delay, people don’t always associate their unexplained allergy to meat back to the tick bite. Please use tick repellent and do tick checks. I got this from our backyard where we have never had tick problems before

A Good Laugh

By Annette Nowakowski

I have a friend Nick who had a yellow lab named Petra. My dog, Gazelle, is also a yellow lab. Since our dogs were approximately the same age, size and temperament, they enjoyed playing together. We often visited each other’s houses so that the dogs could play.

Nick was a member of the Lions Club. Several years ago, around Christmas, he invited me to his Lion’s Christmas party at a local restaurant. The club president, George, drove to get Nick and Petra, and then came to get me and Gazelle. He had a hatchback, and the dogs sat in back together. Needless-to-say, the party was a “roaring” good time, with lots of eating and drinking. George drove us both home, but dropped me off first. I got out of the car, and George handed the dog’s leash to me. We walked up my front stairs and right into the house. As soon as we got in, I busied myself getting ready for bed and getting things ready for work the next day. Suddenly, I became aware of a lot of panting in the living room. I thought it was strange, because Gazelle never panted that way before. I thought she was just excited since she had a very stimulating evening with lots of noise and people. I took her on the yard to do her business, and hoped she would calm down. She didn’t. As I bent down to try to soothe her, I noticed some strange things. Her ears and tail were shorter than Gazelle’s; her legs were thinker than Gazelle’s. It slowly dawned on me that I did not have Gazelle, I had Petra! I thought of calling Nick, but I hesitated. I didn’t want to make a fool of myself if I was wrong. I checked the dog all over one more time. Yes, it was Petra. When I called Nick, I said, “I don’t know how to tell you this, but I have the wrong dog”!  He said he discovered the same thing a moment ago. Since the dogs were on different diets, we decided to make the exchange that night. Of course, George was long gone. Nick had to take a cab to my house.

At the next Lion’s meeting, you better believe George received a lot of teasing about the mix up. Some members told him he needed a dog guide. Since then, I decided to put some jingle bells on Gazelle to tell the dogs apart more easily. I like the sound of the bells, and knowing where Gazelle is. Nick now has a Sheppard so, there should not be a mix up anymore. I enjoy telling this story to my friends. It gets a lot of laughs. I hope you enjoyed it as well.

One Minute Message

The National Federation of the Blind 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. You can live the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back.

Pledge of the

National Federation of the Blind

I pledge to participate actively in the efforts of the National Federation of the Blind to achieve equality, opportunity, and security for the blind; to support the policies and programs of the Federation; and to abide by its Constitution.

**Board of Directors**

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