

The Buckeye Bulletin Fall 2005

Fall 2005 Buckeye Bulletin

a publication of the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio

The National Federation of the Blind of Ohio is a 501 (c) 3 consumer organization comprised of blind and sighted people committed to changing what it means to be blind. Though blindness is still all too often a tragedy to those who face it, we know from our personal experience that with training and opportunity it can be reduced to the level of a physical nuisance. We work to see that blind people receive the services and training to which they are entitled and that parents of blind children receive the advice and support they need to help their youngsters grow up to be happy, productive adults. We believe that first-class citizenship means that people have both rights and responsibilities, and we are determined to see that blind people become first-class citizens of these United States, enjoying their rights and fulfilling their responsibilities. The most serious problems we face have less to do with our lack of vision than with discrimination based on the public's ignorance and misinformation about blindness. Join us in educating Ohioans about the abilities and aspirations of Ohio's blind citizens.

The NFB of Ohio has twelve local chapters around the state, a chapter for at-large members, and special divisions for diabetics, merchants, students, seniors, and parents of blind children. This quarterly newsletter is produced in large print and on cassette. To receive more information about the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio, to make address changes for the newsletter, or to be added to the mailing list, call (800) 396-6326

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From the President's Desk
by Barbara Pierce

This late summer edition of the newsletter always contains lots of information about our annual convention, which this year is November 3 through 6. I hope you will make a special effort to join us because we are trying something a bit different this year. As you read Mary Pool's article about convention arrangements, you will see that many of the peripheral activities are what we have come to expect: seminars, committee meetings, technology displays, and hospitality.

But to give you some insight into this one-time-only departure from our usual program of state and library officials and outside experts of various kinds, I must tell you a bit about the weekend conference I attended in mid August. It was held at the National Center for the Blind and was billed as an advanced leadership seminar. I was present as one of a handful of mentors, but I think I derived as much from the day-and-a-half of presentations and workshops as any of the twenty-nine participants. We all found that getting to know other committed Federationists and working together to sharpen our skills and define our goals revitalized our energy and our commitment to what the organization stands for. All of us committed ourselves to step out in new ways in the coming months to share with others what we learned that weekend and try to breathe new life into our affiliates and chapters.

I decided to try to shape our convention agenda so as to remind ourselves of what the NFB stands for and what we are trying to accomplish in Ohio across the organization. We will not be hearing this fall from outside officials. Instead you will have a chance to learn firsthand about a number of the initiatives of the Jernigan Institute, including the Kurzweil National Federation of the Blind Reader—the portable one that reads on the go. We will think together in various ways about what we stand for and how to spread our understanding of blindness everywhere from the halls of Congress to the local bus.

I am not going to tell you any more; you will have to come and experience the convention for yourself. Don't worry, though. People who are attending their first convention will not feel out of place. This is not going to be an event for only the initiated. If the program unfolds as I hope it will, people will come away with a new and more complete understanding of what we are trying to accomplish. And I trust that all of us will be more energized and more effective in changing the lives and prospects of blind Ohioans. I hope to see you at the convention in

Cuyahoga Falls.

A Convention You Won't Want to Miss
by Mary Pool

Editor's Note: Mary Pool is a long-time member of the board of directors of the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio and chair of the convention-planning and arrangements committee. Here is what she has to say about the 2005 convention

Make plans for the state convention now. I guarantee that this is a convention you will not want to miss. I am sure that everyone who attended the 2002 convention will agree that this is without question the best hotel we have ever had for a state convention. Room rates are \$63 per night plus tax. Here is what you get for that price. The deluxe suites include separate sleeping and living areas with unmatched amenities. Bedrooms include either a king bed or two double beds, plus a television. The living area includes a second TV with a video player. Family-oriented videos may be checked out at the front desk at no charge. There's also a queen sleep sofa, desk, microwave oven, mini-bar, and coffeemaker with complimentary tea, coffee, and decaf. Your dressing area has an iron and ironing board and a hair dryer. During your stay the exercise facilities will be open 5:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. They include an indoor lap pool, whirlpool, sauna, and varied exercise equipment. If the weather cooperates, you can see and feel the cascading Cuyahoga River by taking the private elevator to a rock ledge. Elevator hours are dawn until dusk.

The award-winning RiverFront Restaurant and adjoining Reflections Lounge will be open daily for your convenience. The accent is on comfort and service for all throughout the convention.

The hotel is truly spectacular. To make your reservations, I suggest you call (330) 929-3000. This is a direct number to the Sheraton Suites in Cuyahoga Falls. If, however, you prefer to use a toll-free number, call 1-800-325-5788. Please be sure to make any requests for special accommodations when you reserve your room. For example, if you need a wheelchair-accessible room, be sure to make that fact known. Our block of rooms will be released on October 13. Please make your reservation before that date to be sure you have a room. Reservations made after October 13 will be honored at the convention rate as long as space is available, but who knows how long that will be?

As always we encourage everyone to preregister for the convention. A convention registration form is enclosed in this issue. By registering in advance, you will save five dollars on the cost of registration and two dollars on any meals you sign up for. It is important that we give the hotel accurate counts for all meals. Whether you preregister or register at the convention, you must register to get the NFB-O convention room rate.

The quality of the hotel and its staff are, of course, never what makes a Federation Convention exciting. No. We do that ourselves. The program that is now being planned for this convention has something for everyone. Carla McQuillan, president of the National Federation of the Blind of Oregon and a member of the board of directors of the National Federation of the Blind, is our national representative. Carla owns and operates several Montessori schools in Portland. She has been in charge of NFB Camp at the national convention for several years, and she brings a great deal of energy to the Federation. You will want to meet her and hear what she has to say.

The convention will begin on Thursday, November 3, with a 7:30 p.m. meeting of the board of directors of the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio. This is

an open meeting, and everyone is welcome to attend. This will be your first chance to meet Carla McQuillan and our 2005 scholarship winners.

The parents are planning a full weekend of activities beginning on Friday morning. We encourage parents of blind children to plan to be there for the weekend. If you cannot stay for the whole weekend, please plan to come on Friday.

Friday morning will also include a technology workshop. This year we will concentrate on GPS systems for the blind, but we will also have the newest advances in JAWS, PAC Mate, BrailleNote, and more.

Friday afternoon will also be a busy time. Workshops are now being planned. The most ambitious of these is the Possibilities Fair for Seniors, which will begin at 1:00 p.m. For more information see the flyer elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Various committee meetings will take place Friday evening. The Resolutions Committee will meet at 7:30 p.m. Through this committee the policies of the affiliate begin to take shape. If you have an issue you believe the affiliate should address in some way, write a resolution. The resolution should be typewritten and, if possible, accompanied by a Braille copy. If you cannot get it transcribed into Braille, do not let that discourage you. The important thing is that we have a print copy from which to work.

Resolutions must be sent to the attention of Paul Dressell no later than one week before the Resolutions Committee meeting. This year resolutions must be received in either the Oberlin or the Columbus office by Friday, October 28, 2005. Anyone wishing to submit a resolution for consideration after this date must persuade a member of the Resolutions Committee to sponsor it and bring it to the committee. Resolutions for which the committee votes do not pass will not be considered by the convention unless three chapter presidents present and voting at the convention sign a request to bring the resolution to the floor.

The first general session of the convention will begin at 9:00 a.m. Saturday. During this time we will receive a report from our national representative and hear from many other interesting speakers. As you can tell from the president's column, we are going to break away from our traditional agenda items and focus on chapter- and organization-building. We believe that these items will be of interest to everyone and that they will also help with individual growth in the Federation.

The noon lunch break provides the opportunity for division and committee meetings as well as many other activities. Once again this year we have the extended lunch break that we have had for the past two years. As always box lunches will be available for those who order them in advance. Mark the convention registration form to indicate if you would like to attend one of the lunch meetings.

The second general session will begin at 3:00 p.m. Again this is your chance to hear from speakers and participate in items to help you learn about and build the organization that affects the lives of all blind people. The afternoon session will adjourn at 5:00 p.m. Don't miss the social hour from 6:00 to 6:30 p.m. The banquet will begin at 6:30. This is always the high point of a Federation convention. I am already looking forward to Carla's banquet address. Individual and chapter awards as well as scholarships will also be presented during the banquet.

We are once again planning our Not-So-Silent Auction. It was a lot of fun last year, and we can already tell you about a couple of items to be auctioned. We have a slightly used CCTV and a refurbished Perkins Braille ready for bidding.

The entertainment for the after-banquet dance is still being arranged, but I know that several people enjoyed the games we played last year. Be ready to have a

great time. This is a chance to make new friends and renew acquaintances.

The Sunday morning session will begin at 9:00 a.m. with a memorial service. Immediately following the conclusion of the service, we will move into the general business of the affiliate and elections. The convention will end at noon. I look forward to seeing you there.

Driving directions to the convention hotel:

FROM DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND AND POINTS WEST:

Take I-77 South to the Ohio Turnpike. Follow the signs to I-80 / Turnpike East to Exit #180 (Old Exit 12). Take Route 8 South to the Broad Boulevard Exit. Turn right at the end of the ramp, then left onto Front Street. Free parking is available on both sides of Front Street.

FROM CLEVELAND'S EAST SIDE:

Take I-271 South to Route 8. Take Route 8 South to the Broad Boulevard Exit. Turn right at the end of the ramp, then left onto Front Street. Free parking is available on both sides of Front Street.

FROM YOUNGSTOWN, KENT AND POINTS EAST:

Take I-76 West to Route 8 North. Exit at Broad Boulevard, turning left at the end of the ramp. Turn left again at the second light. The hotel is on the left. Free parking is available on both sides of Front Street.

FROM CANTON AND SOUTHEAST POINTS:

Take I-77 North to Route 8 North. Exit at Broad Boulevard, turning left at the end of the ramp. Turn left again at the second light. The hotel is on the left.

FROM COLUMBUS:

Take I-71 North to Exit 209. Follow I-76 East to Exit 23B (exits from left lane). Take Route 8 North approximately 5 1/2 miles to the Broad Blvd. Exit. Turn left, then left at the second light, Front Street. Hotel is on the left. Free parking is available on both sides of Front Street.

If you or a friend would like to remember the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio in your will, you can do so by employing the following language:

"I give, devise, and bequeath unto the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio, 237 Oak Street, Oberlin, Ohio 44074, an Ohio nonprofit corporation, the sum of \$ (or "percent of my net estate" or "The following stocks and bonds:) to be used for its worthy purposes on behalf of blind persons."

The Soft Bigotry of Lowered Expectations
by Eric Duffy

While growing up, I heard a lot of talk about racial prejudice. In high school I had a friend who talked about the discrimination faced by women. But no one (and I mean no one, including blind faculty and staff members at the Ohio State School for the Blind) talked about discrimination against the blind. We students knew that most of the sighted public didn't understand much about blindness. We sometimes faced our own lack of knowledge and understanding about the real capacities of blind people. But none of us thought of ourselves as being part of a minority group. Many of us knew that a high unemployment rate existed among the blind. We knew that this problem had a lot to do with society's attitudes about blindness,

but none of us thought of this as discrimination, and we certainly never thought about the need to organize.

From the time I was a child and began to understand such things, I realized that discrimination, at least as far as I could tell, was not because the public didn't like blind people. As has often been said, the road to hell for the blind has been paved with other people's good intentions.

We all know the pain of being denied an opportunity for employment or education because of blindness, but perhaps even worse is the subtle discrimination many of us are unaware of when it occurs. This is what President Bush has referred to as "the soft bigotry of lowered expectations."

From an early age we learned that some sight was better than no sight at all. Students who had good usable vision were able to work in the school dining room and make some spending money. I remember asking why we didn't have any totally blind dining room workers; I was told that you had to be able to see if someone raised his or her hand for seconds. That ended the conversation.

By the time Jason Ewell was a student at the school, he and a few other students got together and changed this practice. But he had the support of a staff member who was involved in the Federation. Her expectations of blind people had changed over the years, and she understood the value of collective action.

What about the blind teachers whom we never saw using canes? From their example we, of course, learned that it was unnecessary to use a cane on school grounds and that, if we were off campus, it was better to travel with someone who had some vision than it was to use a cane. I can't help wondering what my travel skills would be like today had I started using a cane at fourteen or fifteen months as did Macy McClain. Over the years I believe I have developed competence and confidence as a traveler, but I will never know how much better I might have been had I started using a cane and traveling independently at an earlier age.

We are all products of our culture. No matter how much we resist doing so, we internalize lowered expectations. We find a comfort zone, and we find ways to rationalize why we don't go beyond the boundaries of that zone. For example, how many of us have heard and believed that, no matter how much we try or practice, we are always going to be slow Braille readers? After all, by its very nature reading in Braille is slow, so blind people are naturally slow readers. In school I was a terrible speller. I was told that most blind people were bad spellers because we don't have the same exposure to the written word that print readers have. I was also told that someday I would have a secretary, so I didn't have to worry about good spelling skills. That was a bad message. On one hand I was told that I was likely to have a job and a secretary. On the other hand I was told that as a blind person I couldn't learn to spell and that I should just accept that fact. My spelling has improved since high school, but I still have a long way to go. I conclude from my experience that we should expect blind children to learn to spell.

I remember that, when she was little, Macy McClain was constantly exposed to Braille. Mark and Crystal made Braille labels and put them on just about everything. Braille was everywhere in the house. This was true even before Macy could read Braille. But then weren't sighted children seeing the printed word long before they could read it?

My parents didn't expect me to be at all productive. I was not expected to cook, clean, or for that matter do much of anything for myself. That didn't mean that I didn't learn the skills, because I did. I took cooking and daily living skills classes at the school for the blind. But, because no one had high expectations for me, I didn't develop good habits. Humans are habitual creatures.

If we have to cook every day, cooking also becomes second nature. It becomes part of our routine. If, however, we learn to eat fast food and convenience foods, they become a part of our daily routine.

As we in the Federation know, it is not enough simply to learn skills; we must also develop the proper attitudes. That is why the best rehabilitation centers not only teach the skills of blindness but help develop proper attitudes about blindness as well. Students are also required to use the skills they learn every day. Whether it is in school, in the job market, or in everyday life, if normal expectations aren't present, none of us will be all that we can be.

We cannot anticipate fully how lowered expectations really do affect our lives. In fact, we may not even know when they do. Take for example a case in which someone has not developed good grooming habits. This is not to say that he doesn't have the skills, but that the habit of good grooming isn't what it should be. One day he decides not to worry about shaving. His hair is a little long, but so what? His shirt and pants have a few wrinkles, but nothing major. He wanders into a restaurant where the man he will be interviewing with the next day is having lunch, although he doesn't know it. What are the odds of this man's getting the job?

Children learn best through example. The words we use do not have the same effect on them as do our actions. So for parents of blind children it is not enough to say, you need to develop good cane travel skills. It is not enough to say, I think you are as normal as any other child, and I expect you to grow up and live a normal and productive life. You must expect of them the same things as you do of sighted children.

In my own case I must work to help my children develop better habits than those I developed as a child. They are not blind, but they are learning how to handle themselves and manage a home through my example. They are learning how to manage money, not so much from what I tell them, but rather from what they see me do. I become more aware of this tremendous responsibility every day. I am committed to changing the expectations I have for myself, and, by doing so, I hope to build a better future for my own children and the next generation of the blind. Through the National Federation of the Blind I know it is possible for all of us to have a better future.

On the Shoulders of Giants
by Paul Dressell

Editor's Note: Paul Dressell is the senior member of the board of directors of the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio. The following article is quite timely as we begin to think about nominations for various awards. Here it is:</I>

Some time ago--and I fear that it was quite some time ago--I promised to write a series of articles about past NFB-O leaders. The first of these articles will feature two NFB-O giants: Ivan Garwood and John Knall. On the surface Ivan and John were a study in contrast, but they were similar in their complete and absolute love for the Federation.

In remembering Ivan Garwood, the term "Giant" does not readily come to mind. The qualities that Ivan possessed are not universally valued by today's society: humility, sincerity, unquestionable integrity, and uncompromising honesty. Ivan served as NFB-O treasurer for eleven years; he continually gave credit to his sister, Ruth, who unselfishly assisted him in the performance of his duties. It is possible that Ruth sacrificed marriage in order to be of service to her brother.

Mary Ellen (Reihing) Gabias recounts two incidents which reveal Ivan's character and wit: she visited the Tri-county Federation of the Blind to observe

Ivan in his role as president. During the course of the meeting Ivan referred to the organization as a "club." After the meeting was over, Mary Ellen confronted Ivan. (Mary Ellen was much younger then and didn't have the experience gained from her many years of Federation activities.) She told Ivan that correct usage was "chapter" rather than "club." In his quiet but effective way, Ivan softly observed that he hoped that his "chapter" would have more pages.

The second incident took place during a 1974 NAC demonstration in Cincinnati. Mary Ellen called to ask if Ivan or Ruth could participate; Ivan said that a younger member was willing to make the trip by chartered bus. In order for the new member to rendezvous with the 6:00 a.m. bus departure, it was necessary for Ruth Garwood to drive sixty miles. Upon successfully getting the NAC tracker to the bus, Ivan contributed five dollars and apologized for not being able to give more. This was sacrificial giving at its best since both Garwoods were on very limited incomes.

On the other hand, John Knall could best be described as a law-and-order man. John served as first vice president and secretary of NFB-O for many years. His meticulous preparation and dedication to each office were evident; it is truly unfortunate that he didn't live in the computer age. He was generous with advice as well as chastisement if needed, and he was always on the lookout for emerging talent.

Like Ivan John had a loyal helpmate--his wife, Mickey. They both served as effective role models for the blind community. They enjoyed entertaining fellow Federationists in their lovely home in Lakewood. One of John's legacies was the Index of Procedural Motions, which was chronological listings of all motions made by the executive committee and the convention. The Index of Procedural Motions was alphabetically arranged by topic: for example, all motions pertaining to fundraising were itemized accordingly.

One of the most prestigious awards given at our annual convention banquet is the Knall-Garwood plaque. It is an award not lightly presented; in fact some years it is not given at all. Note that the wording on this plaque is "Presented to..... with deepest affection and respect for your many years of loving service to the blind of Ohio and in recognition and reverence for the generosity and commitment of your life as one of us." Certain words leap from the page: "affection," "respect," "loving service," "reverence," "generosity," and "commitment." What finer tribute could those of us "Who stand on the shoulders of giants" to pay to those who have gone before us?

Acknowledgments: I would like to thank Bob Eschbach, Mary Ellen Gabias, and Barbara Pierce for either providing invaluable information about Ivan Garwood and John Knall or directing me to sources of such information.

StreetTalk, a New GPS System for the Blind
by Eric Duffy

What is StreetTalk?

Here is how Freedom Scientific describes this new program: "StreetTalk is an accessibility interface to the Destinator® application. Destinator is a satellite-based navigation system for devices that use the Windows® Pocket PC operating platform, such as the PAC Mate. Destinator uses the twenty-four United States Department of Defense Global Positioning System (GPS) satellites to pinpoint your location using sophisticated software and mapping technologies to route you to your destination in the most efficient and timely manner.

"StreetTalk assists you in planning your route, and it provides turn-by-turn voice and Braille guidance for destinations including North America, Western Europe, Brazil, Australia, Hungary, and Israel."

Note: Areas covered are dependent on the version of Destinator you have installed.

I have been intrigued with the notion of using GPS as a useful travel tool for the blind since I first began to understand anything about GPS back in the early '80's. I tried one of the first GPS systems made for the blind by the Sendaro Group in the '90's. I have used the Trekker, which is now a part of the HumanWare family of products. I have also used the BrailleNote GPS.

All of these products are useful, but we must keep in mind that they are tools that when used properly can enhance our travel experience. When they are not used properly, serious problems can arise. This is true, however, with any tool used by the blind or the sighted. Modern day nail guns have made the process of driving a nail much easier. If not used properly, however, these guns can pose a great danger to the user and others. Here in part is what comes up on the opening screen of StreetTalk in the way of a warning: "The GPS is operated by the government of the United States, which is solely responsible for its accuracy and maintenance. It is the user's responsibility to use this product prudently. This product is intended to be used only as a travel aid and must not be used for any purpose requiring precise measurement or direction, distance, location, identification of hazards, or topography. StreetTalk is a navigation aid and is not intended to replace mobility tools such as a cane or guide dog. StreetTalk cannot provide information about such things as hazards along a route, weather conditions, or any other aspects of a traveler's physical environment. The user assumes complete responsibility to exercise caution and good mobility practices while operating StreetTalk."

It is important to have good travel skills to use StreetTalk, just as it is important for a sighted person to have good driving skills in order to use a GPS system. For example, if, while you are walking down a street, StreetTalk instructs you to make a turn, you must use your own judgment to decide whether or not you are close enough to the corner to make the turn.

I purchased StreetTalk at the 2006 annual convention of the NFB in July, and I have been using it daily ever since. I am quite pleased with its performance. Destinator is an off-the-shelf, affordable product available for PAC Mate users; StreetTalk is the application that makes the Destinator product accessible.

StreetTalk allows you to create a route from one location to another and get turn-by-turn directions. For example, here is how I will travel from my house to the state convention hotel in Cuyahoga Falls: StreetTalk tells me that the total distance to travel is 123.58 miles. I travel straight on N. 4th St. for 518 yards towards Morse Rd. I turn left on Morse RD and travel for 827 feet. I then turn right on I-71 N and travel for 93.72 miles. I then keep right on Exit 209, I-76 /US-224, Lodi/Akron and travel for 0.61 miles, keep right on I-76 E./US-224 and travel for 17.82 miles. I am then told to keep right on I-76 E and travel for 1.76 miles. Then keep right on I-76 E and travel for 3.55 miles. Then, keep left on Exit 23b N, OH-8 N, Cuyahoga Falls, and travel for 5.10 miles, and keep right on Broad Blvd., and travel for 490 yards. Turn left on Broad Blvd., and travel for 341 yards. Believe it or not, I am then told to make a U turn on Broad Blvd. or travel for 460 feet, turn right on Front St., and travel for 63 feet. That completes the route, and I arrive at my destination.

While you are traveling, StreetTalk can tell your current speed. You can find out where you are by address and also by intersection. You can determine your current longitude and latitude. StreetTalk will also announce upcoming points of interest.

Points of interest are locations on a map that travelers might wish to know about, such as ATM's, banks, gas stations, grocery stores, hotels, libraries, restaurants, schools, and more. You can set StreetTalk to announce any or all upcoming points of interest by category, so that, as you travel down any street or highway, you automatically know what is around you. It is also possible to query to StreetTalk for what is around you at a given location even if points of interest are not set to be announced automatically.

While in Louisville for the national convention, I used StreetTalk to plot a route to a wild life refuge. That is when I first began to learn how accurate it is. Its turn-by-turn directions were right on and definitely needed. By the time we started back to the hotel, it was dark, and we were in an unfamiliar area. It was great to be able to navigate.

I have used StreetTalk to travel to a friend's house on foot. When it announced that I had arrived at my destination, I reached out and touched the steps with my cane.

Recently Crystal McClain and I were traveling to a library in separate vehicles for a seminar conducted by our Miami Valley Chapter. She got her directions from Map Quest, and I used StreetTalk. Although at one point we were side by side on the highway, I got there before she did.

If you divert from a planned route, you can retrace your steps, or StreetTalk will automatically recalculate the route for you. This program is a powerful tool.

StreetTalk has some obvious weaknesses which I hope will be improved upon in future upgrades to the product. Currently it is not possible to explore an area and learn street names that are not part of a specific route. Because Destinator is made for vehicle travel, it directs to the nearest highway to get to your destination. This is not helpful when walking or traveling by city bus. Understandably StreetTalk uses a lot of memory. It is important to close the program properly, which I was not doing when I first started using it.

This is a new product, and I expect to see some improvements soon. But I can say now that StreetTalk is well worth its price. To get more information or to purchase the product, call Universal Low Vision Aids at (614) 224-6465. Outside Columbus call 1-800-369-0347.

Our plan is to have demonstrations of StreetTalk, Trekker, and BrailleNote GPS at the state convention in November. Join us and learn more about these products.

Canes Then and Now
by Richard Payne

Editor's Note: Richard Payne is a member of the board of directors of the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio and president of our Miami Valley Chapter. He has led an interesting life as a cane user. Here is what he has to say about some of his experiences:

Before losing my vision, I knew nothing about blindness. If I thought about blind people at all, I pictured them using sticks to feel their way around. When I lost my sight, I let people push me from behind to guide me. I even let them put their arms around me to lead me. But I was not about to use one of those sticks.

The Arkansas School for the Blind was where I got my first real introduction to the

skills of blindness. The instructor at the school began to teach me how to find my way around the room and building where I was staying. She then gave me a (not-so-long) white cane. It didn't take me long to learn how to move around the school.

I soon learned that a store was not very far from the school, and I started going there pretty often. One afternoon I took off with some other students, and instead of going to the intersection to cross with the light, we jay walked. The school was at the bottom of a hill on a busy street. I grabbed a friend's arm, and we started to run across the street. As our luck would have it, a car was coming down the hill at a pretty good speed, and the rest is history. The car hit me first and sent me flying high across the street. It hit my not-so-sighted guide, and he went up in the air and crashed into the windshield of the car. We had to be rushed to the hospital. The next day the superintendent of the school said he would not punish us because he felt that the crash itself should have taught us enough.

Since those early days of cane travel, I have tried a variety of canes, including some I have made myself. I have also had some other interesting experiences with canes. Paul Dressell and I chat at most conventions, and he likes to remind me of the time I lost my cane down a hotel elevator shaft and the student division sold it back to me. I also once lost my cane in a river while canoeing.

To show you how far I have come, my white cane recently fell apart, and the first thing I did was to replace it. I realize now more than ever that the long white cane does have a place in my hand.

Editor's Note: Last year our blind seniors spent much of their time at convention organizing a division. This year they have planned an exciting and informative Possibilities Fair for seniors and their families. What follows is the flyer about this event that we have been mailing to senior centers in the northern half of the state. It will be extremely useful to any senior losing sight. Please help us spread the word.

Possibilities Fair

For Seniors Who Are Losing Vision and for Their Families

Seniors who are losing vision are often unaware of the resources and services available to them. The National Federation of the Blind of Ohio Possibilities Fair will provide a hands-on opportunity for those fifty-five and older who are losing vision (and for their families) to learn how to improve their lives.

Imagine Independence

Friday, November 4, 2005

1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

Free Admission

Sheraton Suites Hotel

1989 Front Street

Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio

For more information contact:

Virginia Mann (440) 943-5834

Linda Freund (440) 428-8773

Mary Weldon (330) 773-5253

Natty Bumpo with Sleep Shades
by Jerry Whittle

Editor's Note: The following article by Jerry Whittle appeared in a 2005 issue of the Pathfinder, the newsletter of the National Federation of the Blind of Louisiana. This article falls in the category of "How do blind people do it?" Here is what Jerry Whittle has to say:</I>

In the fall of 2004 several students and staff members of the Louisiana Center for the Blind participated in a special event sponsored by the Bossier City-Shreveport chapter of the World Turkey Federation (WTF). Obtaining a grant and raising their own funds, the WTF invited us over to a large banquet, and we were all treated royally, enjoying excellent food and winning some great door prizes. We also eagerly bought raffle tickets for a chance to win several firearms, including rifles and shotguns. It was obvious to all of us that the WTF members were excited about the opportunity to teach us all how to shoot guns and to hunt deer. They passionately wished to provide those of us who were blind the once-in-a-lifetime chance to hunt for and perhaps kill a deer.

The following weekend we traveled sixty miles to a firing range near Minden, Louisiana. Several WTF members were on hand to teach us gun safety and allow us to do some target shooting using high-powered shotguns and muzzleloaders. All the students from the Center wore sleepshades, including one of our sighted graduate students in the Louisiana Tech University orientation and mobility program. On the firing range I selected a .50 caliber Knight muzzle-loading rifle, and my sighted mentor showed me how to use it, including how to rest the stock and how to squeeze the trigger rather than pull it. He placed a sight on the rifle that had been made for a .44 caliber revolver, stating that the shorter scope would allow him to sight for me better, and he stood behind me and told me how to move the rifle so that I was lined up with the target. We all wore earplugs, and everyone began to fire away. One of our students fired a twelve gauge shotgun with a slug next to me, and the percussion and sound shook my spleen and other internal organs.

My muzzleloader almost matched his big shotgun, and I placed five shots in the target from about fifty yards away. My mentor told me that all of them were kills, and I was ready to go hunting. Almost all of our students and staff members had equal success; some of our students had never fired a gun before and were thrilled with their success in spite of having ringing ears. When our mentors told us to come back the next morning at 3:00 a.m., we all just about had a heart attack since being there at three in the morning meant we would have to leave Ruston at about two!

Merilynn, my wife, drove all of us over to the camp in the wee hours of the morning, and mercifully we had plenty of coffee and sugar cakes to blast us into action. After milling around the camp and stocking up on sausage, biscuits, and doughnuts, we loaded into the back of flat-bottomed trucks and were driven to ground stands at strategic locations around the animal preserve. I was assigned to a very quiet location overlooking a little valley. My mentor and his girlfriend, who was there to film, walked me to the stand. I had on camouflage, and he put a gauze wrap around my face and sprayed me with some kind of chemical to kill my human scent.

It was drizzling rain when we settled into the stand. My mentor said, "I selected this place because we have plenty of mulberries, honeysuckle, and oak trees for acorns. The deer in the South are usually smaller than deer in the North because the only protein in the wild down here is mulberries and honeysuckle." Up North the deer have plenty of grain and mullet, so they are much bigger and faster. The stand was nestled among some trees and bushes, and I was well concealed. By this time it was about five in the morning, and the sun had not yet begun to rise. I sat quietly listening, and I had to fight off sleep; we all did.

Soon the sun began to rise, and the birds sang and the squirrels barked. My mentor said that he could tell some deer were near by the way the crows called and by the way the squirrels barked, coming to the ground and quickly running up the huge oaks. I put my gun on the rest and waited. In a little while he whispered, "I see a doe and a fawn about thirty yards to your left. The little fawn is at the edge of the clearing, but the doe is staying in the woods. Do you want to shoot the doe?"

Having a very strong penchant for motherhood of any kind and having the Bambi syndrome, I said, "Not particularly." But I knew that these WTF members were anxious for all of us to have a great hunting experience, so I resolved to pray that the doe would not come out and I wouldn't have to shoot her to please my devoted teacher.

The fawn played in front of me for over an hour, so close, in fact, that I could hear her eating the corn and acorns, and she often looked directly my way, wagging her little tail and frolicking in the meadow. The doe stayed low. My mentor told me all this in a hushed whisper. "The fawn has only a couple of spots on her rump, and she weighs about sixty pounds. We aren't allowed to shoot anything with spots. She could probably make it alone if you shot the doe." Luckily, the doe never appeared, but when I heard the loud report of two gunshots at another stand, instantly the fawn and doe vacated the premises.

The next day three of our students returned without the rest of us because we had made a previous commitment. Wearing sleepshades, our graduate student killed a spiked deer, about ninety-five pounds, and one of our totally blind students fired at a doe, but missed.

All of us had a great hunting experience. Even though I did not have the opportunity to fire at an animal, I still enjoyed the learning experience and being in nature with some outstanding hunters and woodsmen. Everyone pledged to return in the fall of 2005 and do some more hunting, and the wonderful members of WTF promised to accommodate us. Most important, we had an opportunity to demonstrate that the blind can enjoy hunting and nature using alternative techniques, and the WTF members gave us all the freedom we needed to be as independent as possible. It was a learning experience for both groups.

Buckeye Briefs

October is Meet the Blind Month. This is a great time to do some fundraising for your chapter and to educate the public about blindness. The Lorain County Chapter will conduct its annual hike-a-thon, the Parents Division will have its annual cane walk, the Cuyahoga Chapter is conducting a fundraiser at Wal-Mart, and Crystal McClain has arranged for a blind Federationist to make a presentation about blindness at her church. These are just a few examples of activities that will be taking place around the state for Meet the Blind Month. What will your chapter be doing? Please let Paul Dressell know what you have done so that we can list all Meet the Blind Month Activities in the next newsletter.

We are sorry to report the death of Karen Roth, who died quietly on July 11. Karen was the daughter of Colleen and Dudley Roth. Colleen is president of our Toledo Chapter. We extend our deepest sympathy to Colleen and Dudley, and we ask that you keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

At its July meeting the Cincinnati chapter invited Kelly Prescott to do a demonstration of the Trekker GPS System. Kelly won the Trekker at the 2004 national convention in Atlanta, and he now sells these units for HumanWare.

We regret to report the death of longtime Federationist the Rev. Myers Bost, who died while hospitalized on June 4. Meyers was a beloved member of our Federation family who for many years conducted the memorial service at our annual convention. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

We are saddened to report that Ken Velkovich has been hospitalized after a stroke on Wednesday, August 24. It is too soon to know what to expect, but we ask that you keep Ken in your thoughts and prayers.

On Saturday, August 13, the Miami Valley Chapter conducted an educational seminar for its members and the public. Richard Payne and Gus White made public service announcements well in advance of the event and worked hard to promote the National Federation of the Blind. The chapter wishes to thank J.W. Smith, Crystal McClain, and Eric Duffy for their participation in this event.

We are sorry to report the death on August 24 of Phil Psomas, who died as a result of complications arising from a kidney transplant. Phil and his wife Anita have been members of our Cleveland chapter for many years. Our thoughts and prayers are with Anita and the Psomas family.

The following announcement appeared in the June 22 edition of the Zanesville Times Recorder:

\$500 Donation

National Federation of the Blind, Muskingum County Chapter, donated a check for \$500 to Shirley Dickman of the visually impaired class at Rufus Putnam Elementary School. Those taking part included Richard McConnell, president; Judy Clymer, vice president; Shirley Roberts, secretary/treasurer; and Dickman. They raised the money during the year on raffle tickets and a lemonade sale. The group has seven members and meets the fourth Wednesday of each month. For information, call (740) 452-9187 or (740) 453-0176.

National Federation of the Blind of Ohio
2005 Convention Preregistration
Cuyahog Falls Sheraton Suites, November 3 through 6, 2005

Please complete and return this form by October 25, even if someone else is reserving a room for you. Mail the completed form and check made payable to NFB of Ohio for registration and meal reservations to 237 Oak St., Oberlin, OH 44074-1517. Preconvention rates are dependent on receipt of payment before the convention.

If you are preregistering and buying tickets for others, on the back of this form please list their names as they should appear on name tags. All costs will be higher if you register at convention. Ticketed activities are listed below. Indicate the number of reservations for each event.

Activities:

Friday parent or senior division buffet: \$15 (\$17 at the door)
\$8.00, twelve and under (\$10.00 at the door)

Saturday boxed lunch: \$10 (\$12 at the door)

Check one of the following lunchtime activities

- _____ Student
- _____ Parent
- _____ Senior
- _____ Other

Banquet: \$25, _____ meat \$21, _____ vegetarian
(\$27 at the door) (\$23 at the door)
Registration prior to convention: \$10
(\$15 at the door)
Total check enclosed

Registrations without payment will not be valid.

NAME: (for name tag)
ADDRESS:
CITY/STATE/ZIP:
TELEPHONE: EMAIL:

I wish to make a donation (always appreciated) of \$_____ to the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio. My check is enclosed. (Make check payable to the NFB of Ohio.)

Editor's Note: From its beginning the National Federation of the Blind has been committed to building a better future for the next generation of the blind. There is no greater evidence of this commitment than what we have done to create a solid scholarship program. This year you will meet two scholarship winners in our Ohio scholarship program at our state convention. But it is not too soon to begin thinking and planning for the 2006 NFB of Ohio scholarship program. We should all circulate forms to blind high school seniors and fulltime students in post-secondary education programs. Here is the form for the 2006 program:

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF OHIO
2006 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

In 2006 at its convention, November 16 to 19, the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio will present one \$1,500 and one \$1,000 scholarship to recognize achievement by blind post-secondary scholars. All applicants for these awards must be (1) legally blind and (2) pursuing or planning to pursue a full-time post-secondary course of study during the 2006-2007 academic year.

Criteria: Both scholarships are awarded on the basis of academic excellence, service to the community, and financial need.

Membership: The National Federation of the Blind of Ohio is an organization dedicated to creating opportunity for all blind people. Recipients of Federation scholarships need not be members of the National Federation of the Blind.

Making Application: To apply for National Federation of the Blind of Ohio scholarships, complete and return the application on the reverse side of this sheet to be received by June 1. Please provide all the applicable information requested at the bottom of this page, and attach to your application all the additional documents requested.

Winners: The Scholarship Committee reviews all applications and selects the scholarship winners. They will be notified of their selection by August 1 and will be brought to the state convention November 16 to 19 at Federation expense. This trip is separate from the scholarship grant. These winners are among Ohio's finest blind students.

The National Federation of the Blind of Ohio convention in Cleveland will be the largest gathering of blind people to occur anywhere in the state this year. You will meet other blind students and exchange information and ideas. You will also meet and talk with blind people who are successfully working in their chosen professions or occupations. State officials, legislators, and the makers and

distributors of new technology attend Federation conventions. Above all, a broad cross section of the most active segment of the blind population of Ohio will be present to discuss common problems and plan for concerted action. It will be an interesting and exciting weekend.

Awards: Scholarship awards to the winners, who must themselves participate throughout the convention to receive the awards, will be made during the banquet on Saturday evening, November 18.

The Jennica Ferguson Memorial Scholarship, \$1,500, is presented by the NFB of Ohio in loving memory of an extraordinary young woman who died at the age of eighteen but who grew up to embody the best the Federation has to offer the world.

The NFB of Ohio Scholarship, \$1,000, is presented by the members of the Ohio affiliate.

Attach the following documents to your completed application:

1. Send us a letter: we want to get to know you. What information on your application needs or deserves further explanation? How have you dealt with your blindness? What are your hopes and dreams?

2. Send two letters of recommendation.

3. Provide transcripts through December 2005 from the institution now being attended and from all other post-secondary institutions attended. If you have not yet attended a post-secondary institution or are not about to complete at least one term of study, send your high school transcript.

4. Send a letter from a state officer or chapter president of the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio showing that you have discussed your scholarship application with that officer. The state president, Barbara Pierce, (440) 775-2216, will provide contact information upon request.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF OHIO SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Read reverse side of form for instructions and explanation. Form may be photocopied, but only if reverse side is also included.

To apply for a scholarship, complete this application form and mail completed application and attachments to Jennifer Kennedy, chair, National Federation of the Blind of Ohio Scholarship Committee, 1445 Heartland Ave, Orrville, OH 44667; phone, 330-465-6245; email, <froggie173@aol.com>. Applications must be received by June 1, 2006.

Name (please include any student or other names by which you have been known):

Date of birth:

Spring '06 school address:

School phone number:

Home (summer) address:

Home phone number:

Cell phone number: _____ Email address:

Institution attended in spring semester, 2006, with class standing (freshman, senior, etc.):

Cumulative grade point at this institution:

Institution to be attended in fall of 2006, with class standing:

List all post-secondary institutions attended with highest class standing attained and cumulative grade point average:

High school attended and cumulative grade point:

Vocational goal:

State your major or proposed major:

Awards and honors (attach list if necessary):

Community service (attach list if necessary):

(See reverse side for list of required attachments.)

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

September 16-18 Parents Fall retreat weekend, Hamilton, Ohio

September 24 NFB-O Board Meeting, Columbus, also deadline for submitting Gavel Award materials

October 1-31 is Meet the Blind Month

October 13 Room release date for NFB-O convention

October 15 White Cane Safety Day

November 1 Beginning Braille Readers Are Leaders Contest

November 3-6 NFB-O Convention, Cuyahoga, Falls

December 1 deadline for expressing interest in attending Washington Seminar

December 15 Deadline for submitting materials for the next Newsletter

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