

SUMMER/FALL
2011



A publication of the
National Federation of the Blind of Ohio

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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. We are changing what it means to be blind.

The NFB of Ohio has fourteen local chapters, one for at-large members, and special divisions for diabetics, merchants, students, seniors, parents of blind children, guide-dog users, and those interested in Braille. This semi-annual newsletter is produced in large print and on CD and is circulated by email. For information about the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio or to make address changes or be added to the mailing list, call (440) 775-2216 or email bbpierce@pobox.com. For information about NFB-NEWSLINE, our free digitized newspaper-reading service, call (866) 391-0841. Local NEWSLINE numbers are: 330-247-1241 (Akron), 330-409-1900 (Canton), 513-297-1521 (Cincinnati), 216-453-2090 (Cleveland), and 614-448-1673 (Columbus).

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The NFB of Ohio has been a member of the Better Business Bureau since 2000.



From the President's Desk by J. Webster Smith

For some time I've been thinking about issues of expansion and inclusion in the NFB of Ohio. By this I mean, why is it that we don't have even more blind and visually impaired people in our ranks? As we prepare for our state convention this November, I thought I would address at least some of the reasons why I think people should consider becoming active members of the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio.

You know some of the excuses people mention for not joining, right? I'm sure that this is not an exhaustive list, but some of the ones that I have heard over the years include:

"I'm not a joiner."

"Those people can't teach me anything."

"I don't agree with some of the philosophy of the NFB."

"I can't get to meetings."

"I'm not that blind yet."

"I'm doing all right by myself."

"What can that group do for me anyway?"

You've heard some of these and probably others as well. So let me give you three reasons why I think each of us should consider, not only attending our state convention this year, but becoming an active member of the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio.

1. You never really know when you'll need your extended family.

The NFB of Ohio is a family in every sense of the word. We care deeply for each other, and, when one of us is in need, we do all we can to be of assistance. A common bond unites us, a commitment to ensuring equality, opportunity, and security for all blind and visually impaired people wherever they live in the state of Ohio. So imagine what it would be like to be able to tap into such a support system and to call on appropriate members of your family when necessary. It is interesting that many people call on us only when they really need somebody to fight for them or advocate on their behalf. We are willing to help when appropriate, but why is it that many people call on us only then, rather than being a part of the organization before the crises hit? It's like those family members whom you hear from only when they need something. I challenge you to be an active part of this family so that, when and if you ever need us, you won't have to call very loud or jump through hoops because, though we do outreach when we can, we always stick together and fight for our own.

2. We are in this struggle to deal with blindness and educate the public together, whether we like it or not.

As blind and visually impaired people, whether we like it or not, we are often judged and treated like other blind people whom we

do not or may never know. Our blindness inextricably links us so completely that we do not experience isolated events in our community, or at least not for very long. We live in foolish denial if we think that we are not affected by what happens to our brothers and sisters, both positively and negatively. Believe me when I assure you that the success of a blind man who drove a car last January will eventually trickle down to you as a blind person in some way. Conversely, the erroneous depiction of a blind or visually impaired person or situation in the media will have that same trickle-down effect.

In addition to this cause-and-effect relationship, we have safety and strength in numbers. It should come as no surprise that you will feel alone and isolated if you choose to be alone and isolate yourself from like-minded individuals. I believe that some of you reading this now have no idea how many of your brothers and sisters are out there dealing with issues similar to yours and are building effective coalitions to address many of those issues. Quite frankly, we will be taken much more seriously by agencies, the state legislature, and other entities when we are not perceived as isolated individuals coping with unique situations but as a significant population that demands to be taken seriously.

3. It provides an opportunity to pay it forward.

I want to be candid here because for some time I have been concerned that what some call the super blind or very successful blind people really don't choose to be or think they need to be involved with movements like the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio. Unfortunately, this I-am-better-than-the-rest-of-you phenomenon is not new; in

fact, Dr. Jernigan addressed it in his 1990 banquet address speech entitled "The Federation at 50":

No blind person in this country is untouched by our successes or, for that matter, our failures, and no blind person can avoid identification with the rest of us. This is true regardless of how a blind person feels about it and regardless of how we feel about it. Blindness is a visible characteristic, and all of us are judged by each other whether we like it or not. The feeling I have toward those blind persons who try to hide in sighted society is not anger but pity, and, yes, I am talking about those who are regarded (and regard themselves) as highly successful.

So there it is. Even in 1990, the year I joined the NFB, this issue was a prominent one. So let me be perfectly clear: if any of you reading this consider yourselves to be the super-blind, by all means, we need you. And you could view your time with us as an opportunity to help others and to give back or, as the phrase today goes, "pay it forward." Blind people need as many role models as possible; and, whether you will admit it or not, much, if not all, of your success is and has been due to the struggles and efforts of many blind people in movements like ours. In fact, many of the opportunities that you have received and are experiencing are a direct result of those efforts. None of us can afford to operate under the impression that "I made it on my own, so you should be able to do so as well."

When I joined the Federation in 1990, I might have been considered one of those super-blind, successful individuals. I had a great job and family, owned my own home,

and by all measurable standards was living the American dream. So what has kept me in the Federation all these years? Simply the fact that we are an extended family, we share a bond that I can find nowhere else, and participation in the Federation gives me an opportunity to give back to others some of what I have received. Maya Angelou once said,

“Those who learn should teach, and those who get should give.” I hope that you will consider attending our state convention (all the details you will need you will find in this issue of the newsletter), but, more important, I hope you will consider becoming an active member of our movement, because we need you more than ever before.

Make Plans to Attend the 2011 Convention by Mary Pool and Sheri Albers

Editor's note: Mary Pool has chaired the Convention Arrangements Committee for many years. In preparation for Mary's well-deserved retirement from this responsibility after this convention, J.W. has asked Sheri Albers to share this responsibility with her. This is what they say about our upcoming state convention November 4 to 6:

It is now August, and we are looking forward to the state convention in Dayton. We will be at the Wyndham Garden Dayton South Hotel, 31 Prestige Plaza Drive, Miamisburg, (937) 434-8030. The convention schedule is not completely settled though we can report that technology and exhibits, including the popular resale table, will be open from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Friday. The board meeting will begin at noon as it did last year, and J.W. assures us that it will last only an hour. We hope that this schedule will enable everyone to travel Friday morning and therefore save on one night of hotel expense.

Our room rate is \$75 a night plus tax for all rooms. Remember that this excellent rate vanishes when our room block is released on October 13, so make your reservation today by calling the hotel. Tell the reservations clerk that you are part of the NFB group, and be

sure that the hotel is aware of any special needs when making your room reservations. For example, if you need a wheelchair-accessible room or a room close to the elevators, let them know. The accompanying article provides some important information about the layout of our hotel.

Be sure to preregister for the convention because doing so gives us more accurate information about meal counts and room setups. To encourage you to preregister, we provide some saving to those who do so. The deadline for preregistering is October 21. I urge you to take this deadline seriously. We often hear pleas to grant the preregistration discounts to late registrants because the member really intended to get the form and check in by the deadline but just didn't get organized soon enough. We provide as much time as we can, but we must enforce the cut-off date so that we have time to process the registrations we have before leaving for the convention.

Here are some important things to remember when planning for the convention. The first full convention event is the board of directors meeting on Friday at noon. This will be your first chance to meet our national representative, Ever Lee Hairston, and our scholarship winners. Ever Lee is a member of the

board of directors of the NFB, and second vice president of the California affiliate. She is now retired but had a distinguished career in New Jersey, retiring as program director in the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse.

The exhibit and technology room will be open on Friday from 11:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. We are working to get representatives from manufacturers such as HumanWare, Freedom Scientific, and GW Micro to participate. It is important that you stop in and meet these representatives. Let them know that you appreciate their participation in our convention, and take the time to look at their products. As a state fundraiser we will have a Pampered Chef table in the exhibit room. This is an excellent line of kitchen products and equipment. Anyone who loves to cook or needs a gift for such a person should not miss this display.

On Friday afternoon the Parents Division will conduct a workshop from two to five and will plan to have dinner together afterwards, though it is not yet clear whether this will be in the hotel or outside. The Membership Committee will also conduct an organization-building workshop beginning at 1:30 on Friday. Every chapter should be represented at this meeting, and in fact it will provide a shot in the arm for all Federationists. That afternoon will also feature a workshop for new members and anyone who wants to gain a bet-

ter understanding of the NFB's philosophy of blindness.

Various activities and committee meetings will take place Friday evening. Sheri Albers is organizing a Hobby Lobby right after dinner. People who enjoy various hobbies will be present to talk to and help those interested in learning about them. The Ohio Association of Blind Merchants will conduct a meeting Friday evening as well.



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. It should be printed out and,

if possible, accompanied by a Braille copy. If you cannot transcribe it into Braille, do not be discouraged. The important thing is that we have a print copy from which to work.

Resolutions must be sent no later than one week before the Resolutions Committee meeting. This year resolutions must be received in either the Athens office or the home of Paul Dressell, the committee chair, by Friday, October 28, 2011. 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 meeting. Resolutions for which the committee votes to recommend 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 Nominating Committee will also meet briefly late Friday evening.

Don't miss the NAPUB fund-raiser late Friday evening. For the first time ever in Ohio we will present a radio play reading. We have chosen the Fibber McGee and Molly Show "Fibber Has a Happy Face." Bob Pierce is the director, and eight Braille-reading Federationists will read the parts of this show from the forties. It should be a lot of fun. The admission fee is \$5, and proceeds will fund programs that promote the use of Braille in Ohio. Don't miss our president as Fibber McGee and Deborah Kendrick as Molly.

At 7:00 a.m. Saturday the Diabetes Action Network will hold a breakfast meeting in or near the restaurant. The National Association to Promote the Use of Braille will have a continental breakfast meeting that morning as well. If you want breakfast with NAPUB, be sure to sign up for it on the convention registration form.

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 we will hear from many other interesting speakers.

The noon lunch break provides time for division and committee meetings as well as other activities. This year we will observe the two-hour noon break. As always, box lunches will be available for those who order them in advance. Download the registration form from our Website <nfbohio.org>, or mark the convention registration form at the end of this newsletter or folded into the CD envelope if you would like to order a lunch, and indicate which meeting you will be attending.

The second general session will begin at 2:00 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. sharp.

Don't miss the social hour from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. The banquet will begin at 7:00. This is always the high point of a Federation convention. We are already looking forward to Ever Lee's banquet address; she is one of the Federation's truly motivational speakers. Individual and chapter awards as well as two scholarships will also be presented during the banquet.

As always we will conduct money for the movement after the banquet, so chapters and divisions, as well as individuals, will want to be considering their gifts and pledges. The after-banquet entertainment will be provided by the Back 40 Blues Band, and host chapter president Richard Payne says that we can sing along if we want to. It sounds like fun. This party is always a good time to make new friends and renew acquaintances.

We have scheduled a leadership breakfast for chapter and division presidents and vice presidents or their designees on Sunday morning. Do not sign up for this breakfast unless you are a state board member or in one of these leadership categories.

The Sunday morning session will begin at 9:00 a.m. with a memorial service.

Immediately following this service, we will move into the general business of the affiliate and elections. The convention will adjourn no later than noon. Federation conventions are always stimulating and reinvigorating. Sometimes they are life-changing. Please don't miss this one; you will always be sorry if you do—and so will we.

Navigating the Wyndham Garden Dayton South Hotel **by Barbara Pierce**

The first thing you need to keep in mind about the Wyndham Garden is that it is a holodome property. That is, its central architectural feature is an atrium with recreational facilities: pool, hot tubs, pool table, and maybe a game room by convention time. The guest rooms on all three floors circle this atrium. The rooms on the inside of the circle have sliding glass doors that overlook the pool and room doors on the opposite wall that give access to the corridors that give access to the outside and lead to the public rooms of the hotel. You cannot lock the glass sliding doors from outside the room, so you should not leave your room that way unless someone can lock the door from the inside after you leave.

The main entrance of the hotel is on its east wall, toward the north end. You pass through two sets of doors to reach the lobby. Just inside the inner doors of this main entrance, on both the left and right side, are small board-type meeting rooms, and the front desk is on the west wall of the lobby, not far in front of you. If you turn right (north) at the desk, you can turn left (west) at the north end of the desk and walk toward the ballroom, which runs north/south along the west side of the hotel. A foyer along the length of the ballroom gives access to the various sections of the ballroom on the west side of the foyer. If, instead of walking south along the ballroom, you turn first right and then left, you will find the restaurant and bar at the northwest corner of the building.

To reach the guest rooms, return to the front desk and turn left so that you are walking south toward the atrium. On the right you

will pass an archway that gives access to the ballroom foyer about halfway down its length. Continuing south along the carpeted corridor, you will find sectional seating in the middle of the hall at a point when the space opens into an art gallery. At the south end of this central seating you can angle east or west to find corridors giving access to the wooden room doors, which have raised and Braille room numbers as required by the ADA. If you choose to go straight south instead of angling, you will reach the northernmost of the two elevators. Turning left or right at the elevator will take you straight east or west to doors giving access to stairwells. The one on the east side is door 1, and the one on the west end is door 4. At the ground-floor level these stairwells, as well as doors 2 and 3 at the far ends of the corridors, each contain a door to the outside, a door to the atrium, the door you just walked through, and a door to the connecting guest-room corridor. The stairs to the upper floors are also in this uncarpeted area. By the way, your room key will open the outside doors, which are kept locked. You will find the box for inserting the key card to the right of the door on the outside. The grassy dog relief area is just outside door 4. A trash receptacle will be available outside that door.

To grasp the guest-room layout, think of the hotel as an arrow with the corridor leading from the front desk to the elevator already mentioned as the shaft of the arrow. The arrowhead is the guest-room area with the pool atrium in the center of the arrowhead. Parallel corridors make a circuit around the arrowhead with a flattened tip, that is, not coming to a point. The south elevator actually

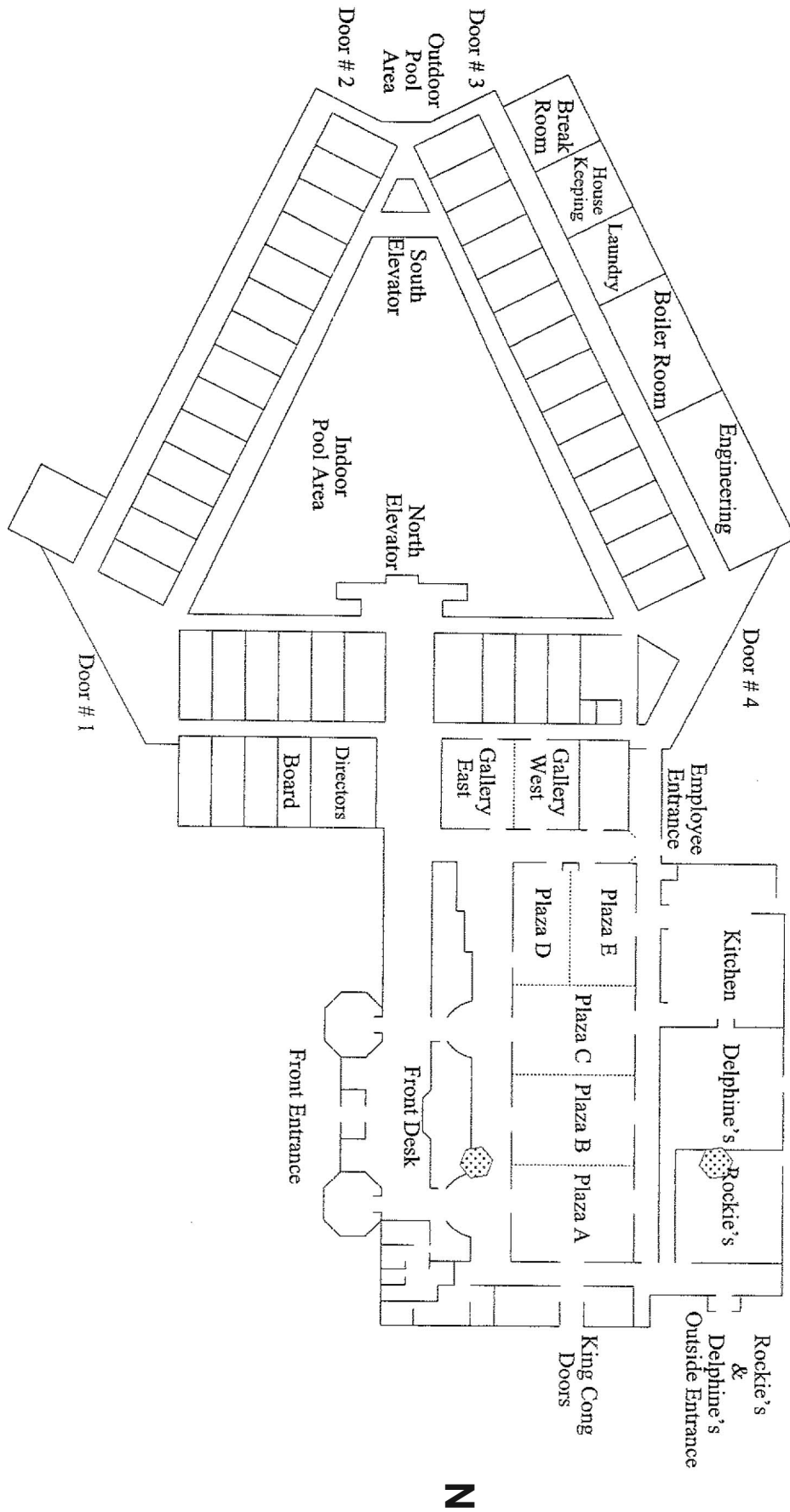
faces south and is located at the extreme southern end of the hotel. The innermost of the parallel corridors circles the atrium with a chest-high wall separating the hallway from the drop to the atrium. The outside wall of this corridor contains the glass sliding doors to the rooms. Most of the ground-floor rooms are located only on the outside wall of the hotel, though near the northern elevator the wheelchair-accessible rooms are located on

both sides of the outer hallway. If you need an accessible room, be sure to mention that fact when you make your reservation.

If you take the time to study this description, it should give you a place to begin learning the layout of the convention hotel. Remember that we will be at this facility for the next four years, so you will have plenty of time to become familiar with it.

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, P.O. Box 458, Athens, Ohio 45701, 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.”



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Meet the 2011 Scholarship Winners from Ohio by Barbara Pierce

Ohio was lucky enough this year to have two national scholarship winners. Sandy Sommers was a state scholarship winner in 2010, and we urged her to apply for a national scholarship this spring. She is certainly glad that she did because she was chosen as one of the thirty winners, and she received a \$3,000 National Federation of the Blind Scholarship at the banquet on July 8.

Sandy is a student at Stark State, where she is studying to become a physical therapy assistant. Sandy and her husband have three teenage children. Several years ago she was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa. She was of course distressed at the news. But, knowing that her children had a chance of inheriting the disorder from her, she marshaled all her determination to return to school and train for a job that she would find satisfying. She wanted her children to know, if they someday had to face RP, that it did not have to ruin their lives. She had very little idea of how to achieve her goal, but she did not let that discourage her. Then she heard about the NFB of Ohio's scholarship program and applied. Now at least she knows where to turn for the answers she needs, and she is still earning a four-point grade point average.

Aleeha Dudley is Ohio's other national scholarship winner. She has just graduated from National Trail High School and will be attending Miami University this fall. If you know anything about the NFB scholarship program, you already know that the competition among high school seniors for places in the scholarship class is very tough indeed.

Aleeha is determined to study veterinary medicine and specialize in equine medicine, treating horses with acupuncture.

Aleeha rides and shows horses, though not in Prebble County, where she lives. Fair officials ruled that as a blind person she could not compete. So she competes in Indiana, where equal-access legislation prevents this kind of discrimination. Her friends, who did not appreciate the decision of their county fair officials, have moved to the Indiana competition as well. With such determination and her A minus average, our money is on Aleeha to do exactly what she decides to in the coming years.

Shivaji Kuhmar, one of our two state scholarship winners, is vice president of the Capital Chapter and a doctoral student at the Ohio State University. He is writing his dissertation on the impact the emergence of India and China as world powers is likely to have on international relations in coming decades.

Shivaji is one of our 2011 scholarship winners, so you can talk about his dissertation with him at the convention this fall. This will not be his first convention. When he came to Ohio State, he felt the lack of blind friends, so he researched consumer organizations and decided that the NFB was the one for him. He learned the dates of our most recent convention in Cincinnati and got on a bus to go to it, and he has been increasingly active in the NFB since.

Ryan Beyer, our other 2011 scholarship winner, is at the opposite end of the postsecondary education spectrum. This spring he graduated from Perry High School, and he will enter the University of Toledo this fall. He plans to major in mechanical engineering. In addition to carrying an impressive academic load of advanced placement courses and a

lot of math and science, Ryan was a diver on his school's swimming team and captain of the cross country team. He uses a cane in unfamiliar places like his college campus this fall, and he depends on JAWS to work on the computer. He did not know much about the NFB before he applied for our scholarships,

but he reports that he is looking forward to learning more and getting to know the folks in the Science and Engineering Division.

There you have the Ohio and national and state scholarship winners for 2011. Please make a point of getting to know them. They are all interesting and talented people.

The Ohio Business Enterprise Program in 2011 and Beyond by Eric Duffy

Editor's note: Eric Duffy is first vice president of the NFB of Ohio. For many years he has worked with Ohio vendors. He wrote the following article to report to us all on recent events in the Business Enterprise Program. This is what he says:

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) is the single most important employment program for the blind in the country today. To my mind it is equally clear that the Ohio's BEP has been damaged by dissension and controversy for many years. But positive changes may be in the works. This is something that we must all work toward. Those who are not BEP operators may reasonably ask why the Federation should be concerned about the program since operators have their own representative committee. They have a grievance process that they must use when they believe that they or the program has been harmed by program administrators. In fact some people have asked me directly why as a leader in the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio I put so much time and energy into matters related to the Business Enterprise Program. The answer is that it is in the NFB's best interest and it is important to rehabilitation generally to have a strong BEP Program in Ohio again,

as we had for many years in the past. We must do our part to see that we do. The Ohio Association of Blind Merchants (OABM) is our division giving blind vendors a voice in our organization. We have the responsibility to support the division and to ensure that its actions fall within our organization's philosophy and principles. When those requirements are met, we must support the division and its leaders, even when their positions are not favored by agency administrators, BEP staff, and even some operators.

Since its beginning the Ohio Association of Blind Merchants has spent much of its time working on grievances to support operators, dealing with rule changes, and in general doing what I call damage control. Program administrators should have a good relationship, not only with the elected representative committee for blind operators, but with the organized blind as well. The NFB of Ohio wants to support the program and the agency as much as possible, but it is always our duty to act in the best interest of the blind (including BEP operators), even when that means opposing the agency.

I am cautiously optimistic that we may be approaching a point at which we can begin working with BEP officials in partnership

rather than in opposition. However, this will not happen overnight and without a true desire for change on both sides. For our part, when the agency extends a hand in friendship or requests our support, we must recognize the gesture and accept it willingly. We must make a concerted effort to acknowledge actions beneficial to the program and to extend a supporting hand when we can.

By the same token the agency must see the OABM as a valuable partner to be invited to the table before major program changes are made and not an organization that it must deal with only when forced to do so. Staff and operators should be encouraged to participate in the NFB's BLAST conference nationally and meetings or workshops conducted by the OABM. Gestures like these can foster better relations and ultimately benefit the program.

Why do I think such change is possible? I began to think so when Dan Connors became Director of the Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired, (BSVI). I believe Dan has a good understanding of blindness and respects the Federation. That is a good start for any director. I became more optimistic when Kevin Miller was appointed as the Administrator of the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (ORSC). Kevin has used a common-sense approach to solving several BEP problems quickly after they were brought to his attention. He has sent the signal he is willing to do something if it seemed to him to be the right thing to do. He was not inclined to listen to his legal department and beat operators down just because he had the muscle to do it. In other words, he showed a commitment to the spirit and not just the letter of the law.

Last spring Dan Connors asked Terry Smith, director of the Tennessee agency for

the blind, to evaluate Ohio's program and make recommendations about how best to move it forward. It was our OABM President Steve Vincke who made this recommendation. Both Dan and Steve are to be congratulated for making this happen, and Terry is to be commended for his work. Terry Smith is a nationally known leader in BEP and runs a strong program and has a reputation of having a good relationship with operators. It was not always this way. Terry himself points that out in his report. He does so to illustrate that change is possible.

Here are some of the observations and comments from Mr. Smith's report on Ohio's program. The entire report can be obtained from the Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired and can be found both on the NEWSLINE sponsor channel and the NFB of Ohio Website. By way of introduction Mr. Smith says:

The Consultant was retained to assist the Ohio Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired in a strategic planning initiative for its Business Enterprises Program. Ohio's Business Enterprises operates under the authority of the Randolph Sheppard Act found at 20 U.S.C. 107 and Ohio Revised Code 3304.28 et. Seq. In FY 2009, 114 blind Operators generated over \$18 million in annual sales with each operator earning an average of approximately \$35,669 per year. The median income was \$34,389. In 2010 101 operators generated sales slightly over \$16.8 million, and average earnings for Ohio operators were \$37,865. The median was \$30,918. The Program is relatively large in terms of the number of facilities when compared to other states and provides some excellent entrepreneurial opportunities for those licensed blind

operators who participate in the Program. The state is blessed with several federal locations, including a military installation, that provide lucrative opportunities for blind operators. The Program also enjoys a strong priority on most state properties by virtue of its Little Randolph Sheppard Act. State prisons are the exception to the priority, which is unfortunate since prisons offer lucrative opportunities for operators in many states.

There are many positive things happening with the Ohio BEP. The agency has demonstrated a willingness to advocate on behalf of its operators as evidenced by the filing of arbitration complaints against the air force and United States Postal Service. [I must interrupt here to say that the NFB of Ohio and the OABM had to force the agency to exercise the Randolph-Sheppard priority with Wright Patterson Air force Base, but back to the report.]

It is aggressively pursuing locations on the campus of Ohio State University. There is a very strong Kennelly (interstate rest areas) program that provides entrepreneurial opportunities for 34 operators. The training program for new operators is state of the art and is the first such training program to be offered by any state entirely online. Ohio is one of a handful of programs that allow blind operators to file their reports and pay their fees online. An Ohio operator provides troop dining services at Wright Patterson Air Force Base without using a teaming partner, which some states would be reluctant to do, and this is viewed as a strong demonstration of confidence in the abilities of the blind operator.

Despite these positive aspects of the Program, there are significant problems with respect to the administration of the Program as they relate to the relationship between the

operators (the OVRC especially) and agency management. It appears that strides have been made with respect to the concept of active participation, but further progress is needed.

Phase 1

Phase 1 of the project was the evaluation and assessment phase, in which the consultant familiarized himself with BSVI's BEP operations. He attended the Ohio Vendors Representative Committee meeting on March 18, 2011, to observe the OVRC meeting and to discuss the strategic planning initiative. He visited facilities and talked with operators in the Cleveland area on April 27-28 and in Columbus May 10-11. He met with BEP staff on May 12 and attended and presented at the annual operators meeting on May 13. He met with in person or interviewed by telephone most members of the OVRC and alternates. The consultant also interviewed key management staff including Stephen Moore, Ed Winkfield, Lisa Kemp, and Cindy Markin. He met with BSVI Director Dan Connors. He also met with or talked by telephone with three of the BEP specialists.

He requested and was provided copies of Ohio's Little Randolph Sheppard Act, the BEP rules and regulations, policies and procedures, profit and loss statements for all vending facilities, program financial reports, the FY 2009 and 2010 RSA-15 Reports, minutes of recent OVRC meetings, job descriptions for BEP staff positions, any relevant attorney general opinions, and demographic data about the operators. These materials were reviewed in detail to gain a better understanding of the Program.

At the consultant's request, a survey was mailed by the Agency to each blind operator participating in the Program and BEP staff. The purpose was to ensure that all licensed

blind operators and staff had an opportunity to provide feedback. A total of 40 operators responded to the survey, which is a response rate of over 40 percent, which is less than desired but still a strong representative sample. Nine BEP staff completed a survey. Completed surveys were mailed confidentially directly to the consultant, who tabulated the results. Those results are attached to this report.

Observations and Findings

Below are some of the consultant's observations during Phase 1 of the evaluation process. They are not listed in any order of priority. They are presented with no value judgments or blame attached. Having said that, some of the observations may appear to be critical. That is unavoidable to a certain extent, but the intent is not to affix blame on any individuals. The purpose is to put issues on the table for discussion and consideration at future planning sessions. It is conceivable that some of the observations are not accurate and can be disregarded. A discussion of several of the observations appears later in the report.

The observations are grouped in several broad categories for easier reference. Again, the categories are not presented in order of importance.

Strategic Planning Initiative

1. Most operators and BEP staff who were interviewed see the strategic planning initiative as a positive. However, survey results indicate that almost half of the operators were not even aware of the strategic planning initiative, which is surprising.

2. Operators and staff alike indicated that they hope the strategic planning process will result in a better working relationship between the operators and agency and a greater degree

of trust.

3. Some operators have an unrealistic expectation that the consultant will be able to offer a list of solutions and recommendations that will fix what is wrong with the BEP. Those solutions and fixes must come from the OVRC and agency staff in the next phase of the strategic planning process.

[I interrupt here to ask why so few operators seemed to be aware of the strategic planning initiative. The agency should have encouraged the involvement of all operators and the organized blind.]

There is a history of an inordinate number of grievances filed by operators, and this litigation and the threat of litigation has had an adverse effect on the program.

[I agree with this conclusion for the past eight years, but I can say there were many, many years with very few grievances were filed over a twenty-year period. Now back to the report:]

The agency's past practice of denying grievances may be in conflict with the Randolph-Sheppard Act and the implementing regulations. C.F.R. 395.13 says any blind vendor "dissatisfied with any state licensing agency action arising from the operation or administration of the vending facility program" may request a fair hearing. There is some indication that the policy of denying grievances has changed, but it is still an issue in the minds of some operators. The agency may want to seek technical assistance from RSA on when it is appropriate to deny such a request. The practice of the agency of involving attorneys in all grievances places operators at a disadvantage in that they have to hire attorneys at their own expense to level the playing field when contesting an agency action. The one benefit of doing this is that it

may discourage frivolous grievances. Two of the three active grievances came about as the result of adding vending to existing facilities. A definitive policy on how such additions should be made might have prevented those grievances. A policy has since been developed and is still being tweaked.

[I believe that the practice of denying grievances has changed largely due to the efforts of Dan Connors, but involving the legal department in grievances should be a last resort. Every effort should be made to solve grievances at the lowest possible level. The following is listed under Program Performance. I find it disturbing:]

Gross sales have declined in recent years as have the number of vending facility operations. In 2009 114 operators generated \$18 million in sales, while in 2010 the number of operators dropped to only 101, who generated approximately \$16.8 million. Both are areas of concern for operators and staff. The average income per operator in Ohio was \$37,865 in 2010 and \$35,669 in 2009, which were significantly below the national averages. In 2009 (the most recent year for which federal figures are available from RSA), Ohio operators earned approximately 67 percent of the national average, which was \$51,654. On one hand this is surprising considering the number of lucrative facilities in Ohio. However, the median income was \$33,389, which is much closer to the national median of \$34,051. Average income can be misleading, and the fact that Ohio's median is so close to the national's suggests that Ohio's numbers are more reflective of the program's performance and are not inflated by a few operators who earn exorbitant amounts, which is the case in many states, especially those with a large military presence with the BEP handling the

troop dining. Ohio appears to have difficulty attracting African Americans to BEP. Of 99 current operators, only 6 (6 percent) are African American. Approximately 12 percent of the general population is African-American, so this population is underrepresented in BEP. This problem is not unique to Ohio. Most states have the same problem. The average age of Ohio operators is 54. There are no national figures with which to compare this statistic; however, based upon the consultant's experience, this age is not out of line with what would be found in other states. In fact, the age is lower than some states.

[For at least the past five years many of us have asked what is being done to grow the program.

The following text appears under BSVI/Operator Relationships:]

There is an atmosphere of lack of trust that permeates the program. Many operators and even some staff report a genuine fear of retaliation if they cross the area managers or program director. Many stories were told to support such claims, but none were verified because to do so would have violated the confidentiality of the persons communicating the issue. There is a perception among many operators and some staff that agency management and the OVRC play favorites and that program rules and policies are not enforced equitably. Some operators are very personal in their criticism of certain BEP management staff. Some are not bashful in expressing their desire to see changes in management personnel. There is a perception that Ohio has two distinct programs [one supervised by Ed Winkfield and one supervised by Lisa Kemp]. The two area managers have different management styles, interpret policy differently, and have different requirements of their staff.

There is little or no coordination between the two. It is curiously evident that operators in the Cleveland area [managed by Winkfield] are more satisfied with the program overall and management staff than operators in the Columbus area [managed by Kemp]. The agency appears to do an excellent job of providing materials to operators and OVRC members in accessible formats. One of the most common complaints operators had about BEP management staff is their failure to return telephone calls.

[The responsibility to see that the program operates consistently throughout the state falls squarely on the shoulders of the BEP program manager, Steve Moore. It is both interesting and disturbing to read the following comments about the Ohio Vendor Representative Committee:]

There is a fundamental lack of understanding of the concept of "active participation" on both the part of agency management and the OVRC. The current approach to active participation is very legalistic and self protective, and there is no true partnership between the agency and OVRC when it comes to joint decision-making. The OVRC members feel they are not a legitimate part of the decision-making process in some instances. Multiple examples were cited—the decision to withhold payments to ODOT for janitorial service and utilities, the last rule amendments when the agency allegedly tried to bypass the OVRC and go directly to the operators for input on the proposed rules, and the decision to award a statewide contract for all maintenance and repair services. These are areas that are subject to active participation. The practice of the OVRC making motions and the agency simply responding in writing when the minutes are sent out with a simple "Yes" or

"No" doesn't fulfill the requirement of active participation in the view of the consultant. The practice will probably be looked at closely by RSA when they conduct their monitoring review later this year or early next.

Even those OVRC members who are critical of the Agency's commitment to active participation say things have improved over the last year. There are diverse opinions on why there has been improvement. Some give Director Miller credit while others believe Director Connors is taking a more active role and requiring Stephen Moore to allow more participation. Others believe Mr. Moore is finally getting it, while a few believe it is directly related to the initiation of this program evaluation and strategic planning effort. Regardless of the reason, OVRC members believe some improvement has been made. In order to improve communication, Stephen Moore started having weekly calls with the OVRC chair, and notes from these calls are shared with all OVRC members. This has helped with communication although some calls have been cancelled by Mr. Moore due to scheduling conflicts. Many complaints expressed by OVRC members and operators at large relate to things that happened several years ago. With some there is a reluctance to move forward and forget the past.

[Ohio has a history of conflict between operators and management for many years now, and things only begun to change since Dan Connors and Kevin Miller arrived on the scene. Both BSVI and BEP staff are now both significantly smaller than they used to be. The agency still faces significant budget challenges. Given these things, I am forced to ask why Dan Connors is not managing this program following the model used in Tennessee used by Terry Smith. This would be a great

way to build new relationships with operators and to help everyone to move the program forward. The Bureau Director has served as manager for the BE Program in the past here in Ohio, and this change might be the best way to go now. Here are some observations concerning the staff:]

The BEP specialists appear to be well liked and generally well respected. The consultant received minimal complaints about the specialists. This observation is supported by the results of the surveys. The BEP director does not have the support of some of the operators. This was evident in both the surveys and personal interviews. Many question his educational qualifications and claim the minimum qualifications for the job were lowered so he could get the job. There was even a failed petition to have Mr. Moore removed from his position. However, in personal interviews many other operators, including several members of the OVRC, expressed support for Mr. Moore. The operators view Director Miller as a positive influence and are very encouraged by the direction he wants to go.

There is no formal training for new BEP staff or ongoing in-service training opportunities, which appears to be a major drawback. Staff have virtually no opportunity to attend national Randolph-Sheppard training opportunities (i.e., BLAST, Sagebrush, NAMA, etc.). The agency has demonstrated a willingness to hire blind staff with one specialist and one area manager being blind. Many states are reluctant to hire blind staff due to the nature of the job. The fact that the agency has actually hired two former BEP operators should be seen as a positive gesture and a compliment to the agency and the caliber of the operators.

In recent years budget restraints have forced the downsizing of the BEP staff. Today

the staff is less than half the size of a few years ago. The impact of this has been mitigated to some extent by the fact that the number of vending operations has also decreased. Today the ratio of specialists to operators is 1 to 11, which appears to be appropriate when compared to other states. There is some concern about the inequitable distribution of facility assignments to specialists but this is due in large part to geographic considerations. BEP staff report they are burdened with paperwork, which prevents them from being true business consultants. There is a perception among many operators that the specialists are asked to do too much. Staff and operators alike cite the reduction in staff as a reason. BEP staff report some frustration over working in silos and believe there should be more teamwork and a greater effort to take advantage of the individual skills of each staff member. Ohio state employees are represented by a union, and this can hamper the ability of the agency to hire staff with the qualifications desired by the operators.

There are some tough questions that Kevin Miller and Dan Connors must ask. These include: Is the program growing or getting smaller each year? Are new locations being built? Are operator's incomes growing? Is the number of jobs for blind vendors increasing or getting less each year? Under the leadership of Steve Moore is this program heading to a bright future? Does he have the ability to turn the program around in the future? Can enough fences be mended between operators and the program director to move the program forward quickly? Trust is difficult to build but easy to destroy.

It is important to know both the history and the current state of the program. Difficult

questions must be asked and answered. We must find ways to work together in partnership. The BEP has lost both staff and funding over the past several years. It has also lost facilities. We must find ways to reverse all of these damaging trends. Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

This program cannot afford to repeat the past either in perception or in reality. We are willing to do our part to bring about positive change.

Reflection on the 2011 National Convention **by Sandy Sommers**

Editor's note: Sandy Sommers won an NFB of Ohio scholarship last November and a national scholarship this past July. Whenever I ran into her during that action-packed week, she seemed to be busy, connected, and having a great time. So I decided it might be interesting to hear from her about her impressions of the national convention and the impact it had on her life and future plans. This is what she wrote:

I brought my first baby home almost eighteen years ago. I had no idea what I was doing. I was amazed that they let me bring this little thing home, but I was confident that I could handle motherhood because I knew I had the resources to back me up when I needed help. I had girlfriends with babies who could guide me, I could call my mom for advice in the middle of the night, and I could always call my pediatrician to try to figure out what I needed to do. Many options for help were available at all times of the day and night.

For most of us blindness does not come with this instant support system. When the retina specialists told me to prepare myself for a life of blindness, I had no idea where to turn. I have never known another blind person in my entire life. My only exposure to blindness was Stevie Wonder and Andrea Bocelli.

This was hardly what I would call a big help, especially since I can't sing or play the piano and I had never actually met either of them. I had no blind girlfriends, friends of friends, blind parents, or even a doctor that could lend support or advice. I felt that I had no support system and nowhere to turn, and my ignorance was all-consuming.

My search for answers about living with blindness eventually led me to the National Federation of the Blind. Nobody in the Federation told me that life without sight was impossible as I had been told by countless doctors and rehab specialists; in fact, they made me realize that I still have a full life ahead of me with plenty of options.

I had the privilege of attending my first national NFB convention this summer in Orlando, Florida. Not only was I a first-time attendee, but I was a national scholarship winner as well. The scholarship alone said to me that the Federation already believed in me and that I was able to represent and be a useful part of the organization. I arrived already welcomed by the Federation because of the scholarship, and, as the week progressed, I met more and more members of the Federation whom I really wanted to get to know and call my friends. I was introduced to people from all walks of life and from just about every

state--people who were intelligent, accomplished, and friendly and who were more than willing to share ideas, answer questions, and encourage me to participate fully in the mission of the Federation. I attended numerous meetings led by students, lawyers, former scholarship winners, guide dog users, parents of blind children, and teachers, to name only a few. I had meals with mentors, roommates, chapter presidents, and complete strangers (who didn't feel at all like strangers after five minutes). Each day I took a little more information away with me and added a little more pride to the fact that I was now part of this organization.

I listened with excitement to Dr. Maurer talk about what our mission is and the resolutions of the Federation for the coming year. I listened to Ron Brown talk about playing baseball, never dreaming that ball games were still an option for a blind person. I listened to Mark Riccobono talk with enthusiasm about driving a car as a blind person and about the

engineering that had made it possible. The entire time I kept thinking to myself, "Do these people know that they are blind?" I loved the positive attitude and the ability of everyone there to do what they set their minds to--with little or no vision.

By the end of the week, not only did I know that I was a Federationist, I also had almost 3,000 new friends whom I now consider my new support system. Turns out that I can do anything I dream of, and I am backed by the National Federation of the Blind. The week was a whirlwind of activity, and I loved every minute of it. I now know that I can be an independent blind person, and the NFB has given me the strength, the determination, and a philosophy that will enable me to succeed in the future. The convention confirmed that I have joined an organization that has much to give to me. I am looking forward to many years of giving back. I now dream of being a blind resource to someone in the future.



Editor's Musings by Barbara Pierce



If you attended the national convention this summer or have paid attention to the Senate's effort to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act, which includes the Rehabilitation Act, you know that blind people and members of other disability groups have been trying to beat back plans to entrench the practice of paying sheltered workshop workers and some other groups of disabled employees less than the minimum wage. We have been gathering signatures on a petition urging the members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee to resist this effort to perpetuate this shocking practice. Every blind person should be familiar with this issue and do whatever is possible to help fight this battle. Below are excerpts from an article in the NFB of Maryland summer newsletter written by Mary Ellen Thompson and an email from former RSA Commissioner Fred Schroeder. They lay out the issue and some of the reasons for the NFB's position:

Since 1938 the federal government has sanctioned the practice of paying many workers with disabilities less than the minimum wage, which is guaranteed to other Americans. This practice was codified as Section 14C of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Sheltered workshops and other businesses must apply to the U.S. Department of Labor for exemptions from paying the minimum wage. The Department in turn is supposed to inspect these facilities to determine whether payment of less than the minimum wage is warranted. However, several years may elapse before federal inspectors review the practices of any given facility.

The NFB has worked for decades to eradicate this discriminatory treatment of disabled workers, but 2011 brought new urgency to the fight. In June we discovered that, as part of the process of renewing the Workforce Investment Act, which includes vocational rehabilitation, a new section, 511, had been added. It provided that placement of a rehabilitation client in sub-minimum-wage employment would be equivalent to a competitive employment outcome. As of this writing, Section 511 is a part of the proposed Workforce Investment Act legislation.

Mary Ellen has outlined the issue, and people across the country have been gathering support for our position. As you might guess, some people have run into questions. One that made it to the chapter presidents listserv was what about people so disabled that they cannot carry out their jobs at a competitive level. Mostly these are not folks whose only disability is blindness, but some blind people with several disabilities fall into this group. Fred Schroeder responded to the

question this way:

Your question gets right to the heart of the problem. We know that there are people with very severe disabilities. We know that some of these individuals are not working at a competitive level. The problem is that under the subminimum wage system there is no incentive to search for methods that could improve the individual's productivity, nor is there any incentive to search for work that is a better fit for the individual. If a person is working below the productivity standard, it is assumed that that is the best he or she can do, given the nature of his or her disability. The subminimum wage system feeds into society's low expectations about the ability of blind people to work. It is taken for granted that we will be less productive, and the only remaining question is how much less productive.

When Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act, businesses argued that the net effect of the minimum wage provision would be to force businesses to pay people more than was reasonable, given the low profit margin in many industries. It was argued that companies would go out of business, leaving workers with no work at all. Even among the nondisabled population, some people, for whatever reason, work below the standard. For those people their options today are to search for work that they can perform competitively or to go without work. Subminimum wage work is not an option because as a matter of policy in 1938 we decided that the absence of a guaranteed minimum wage fostered exploitation and resulted in hardworking people being unable to earn enough to support themselves and their families.

Under the current system, assuming it is

administered fairly, measuring a worker's productivity tells us only what the individual's performance is on that specific task. It does not tell us anything about the individual's ability to do something else. If the minimum wage is extended to all people, including blind people and people with other disabilities, there is an automatic incentive to find work that the individual can do competitively. Will some people be left out in the cold? Likely so, but I believe that the over a third of a million people currently being paid below the minimum wage are being left out in the cold right now. We have no way of knowing if the more than 360,000 people being paid below the minimum wage are really so limited in their productivity as to justify a subminimum wage. There is no oversight and no accountability. We mostly take the word of the employer. Would we do this for people without disabilities? Of course not. We would recognize immediately that such a system would spawn great mistreatment of workers.

Many sheltered workshops do not provide fulltime, forty-hour-a-week work. According to National Industries for the Blind, blind people working on noncompetitive federal contracts average less than twenty-five hours of work a week. That means that a person making \$5 an hour will earn \$25 a day or \$500 a month. That is not enough to give an individual a decent standard of living. But the sheltered workshops tell these workers that their earnings together with their Social Security provide more income than they would get living on Social Security alone. So the sheltered workshops make money by keeping wages low while at the same time they are looking to the Social Security system to help subsidize the workers' low wages.

The bottom line is that there is huge

money in the sheltered workshop industry, and there is no incentive to find ways to improve the workers' earnings. Unfortunately, this stems from that unquestioned assumption that blind people and people with other disabilities are working in a system that is doing its very best to help. That may be so, but the incentives are lined up the other way. The incentives are to pass poor profitability along to the worker. There is no incentive to buy the latest equipment; no incentive to search for better contracts; no incentive to provide the workers training to improve their productivity; no incentive to do anything besides keeping wages low.

When I was RSA Commissioner, our data showed that nearly ninety percent of people placed in sheltered work were being paid below the minimum wage. Data also showed that earnings did not improve over time, nor did people leave the sheltered workshop for integrated employment. Once people entered the sheltered workshop, they were likely to stay there for the rest of their working lives.

I recognize that I have not answered your question. Will extending the minimum wage guarantee result in some people with severe disabilities being left with no opportunity to work? In theory, yes, but, in spite of what we are told, very few people with the most severe disabilities are working in sheltered workshops right now. What got Senator Harkin interested in the subminimum wage issue was an event in his home state. In 2009 Henry's Turkey Service, a meat processing plant in Iowa, was discovered to be exploiting and abusing as many as sixty disabled workers. Based on Henry's assessment of their productivity, the workers were paid an average of just \$0.41 an hour. Henry's also served as the workers' representative payee, giving Henry's

complete control of their Social Security payments. As well as serving as employer and custodian, Henry's also served as the workers' landlord. When all was said and done, each worker was allowed to keep approximately \$65 each month. These were men with intellectual disabilities. From all accounts their productivity was as good or better than that of the nondisabled people with whom they worked.

Of course some will argue that Henry's does not represent the condition of all individuals being paid at a subminimum wage. It is an abuse of the system. That is true, but the point remains that the system is structured to encourage exploitation. Society generally assumes that we are less productive. It further assumes that people who are employing people with disabilities are doing it out of kindness. It also assumes that the government must be overseeing the system, a system designed to give the less fortunate a little something to do with their days.

I cannot say that no one will be left out if the minimum wage is extended to people with disabilities, but I can say that we know that Henry's is by no means the only example of a system that exploits people with disabilities. In 1938 did some businesses go broke because of increased labor costs? I'm sure some did. Were some workers deemed unemployable because of poor skills? I'm sure some were, but the question comes down to one of basic beliefs about fairness and the right of blind people and others to have equal opportunities in life. The subminimum wage system takes people with limited opportunities and subjects them to segregated work at a deplorable wage.

Your point about providing incentives to be more productive is right on track. The idea that

there will be hard feelings if one person is working up to standard and another is not when they are both being paid the minimum wage strikes me as a weak argument against fair wages. In the general workforce today employees doing the same job are often producing at very different levels. Do we really believe that all bank tellers are working at the same rate of efficiency? Do we believe that all bookkeepers are working at the same speed with the same accuracy? Of course not, but we reward the more productive with promotions and bonuses. In other words, we need the minimum wage to

be just that: the minimum any individual is paid in our society. The minimum wage must be for all people. Continuing to single out blind people and others with disabilities and make them prove their worth is unfair and leads to exploitation and, perhaps more damaging, leads to reinforcing despair and hopelessness.

The HELP Committee is planning to mark up this bill shortly after Labor Day. Be watching for what happens to it, and, if you have the chance, educate your neighbors and your members of Congress about this issue.

Buckeye Briefs

◆ At the national convention in July, Cincinnati chapter member Jeanette Wade fell on the escalator on the way to general session. Unfortunately she broke her left arm. We were very lucky that both Carol Akers and Ruth Boggs of our delegation are nurses, so they stayed with Jeanette until she went to the hospital to have her arm set. When she returned to the hotel, they checked on her until time for her to return home the next day. Paul Dressell reports that Jeanette is receiving therapy every day and will be home from the nursing home within a few weeks. Chapter members have been staying in touch with her and are eager for her to get back to her home and friends. We all wish Jeanette a rapid and complete recovery.

◆ We are pleased to announce that NFB of the Ohio River Valley President Becky Booth and her husband Mark gave birth to their daughter Saige Marina on January 27. Saige was twenty inches long and weighed in at six pounds, fourteen ounces. Congratulations to the entire Booth family.

◆ We are deeply sorry to report the death

on July 27 of Sandy Keller, wife of Ohio Association of Blind Merchants member Bill Keller. With Bill Sandy was co-owner of Op-Stop Sundry Store, Kellers' Korner, and the Red Star Bar in Columbus. She was sixty-six at the time of her death at Mt. Carmel East. She will be deeply missed.

◆ On October 1 the Lorain County chapter will conduct its annual hike-a-thon in the Metro Park system. It is a beautiful five-kilometer walk through fall foliage, busy squirrels, migrating birds, and even occasionally a deer or two. This walk will kick off Meet the Blind Month and is the chapter's major fundraiser of the year.

◆ Also on October 1 Ohioan Jason Ewell, who now works at the National Center for the Blind, and Dr. Jessica Bachicha, who works part-time at the Center, will be married in New Mexico. From what we have heard about the wedding plans, the event should be spectacular as well as deeply moving. We will be thinking of Jason and Jessica on their very special day.

◆ Colleen Roth reports that the At-Large Chapter's monthly newsletter is now available to members by email and on the new cartridges that NLS is using for books. This means that the newsletter can be read using the NLS digital machine. Who says that we are slow to adopt the most up-to-date technology?

◆ Debbie Baker, president of the NFB of Springfield, says that the chapter is planning a Christmas party for area children on December 10. They are counting on Santa to make an appearance. A little-known fact about Santa Claus is that he reads Braille.

◆ The Miami Valley chapter is planning a tandem bike ride on Saturday afternoon, October 8. This will also be a Meet the Blind Month event. Contact Richard Payne for more

information about plans for the day.

◆ On July 22 William Turner, president of the Cleveland chapter, had a mild stroke. We are very pleased to report that he is recovering well and expects to return to work in the near future.

◆ As part of cost-cutting measures, RSC's Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired has consolidated, along with the rest of the agency. For example, in Columbus the BSVI office earlier located on West 5th Avenue is now at RSC headquarters, 150 E. Campus View Blvd. However, consumers and counselors are free to set up meetings in whatever location is convenient to both parties, along a bus line or in a public library, for example.

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

September 17

NFBO Board Meeting, Columbus

September 30

Award nominations and Gavel Award reports deadline

October

Convention assistance applications deadline

October 13

Meet the Blind Month

October 15

Convention hotel room block released

October 21

White Cane Safety Day

November 1

Deadline for convention preregistration

November 4-6

Beginning of the Braille Readers Are Leaders contest

December 1

NFB of Ohio Convention, Holiday Inn Dayton Mall

January 4

Deadline for expressing interest in Washington Seminar

January 4-11

Louis Braille birthday

February 6-8

Braille Literacy Week

Washington Seminar

2011 Convention Preregistration

Wyndham Garden Dayton South Hotel

31 Prestige Plaza Drive, Miamisburg

November 4th – November 6th

Please complete and return this form by October 21, 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 P.O. Box 458, Athens, OH 45701-0458. 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 the convention. Ticketed activities are listed below. Indicate the number of reservations for each event.

Saturday NAPUB Breakfast: \$12 (\$15 at the door) _____ \$ _____
how many?

Saturday boxed lunch: \$15 (\$18 at the door)
Mark the number of lunches ordered for each activity:
_____ Parent(s) _____ Senior(s) \$ _____

Banquet: \$25 _____ meat \$22 _____ vegetarian
(\$30 at the door) (\$27 at the door) \$ _____

Sunday Leadership Breakfast: \$12 (\$15 at the door)
How many? _____ \$ _____

Convention registration prior to convention: \$10
(\$15 at the door) how many? _____ \$ _____

Total check enclosed: \$ _____

Registrations or meal orders 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.)



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