



NATIONAL FEDERATION  
**OF THE BLIND**

KANSAS

## **TAP TRACKS**

**The Newsletter of the  
National Federation  
of the Blind of  
Kansas**

**Autumn / Winter  
2015**

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Associate Editors

Materials for the next issue of TAP TRACKS which will be in the spring of 2016 should be submitted by January 31, 2016. Send or email your contributions to:

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Thank you!

## **It's Coming! It's Coming!**

**-- Donna Wood**

Are you ready? It will soon be here, the 47th annual state convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Kansas. The NFBKS state convention will be held November 20th, 21st, and 22nd, 2015. The convention location is at The Hotel at Old Town, at 830 East 1st Street, Wichita, KS 67202. Reservations can be made by calling 316-267-4800 (if calling locally) or toll free at 877-265-3869. Room rates this year are \$90. Breakfast is included. The deadline for reservations is November 10th 2015.

We are celebrating 75 years of the National Federation of the Blind this year! The state board has approved a variety of pluses for this convention. Special room rates hot catered snacks and a band at our hospitality area on Friday are just a few of the amenities we can look forward to.

You will find a pre-registration form in this newsletter. Pre-registration is \$5 (it will be \$10 at the door). We will be having a luncheon Saturday and the cost will be \$15. Our banquet will be Saturday evening, the cost being \$25.. Following the keynote speech, and scholarship awards we will have entertainment and an available bar.

Our national representative will be Julie Deden, executive director of the Colorado Center for the Blind. Julie has been working at the Colorado Center since 1997 and became Executive Director in 1999. It's her dream job because she has the opportunity to see positive changes in her students each day. Julie has been blind since birth, but did not always feel good about herself as a blind person. She worked as a rehabilitation counselor for the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for 14 years prior to her work at the center. Julie has her master's degree in counseling, a 20-year-old son, and enjoys cooking, hiking and reading. Julie Deden is a great leader in the field of blindness rehabilitation. Her impact on our movement and on the state of the art in the rehabilitation field cannot be understated. We could not

be more pleased to be her hosts. Please help us help her feel at home!

We have a full agenda scheduled for the convention, including the usual events of a Friday afternoon seminar, resolutions, exhibits, and business meeting. The agenda for Saturday will cover such topics as the 75-year history of the NFB, rehabilitation, and health and fitness. We have a couple of fundraisers that will be of interest to many of you, including a 50/50 raffle held by the affiliate, and the opportunity to win an Apple TV from the South-Central Chapter.

Not only will the weekend be informative and fun, it will be good to see old friends and make new ones. Come and join us and learn about the NFB, technology, legal issues, and so much more on topics that effect our lives.

**From the President**  
**-- Tom Page**

Greetings Kansas Federationists. I can hardly beleive that it has been almost year since we gathered in Lawrence for our last convention. The 75th year of our organization has been an eventful one for blind Kansans.

In addiation to the activities you can read about in other articles we have continued our quest to secure funding for the NFB-Newsline program. We are working to engage with reprsentatives who were responsive to our outreach this spring. Ultimately we hope to secure a stable ongoing funding solution so we may contunie to have access to this important resource.

We have continued our advocacy work with the Kansas rehabilitation system and I have had the pleasure of engaging with both state and private educational institutions on behalf of blind students We will hear from the students themselves this November.

Although we are not a large group we are continuing to grow State and notional Anya Avromenko, a blind student at Emporia State, has stepped forward as a leader of blind students in Kansas.

Her hard work combined with Sharon Luka and the At-Large chapter leadership has resulted in the strong possibility that we will be officially welcoming both a new chapter and a new division to the NFB of KS family at convention. As we meet blind people and interface with the world we may be talking to our next to member. Have you heard our new 30 second message? Check it out at:

I hope that all of you can make it to our upcoming Wichita convention. We are taking things to another level this year. In addition to the deluxe accommodations we will be in the heart of Wichita's Old Town district. This will afford a much different walking based experience for those who wish to engage in the night life. We have left room in the agenda for folks to enjoy the many options available for dinner on Friday night. I am personally amped and ready! Until next time, keep living the lives you want!

## **Seventy-Five Years of the Organized Blind Movement Tribulations and Triumphs -- Sharon Luka and Rob Tabor**

Those of us who remember those dear old golden rule days of high school history classes may have heard our history teacher tell us that where we are today as a nation is determined in part by the sayings, writings, and actions of our predecessors. The profound meaning of this truism comes to light when we take the time to study and reflect on the rich and eventful 75-year long history of the National Federation of the Blind. From 1940 to the current time, the National Federation of the Blind has worked hard to change what it means to be blind.

On November 16, 1940, sixteen delegates gathered at the Reding Hotel in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, to draft and formally approve a constitution that would bring together organizations of blind people in seven states. These states included California, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. This fledgling National Federation of the Blind (NFB) was

launched to become a platform for organized action to enhance the futures of America's blind citizens with a dual focus on independence and civil rights.

Our founder and first president for twenty years, Dr. Charles Jacobus (“Chick”) tenBroek, was a brilliant constitutional scholar, lawyer and professor who, at the time of the founding of NFB, was teaching at the University of Chicago and later moved to accept a teaching post at the University of California Berkeley School of Law, where he wrote many law journal articles and white papers that form the philosophical foundation of the Federation where they still stand tall in the vast collection of the ever-expanding body of Federation literature.

Our first national constitution, developed by Dr. tenBroek, Gayle Burlingame, and other key leaders, was so brief it could have been typed on a single sheet of standard size typing paper. Even for its carefully crafted concise language and brevity, was vigorously debated and voted upon, section by section. In fact, the constitutional debate ran until 4:00 a.m. on the day it was approved in its entirety. Dr. tenBroek thought it best to keep the governance document with language specific enough to establish a starting framework for the organization while being short enough to allow for expansion as the organization grew in size and complexity.

Our first logo was a circle bearing the words "Security, Equality, and Opportunity." These meaningful words formed a triangle in the middle of the circle. That inscription announced the ever-present demands, desires and needs of the new organization. Under the able guidance of Dr. tenBroek, one of the first battles our forbearers fought was an initiative to create a national pension for blind citizens under the administrative oversight of the then social security board, the predecessor of our present day US Social Security Administration.

This monetary benefit opened the way to a modicum of financial security and independence for blind people who needed a transitional benefit while they prepare for a job and a long term vocation.

Through the pioneering work of NFB, blind people also gained much improved access to jobs in the Civil Service and later to state and local governments and numerous industries in the private sector of the economy.

In the 1940s blind civil service job applicants were barred even from applying for these jobs. The daring pioneer who broke the US Federal Civil Service hiring barrier was Russell Kletzing, an attorney who later was elected president of NFB for a short period after Dr. tenBroek ended his first term in 1961. This opened the way for increased work opportunity for the nation's blind working age population.

Blind citizens also gained increased access to housing, transportation, and places of public accommodation, not because benevolent politicians and bureaucrats of august status thought it right to do this, but because of the indefatigable and persistent efforts of NFB.

The 1950s and 1960s was a turbulent period for NFB which was under siege from without and from within. The external source of attack against the Federation came from Federal and state government agencies who appeared to feel threatened by the growing size, financial position and influence of NFB, particularly on Capitol Hill. Vocational rehabilitation and social welfare agencies that were ostensibly helping the blind had become firmly entrenched in their custodial care and patronizing attitudes toward the blind, and took other actions to keep them in a perpetual condition of subservience and dependency. Agency bureaucrats sought to impede the right of the blind to organize. Under the leadership of Dr. tenBroek and others, a young Senator from Massachusetts was persuaded to introduce a bill that would guarantee a right of blind persons to organize themselves and to govern their own affairs free of harassment and intimidation. That Senator was John F Kennedy, who, as we all know, was elected as the 35th President of the United States in the general election on November 8, 1960. Although the Kennedy-Baring bill was not enacted, the sheer force of its political momentum in Congress,

combined with a credible threat of litigation in the Federal courts proved sufficient to settle once and for all the right of the blind to organize.

The mounting discord within the NFB was catalyzed by three major forces. First, there arose within our ranks differences of opinion in the organization about whether the NFB should exist as a loose network of statewide organizations, or as a centralized organizational structure with state affiliates and local chapters. Secondly, some state leaders such as Durward K McDaniel of Oklahoma, felt that NFB had taken on an overly confrontational posture toward the blindness agencies and felt that a more conciliatory stance was more appropriate. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the rise of professionalism gave rise to conflicts between the national board and staff as to lines of authority and centers of power.

In 1945 Dr. tenBroek hired A.L. Archibald as an executive director to assist Dr. tenBroek in the day to day operations of NFB, likely to enable Dr. tenBroek to attend to his professional duties at UC Berkeley while continuing to perform his presidential duties. Archibald began work on a part time basis in 1945 and was upgraded to a full time position in 1952. Over the course of time Archibald began to make a series of growing demands for more decision-making and spending authority. Dr. tenBroek, being a long-suffering patient man, was probably patient with Archibald to a fault. To solidify his power base, Archibald formed an alliance with Durward McDaniel and conspired with him to launch a barrage of charges of impropriety against Dr. tenBroek and his chief protégé Kenneth Jernigan, both of whom attempted to neutralize these allegations with their own countercharges. The perfect storm was going full blast, and in 1961, a splinter group from ten state delegations left the convention hall and went to a nearby hotel in Kansas City Missouri to launch the American Council of the Blind (ACB), which still exists as a rival blind consumer organization, although the two organizations have collaborated on various legislative matters from time to time.

One of the departing state affiliates was Kansas, which, as a result of the “Civil War”, was without an NFB state affiliate for seven years until the Kansas Federation of the Blind (KFB) was launched in 1968 under the leadership of Jim Couch, Richard J (“Dick”) Edlund, Jack Kelly, and others. The KFB became the National Federation of the Blind of Kansas under an affiliate member chartering structure that was adopted at the 1972 NFB national convention.

The federation underwent a long period of re-building and new growth, and all of the departing state affiliates had been replaced before the end of the 1970s. The NFB national constitution was also strengthened with important declarations of authority, guaranteed rights of membership, and a prohibition against making motions and voting by proxy. The NFB in convention was declared to be the supreme authority of the organization and discretion was vested in the president and Board of Directors to carry out the policies of the organization. These principles undergird NFB’s governing structure in our present day.

Without a doubt, the so-called Civil War of 1961 was a defining moment in Federation history in that the organization would surely have met its demise except for the indomitable spirit of Drs. tenBroek, Jernigan, Dr. Newel Lewis Perry, and others. Many Federationists today will attest that the Federation came roaring back bigger and better than before the “Civil War.” After serving the presidency of NFB for over twenty years, Dr. TenBroek resigned as national president under a cloud of a crisis of confidence in his leadership. The ensuing five years proved to be a period of instability in top leadership. Dr. tenBroek’s immediate successor was John Taylor who resigned as president in the spring of 1962, citing increased work related demands as his reason. He was followed by Perry Sundquist, then by Russell Kletzing. Dr. tenBroek returned to the presidency in an election by acclamation in 1966 and remained in office until cancer claimed his life in 1968.



Dr. Kenneth Jernigan succeeded Dr. tenBroek and remained as president until he retired in 1986 when Marc Maurer was elected president and held office until 2014 when Dr. Mark Riccobono was elected by acclamation. Dr. Jernigan lived a positive life as a blind leader, teacher, and thinker with a strong international reputation until he passed away in 1998.

In 1978 Dr. Jernigan led the NFB in building its national headquarters at 1800 Johnson Street in the inner harbor district of Baltimore Maryland after maintaining headquarters in Suite 218 of the Randolph Hotel Building in Des Moines Iowa.

Over time the organization remodeled and occupied the four-story structure of the city block-long National Center for the Blind.

In October, 2001, The NFB broke ground for a twenty million-dollar research and training institute now seated next to the National Center. Thus, the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute began serving people in January 2004.

Through the Jernigan Institute the NFB now administers many educational programs including the Braille Transcriber and proofreader Certification processes for the Library of Congress.

In 2009, to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Louis Braille, the Frenchman who invented a nonvisual tactile reading and writing code for the blind, NFB in partnership with the US Printing and Engraving Service, launched the historic first braille one dollar coin in Braille's name. The project raised about ten million dollars for programs to promote braille literacy.

The Jernigan Institute conducts courses in NFB philosophy through periodic leadership training seminars which have been attended by Federationists from Kansas, 51 other states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico -- 52 state affiliates all tolled. The Jernigan Institute also provides training in technologies.

We continue working to establish state training programs for the blind which will offer training in the use of the long white cane, braille proficiency, household management skills, and other "soft" skills of blindness.

NFB has partnered with three prevocational blindness skills training centers in Minneapolis Minnesota, Ruston Louisiana, and Littleton Colorado. These centers not only teach the skills of blindness but emphasize a positive philosophy on blindness as well. It is notable that all of the centers (2 private and one state center) were started by federationists.

In July 2015 we celebrated our past seventy-five years of accomplishments at our national convention in Orlando, Florida. On July 8 NFB convention attendees, co-sponsors, volunteers, and members of the Rosen Hotel group mobilized to set a new Guinness world record trademark title for the largest umbrella mosaic.

2,480 individuals raised umbrellas to announce our seventy-five years of success and broke the long-standing umbrella mosaic record of 2,170 umbrellas.

Perhaps you feel this article doesn't even begin to do justice to the amazing and glorious 75-year long history of the Federation, an opinion with which we completely agree. To be sure, there is much that remains to be brought to mind, including the grand showdown we had with the National Accreditation Council over standards and accreditation of agencies for the blind, the exit row seating controversy with the commercial airline industry, the ongoing battle in Congress to end the odious and discriminatory practice of paying subminimum wages to blind and disabled workers, and the globalization of the organized blind movement, to name but a few milestone events. For those who wish to learn more, we enthusiastically commend a recently released digital book entitled *Building The Lives We Want, the Seventy-Five Year History of the National Federation of the Blind* by Deborah Kendrick, a professional writer. This comprehensive thoroughly researched and masterfully written work is available on the NFB website at:

<https://nfb.org/pubs/building-the-lives-we-want>

This amazing digital book is free and can be downloaded to a computer and to a wide range of portable book readers and smartphone apps. Subscribers to NFB Newsline® can listen to this work in its entirety by choosing option one three times from the main Newsline menu. We boldly make two guarantees. First, You will be so transfixed by how our story is told you will have to tear yourself away from the eBook to attend to your daily routines. Secondly, your knowledge and commitment to the philosophy and work of the Federation will undergo a manifold increase whether you are new to the Federation or you are a grizzled veteran of NFB. So enjoy this excellent read and be both informed and inspired.

## **Legislative Activities Update**

### **-- Rob Tabor**

On a cold, blustery, mid-winter's day in February of this year, six hale and hearty Kansas Federationists made the annual trek to Capitol Hill to make the Federation's case for long-desired and long-sought changes in our nation's policy toward the blind. The three issues carefully chosen by our very able national legislative affairs staff included the Transition to Integrated and Meaningful Employment (TIME) Act, formerly known as the Fair Wages for Workers With Disabilities act, the Technology, Education, and accessibility in College and Higher Education (TEACH) Act, and, last but not least, The Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled ("Marrakesh Treaty"), commonly called the "Books Without Borders" treaty. There were enough Kansas delegates to divide into two teams, each of which were assigned to meet with two House members and one Senator, which enabled us to complete our business in DC in two days.

As per usual, we mostly met with various Congressional staff aides, but we did get to meet with Representative Lynn Jenkins (R/KS2), though this meant taking a long hike from her office in

Longworth House Office Building to the Capitol via the underground tunnel labyrinth. The other group also met briefly with Rep. Mike Pompeo (R/KS4), and a group photo was taken.

One afternoon the NFB national office held a reception for Congress members and staff in a large gathering space in the basement of Longworth in honor of our 75th anniversary year. The reception was very well attended, and an address was given by Rep. Greg Harper of Mississippi, the sponsoring member of the TIME bill.

We now look forward to the 2016 NFB Washington seminar which is scheduled for the first week of February. Issues to be presented to Congress for 2016 have yet to be announced, but we fully expect the TIME bill to be on the agenda, and probably the TEACH bill as well, which is now becoming known as the SMART Act.

If you want to play a tangible role in changing what it means to be blind at the public policy level and have never attended a Washington Seminar, we enthusiastically encourage you to do so. We will convey further developments on the 2016 Washington Seminar through the Home On The Range email list as we receive it. If finances are a concern as they still are for many blind persons, the state board does its best to provide a helpful level of financial assistance for seminar delegates.

## **Jayhawk Chapter Update**

### **-- Rob Tabor**

The Jayhawk Chapter of our Kansas state NFB affiliate has had a busy and active year thus far. We have 13 members and we have had a change of meeting venue. Since January we have met on the third Saturday of every month from 1:00pm to 3:00pm at the recently renovated Lawrence Public Library (LPL).

Last spring we joined forces with the Access Task Force of Independence, Inc., a community-based independent living

resource center, to advocate successfully for accessibility and nondiscrimination language to be added to the local taxicab service licensing ordinance. This opportunity came at a perfect time because the Lawrence City Commission decided the taxicab licensing ordinance was in need of a major overhaul, and an accessibility section for blind and disabled taxicab riders was another piece that could be easily added to this comprehensive new approach to regulation of taxicab services.

We have also had two successful fund-raisers last spring. For the first time ever we conducted a tournament pool for the NCAA Division One Men's basketball tournament which raised \$145, which we considered to be very impressive for a first effort. Participants were asked to donate \$5 to enter their prediction of outcomes at the various team elimination rounds, and a prize of a free massage was donated by Massage Envy. A massage was also awarded to the participant who recruited the highest number of participants from outside the chapter.

On May 12, we held a giveback supper at Freddy's Frozen Custards and Steak Burgers. This was our second straight year for this project which raised \$200 for the chapter.

We are now in the planning stages of the 2015 Meet the Blind community education campaign which traditionally takes place in October. We will present to the Lawrence City Commission to request Mayor Mike Amyx to read and sign a proclamation for Meet The Blind Month and White Cane Safety Day which is officially observed on October 15. The proclamation signing ceremony is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, October 6, subject to confirmation with City personnel. We are also planning a public awareness campaign via local media outlets to promote better pedestrian traffic safety for the blind and for all pedestrians and bicyclists.

Finally, at our August meeting they demonstrated the NFB Connect app for the iPhone and other iOS devices, which spawned a request from several of our members for an iOS device and Voiceover training class which we expect to schedule soon.

## **Johnson County Chapter Update**

**-- Susan L. Stanzel**

On September 19th the Johnson County chapter of the NFBKS participated in the Kansas City, Missouri chapter White Cane Walk. 6 members of the Johnson County chapter participated in the walk. Those chapter members who were unable to walk donated generously to the cause. In total, over 1,100 dollars was raised for the Johnson County chapter.

## **South-Central Chapter Update**

**-- Serena Nickell**

The National Federation of the Blind South-Central chapter began our year with a social event at El Mexico Cafe that also gave us an opportunity to sell chocolate to restaurant employees and patrons. Following our social event, we were able to send 3 members, one a first time attendee, to the Washington Seminar.

We focused on membership development and community outreach this year in our chapter. In May, the chapter presented a Braille puzzle map of the United States to Envision's Child Development Center.

We held our annual picnic in June and fun was had by all. South-Central chapter had 5 members attend the 75th annual national convention. One of our members is attending the Colorado Center for the Blind and split her time between both the Kansas and Colorado affiliates.

The chapter is looking forward to hosting the Kansas State convention, coming in November to Wichita. We will be holding our Christmas party on December 12, 2015 at The Monarch. The South-Central chapter is looking forward to another busy year.

## **At Large Chapter Update**

### **-- Rob Tabor**

At the 2014 state NFB affiliate convention in Lawrence held last November, our state president, Tom Page, convened a caucus to help organize this now unofficial chapter in preparation to launch a new official statewide chapter for blind Kansans who face major travel barriers to local chapter meetings. Shelby Young agreed to be the provisional chapter president, Ana Hindman consented to serve as vice president, Sharon Luka agreed to be the chapter secretary, and Bob Fuller agreed to be the provisional chapter treasurer in addition to his duties as state affiliate treasurer. Rob Tabor continues to serve as the At Large Group advisor from the state affiliate board of directors.

The at Large Chapter meets regularly via teleconference on the third Friday of each month at 7:00pm for approximately an hour. At the regular business meeting on Friday, June 19, a draft chapter constitution was approved by the group for submission to the state board as a crucial step towards becoming a full-fledged official chapter of the Kansas NFB state affiliate. The proposed new constitution names the new chapter as the Meadowlark Chapter in honor of the official state bird of Kansas.

Due to the relocation of Shelby Young to Oklahoma, the At Large meeting group is in the process of reorganizing its leadership, a task which will hopefully be completed at the September regular meeting.

**Registration for the  
NFB of KS State Convention  
November 20-22, 2015**

Please send registration form and payment to Bob Fuller using **paypal at treasurer@nfbks.org** or 1812 Mississippi St., Lawrence, KS 66044. Please make checks payable to the National Federation of the Blind of Kansas.

If you are registering multiple attendees, please include all names of those you are registering. Please include the total number of registrations and meals.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-registration: [ ] x \$5.00  
Registration at the door: [ ] x \$10.00  
Luncheon: [ ] x \$15.00  
Banquet: [ ] x \$25.00

Please note if you would prefer a vegetarian meal:

Hotel at Old Town  
830 E. 1st St.  
Wichita KS 67202  
316-267-4800  
Room rates \$90.00  
Reservation deadline: November 10, 2015

When making your reservation please indicate that you want the NFB of KS convention room rate.

Please join us in November!