DATE: July 2014

SUBJECT: Gavel Award Contest

TO: Chapter and Division Presidents

As you know, each year the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio requires all its chapters and divisions to make a written report covering the year's activities. This document must be in the hands of the board of directors before the annual convention in order to assure that chapter and division members have the right to vote during the convention. We invite, but do not require, all chapters and divisions to take part in the Gavel Award Contest conducted each fall to identify and recognize the best Federation chapter and division in the affiliate. (Note that a brief written report of every group's year's activities is required by our constitution.)

Because finding ways of encouraging growth and maturity among chapters and divisions is important to us all, the Gavel Award Contest is serious business. Please take time in the coming weeks to answer the enclosed or attached questions and provide the requested information as clearly as possible. Reports must be in J.W. Smith’s hands by September 20th. Where you find blank lines on the print questionnaire, please type or clearly print your short answer in that space. The longer, more complex questions should be answered on a separate sheet of paper, with the answer numbered to match the question being addressed. The information supplied on the questionnaire itself--group's name, number of members, etc.--may be printed, but everything else must be typed.

Explanatory comments about some of the questions are probably in order. If, after reading the remainder of this memo, you still have questions, you may call or write to me for further information. Question #2 may puzzle some readers. The committee is not interested in the civic activities of chapter or division members or the group as a whole if they have nothing to do with educating the public about the capacities of blind people or furthering the goals of the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio. For example, prevention-of-blindness projects are valuable civic activities, but they do not, as a matter of course, fall into the interests of the NFB; we work to help blind people function effectively rather than to prevent blindness. On the other hand, if chapter members took part in a political campaign because a candidate indicated interest in an NFB-sponsored piece of legislation, this is noteworthy, not only because we are making valuable friends through this effort, but because we are educating other campaign workers about the abilities of blind people.

Question 4 seeks to identify and to promote inter-group activity as well as chapter or division programs, division support for chapters, and assistance to other elements of the Federation.

Question 5 is an effort to understand what kind of fundraising each chapter or division is doing and how much of the work is actually completed by NFB members. It is also useful to know in what ways other organizations and individuals are or were brought into the fundraising process.

Question 6 seeks to measure the proportion of chapter or division contributions to state and national work. For example, if the chapter made a contribution to the state or national organization in order to assist in important projects, like the Washington Seminar or for members to attend the national convention, those contributions count for purposes of this question.

We are now requiring all groups to answer Question 7. We should all be looking for the ways in which our members are becoming more sophisticated and experienced Federationists. This question requires chapter and division members to look at the larger picture. Answering it will increase your group's score and will help chapter and division leaders chart a sound course in the coming year.

Please make an effort to answer the questions on this questionnaire, even if you do not believe your chapter or division is a serious candidate to win the Gavel Award. We have decided to honor the group that is most improved, as well as the Gavel Award recipients. All of us are capable of competing in the most improved category, so please get a committee together, look over your minutes and treasurer's reports from the past year, and make an effort to write a report that can be used in the Gavel Award Contest.

CHAPTER GAVEL AWARD QUESTIONNAIRE 2014

Chapter name:

Chapter president's name:

Current membership:

Membership last year:

Number of new members joining this year (worth 1 pt. each):

Before September, 2014, how many business meetings will your chapter have conducted since September, 2013? (worth 1pt. each)

How many members are registered with NFB-NEWSLINE?

How many new users have signed up this year? (worth 1pt. each)

 How many members have purchased gift cards through the NFB Scrip Ohio Program? (worth 1pt. each)

(Members-at-Large only) How many newsletters has your chapter circulated during this period?

1. How does your chapter promote the goals, philosophy, and activities of the National Federation of the Blind among chapter members and the general public? (worth 10 pts.)

2. Civic Activities: Aside from participating in local, state, and national Federation activities, in what community programs have your chapter members been involved? Examples: social or political causes, religious institutions, civic organizations, or student activities. (worth 10 pts.)

3. In what forms of advocacy are your chapter members involved? (worth 10 pts.)

4. Please note this question has three parts so that we can determine how closely our chapters and divisions are working together and how much we see ourselves as part of the larger organizations at the state and national levels. Be sure to answer each part of this question. How has your chapter interacted with other NFB chapters or divisions during the past year?

A. List all activities in which your chapter has participated with another chapter or division; how many members took part in each? (worth 10 pts.)

B. List all state-affiliate-sponsored activities in which your chapter has participated; how many members took part? (worth 10 pts.)

C. List all events sponsored by the national organization in which chapter members have participated this year; how many took part in each? (worth 10 pts.)

5. What fundraising projects has your chapter engaged in during the past year? (worth 10 pts.)

A. Describe the extent to which chapter members take responsibility for such projects.

B. What role did outside organizations or sighted volunteers play in these activities?

6. Funding the projects and activities of the National Federation of the Blind at the local, state, and national levels is vitally important work for all of us. Answering the following questions will assist the awards committee to compute the percentages of financial support of each chapter. This will enable the committee to make useful comparisons.

A. What was your chapter's bank balance as of September, 2013?

Balance as of September, 2014?

B. After subtracting all expenses associated with fundraising, how much money has your chapter raised during the year ending September, 2014? How much money came in from all other sources during this period?

 C. How much money has your chapter contributed to the state affiliate during this period? How much financial assistance did your chapter contribute to members to attend the state convention in the form of grants?

(worth 10 pts.)

D. How much money has your chapter contributed to the national organization during this period? How much money did your chapter contribute for members to attend the national convention in the form of grants? (worth 10 pts.)

7. Take no more than two paragraphs to discuss the ways in which your chapter is a stronger part of the National Federation of the Blind today than it was a year ago. (worth 10 pts.)