**Granite State Connection**

July, 2021

Editor, Sheryl Dutton

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**NFB Pledge**

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

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**Presidents Corner:**

Happy Fourth of July! I hope everyone is spending a lot more time outside in the beautiful Granite State weather. Please remember to attend the NFB National Convention, July 6 through July 10, 2021. There are a lot of events and seminars. I am sure most of you will find something of interest among them. Now that restrictions are lifting, take the time to reconnect and enjoy your friends and family.

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**Affiliate News:**

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We would like to offer our deepest condolences to Stephanie Hurd and her entire family on the passing of her mother.

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We would like to thank Eastman’s Docks and Jeff Caron for arranging the deep-sea fishing experience on Sunday, June 13. A good time was had by most. (Exception being a seasick Dennis O’Brien)

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Membership coins are in! The state president is in the process of making deliveries and hopes to have them all distributed by the end of summer.

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**News and Notes from Up North by Richard Chabot:**

On Saturday, August 14, from 9 am to 3 pm, the Great Northwoods Chapter is having our annual “road toll.”

What is a “road toll?”

It’s a way for local charities in Berlin to receive money for their causes.

On that day we’ll head down to Glen Ave. and set up the barricades and our chapter’s banner. When people stop and donate, we will gladly tell them all about who we are and what we do as well as hand out NFB pamphlets, which have even more information in them.

On average, we raise approximately $600 a year from this event.

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**Spotlight:**

Hello, my name is Carl Provencher. I was born on August 21, 1954 in Lowell Mass. I am legally blind, due to cerebral palsy, and brain damage.

I started school in 1960 in Lowell, Massachusetts, where I attended Special Ed classes for the blind and physically handicapped.

We moved to New Hampshire in 1966 and was home schooled to finish the sixth grade. I spent seventh and eighth grade at Hudson Memorial school. I then finished my schooling at Alverne High in Hudson NH where I graduated in 1973. While in high school I played bass in the band and sang in the choir.

In 1974, for 3 months, I went to the workshop for the blind in Manchester NH, for work training. I then went to NEEDS Inc. from May of 1974 to June of 1975. I then went to Keene for 6 weeks of independent living skills.

In August, while I was going for pizza, there was an accident where I was hit by a car. I suffered a torn cartilage in my right leg.

After that, I was sent home to recover.

I decided to follow my music interests and played guitar and keyboard. I was in a band, and was lead guitarist. I’m self-taught, and have been playing since I was 3 years old. Music has remained a big part of my life.

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**Notes on Braille (by Linda Piekarski)**

**The Perfect Braille Letter**

Have you ever thought about which braille letter is the perfect one? You can stand it on its head or flip it left to right and it stays the same. I’m talking about the letter “Z” of course – the perfect braille letter. I’m curious about braille palindromes too – words that are the same read backwards or forwards. “ICE” is a palindrome word, as is “FIXED.” Let me know if you come up with any others.

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**Canine Corner (by Jody Ianuzzi):**

Great news!

Thanks to the wonderful staff at the New Hampshire Governor’s Commission on Disabilities, we now have a flyer for taxi drivers informing them of the law to transport our dogs. The information is prominently listed on the homepage of the website. It will also be included in the municipal association newsletter and in many social media locations. In September the New Hampshire town and city newsletter will have an article describing the problems that we have had transporting our guide dogs in taxi cabs.  The governor’s commission has also been assisted by Melissa Allman who is the Access Advocate at the Seeing Eye.

We still need to be vigilant and report any difficulties that we have traveling in taxis with our guide dogs to the Governor’s Commission on Disabilities.

In future articles in Canine Corner, I hope to include descriptions of the 14 guide dog schools in the United States. There are quite a variety of schools ranging from the oldest school the Seeing Eye (which is now 92 years old) to newer schools that are just a few years old. Questions about schools you may wish to ask include: Do you have a choice between residential training or in-home training? Do you have a choice between a variety of different breeds? I hope to feature one school for each issue. If you would like to submit an article for your favorite guide dog school, please feel free!

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**From Marie Johnson:**

No doubt, this too, will be unattainable to most of us common blind/VI individuals, but it is interesting experimentation and part of our upcoming future!

My luck, the darn thing would turn on me like a maniacal pit-bull and I'd have to smash it to pieces to break free?!! (Giant grins)

\*\*\* Gerry Roberts Apr 28, 2021 07:47 AM EDT writes

Researchers have created a quadrupedal robot designed to help visually impaired individuals navigate through difficult environments, just like your trusty, reliable guide dog.

In the study "Robotic Guide Dog: Leading a Human with Leash-Guided Hybrid Physical Interaction," these researchers from the University of California Berkeley's Hybrid Robotics Group built the quadrupedal robot with a leash that could guide humans through without crashing into walls, objects, or other obstacles.

Such guide dogs usually are chosen and trained individually, Zhongyu Li, a UC Berkeley Hybrid Robotics Group researcher part of the study team, said in an interview with TechXplore.

He added that as the skills of one dog could not be shared with another, training the guide dogs has become tedious and time-wasting. But for robotic guide dogs, algorithms that have been developed on one robotic guide dog can easily be transferred to another.

(Photo of Robotic Guide Dog, named Mini-Cheetah) (Photo Credits: UC Berkeley)

The leash can be tightened (taut) or stretched (slack). Such use of a leash provides greater flexibility in the positions and movements of both humans and robots as they navigate an environment.

Reactive Planner Developed to Help Robotic Dog Guide Humans

Apart from building the new robotic guide dog, researchers likewise made a hybrid physical human-robot interaction model representing how a robotic and human would interact. A reactive planner was then developed that shifts between taut and slack leash modes so the robotic guide dog could help human users navigate through an environment with ease, even in confined spaces.

When the robotic guide dog-human "team" passes through a narrow space, such as a corner of a small corridor, the robot would be programmed to have the leash mode to go slack, researchers said in a report in The Daily Californian.

Quadrupedal robots are the natural choice as robot guide dogs as they resemble dogs in shape and size, which humans could easily accept to do such crucial tasks.

Li said they decided to use the quadrupedal, called the Mini-Cheetah, which uses a 2D light detection and ranging or LIDAR to sense its surroundings. It also has a camera on a gimbal to monitor the position of the human it is guiding, with a leash for it to more effectively guide people, and a force sensor on the leash to gauge the force applied to it and on the human it is guiding.

Real-world Tests Show Resounding Success

Li and the research team assessed the system in several real-world tests. They would have the robotic dog guide a blindfolded individual to a determined location, as it guides the human to avoid accidents, colliding with obstructions. Test results appeared extremely promising as the robotic dog successfully guided the blindfolded humans to their location without any accident or collision. The robotic guide dog, which features an integrated sensor suite and path-planning algorithms, has proven that it could guide visually impaired individuals safely passing through difficult pathways.

The researchers are now looking at further empowering the robotic guide dog to assist people in navigating more complicated, intricate outdoor routes and help them pass intersections and pedestrian crossings with traffic lights.

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**Calendar of Events:**

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**Calendar of Events (NFB national and affiliate):**

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**National Federation of the Blind National Convention**

Dates: July 6 through July 10, 2021

Location: Anywhere and Everywhere, virtual

NH state Caucus is Friday, July 9, 11AM to 1 PM. Zoom information forthcoming.

The agenda is available on the NFB website.

Call or email Deanna if you have questions. (Use information at bottom of newsletter)

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**CHAT NIGHT for NEW HAMPSHIRE AFFILIATE**

Date: Sunday, July 11, 2021,

Time 7:00 PM

Location: Anywhere and Everywhere, virtual

Zoom information will be sent out

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**National Federation of the Blind of New Hampshire, Lakes Region Chapter Monthly Meeting**

Date: Saturday, July 17, 2021,

Time 10:30 AM

Location: Anywhere and Everywhere, virtual

Join Zoom Meeting

https://zoom.us/j/93669651975

Meeting ID: 936 6965 1975

One tap mobile

+16468769923,,93669651975# US (New York)

+13017158592,,93669651975# US (Washington DC)

+13126266799,,93669651975# US (Chicago)

Reminder Zoom information will be sent out.

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**National Federation of the Blind of New Hampshire, Board Meeting**

Date: Monday, July 19, 2021,

Time 8:00 PM

Reminder Zoom information will be sent out.

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**National Federation of the Blind of New Hampshire, Great Northwoods Chapter Monthly Meeting**

Date: Wednesday, July 21, 2021.

Time 12:30 – 2:00 PM

Unless otherwise notified.

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**Walk for Sight**

August 7 – 14, 2021

For information, contact Deb Moore. (deelm27@yahoo.com)

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**National Federation of the Blind of New Hampshire, Annual Convention**

Date: September 25, 2021

Location: Anywhere and Everywhere, virtual

More details coming.

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**Tech Tips:**

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**Top Apps to Help the Blind and Visually Impaired Navigate Better (continued)**

This continues the list of free apps that we began last month.

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**5. RightHear**

Here’s another option with its own pros and cons in terms of accessibility. RightHear uses your GPS and Bluetooth to spot nearby locations and help you navigate between them for free, whether you're indoors or outdoors.

It links up with other software like Be My Eyes, Envision AI, and Google Maps to get you where you need to go and broaden your user experience with features like object recognition.

The main downside is that, outside of big cities, RightHear doesn’t pick up all landmarks or calculate distances accurately. The number of functions it needs to use will also [**affect your phone’s battery**](https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/monitor-android-battery-health/), an important issue to keep in mind when choosing the best app.

**Download:** RightHear for [**Android**](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.righthear)

[**iOS**](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/righthear-blind-assistant/id1061791840) (Free)

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**6. TensorSight**

AI technology really does give the blind and visually impaired several apps to choose from that can help navigate their environment. Choosing between them comes down to how complicated or energy-consuming you want your software to be.

TensorSight, for example, is just as good at alerting you when people or obstacles are ahead, while also reading out text and scanning barcodes. It’s in its infancy, however, and not the smartest app around in terms of recognizing objects.

That said, alongside the tools being handy, user-friendly, and completely free, it won’t go through your battery as fast as more complex software. Given time and support, TensorSight is sure to improve its services.

**Download:** **[TensorSight](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=co.tensorsight" \t "_blank)** for Android (Free)

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**7. NaviLens**

There are actually various ways to navigate using mobile apps. The alternative approach you’ll find with NaviLens involves scanning for special markers in different locations, which make your phone relay important information.

This way users know what to expect when getting in and out of elevators, for example. You can adjust the app’s settings to fit your needs, including its scanning speed, distance, and sounds.

Even though NaviLens largely depends on these markers to work properly, it’s quickly becoming a popular choice. Extra navigation tools are also under development, boosting its potential.

**Download:** NaviLens for [**Android**](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.neosistec.NaviLens)

[**iOS**](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/navilens/id1273704914) (Free)

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**8. TapTapSee**

If you just want to take pictures of the world around you and have your phone tell you what’s there, TapTapSee is a reliable app. It doesn’t do much more than that, but you can expect good recognition capabilities after setting it up.

Once again, there’s room for improvement. The main tricky part is that you need to enable your phone’s TalkBack accessibility feature and successfully sync it with TapTapSee. Otherwise, the app won’t narrate anything.

Once everything’s in place, however, you’ll be able to snap photos of objects, barcodes, and more so the app can bring up handy information. You can also save and share your results, while enabling simple functions like your camera’s flash or the sound it makes when focusing.

**Download:** TapTapSee for [**Android**](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.msearcher.taptapsee.android)

[**iOS**](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/taptapsee/id567635020) (Free)

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**Keep Exploring How Technology Improves Accessibility**

Considering how widespread mobile use is today, it’s no surprise that developers focus on enhancing smartphones and their relationship with users. Even though apps for the blind and visually impaired are still being perfected, the effort is a major stepping stone.

Yet the bigger picture is even more impressive. Accessibility is now a priority in almost every tech industry, so it’s worth branching out your research and discovering just how much people with disabilities can get into now.

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**Here’s a little bit of humor especially for July 4;**

If you crossed a Patriot with a curly-haired dog, what would you get?

Yankee Poodle!

How come there aren’t any knock-knock jokes about America?

Because freedom rings.

What kind of tea did the American colonists want?

Liber-tea.

What’s the difference between a duck and George Washington?

One has a bill on his face, and the other has his face on a bill.

What did the colonists wear to the Boston Tea Party?

Tea-shirts.

What was George Washington’s favorite tree?

The infan-tree.

Remember:

If you drink a fifth on the fourth,

You may not go forth on the fifth.

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**This Month’s Recipes:**

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**MISSISSIPPI POT ROAST**

**Ingredients**

1 3-lb. chuck roast (or any other roast of your choosing)

1 packet ranch dressing mix

1 packet dry au jus mix

1/2 cup salted butter (1 stick) (cut into pats)

8 pepperoncini peppers

¼ cup liquid from pepperoncini peppers bottle

salt & pepper to taste

**Instructions**

1. Place meat in slow cooker.

2. Sprinkle packets of dry ranch dressing and au jus soup mixes over pot roast. Add pepper juice.

3. Top with butter, then place peppers on and around roast.

4. Cover and cook on low for 6 hours.

5. Take two forks and start shredding the meat. Discard any big fatty pieces.

Then serve!

**Notes**

Use the drippings as a gravy base.

Cut up the peppers and add them to the gravy or to the shredded meat for an extra kick of flavor.

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**Oatmeal Chocolate Chip Cookies**

Ingredients:

1 cup butter softened,

1 cup packed light brown sugar,

½ cup white sugar,

2 eggs,

2 tsp vanilla extract,

1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour,

½ tsp baking soda,

1 tsp salt,

3 cups quick-cooking oats

1 cup chopped walnuts,

1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

**Directions:**

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

2. In a large bowl, cream together the butter, brown sugar, and white sugar until smooth.

3. Beat in eggs 1 at a time, then stir in vanilla.

4. Combine the flour baking soda and salt, stir into the cream mixture until just blended.

5. Mix in the oats, walnuts, and chocolate chips.

6. Drop by heaping spoonsful onto ungreased baking sheets.

7. Bake for 12 minutes.

Allow cookies to cool on baking sheets for 5 minutes before transferring to wire racks to cool

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**A penny for your thoughts**

“May we think of freedom, not as the right to do as we please, but as the opportunity to do what is right.”

* Peter Marshall

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Remember, we want your inputs!

Please send recipes, events, tech tips, jokes, questions, and your feedback.

Email the Editor, Sheryl Dutton at [sheryldutton@comcast.net](mailto:sheryldutton@comcast.net) .

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