



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

Spring 2013

Materials for the next issue of TAP TRACKS
scheduled for the fall of 2014 should be submitted
by August 30. Send or email your contributions to:

Tom Page
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Wichita KS, 67202
Thank you!

From the Presidents Desk – Tom Page (President, NFB of KS)

Greetings fellow federationists! It has been an action packed time since the last newsletter. Last Fall we came together in Wichita for our annual convention. We celebrated our successes, mourned our losses, and gathered strength and resolve for the coming year. Gary Wunder (our national representative) injected his gentle wisdom into the proceedings and lent outside perspective that helped greatly to encourage us in our ongoing work.

Scholarships were presented to Anya Avromenko of Emporia State, Charles Wilks of Kansas State, and Dustin Turner of Baker University. Attached to this newsletter are the 2014 scholarship announcement application forms. If you know of a blind student or teacher of the blind please pass these on to them!

The convention theme of thinking for change was highlighted at our opening session by Maryse Figueroa and Rob Tabor did an excellent job leading the first day's seminar focused on what is the National Federation of the Blind. We welcomed guests including: the director of Wichita Transit, Steve Spade, and the director of Wichita State's Disability Services office, Grady Landrum. Frank the chief executive of Wichita's Disabled American Veterans reminded us that an organization does not have to use special wage certificates to run a successful thrift store operation and that empowering each other through the sharing of our individual experiences creates a synergy that allows our organizational efforts to prosper. That night, we all enjoyed the banquet dinner and jazz band featuring Wichita veterans Jim Keefer and John Salem. The next day we worked together to complete our business meeting and returned to our respective home towns.

We were pleased to be joined by Michael Monteferrante, the CEO of Envision (a large workshop in the area). Michael has been learning more about the true nature of blindness and capabilities of blind people by engaging with us. Our newly formed Blind Industrial Workers of

America Committee celebrated adding its 11th dues paying member at the convention and has continued to work together to provide Mr. Monteferrante with ideas and suggestions for improving working conditions at the shop. (see chapter reports)

The winter was a hard one complete with heavy snows and sub-zero temperatures. Some of our work was disrupted by the extreme weather and we were unable to follow through on plans to travel as a group to Topeka to lobby for Newslite funding. We are configuring new plans to take up this important work in the Fall. Our advocacy efforts were not hampered with regard to the Kansas Vocation Rehabilitation agency. We were successful over the winter in helping several members resolve problems that were affecting their ability to receive services or educational funding. This work is also ongoing as unfortunately we live with one of the least successful agencies in the nation. We will not stop until all blind Kansans are able to equally access the very important services that VR can provide.

The return of spring has brought much new work on advocacy with VR, local, state, and national government, and the workshops. We were able to send eight members to the Washington seminar (see Rob Tabor's writeup in this newsletter) and are proud of the work we performed in D.C. with our fellows from across the nation. The chapters continue to work in their locales to achieve security and opportunities for all blind Kansans. The South Central chapter continues to work with the city government to improve the transit system, the Blind Industrial Workers continue to meet and engage with the workshop management and the Jayhawk chapter is working towards putting on the 2014 convention this November. In Kansas City the Johnson county and Kaw Valley chapters have partnered with the KCMO chapter to engage in fundraising and continuing work with the Kansas State School for the Blind. Our at large chapter continues to provide resources and fellowship for those in the more rural areas of the state. If you are reading this but don't attend one of the monthly chapter meetings; join us in changing what it means to be blind in Kansas.

THE 2014 WASHINGTON SEMINAR -- By Rob Tabor, 1st Vice President, State Legislative Coordinator

Though participation in the 2014 NFB Washington Seminar was slightly down from recent years, I can assure you that Kansas was well represented by eight proud and fired up Federationists with a good mix and balance of grizzled veterans and first time participants. Our delegation included our state president Tom Page, Rob and Susan Tabor, Leonard and Meg Silkey, Renee Morgan, Andrew Crane, and Anya Avramenko. Even with a slightly smaller delegation we still had enough Kansas Federationists to form two teams to descend on the six members of the Kansas Congressional delegation. Though most of our meetings were with House and Senate office staffers, Tom's team got to meet with Rep. Mike Pompeo who represents the fourth Kansas congressional district which includes the Wichita and Sedgwick County areas.

Our 2014 visit to Capitol Hill centered around the three bills or items which comprise our legislative priorities for this year. These include HR 831, the Fair Wages for Workers With Disabilities Act, HR 3505, the Technology Education and Accessibility In Colleges And Higher Education Act (TEACH), and a proposed air Carrier Technology and Accessibility Act (ACTA). The Fair Wages bill calls for the repeal of Section 14C of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) which now permits employers who hold special wage certificates from the US Secretary of Labor to pay subminimum wages to its workers. If our Fair Wages bill passes, all employers including nonprofit sheltered workshops would be required to comply with Federal minimum wage provisions of the FLSA within three years of enactment.

The TEACH bill calls on the Federal Access Board to develop a draft set of voluntary standards for accessible digital teaching materials for blind students in universities and other post-secondary educational settings. The NFB legislative staff is asking us to devote maximal effort to gain more co-sponsors, especially among Republican House members.

Unfortunately, none of the Kansas delegation agreed to sponsor or co-sponsor any of our legislative agenda, but making our voices heard each and every year is of the utmost importance and I hope it will never be neglected. I extend a hearty thanks to all of our Federation colleagues who participated and to those who have responded to calls for action at time critical points in the legislative process.

The best gain from our endeavors so far has been the growth in the number of co-sponsors of the fair wages bill in the House to 79 as of the day of this writing. We will need 218 to guarantee passage, but our legislative staff believes we now have enough co-sponsors to begin asking our senators to introduce a companion bill in the senate. Of course we could wait for the house bill to make its way to the senate, but momentum is crucial at this point of the year. A companion bill will enable us to gather co-sponsors at both ends of Constitution Avenue at the same time.

Chapter Reports

At Large Chapter Report By Rob Tabor

The At Large chapter of NFBK meets regularly via teleconference on the third Friday of each month from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Rob Tabor, NFBK First Vice president, usually chairs the teleconference meeting, which has an average of seven participants, and the content is fairly typical of a face to face chapter meeting including the playback of national presidential release messages by our national president, Dr. Marc Maurer. We also feature a skills enrichment segment which can cover any topic from how to make waffles to the latest and greatest DAISY digital playback device or refreshable braille display device.

Interest among participants in recent meetings has been expressed to take the necessary steps to launch a chartered at large chapter of the NFB

of Kansas. It is interesting to note that the Colorado state NFB affiliate has launched an apparently robust and thriving at large chapter.

You may dial into the At Large chapter teleconference call by dialing either 866-476-8702 toll free or 916-233-4200 unlimited long distance. The conference participant access code in either case is 950655 followed by the hash or pound key (#), but the automated greeting system won't let you forget that. We invite you to check us out at our next teleconference meeting on May 16 at 7:00 pm. If you are subscribed to our Home On The Range email distribution list, a reminder is usually posted just a few days before the call.

Blind Industrial Workers Committee
By Tom Page

The NFB of KS Blind Industrial Workers committee had its first meeting last October at the River City Brewery over pizza (and beer for some). The 7 members voted to join the newly reconstituted Blind Industrial Workers of America Division and form a committee to engage with local workshop management on behalf of the blind workers. The committee elected Leonard Silkey Chairperson, and Meg Silkey Secretary.

Our friend Charlie King read aloud a letter containing a digest of worker concerns that had been voiced in 2 previous informal meetings earlier in the year. The committee asked me to send the letter to Michael Monteferrante (CEO of Envision) and seek a meeting on the issues therein.

We invited Mr. Monteferrante to our state convention (some two weeks later) and he did attend part of the day and engaged with many members. Our National Representative Gary Wunder came to town early and toured the Envision facility. During the convention the membership

grew to 11. Due to tech glitches and changes in my address the letter was not sent to Mr. Monteferrante until after the new year. Weather and a water pipe rupture further delayed the meeting regarding the workers concerns.

In the meantime the BIW division committee met again and discussed old and new concerns over pizza as the guests of the Service Employees International Union #513 at their offices. At this meeting the committee reiterated their commitment to improve conditions at the Envision workshop by encouraging the management to convert to an empowerment shop by:

- Creating paths of opportunity for blind workers to move up in the organization
- Creating paths of opportunity for blind workers to transition to integrated competitive employment
- Phasing out sub-minimum wage
- 7 actionable items were also presented in writing to Mr. Monteferrante regarding factory conditions

Shortly after this meeting I accompanied Serena Nickell (South Central Chapter President) to the Envision office building where we met with Mr. Monteferrante. Mr. Monteferrante did not agree with much of the committee letter. He did not want to discuss the sub-minimum issue and insisted that the special programs (yoga, art classes, exercise class) and the low number of productive hours of some of the workers made it unfair to criticize the low wages our 2012 FOIA request showed was being payed to workers under special wage certificates. He believes that when these programs and hours are considered that none of his employees are payed less than minimum wage.

Although he refused to discuss sub-mininum wages he did confirm that action had been taken on placement of Braille information in the factory. He also addressed several quality control issues raised by machine

operators. Mr. Monteferrante is looking into several other of the factory issues regarding the accessibility of the machines and indicated he would know more on the timeline for talking machines soon. The committee will meet this June and looks forward to more engagement with Mr. Monteferrante.

Jayhawk Chapter Report By Rob Tabor, Chapter President

I begin today's Jayhawk Chapter report on a wistful note of the loss to our chapter of Dr. Chikako Mochizuki, our immediate president emerita, who moved to Duluth Minnesota where she is now an assistant professor of Asian history at The University of Minnesota At Duluth. Though we're sad to lose Chikako, we are deeply appreciative of her contributions over the years to the NFB of Kansas and to the Jayhawk Chapter. So our loss is the Minnesota affiliate's gain.

We're very excited to announce a chapter fund-raising event at Freddy's Frozen Custard and Steak Burgers, 2030 West 23rd, Lawrence, Kansas on May 22 from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm. As of this writing the promotional flyer, which will serve as proof to the Freddy's staff of a customer's intention to benefit our NFB chapter, is being developed and will soon be presented on Home On The Range. So look for our Freddy's event brochure, coming to an inbox near you.

The Jayhawk chapter continues to meet on the third Saturday of each month at Independence, Inc., 2001 Haskell Avenue, Lawrence, from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Any Federationist or potential new Federationist is welcome to visit us any time.

Johnson County Chapter By Susie Stanzel, Chapter President

We had a very nice Christmas party in December with lots of good food to eat.

Pila Mahoney sold her home and has moved to an apartment in Missouri. However, we are very fortunate she is going to remain active in the chapter.

Randy Phifer has written a tremendous oration called “Lemons Blossom Lemonade”. He is determined not to let his health challenges get him down and hopes to serve the community by encouraging people to make some healthy changes in their lives. He was published in the Kansas City Globe newspaper. Please see the flier elsewhere in this publication. This is a link to his presentation:

https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=sJEACn_3X-Y

He has also developed a method to play chess using no board nor pieces. A flier describing the method can also be found elsewhere in this publication.

I continue to talk with callers and offer encouragement when they think life is certainly coming to an end. We know there is life after blindness!

The Johnson County Chapter of the NFB of Kansas meets the second Friday of each month at Bethany Lutheran Church at 91st and Lamar. Our meeting starts at 6:30.

South Central Chapter Report
By Serena Nickell, Chapter President

The NFBKS South Central chapter has been pretty busy lately. We started off the year with a new slate of officers. They include: President: Serena Nickell, Vice President: Leonard Silkey, Secretary: Emily Schlenker, And Treasurer: Diane Fleming.

In March of this year two of our chapter members participated in another bus ride to test the accessibility of the automated system for announcing

bus stops. When we first started this process the announcement systems were working at about 3%. Now they are working at approximately 90% which is a great improvement.

In April public meetings were held in various Wichita locations to provide input on the revision of the city plan. One of the city's options included a vast improvement to the Wichita public transit system and we were able to mobilize 12 members to the various meetings. Needless to say our chapter is passionate about any possibility of improving our current system. If you live in the Wichita area call or email your city council person today to encourage them to include funding for the Wichita Transit Vision Plan in the sales tax referendum coming up this fall.

Our chapter will be participating in Wichita River Festival's Celebrate Abilities Day for the second year in a row on Tuesday June 3rd in the evening. We will also be holding a fundraiser in mid June to help chapter members wanting to attend National convention in July.

We meet at the Wichita Downtown Public Library on the second Saturday of the month from 1-3PM. The South Central chapter also holds a Saturday social held on the 4th Saturday of each month. These socials range from going out to eat to bowling as well as other public activities. Call Meg Silkey at 316-882-3069 for information on the social calendar.

Contact us at:

National Federation of the Blind of Kansas

President, Tom Page

120 E. 1st St. #3C

Wichita KS 67202

<http://www.nfbks.org>

Lemons Blossom Lemonade

Randy J. Phifer delivers a personal and inspiring oration conveying his life with diabetes. The motivational sharing testimony reveals his embrace and endurance with blindness, heart disease, kidney disease, and neuropathy. You will be encouraged to embrace your family medical history and live a wellness lifestyle. Invite friends and family to experience this touching and informative oration. To schedule this dynamic, must see, motivational sharing testimony, please contact us at (913) 438-7757 or Email RJPmotivation@Gmail.com.





National Federation of the Blind of Kansas
President, Tom Page
120 E. 1st Apt. 3C Wichita KS 67202

2014 NFB OF KANSAS KENNETH TIEDE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

A KEY TO YOUR FUTURE

The National Federation of the Blind of Kansas will award up to three scholarships of 1,000 Dollars. If you are a legally blind high school senior, or if you are a blind student participating in a post-secondary undergraduate or graduate academic or vocational and technical training program, the National Federation of the Blind of Kansas invites you to apply for one of our scholarships.

Applications will be accepted from out of state students who will be attending school in Kansas and from Kansas students who will be attending in or out of state schools.

Applicants must have a 2.5 overall GPA. If you receive one of these scholarships, the NFBK will pay for you to attend our state convention in Lawrence KS on November 21,22, and 23 2014. At the convention you will be assigned a mentor, someone to acquaint you with the work and philosophy of the organization and to be a resource person for you as you continue your academic pursuits.

Your receipt of a scholarship is contingent on:

- Legal blindness

- Academic merit
- Ability to attend our convention in Lawrence KS on November 21,22, and 23 2014.

For complete details and requirements please review the attached application form. You may also contact Dianne Hemphill, NFBKS scholarship Chairperson, at 316-201-1323 or by e-mail at diannehemphill@cox.net. You may also go to our web site www.nfbks.org for more information on the scholarship program and to meet past scholarship recipients.

Your completed application and all supporting materials must be received no later than June 30, 2014 at the address listed on the application form.

If you know of a blind student please pass along this information to them.

Thanks,

Tom Page
President, National Federation of the Blind of Kansas



National Federation of the Blind of Kansas
President Tom Page
120 E. 1st Apt. 3C Wichita KS 67202

2014 NATIONAL FEDERATION OF the Blind of KANSAS
KENNETH TIEDE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS
APPLICATION FORM

ELIGIBILITY: STUDENTS MUST ANSWER YES FOR EACH
CRITERION IN ORDER TO BE ELIGIBLE:

I CONFIRM THAT I AM LEGALLY BLIND IN BOTH EYES WITH
BEST CORRECTION.

I LIVE IN KANSAS OR WILL BE ATTENDING A SCHOOL IN
KANSAS THIS UPCOMING ACADEMIC YEAR.

MY GPA IS 2.5 OR BETTER.

IF CHOSEN FOR A SCHOLARSHIP I WILL ATTEND THE NFB
OF KS STATE CONVENTION TO BE HELD NOVEMBER 21-23
OF 2014. (THE NFB OF KS WILL PAY FOR YOU TO ATTEND.)

IF CHOSEN FOR A SCHOLARSHIP I WILL AGREE TO
PARTICIPATE IN THE NFB OF KANSAS MENTORING
PROGRAM DURING THE SCHOLARSHIP YEAR.

I WILL COMPLETE AN INTERVIEW WITH AN NFB OF KANSAS
DESIGNEE AND WILL CONTACT DIANNE HEMPHILL, NFB OF
KS SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR, TO MAKE AN
APPOINTMENT FOR THIS INTERVIEW. (PLEASE MAKE

CONTACT AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE TO ACCOMMODATE JUNE 30 DEADLINE.)

I WILL PROVIDE MY COMPLETED NFB OF KANSAS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION, A PHYSICIAN'S SIGNED EYE REPORT, CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPTS FROM EACH SCHOOL THAT I HAVE ATTENDED, LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION, AND MY ESSAY BY JUNE 30, 2014.

PROVIDE COMPLETE INFORMATION FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:

NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE CONTACT

HOME:

CELL:

E-MAIL:

DATE OF BIRTH (MM/DD/YY)

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATED

FROM:

YEAR

GRADUATED:

GPA:

WHAT SCHOOL WILL YOU ATTEND IN 2014-2015? (IF UNDECIDED AT PRESENT, SEND THE SCHOOL'S NAME AND ADDRESS TO US BEFORE THE JUNE 30 DEADLINE.

WHAT PROFESSION OR FIELD OF EMPLOYMENT DO YOU WISH TO ENTER WHEN YOUR SCHOOLING IS COMPLETED?

LIST ALL POST SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS YOU HAVE ATTENDED WITH COMPLETE NAME AND ADDRESS: IF MORE THAN ONE LIST ON SEPARATE SHEET AND ATTACH.

THE ESSAY - PLEASE ANSWER THIS QUESTION:

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE TO KNOW ABOUT YOU?

PLEASE KEEP THIS BETWEEN 600 AND 1,000 WORDS. COMPLETE ON SEPARATE SHEET(S) AND ATTACH.

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION - YOU MUST SUBMIT ONE LETTER IN SUPPORT OF YOUR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION FROM SOMEONE WHO KNOWS YOU AND WHO IS FAMILIAR WITH YOUR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE.

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT:

BY SIGNING MY NAME BELOW, I CONFIRM THAT ALL OF THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE AND IN THE ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS IS TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

SIGNED _____

DATE _____

COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM AND ALL REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY DIANNE HEMPHILL, 600 BEL RUE, DERBY, KS 67037 NO LATER THAN June 30, 2014. E-MAIL APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED IN MS WORD AND SENT TO diannehemphill@cox.net .

THOSE SELECTED TO RECEIVE A SCHOLARSHIP WILL BE NOTIFIED OF THE AWARD NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 1, 2014.

THIS FORM MAY NOT BE USED TO APPLY FOR AN NFB NATIONAL LEVEL SCHOLARSHIP

FOR INFORMATION ON THE 2015 NFB NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM PLEASE VISIT www.nfb.org/scholarships.

National Federation of the Blind of Kansas
120 E. 1st #3C, Wichita KS, 67202

FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND
OR PHYSICALLY
HANDICAPPED