

September 11, 2023

Memo To: Executive Officers, Board Members, Chapter & Division Presidents & Others

From: Marty R. McKenzie, President

Positive Note 1935

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Dear Federation Family,

On September 11, 2001, one of the greatest tragedies in our country's history took place in New York City. The World Trade Center Twin Towers were destroyed through acts of terrorism on our home soil. There were 2,977 people who died that day alone and many others lost their lives due to the after-effects of this terrible tragedy. This act galvanized the resolve of Americans and the country came together like no other time in recent history. These individuals are gone but not forgotten. Today, we offer our thoughts and prayers to the remaining families of this terrible event.

Presidential Release 530 featured several important items to highlight in this week's Positive Note. For fifty years, leadership seminars have been held at the National Center with Dr. Jernigan conducting the first one in 1973. The Twisted Pilot Seminar just concluded over Labor Day weekend. Several South Carolinians have participated in these leadership opportunities and I submitted three potential names to Ron Brown while he was here in south Carolina. As an aside, I attended the Close Case Seminar in 2003 and it included leaders like Gregg Stilson who is a high-level administrator for the American Printing House for the Blind, Mike Mellow who has gone on to do great things in the Federation, Treva Olivera and others.

September marks Thom Spittle's tenth anniversary as the Federation Center's lead technology instructor. We appreciate all our past and present certified blind instructors who teach access technology to the state's blind. Currently these include Thom Spittle, Garrett Mosley, Eric Swinton, Malaya Reece and Jim Jackson.

Lego has released its Braille Bricks Collection and these are now available for purchase. Previously, these were only available to blind children through the American Printing House for the Blind. There is a great deal of information available on how to provide instruction using these Lego Braille Bricks in the APH Hive. You can search [www.aph.org](http://www.aph.org) for the Hive and get additional information.

The new Membership Portal is now live at [www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org). If your name was entered into the portal and you have a unique e-mail address, you can access information about your membership there. Please note that not everyone is currently in the system as this takes a great deal of volunteer time from Membership and Mentoring. Current records on membership are at the state level in each state and the Membership Portal may not reflect accurate information at this time. We are working on how to get this updated. This is an exciting new feature that will expand over the next several months and years. President Riccobono has asked that you not call the National Office if you see that your information is not updated and your dues show as not having been paid. You should start with your local chapter and then move to Membership and Mentoring for this information.

Currently, I am working on committee assignments for the 2023-2024 convention year. Each committee chair was asked to provide a list of current members who participated in regular meetings this year. Others who are interested in specific committees may be added. Committee meetings are generally open to anyone who wants to attend. I plan to complete this task by Thursday, September 14, 2023 and release the list next Friday. If you are interested in a particular committee, please contact me via e-mail at [marty2music@outlook.com](mailto:marty2music@outlook.com) .

The Membership & Mentoring committee of the NFB of SC will hold a new member event on Saturday, September 16, 2023 from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. The event will either be in person, virtual, or both. The format will be determined by the will of the members attending. If it is in person, the event will be held at the Federation Center of the Blind, and any virtual component will be held via Zoom. The purpose of this event is for any member to learn more about the NFB of SC affiliate, a little history, how it is structured, and to have your questions answered. No matter how long you have been a member, this event is for you if you would like to learn more about the inner workings of our organization. Please spread the word to others that can benefit.

Please send Thom Spittle an email at [nfbsc.lab.4@gmail.com](mailto:nfbsc.lab.4@gmail.com) and indicate whether you prefer in-person, hybrid or virtual. Please include your name, phone number and e-mail address if you have one. You can also call Thom at 803-331-3344. If Thom does not answer, please leave a voicemail with your information.

October is celebrated as Blind Equality Achievement Month and is a time when we publicly highlight the National Federation of the Blind in our communities. As chapters

and divisions plan events, please share with everyone via the NFB of SC listserv. Events should also be registered at [www.nfb.org/blindmonth](http://www.nfb.org/blindmonth).

The We Care committee is holding a Birthday Blessings Fundraiser from September 1 through December 31, 2023. To determine the amount of your donation, count the letters in your birth month and multiply by two. This gives you your donation amount. The purpose is to assist members in our communities who may have needs during this time. For more information, contact Melinda Jones at [Melindajones0571@gmail.com](mailto:Melindajones0571@gmail.com) or Pathronda Anderson at [tronda1@outlook.com](mailto:tronda1@outlook.com).

Here is David Houck's Federation Facing Fact.

The Blind Who Lead the Blind will provide background information on each board member over the next fifteen Positive Notes. We continue with Lenora Robertson, First vice President of the NFB of SC this week.

Lenora Robertson serves as the First Vice President of the NFB of SC. Lenora started her journey as a Federationist as a member of the rock Hill chapter in 1979. In 1986, Lenora was elected chapter president of the Rock Hill Chapter and serves in that role to this day.

Lenora was elected Second Vice President of the NFB of SC in 1994. She continued to serve in that role until she was elected as First Vice President in 2016. Lenora also currently serves on the Board of Trustees of the Federation Center of the Blind

Rocky Bottom Retreat and Conference Center of the Blind is much beloved by Lenora. She serves as a board member and as Chairperson of the Food Service Committee. She and her chapter spend a week annually at the camp where they always enjoy their visit and work to help beautify the grounds.

For many years, Lenora has headed up the Door Prize Committee at state convention. Convention attendees love her sense of humor and always insure she has more door prizes than she needs available.

With love for her chapter members, Lenora has headed up the sale of World's Finest Chocolate, at one time selling more than 10,000 bars in a year. This project provides

funding for her members to attend state and national conventions. We believe no chapter in the NFB sells more candy than Rock Hill.

In 2015, the SC House of Representatives presented Lenora with a plaque for her outstanding work with the blind. In 2018, Lenora was presented with the first Hometown Hero Award from the City of Rock Hill for her outstanding work in the community. Lenora has also received many honors from the NFB of SC, including the Donald C Capps Award.

Lenora is proud of her daughter Ellen Taylor who was active in the federation for many years. Unfortunately, Lenora lost her daughter, Ellen, in 2021. The RBRCCB Conference Center kitchen is named in Ellen Taylor's memory.

Lenora has been an active Lions Club member for 27 years. Lenora also appears before the Rock Hill City Council where she has been successful in getting grants to benefit her local chapter and the NFB of SC as a whole.

In her free time, She enjoys gardening and working with her flowers. Lenora is much beloved across the state and our heartfelt congratulations are extended to this remarkable lady.

Marty

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