

Kentucky Cardinal

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THE KENTUCKY CARDINAL

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A publication of the National Federation of the Blind of
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We invite and encourage your participation in this newsletter. Articles may be edited

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Just Around the Corner

The NFB of Kentucky

2014 State Convention

By Cathy Jackson, President

Hear ye, Hear ye, Hear ye! The time has come to begin planning for the 67th annual state convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Kentucky. We are gathering in Louisville, Kentucky at the Crown Plaza Airport Hotel located at 830 Phillips Ln., Louisville, KY 40209. We are booked for the weekend of September 26, 27, & 28th. Our room rates are \$99 per night per room plus 15.01% taxes. You should begin making your reservations by calling the hotel direct at 502-367-6161. Reservations should be made no later than September 9th to guarantee the convention rate. Don't forget to specify that you are with the NFBK when making your reservation.

Our NFB of Greater Louisville chapter is once again playing host to our state convention. NFBGL chapter president, Melanie Peskoe, the board of directors and chapter members are preparing to make your convention experience a great one.

Once again we are pleased to offer our members the opportunity to apply for a financial scholarship. George Stokes is chairing this committee and can be contacted for an application and additional information at [href=3D"mailto:george4581@gmail.com">george4581@gmail.com](mailto:george4581@gmail.com) or 502-330-2344. The deadline for making an application is August 31st, 2014. The amount awarded will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Pre-registration is definitely the way to go. Not only do you save money but it also makes life considerably simpler for our treasurer, Mike Freholm. Mike is able to get tickets and badges printed and put into packets before he gets to the convention. Pre-registration also provides us with a more exact count for the meals we must guarantee with the hotel. It is no secret to any of us that expenses associated with a convention, be it national or state have skyrocketed over the past

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few years. We make a concerted effort to keep everyone's personal expenses as reasonable as possible, but nevertheless they do mount up. One way we are helping is by subsidizing everyone's luncheon and banquet tickets. It doesn't matter if you are an old-timer like me, or a brand new member to the organization. We will charge a \$10 registration fee which helps defray convention costs incurred by the affiliate. This fee is not your membership dues, but it does make you eligible for door prizes. We will once again have our open board meeting and luncheon and it goes without saying it wouldn't be convention without our annual Saturday evening banquet. The cost of the luncheon is \$15 and the banquet will be \$30.

If you choose to register at convention you should know in advance that registration will be \$15, the luncheon \$25 and banquet \$40. There is a pre-registration form included in this issue of the Kentucky Cardinal. Complete the form and mail it along with your check or money order payable to NFB of Kentucky to: Mike Freholm, 2012 Harris Way, Russell, KY 41169. Mike needs your form and money no later than Monday, September 15th, 2014. Be sure to include the names and money for all persons for whom you are registering and purchasing meal tickets.

Those who have pre-registered should stop by the registration table in the hotel lobby between 5 PM and 7 PM on Friday afternoon to pick up your convention packet. The table will open again on Saturday morning between 8 and 8:45. Those wishing to register at convention must do so during these hours of operation.

You will notice that there is information on the registration form regarding childcare. A safe, fun environment for our children is a top priority. We need ample time to find qualified caregivers and plan activities for the children. We are asking that you contact Jayne Seif at 502-500-7675 at your earliest convenience so the planning can begin. You must be contacted by Jayne by Friday, September 19th in order to enroll your child/children. Doors will open at 8:30 Saturday morning and will remain open all day until fifteen minutes after the close of the banquet. Snacks and lunch will be provided.

We have had great success over the past several years with our reverse raffle. Tickets are available for a \$10 donation. We need everyone's participation. You should contact me, an NFBK board member, or any local chapter or division president to obtain tickets. We grant the major prizes to the two lucky individuals whose names remain at the end of the drawing. Second place gets \$250 and the grand prize winner receives \$500. But there's more! In addition to the big prizes we draw for \$25 amounts. The first name out of the hat wins \$25. There's still more!

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From that point on, the 25th, 50th, 75th, 100th name and so on, will also receive \$25. Not only does our affiliate net a bigger profit the more tickets that are sold, but also there is a good possibility that we will have more \$25 prizes to share. This fundraiser supports our scholarship program.

Speaking of Scholarships--the National Federation believes strongly in education. That's why the NFB of Kentucky takes such pride in presenting deserving blind students here in the Commonwealth the opportunity to furthering their education. Scholarships range in amount from \$500 to \$1,000 and are given at the banquet. The selection process has closed for this year. We encourage those who are continuing their education to contact us in early spring of 2015 to learn more about the program.

Pamela Glisson is our resident resolutions committee chair. She knows her stuff. You should submit your resolution to Pamela via email at, pglisson@independenceplaceky.org. They do not have to be in perfect condition. Merely present her with an idea and an outline and she will take care of the rest.

Denise Franklin did such a great job chairing the awards committee last year that I decided to appoint her again this time around. Individuals are eligible to be nominated for one of three awards. They are the: Susan Be. Rarick Award, Harold L. Regan Award, and the T. V. Cranmer award. Chapters and Divisions can be nominated for the Robert E. Whitehead award. We do not take the presentation of awards lightly in this affiliate. So we ask that you give serious thought to those you may wish to recognize before nominating them. Denise can be reached at kyfranks@yahoo.com or by phone at 502-499-0759. A description of each of the awards is given in this issue of the Cardinal.

Our Assistive Technology Division (TAD) is sponsoring exhibits and a symposium, which promises to be both educational and enjoyable. The event is scheduled to begin Friday morning, September 26th at 10:00 AM. and will run until 5:00 that afternoon. Todd Stephens, president of the division extends an invitation to all who might be interested. Our TAD folks have taken the bull by the horns the past two years and made a dream come true. They have broadened the scope of our convention beyond general sessions. They had a vision and their vision has come to fruition.

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A little bird told me that Shari Anderson is our door prize chairperson. If you have items to donate and wish to contact Shari ahead of the convention so that arrangements can be made to collect them, you should call her at 502-797-6734. It is perfectly acceptable to bring them with you to convention. Get in touch with her when you arrive at the hotel or see her at the registration table. We accept new items only for both men and women. Pictures of presidents make everyone happy.

The agenda hasn't quite been finalized but I can give you a sneak preview of what's to come. The convention will officially be called to order on Saturday morning the 27th at 9:00 AM. Since we did not have chapter and division reports in this edition of the Cardinal you won't want to miss the roll call where chapters and divisions will give a brief summary of what's happening around the state.

Some things never change. I will give the state of the NFBK address. Sam Gleese, President of our Mississippi Affiliate and member of the national board is our national representative. I don't recall that Sam has ever been to a Kentucky convention, so his being here will be a delight. Other guests will present, but to date they have not all been confirmed. Everyone seems to enjoy the luncheon and open board meeting, so it is back on the agenda. This is your opportunity to meet our NFBK board in person. The afternoon session calls to order at 2:00 PM. The afternoon meeting is dedicated primarily to the business of the National Federation of the Blind of Kentucky. We will deal with legislative issues, resolutions, funding the movement, the election of officers, and any further business that needs to come before the membership.

The banquet puts emphasis on our convention. It is the exclamation point, which says, "Job well done." It is a time to rejoice. We will hear the keynote address from our national representative, Sam Gleese. I have been serving with Sam on the national board for twelve years now and know him to be a kind and warm southern gentleman. Lora Felty, chairperson of our scholarship committee along with the rest of us will celebrate our scholarship winners. They truly deserve the cash award, but just as important is the recognition and acknowledgment for an exceptional job both in and out of the classroom. I am thinking that there could possibly be some NFBK awards presented to outstanding individuals who continue to spread the philosophy of our organization. We will just have to wait to see if the microphone is handed to Denise Franklin. And, oh yes, we can't forget about all of the drawings. They will happen at the conclusion of the banquet.

Michael Freholm is asking everyone to be in attendance at the National Association to Promote the Use of Braille in Kentucky meeting on Sunday morning at 9:00 AM sharp. We are in the throws of planning our first Braille Enrichment through Literacy and Learning (BELL program) for the summer of 2015. We are going to need all of the help we can muster to pull off this larger than life program. Please don't let us down.

My door is always open. Don't hesitate to contact me at cathyj1949@gmail.com or call 502-366-2317. This is your organization too. I appreciate your input. As the lyrics in one of my favorite songs go-"I'll see you in September".

Our NFBK Awards

We are proud and pleased when we are able to award those among us who have dedicated their time and talents to promoting the National Federation of the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind of Kentucky. No one ever said it was easy being a member of this, the world's oldest and largest membership organization of the blind. Yet, there are those whose work is exemplary and they never falter in their dedication toward making this organization what it is today.

We have three awards that can be presented to worthy individuals and one award that can be earned by a chapter or division in the affiliate. Although a committee is appointed each year just before our state convention to accept nominations there is absolutely nothing that says we must present any or all of them.

I thought this would be a good chance to share with all of you the criteria for each of the awards. By doing so I am hoping that everyone will have a better understanding of what qualities we are looking for in our candidates.

SUSAN B. REARICK AWARD

Susan B. Rearick was a first grade teacher at the Kentucky School for the Blind in the early to mid-1900's. She was a forward thinking individual who expected more from her blind students than did her peers at the school or the public in general. Because of her high expectations of her students she clearly represented the teachings and philosophy of the National Federation of the Blind. The person who receives this award can be a blind or sighted Kentuckian.

HAROLD L. REAGAN AWARD

Harold L. Reagan was the first president of the National Federation of the Blind of Kentucky and a member of the national board of directors. As such the emphasis for receiving this award should be placed on the recipient's leadership in the organization. This award can only be given to a blind Kentuckian.

T.V. CRANMER AWARD AWARD

The T. V. Cranmer award is a very special one. Tim, as he was known to all of us, served for many years as an officer of the NFBK. He also held the position as chairman on the Research and Development Committee at the national level. This award is given to a blind person who has served many years in the NFB and will continue to be a driving force in this organization. The Cranmer award is to a blind person, but it is not restricted to individuals living in Kentucky.

ROBERT E. WHITEHEAD AWARD

Robert E. (Bob) Whitehead was the second sitting president of the Kentucky affiliate. This award is presented to an affiliate chapter or division that strives to build membership in the organization. The chapter or division is also actively changing the public's perceptions about blindness through innovative projects and community outreach.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Is There a Place for

Visually Impaired Individuals in NFB?

By Cathy Jackson, President

National Federation of the Blind of Kentucky

I was a participant on a panel at a State Presidents seminar held at our national headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland where the topic of visually impairment was discussed. We also touched on how to convince partially blind individuals that they can benefit greatly by being a part of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), the nation's largest organization of the blind speaking for the blind. Of course, just as important is the fact that they in turn have much to offer the NFB. For many it is automatically assumed that we are an organization of the blind because our name says it all, the National Federation of the Blind, not the National Federation of the Blind and Visually Impaired.

For purposes of this article I am going to use the terms visually impaired, partially sighted and partially blind or similar phrases that may come to mind. I am not afraid to use the word blind or admit that I am a blind person, but I need to make distinctions and clarifications.

The public in general only recognizes total blindness or perfect vision, anything in between is a mystery. Trust me, it's also a mystery to those of us with partial vision. How can I see a dime on the floor from across the room and fall over a chair getting to it? There have been countless times when, during a conversation I have said something like, "As a blind person I...." There is an immediate gasp. "You're not blind; you can see, can't you?" Then they start waving their hands in my face. I feel compelled to launch into an explanation. "Yes I have some usable vision but my visual acuity is 20/200 which means that I meet the legal and medical definition of blindness." The discussion doesn't usually end there. They start pointing to objects asking if I can see them. When my daughter, Nickie, was little and her friends asked how well her dad and I could see, she would simply say, "My dad is almost blind, my mom is half blind and I am a little bit blind."

The honest to goodness truth is that all too often visually impaired people don't know exactly where they fit in. On one hand we the NFB say "Admit you are blind." But on the other hand, there are those who have somewhat of a condescending attitude that says, "But you can really see."

At a national convention I overheard a conversation between two people and one of them said, "NFB doesn't ever discuss the issues faced by those of us

with low vision, do they?" I stopped and thought, You know, we really don't. I have talked with Members in the Kentucky affiliate who have expressed this exact same sentiment to me.

If you stop and think about it, visually impaired individuals face the same problems as totally blind people. style=3D'mso-spacerun:yes'> Actually, our situation may be even more precarious. The public in general is convinced that totally blind people can't do anything, however, they aren't exactly sure just what to expect from those of us with partial vision. If we are half blind are we expected to do only half as much?

We walk into the job interview and it is apparent that we have some vision, but we called ahead to have the test put in an accessible format--large print, audio, and even Braille. We too have to convince the potential employer that we can do the job and with the proper accommodations we are every bit as competent as our sighted peers. We have to make accommodations in the classroom. We have the same issues with public transportation. More often than not, we are unable to read the destination sign in the window of the bus and have to ask, "What bus is this?"

Now put a cane in the hand of someone like me. Let me tell you that really adds a layer of confusion. I am treated quite differently when I am carrying my cane. I was traveling to Oregon a few years ago to serve as the national representative to their state convention. As I recall I had to change airplanes twice before I arrived in Oregon. I was grabbed by the shoulders and turned around and the end of my cane was lifted off the ground. I protested and took the opportunity to turn the situation into a teachable moment. During one of the layovers I decided to head to the ladies' room to freshen up a bit. I stood my long white cane next to me and proceeded to comb my hair and reapply my lipstick. In the mirror I could see a lady standing behind me watching with curiosity, unaware that I was watching her. All sorts of thoughts were running through my head. Did she think I was faking my blindness? Was she wondering if I could actually apply lipstick? Was she waiting for me to make a mess of it all? There were a couple of other things I was considering. Maybe I'll just apply the lipstick on and around my lips so as not to disappoint her if she doubted my skill to put on makeup. No, I decided then I would have to wash my face. Then a second brainstorm popped into my head. I think I'll turn around and ask her if I look ok. No, there would be nothing gained by

embarrassing her. Instead I chose a more polite approach. When I turned around I simply said hello. She made a beeline to the nearest stall.

On this same trip coming home from Oregon I was pretty tired and not in the mood to be hassled. An attendant in the O'Hare airport decided that I needed a cart to transport me to my gate. I assured her I was fine and if she would just give me directions I could travel alone. Besides I had been sitting for several hours and needed to stretch my legs, to which she replied, "not on my watch." I was told to stay put. Lucky for me O'Hare is quite busy. When she turned her head I

collapsed my cane and bolted. Should I have folded my cane and run? Probably not. Looking back that was the coward's way out. I should have stood my ground, but as I said, I was tired and not very rational. I was counting on the fact that if I put my cane away I would be just another passenger in the airport and it worked. I hope by now they have called off the search.

If I wasn't already a member of NFB how would you convince me or any other partially sighted individual that joining NFB would be a great idea? What would you say to me when I tell you I have enough vision to "fake it?" How would you persuade me that learning to do things using non-visual techniques might actually make my life easier? How would you encourage me to open up and share my experiences, both good and bad? And probably the biggest challenge to me: What would you say and do to make me feel comfortable in my own skin? Just telling someone it's ok to be blind isn't always enough.

Most of you reading this article know that I am self-sufficient and strong-willed. How did this happen? It was no accident. I was fortunate enough to have parents who made it clear from the get-go that I was no different from my siblings apart from the fact that I couldn't see as well. I was expected to do well in school and to do chores around the house. They also made accommodations which I was totally oblivious to, but grew to realize their importance. I had large print storybooks and coloring books and white paper plates dotted the baseball field so I could see the bases. They instilled in me a sense of confidence and well-being.

Looking back over my life there were very few times when I was made to feel embarrassed or ashamed of being visually impaired, or made to believe that I was less of a person. I understand this isn't always the case. Some partially

blind people haven't been so lucky. For these individuals NFB could be a pivotal point in their lives. If we can convince them to attend a chapter or division meeting and especially a state or national convention, we can begin the mentoring process and show through our actions that the NFB philosophy does apply just as precisely to partially sighted people. Visually impaired individuals will learn that they no longer have to "fake it" but "face it." We can teach them to advocate for themselves. They will learn the use of alternative techniques that can reduce a visual impairment to a nuisance. Pretty soon they won't care if they are referred to as blind and the word blind will become just a part of their vocabulary. It's all about changing attitudes. You see, no pun intended, there truly are more similarities than differences between partially sighted and totally blind people. We all want to be treated with respect. We all want to be independent and productive citizens. We need to continue setting the success bar higher for ourselves than others do.

If you have ever doubted your place in the National Federation of the Blind, let me assure you that you are welcome and that your membership is valued. I attended my first national convention in New Orleans in 1977. Every national board member I met or saw walking around the convention was totally blind, or perhaps it was merely the fact that they were using their blindness skills to perfection and I assumed they were totally blind. Although at that time I thought one had to be blind to be a member of the Board of Directors, I am living proof that this is not the case. I have never doubted for a minute my membership in the Federation or the contributions I have made. I also value the lessons and opportunities that the NFB has afforded me. So for those of you who are partially blind members of the organization I want you to realize your worth; and to all of us, let's share with other partials who may be feeling left out.

Guide Dog Users: Be a Two-Car Household

By Domonique Lawless, NOMC, NCLB

The following article appeared on the Louisiana Tech University, Blog on Blindness. These remarks are excerpted from a presentation she recently made to the Tennessee Association of Guide Dog Users.

I am often asked the question: "Which is better, a cane or a guide dog?" My answer is: I am a two-car household. Some of you who know me will know that I grew up on the east coast, and know that I have a deep-seeded love for Dunkin Donuts. I'm also a frequent flyer, so I try to always connect through the Atlanta airport. On one trip home, all I could think was: "Dunkin Donuts, gotta get to Dunkin Donuts, I've got some time for Dunkin Donuts."

So, after zig-zagging through the maze of people and bags, I get my donut. True happiness! I look at my phone, and we've got 10 minutes until the flight leaves! At this point, I'm in Terminal A and I need to be in Terminal B!

Now, for those who don't know, in Atlanta, that means crossing the *entire* airport via the always-crowded Plane Train.

There's no feeling as remarkable as the ability to zoom in and out of the crowd, to squeeze between a wall and a person talking on their cell phone, and to walk around-without tripping over-suitcases.

It was an even better feeling to know that, while I had my dog that time, I could have done the same thing with my cane. I can choose whether I want to drive the Mercedes or the Lexus, if you will, and any blind person has the choice to be a two-car household as well.

So, for those of you who are guide dog users (or who are considering applying for a guide dog), here are some ideas to keep in mind to ensure that you take advantage of that choice you have to be a two-car household. Some places just aren't for dogs.

As a guide dog user, I know that I legally can take my guide dog everywhere. Some places just aren't conducive, though...like a bar, out dancing, a concert, or Mardi Gras. (I've been to Mardi Gras in New Orleans twice, and I can safely say that is not a place you want to take a guide dog! I take my guide dog to work, run errands, church, and-before I graduated-my classes in Northern Louisiana.

I use my guide dog and my cane pretty interchangeably. I recognize that each

has its purpose. I love using my dog.

He's a wonderful companion in my life. This is my third guide dog, and we've been working together for a little over a year now. We work seamlessly and with a beautiful agility that I would recommend to most people. I think having a guide dog is a wonderful experience, but I recognize he just can't go everywhere with me. If I can't give 100 percent of my attention to making sure that he's safe, then that might be something to which he probably shouldn't go.

Also, guide dogs are living, breathing things. They can't be *on 24/7*; they need to have a day off just like you and I do. Sometimes, too, they get in bad moods where work just isn't for them. I recognize that there may be a time and a place to use my dog, but that isn't everywhere at all times.

So, when I don't take my dog-say to the NFB National Convention-he gets to have a vacation with my parents, and I get to have a little time apart to have a different experience.

You have to pay attention to the personality of your dog to know the kinds of things that he likes to do. Mine likes to go, go, and go; sometimes, I have to step back, be the adult, and say, "Okay, you need to stop for a moment and have a break!"

The attitudes about canes at guide dog schools have changed.

Another thing to pay attention to is the changing expectations of guide dog schools. When I got my first guide dog, I was pretty much expected to put my cane in a drawer and forget about it until my dog retired. While training with my second

and third dogs, I saw the attitudes change. Guide Dogs for the Blind has an orientation and mobility instructor on staff who helps students during class if they need more O&M practice with orientation skills. Leader Dogs has a great, advanced orientation and mobility program. It's a compressed schedule where you just go for two weeks, and you focus on nothing but orientation and mobility for 8 hours a day. From there, you become at least a proficient cane traveler and that will make you a better dog user. More and more guide dog trainers are becoming orientation and mobility instructors, so that they can understand both perspectives of using a cane and guide dog.

I am an orientation and mobility instructor, and most people think O&M is just about learning to use a cane. When you learn to use a cane, you learn to pay attention to things like sun cues, echo location, picking up different textures, and listening to your traffic. Those are all incredibly vital skills that can be used with a cane or a guide dog.

Once you learn those skills, you'll find that you'll be a better guide dog user.

I have done extensive traveling with my cane, most notably at the Louisiana Center for the Blind, and I've learned how to get home if I'm dropped off somewhere in the city...even if I've never been there before. The cane or dog are what help me get where I'm going; my other travel skills tell me what direction to go. Have a backup plan.

Many guide dog trainers are saying that it's not just OK to carry a cane; they expect you to carry one as a backup travel tool. There's, of course, the obvious possibility that your dog could become sick or injured. There's also the likely chance, too, that you may have to point something out to your dog to refocus their attention or have them learn from a situation. You can't always get as much texture with your feet to figure out where you are, so-when you need that information-you can use your cane. I don't think trainers would advertise walking around with a harness in one hand and a cane in the other 24/7, but every once in a while, there's nothing wrong with using the two in tandem for a specific purpose.

Keep your cane skills from deteriorating.

If you don't use your cane regularly, you can forget some of those fundamental skills of travel. You don't want it to become scary to use a cane in those situations where using your dog just isn't appropriate. Personally, I'd recommend taking your cane out with you on a regular basis, even when your dog would be a perfect substitute, just like you'd exercise the engine in your spare car (if you're fortunate enough to have a spare car!).

The key to remember is that you always have a choice to use your cane or your dog. Yes, it's perfectly legal to take your dog just about everywhere in the U.S. but sometimes it might just not be practical. It's my hope to encourage every guide dog user to learn, use, and brush up on his or her cane skills to stay as independent and self-sufficient as possible. To those who teach cane

travel, I know some teachers feel like their job is just to get students' skills "good enough" to use a guide dog. The reality is that when you are a superb cane traveler, you'll be an even better dog user because those fundamentals of travel still apply.

Oh, by the way, we made the plane, just barely before the doors closed, and-most importantly-I made it with a donut.

Life Changes

By Tressie Smith

The day that I found out that I was going to be losing my vision was the most painful thing for me to hear. I was teaching in an Early childhood program and I was also attending the University of Louisville pursuing a degree in social work. I felt that my whole world was over. At this point I did not feel that I had any purpose in life. I learned about and had the fortunate opportunity to attend the Louisiana Center for the Blind. When I arrived at the airport in Louisiana, I was picked up by Susan Clark, a News Line / Career Transition Specialist. She introduced herself and told me, "Here is your suitcase." I knew that I was in the right place.

Pam Allen, the Executive Director of the LCB, exhibits strong leadership and also has a strong presence. When she speaks, her words are so profound that you are amazed. She is truly committed and dedicated to assuring that her students are self-confident members of society when they leave the center. Her staff exhibits the same expectations. She expects nothing but high standards for herself, her staff, and every student that walks through the doors of the Louisiana Center. The training that was required of us was very intense. The classes were scheduled from eight to five Monday through Friday.

Braille was taught by Jerry Whittle at the time that I was attending the center. However, his workday did not end there. He organized Toastmaster meetings, which I fell in love with. Toastmaster meetings helped me and others learn how to speak with confidence in front of people. He also wrote and produced plays in which his students performed, he developed these plays. He encouraged all of his students to participate. His plays were so professionally done that they could have been on the live screen. I was glad to have been a student of his because he had true compassion and heart for educating his

students.

Jeff Percy was the Home Management and Independent Skills Instructor while I was at the LCB. He was an excellent instructor and I learned a lot from him. He showed me the different steps for tasks that were required of me. I was a cook before I lost my vision, but I had lost some of my confidence as well. Jeff made me feel that I was capable of doing it again. I was cooking things that I had not cooked before. He was always excited about what I was going to be cooking for

the morning. I would always laugh when I asked him what seasoning to use in my cooking dishes. He would always say, "Put some Tony's in it." I think that was his favorite seasoning. Jeff supported me as I prepared my meal for eight and

my meal for forty. I do not think that I would have gotten through it without him. He always made me feel proud to be a blind person.

Merilynn Whittle was a Home Management and Independent Skills Instructor at LCB as well. She and Jeff worked good as a team. I had Merilynn for sewing, writing checks, and putting in long skinny light bulbs. She was a busy lady and challenged us. Every morning, I looked forward to going to her class. I was able to complete her tasks, but it took a few times to really get the skill up to her standards. There were times when I wanted to stop trying, but her encouraging words would not let me. When I finally finished that class, I truly felt rewarded for working so hard. I owe all of that to her. One thing that I really miss about her is the sound of her laughter, because it had so much joy in it.

Arlene Hill was my Cane Travel Instructor. She was a woman that took her job very seriously. I remember the first time she took me out to learn cane travel. Wow, I felt like she was a true drill sergeant. She showed me around the Louisiana Center, and she also got me familiar with the routes that I would be taking by myself. She would always talk us through the routes that we would be taking for each morning. She wanted us to have a mental picture mapped out of where we would be going. Arlene was confident in her students. Sometimes I thought, "I cannot do this." She always told me, "Yes you can." I learned a lot about how to problem solve my way back from different routes because I wanted to be successful with every route that I was given. She worked us hard, but it was worthwhile in the end.

Jerry Darnell was the Industrial Arts Instructor. I remember the first day that I arrived in his class. He told me to sit down in a chair. He asked me a few questions about myself. After that, he started to ask mathematical questions. I was shocked, because I had not been in school for a while. The math questions that he asked dealt with mostly fractions. I felt stupid, because I did not know some of the answers at first. However, he was very patient with me. I thought to myself, "Where is he going with this." He wanted me to be able to know my fractions because I would be measuring things. There were several tools that we used every day. I will name a few: One of the following tools was the click ruler used for measuring everything. This tool was good for blind people to use because we did not need to see it to use it. The other tools were the saw table, mallet, the scratch off, the square ruler, and the router. All of these tools were used to help make braille blocks. The tools were a challenge for us, but the one that challenged us the most was the router. It made us do and say things that would wake up the classroom. This class was really intense, because we needed to be focused at all times. The tools were dangerous to use. I felt that this was the most challenging class, because we were using tools that sighted people would not even want to touch. JD wanted his students to be able to adapt to society, not for society to adapt to his students. I admired him because he was not just there for a pay check. JD was there because he believes in the NFB philosophy. This class was competitive for me, because I challenged myself every day to complete a braille block without any mistakes. JD did not take anything less. After we were finished with making the braille blocks, we were able to do a final project of our choice.

Mr. James, another Industrial Arts Instructor, was in charge of this project. By the time we got to Mr. James we should have been well skilled with each tool and know how to measure. Some of the projects that we could make were clocks, jewelry boxes, end tables, and computer tables. There were so many more things that students could make. When the students finished making these projects, they were so well done that you could sell them at any furniture store and get paid big bucks. I admired Mr. James because he made his students take everything seriously. He wanted his students to take life seriously because he knew that in order for a blind person to survive in society, we would have to work hard to prove to society that we are just as competent as our sighted counterparts. I respect both of these instructors, because they

both wanted their students to be successful, not just in the classroom but in life.

Jewel Ardoin was the Technical Instructor. She taught me how to use JAWS. Without this technology, it would not be possible for me to express my thoughts on paper. She also introduced me to Microsoft Word, e-mail, internet web-sites, and many more applications that allowed me to communicate with the outside world. I now have the skills that I need in order to pay my bills online and to read information that relates to me. I can also research information that I need to be aware of. I now feel that I have some of my independence back since I have learned these skills. I will continue to enhance my computer skills.

There were planned field trips for students at LCB. These field trips were well organized, confidence building field trips. There was water rafting, rock climbing, and trips the malls and to Mardi Gras. These field trips were for students to utilize the skills that they learned while attending LCB. On these field trips, students learned how to feel self-confident about themselves and to know that they can have fun as blind people. I know that the activities were challenging, but they gave me a positive outlook on life. I feel that blind people need to be challenged because challenges make us stronger.

During the time that students are going through training at LCB, they are asked to wear sleep shades. Sleep shades are used to keep out any inadequate vision. If a student had any residual vision, they were asked to use sleep shades. Sleep shades help people trust nonvisual methods and function more efficiently. If you are able to be trained under sleep shades and if you were to lose all of your vision, you would already be prepared. Sleep shades gave me total confidence as a newly blind person. I was able to walk to and from my apartment without guidance and was able to find places that I was asked to find all on my own.

My final training experience ended on June 27, 2012. However, the experience did not end there. I was able to attend the NFB National Convention. This was an amazing experience for me. There were blind people from all over the United States at this convention. I was able to see what the NFB was like and I was truly impressed. The speeches were inspiring. I was also able to see that there are a lot of blind professionals. The banquet was

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really nice and it was a magical moment for the present students and past students of LCB, because Pam Allen and her husband Roland Allen received the Jacobus tenBroek Award. This is the highest award given by the NFB. I was glad to be a part of this great experience. Pam Allen and her husband Roland are a perfect match. They are both true role models that anyone would be proud of.

I wrote this article to let other blind people know about my experience at the Louisiana Center of the Blind. I

want blind people to know that there is life after blindness. I was glad to be given the opportunity to attend the Louisiana Center for the Blind. The staff there has given me the confidence back that I already had. They are truly committed and dedicated to empowering students with the tools that they need in order to be productive members of society.

A Note From Lora Felty

Thank You NFBK Family

I would like to extend my sincere thank you and appreciation to my NFBK family for the love, support and prayers you have shown me throughout my illness and continued recovery. A midnight trip to the ER and emergency surgery weren't exactly in my plans for national convention. As it turned out, I spent nine days in the hospital in Orlando. My sisters drove to Florida to be with me. Thank you so much for the money that you gave to us. It was enough to cover the cost of my family's accommodation during that week, as well as some food. I don't know exactly who gave money, so I can't thank you individually. Just know how appreciative I and my entire family are for your generosity. I love you, my NFBK family! Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

Lora Felty

NFB of Kentucky State Convention

Preregistration Form

September 26, 27 & 28 2014

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This application should be completed and returned to Mike Freholm, 2012 Harris Way, Russell, KY 41169 no later than Monday, September 14, 2014. Make your check or money order payable to NFB of Kentucky.

REGISTRATION (\$10.00)

TOTAL

Number _____ \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

PHONE _____

LUNCHEON (\$15.00)

Number--- _____ \$ _____

Regular _____ Vegetarian _____ Gluten Free _____

BANQUET (\$30)

Number _____ \$ _____

Regular _____ Vegetarian _____ Gluten Free _____

CHILDCARE

Child(ren) Name(s) -- _____

Parent's Name _____

NFBK State Convention Preregistration (continued)

RAFFLE TICKETS(\$10.00)

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Number Sold _____ \$ _____

DONATION \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____