**Granite State Connection**

Summer, 2022

Editors, Sheryl Dutton & Kelly Snyder

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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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**President’s Corner:**

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We had a great time in New Orleans, Louisiana, at the NFB Convention. We sampled the local dishes – gumbo, muffulettas, beignets, and pralines. We went out on a Mississippi riverboat dinner cruise with Carolyn Corrigan and Abby Brusco. There’s more we would like to have done, but there wasn’t enough time. The convention was informative and inspiring, but the hours were long.

In regards to the Future In Sight festival, I am proud of those who participated in that effort. We raised over $3200, which netted a little over $1600 for the affiliate. Thank you for your efforts. Special thanks to Kelly and Andrew for their in-person effort manning the table at the festival.

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

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Spring has turned into summer here in the north country, although, as I write this, it’s only about fifty degrees outside! Oh well, I’m sure summer will return soon enough.

We continue to offer our prayers and support for Linda Vaillancourt, our chapter President, and her family as she continues to deal with her ongoing medical situation. We’re behind you all the way. Hang in there!

I have also secured a new date with the city of Berlin for our upcoming road toll. It will be on Saturday, September 10th from 9 am to 3 pm, weather permitting.

In addition, I have sent letters to the editor to several local newspapers in Coos County. These letters describe who we are, what we do, and how to get more information about us, especially if you want to join our organization. We have also gotten the word out to our churches and other groups that we belong to in the hope that more people will find out about who we are and what we do. I will keep you posted on whether or not our efforts have been a success.

Until then, have a great summer!

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**Spotlight:**

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This month’s Spotlight comes to us from Kelly Snyder:

Hello, fellow NFB-NH friends, from Kelley Snyder! I am one of the newer activist members of your group. I am so delighted to be a part of your group because advocacy is something that has always been a natural part of my character. I think this is partly because I have faced many challenges in my life, but positivity, gratitude, and giving back are skills that are helping me to persevere and live my best life. For example, with Washington Seminar earlier this year, it was so much fun working with you all. I felt truly alive again during that experience and so happy to be a helpful part of this amazing community.

A little background about me-

I live in Farmington, New Hampshire. I have two beautiful children, my supportive husband of twenty-two years, and three adorable grandchildren. Some of my hobbies include writing, cooking, singing karaoke, gardening, and socializing with friends and family.

My low-vision challenge is caused by a mixed connective tissue autoimmune disease. I acquired this disease in 2002 at the height of my Cosmetology career. At the time of the onset, I had a lucrative career as a Color Specialist. I had traveled to Aruba, Mexico, and Las Vegas earlier that year for work and fun. I was a newlywed, who had just bought a new home where I planned to have an in-home salon. I was devastated to say the least when I lost my dream career shortly after becoming ill.

My Low-Vision Journey-

For years after the onset of this new auto-immune disease I have battled a multitude of symptoms from daily chronic joint, muscle, and nerve pain, inflammation (which produces fatigue and “flu-like symptoms”), and brain fog. The disease eventually progressed to an acute low-vision impairment in 2020. Fortunately, my remarkable Cornea specialist discovered that the advancement of the disease now included 60% nerve damage to my cornea (the part of the eye that filters light). He prescribed costly, but effective eye drops to counteract the progression of Photophobia. The second part of my vision challenge is due to complex neurological symptoms. I have a maverick in her field for a neuro-ophthalmologist who helps me navigate ocular muscular challenges. For me, when my eyes become fatigued from the corneal neuropathy the pain and fatigue affect the eye muscles. The eyes then develop double vision, difficulty with color contrast, and tremendous pain. The only way to manage the pain is to completely close my eyes and use a blindfold or very dark glasses. Sometimes I must use a cold compress to calm the pain or change my surroundings to be in complete darkness so my eyes can completely rest.

However, I am no stranger to this disease teaching me how to alter my surroundings to manage symptoms. I have learned how to build a life at home instead of fulfilling my original dreams of being a salon owner. I won’t lie, it has been a very difficult road at times. It’s enough to make one give up but giving in to this has never been my style!

My Comeback-

In 2019, I enrolled in the work-study program through New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR). After searching for what I could do to work around my physical challenges. I decided grant writing would be a great fit for me because I love to write, research, and help others. Then in 2020 I enrolled at SNHU online for my bachelor's degree in Communication with a focus on professional writing.

Fortunately, the vision issue occurred as I was enrolling in college. I didn’t think it was fortunate at the time because I was frustrated that this was happening just as I was making a long-time dream come true. But I was lucky enough to have a VR counselor that listened to me. She helped me to find low-vision tools and resources like Future in Sight, so I could continue with my dream of completing my bachelor’s degree.

One of the tools I was afforded through VR was my accessibility technology and tutoring. This is how I found the NFB of NH. I was crying on the phone with my tutor (Rick Fox) one morning. I was pretty upset because I found it difficult to convey my new vision challenge to fully sighted people. I told him how I had been active in a local non-profit group, and I was looking forward to helping with their online newsletter. When I explained to the supervisor that I could only provide written and not visual content she said “Sorry, I need someone who can do both”. This was devastating because this opportunity was my newest hope for a sense of belonging and purpose again. Now I felt in complete despair because I was losing my vision, my purpose, and hanging onto school by a thread. I felt like really, what the heck?!! Then my tutor suggested reaching out to the NFB-NH. He had listened to many of my writing assignments and encouraged me to pursue my activism here. He said I could likewise find support, community, and resources for my low-vision challenges. I told him that sounds great and all, except the problem, is I didn’t identify as blind. I felt guilty calling my local NFB affiliate because I still had quite a bit of usable vision. He consoled my fears by reminding me that “each vision impairment journey is different”.

My new community of amazing NFB-NH members-

Looking back honestly it took some coaxing, from my tutor, my family, and the NFB that I belonged here too. Today I am so happy I have a place to call home for my activism, and a wonderful community of new friends!

I’m always hopeful my vision improves, but, if it does or doesn’t either way, I’m looking forward to the future civil rights work of the NFB of NH. I’m also looking forward to building stronger bonds and having some fun too, with the members of my affiliate and chapter!

Once again, “the future looks bright and I’m wearing my shades!”

(Paraphrasing the Quote from one of my favorite oldies the song “The Future’s So Bright” by Timbuk 3)

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**Celebrity Spotlight:**

From: The Perkins School for the Blind website

8 celebrities with vision loss

Did you know Johnny Depp, Judith Dench, Steve Wynn and Fetty Wap are all visually impaired?

One lost an eye to a BB gun. One has age-related macular degeneration. One had an eye surgically removed because of glaucoma.

All these individuals faced vision-related challenges, but they have something else in common, too. All eight of these famous people with visual impairment have achieved remarkable success in their fields. From rappers to writers, here are eight celebrities you probably didn’t know are visually impaired:

1. When Johnny Depp first swash buckled across the screen as Captain Jack Sparrow in “Pirates of the Caribbean,” he had a secret – he’s blind in one eye and near-sighted in the other. It wasn’t until a 2013 interview in Rolling Stone magazine that he revealed his visual impairment. “I’ve never had proper vision,” he said. “Everything is just very, very blurry.” Depp has long been one of Hollywood’s biggest (and quirkiest) stars. In addition to the successful “Pirates of the Caribbean” franchise, he starred in “Alice in Wonderland,” “Sleepy Hollow” and “Edward Scissorhands.”

2. Fetty Wap wants to make one thing clear: he wasn’t shot in the eye. The rapper was born with glaucoma and had one eye surgically removed as a child. He used an ocular prosthesis, but later discontinued it. When people ask, he explains about his visual impairment. “I tell everybody it’s nothing, because it’s really nothing to me,” he said in an interview on Sirius XM radio. Fetty Wap is one of the signature voices in modern hip hop, and helped popularize the rap subgenre known as trap music. You’ve probably heard him on the radio performing “Trap Queen,” or “679” with Remy Boyz.

3. Academy Award winner Dame Judith Dench is known for her regal performances, from Queen Victoria in the movie “Mrs. Brown” to M, the head of Britain’s MI6, in seven James Bond films. So, it’s not surprising that she treats her visual impairment with royal resolve. She announced in 2012 that she has age-related macular degeneration – but intends to keep working. “I’m not going to make it something that’s going to stop me,” she told People magazine. In recent films, like “Spectre” and “Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children,” she simply requested her movie scripts with larger print.

4. The Black-Eyed Peas have played around the world, performing hits like “Boom Boom Pow” and “I Gotta Feeling.” But rapper Apl.de.ap usually couldn’t see the audience. He was born with nystagmus, which causes involuntary eye movement, and was legally blind in both eyes. “I’m comfortable not using my vision,” he told People magazine. In 2012, he had artificial lenses implanted in both eyes to improve his vision. Apl.de.ap (real name Allan Pineda Lindo, Jr.) helped found the Black-Eyed Peas in 1995. Their infectious mix of pop and rap made them one of the world’s best-selling bands, with multiple #1 hits in dozens of countries.

5. An accident may have helped Alice Walker become one of America’s most beloved authors. She lost vision in her right eye at age eight when her brother accidentally shot her with a BB gun. Embarrassed by the scar tissue, Walker spent more time alone writing poetry. At age 14, she had surgery to remove the scar tissue. Told by the doctor that she might lose sight in both eyes, she later wrote that she “dashed about the world madly…storing up images against the fading of the light.” She went on to write “The Color Purple,” which won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1983.

6. Thom Yorke, the singer for the British alt-rock band Radiohead, isn’t winking at you. His left eye droops because it was paralyzed at birth, and he underwent five operations to repair it. The last one damaged his vision. “I can kind of see,” he told Vox Magazine in 1995. Yorke had to wear an eyepatch, which made him feel like an outsider at school. He later channeled those feelings into Radiohead songs like “Creep” and “How to Disappear Completely.” Radiohead is one of the most critically acclaimed bands of the past two decades, and its 1997 album “OK Computer” is widely hailed as a masterpiece.

7. Slick Rick and Doug E. Fresh helped put rap on the map with their 1985 hit, “La Di Da Di.” The song, with its idiosyncratic sing-song style and clever lyrics about a would-be Romeo “in Gucci underwear,” has been sampled almost 800 times by artists like the Beastie Boys, the Notorious B.I.G. and Kanye West. Slick Rick (real name Richard Walters), was born in the United Kingdom and was blinded in his right eye by broken glass as an infant. He famously wore an eyepatch while performing, including one glittering silver eyepatch that matched his other jewelry.

8. His name is synonymous with luxury casinos. He’s Steve Wynn, the CEO of Wynn Resorts, the multi-billion-dollar corporation that has owned the Golden Nugget in Atlantic City, the Bellagio in Las Vegas and Wynn Macau in China. But most people don’t know that Wynn built his casino and hotel empire while going blind. He was diagnosed in 1971 with retinitis pigmentosa, which causes gradual vision loss, and became legally blind in 2010. In 2013, Wynn gave $25 million to the University of Iowa to fund stem cell research into a cure for retinitis pigmentosa and other degenerative eye diseases.

Citation:

School, P. (2021, June 18). 8 celebrities with Vision Loss. Perkins School for the Blind. Retrieved May 4, 2022, from <https://www.perkins.org/8-celebrities-with-vision-loss/>

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**Canine Corner (From Jody Ianuzzi)**

Good Afternoon All,

Those of us who met in June shared ideas for a mission statement for our group. We met again on 7/19 with Deanna, the NFB of NH President, to support/approve our Mission Statement. The resulting Mission Statement follows:

Mission Statement:

The NFB NH Guide Dog Handlers Committee is a division under the National Association of Guide Dog Users (NAGDU) division. The mission of the NFB NH Guide Dog Handlers Committee is to inform one another of information and best practices with respect to working with guide and service dogs and to share general knowledge about applicable state and national legislation and relevant advocacy opportunities. The group consists of graduates from various guide dog and service dog schools, friends of working dogs, and puppy raisers from schools that train dogs for people with disabilities. People are from various parts of the United States and Canada. We welcome all participants and NAGDU membership is encouraged. We currently meet through Zoom monthly.

Are you interested in joining in on a casual chat with members and friends of the NFB NH Guide Dog Handlers Committee?  We meet through Zoom on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:30PM EST.  Topics may include care and best practices for our guide dogs, playtime, advocacy, problem solving, and anything else the group wants to chat about.  For Zoom info contact Jean Shiner at 603-770-8791 [Jean.Shiner@comcast.net](mailto:Jean.Shiner@comcast.net) or Dana Trahan at 603-365-5242 [DanaTrahan@comcast.net](mailto:DanaTrahan@comcast.net).  Hope to chat with you soon!

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

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

Dates:

Saturday, August 13, 2022

Saturday, September 10, 2022

Time 10:30 AM

Location: Anywhere and Everywhere, virtual

Reminder Zoom information will be provided to chapter members.

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

Dates:

Saturday, August 20, 2022

Saturday, September 17, 2022

Time 10:30 AM

Location: Anywhere and Everywhere, virtual

Reminder Zoom information will be sent out.

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

Dates:

Wednesday, September 13, 2022

Time 12:30 – 2:00 PM

Unless otherwise notified.

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

Date:

Saturday, September 24, 2022

Time 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Location: Anywhere and Everywhere, virtual

Zoom information will be sent out.

Agenda will be sent out after September 1.

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**Tech Tips:**

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The following was provided from Marie Johnson:

**Bookshare Now with Audio Books**

Bookshare announced that they are adding over 5,000 audiobooks to its library for members to download. Previously, Bookshare's offerings were text-only, which members used text-to-speech software to access:  
[https://www.bookshare.org/cms/campaign/summer](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=0018KlxzXSOSijOh1rAFOZe20tOTTQHX1pxxwfic_EB6M91r1H6bHOLIGxpN75ozwVIq4UKS-XUWqIHLuk-643JY_C4Bu2yEPg2f3Ah1Ouf_870YHuzU0-olUC3BpyNGbbrtnXDFRMOC-MxDoDisD79doLbwXZIlB69KJ6MP0HtbNi0HljPojo5MQ==&c=eicQ4njOB0-HVwmA4RwZKBejJBovz9FT2Pv3QtwqjIFcKGePEvr9dg==&ch=6qSQJ_raN0L1vAe2mwgv6JZbFdqAbXLfVS5CLUEpeEbjbT2h1osGpA==)

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**What’s Up?**

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This month we will include something Deanna O’Brien recently acquired.

Are you familiar with induction cooktops? They use electromagnetic waves to heat the pot rather than the usual hot surface (burner or coil) heat transfer.

You have to have cookware that a magnet will stick to, but a lot of us already have that.

The one Deanna bought is the NuWave Precision Induction Cooktop Gold 1500-watt Portable Induction Cooktop (Amazon, $110, or other retailers) (And, yes, it’s an As-Seen-on-TV item!)

It’s small. about 14 x 12 x 5 inches and weights about 9 pounds. It plugs into a standard outlet.

Why did Deanna get it? To put it simply, she can’t use the glass top cooking surface of her range. She can’t center the pots where they need to go and the cooking surface stays hot for a long time afterwards.

Her husband, Dennis, thought this might be an answer for her cooking independence. The controls have tactile buttons that she can feel where they are. No, it does not talk, but it does beep and she is learning the layout and purpose for the 13 controls. Most of the time, it’s just turn on, set the cooking temperature (things cook faster at 400 degrees than they do at 350), and turn off.

Best of all, it’s a lot safer. As soon as you remove the pot, the cooktop knows it and stops. Also, there’s very little residual heat on the cooktop itself. It is cool and safe to the touch very rapidly. In fact, except for the area right under the pan itself, the surface remains cool. These safety measures greatly reduce the risk of fires and accidental burns.

This type of cooking wastes virtually no energy while cooking food and saving money on the energy bill. By using no more than 1500 watts, the PIC conserves up to 90% of the energy wasted by traditional gas or electric stoves. It is also portable. It can be taken anywhere there’s an outlet. (She even talked about how it could be used at the Convention to save money, but decided against it – that’s what travel is for – to eat other people’s cooking!)

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**Here’s a little bit of humor**

1) What do dentists call their x-rays?

Tooth pics!

2) Did you hear about the first restaurant to open on the moon?

It had great food, but no atmosphere.

And, to begin Summer, a couple of 4 of July jokes:

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

A Yankee Poodle.

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

Because freedom rings.

For when Summer ends, a couple of Labor Day Jokes:

5) Did my wife tell you about a Labor Day joke?

It didn't work for her.

6) Why was the pregnant woman worried?

She'd told her husband it was Labor Day and instead of coming to the hospital, he'd gone straight home!

There’s really not much funny about August, but we’ll try anyway:

7) Looking for a hot date?

Pick any day in August, they don't get much hotter than that!

8) Is today really August?

Or are Julying to me?

9) Do fish go on vacation?

No, they’re always in school.

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**This Month’s Recipes:**

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**Crock Pot Beef Stroganoff**

AUTHOR: Holly Nilsson

Serve this tender beef stroganoff over a bed of egg noodle for a delicious meal!

**Ingredients**

1 tablespoon olive oil more if needed

2 pounds stewing beef trimmed

salt & pepper

½ cup red wine

1 teaspoon garlic powder

1 onion diced

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

¾ pound mushrooms, sliced

2 cups beef broth, divided

8 ounces sour cream

3 tablespoons cornstarch

12 ounces egg noodles cooked

**Instructions**

1. Heat olive oil in a skillet. Season beef with salt and pepper and brown in olive oil in small batches. Deglaze pan with red wine and add to slow cooker.
2. Place beef, garlic powder, onions, Dijon mustard, Worcestershire sauce, mushrooms and 1-½ cups broth in a 6-quart slow cooker.
3. Cook on high 4-5 hours or on low 7-8 hours or until beef is tender.
4. Combine remaining broth with cornstarch and stir into slow cooker. Cover and cook and additional 15 minutes or until thickened.
5. Stir in sour cream. Serve over egg noodles.

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**Soft batch chocolate chip cream cheese cookies**

**Ingredients**

1/2 cup salted butter, softened to room temperature

8-ounce block of cream cheese, softened to room temperature

1 cup sugar

1/2 cup brown sugar (light or dark)

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

3/4 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon baking soda

2 cups all-purpose flour

12 oz bag of semi-sweet chocolate chip

**Directions**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. In a large bowl, cream butter, cream cheese and sugars until they are smooth/creamy, then add the vanilla and mix well.
3. Next, add flour, salt and baking soda - mix until all the dry ingredients are just blended-Do Not Over Mix!
4. Last, add chocolate chips. Fold the chocolate chips into the dough, until just blended. Do not over mix the chocolate chips with the dough.
5. Place heaping round tablespoons of dough on an ungreased cookie sheet approximately one inch apart. I use The Pampered Chef's Medium size scooper for the dough, it's the perfect size and I never have to touch the dough.
6. Place cookies in the oven on middle rack and bake for 9-11 minutes, depending on your oven. Bake until cookies turn a light golden brown. Remove, place cookies on rack to cool.

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**A penny for your thoughts**

“Let us not seek to fix the responsibility for the past – let us accept our own responsibility for the future.”

John F. Kennedy, US President

“Wherever you are tonight, you can make it. Hold you head high; stick your chest out. You can make it. It gets dark sometimes, but the morning comes. Don’t you surrender!

Jesse Jackson, civil rights activist and minister

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Remember, we want your inputs!

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

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