



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

MASSACHUSETTS

Live the life you want.

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National Federation of the Blind of Massachusetts, Inc.

**Welcome to the Seventy First Annual Convention of
The National Federation of the Blind of
Massachusetts**

March 15 through March 17, 2024

!!!!

Rise up and BE ALL You Can BE!!!

The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. You can live the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back. Together with love, hope, and determination, we transform dreams into reality.

NFBMA 2024 State Convention

Convention Hosts

President, Shara Winton

First Vice-President, Mika Pyyhkala

Second Vice-President, Debbie Malone

Secretary, Cullen Gallagher

Treasurer, Kobena Bonney

Board Members: Sandra Burges, Shirley Dorris, Mark Paquette, Masha Sten-Clanton, Kyra Sweeney and Liz Lesperence

Additional Convention Planning Committee

Members:

Carol Maurice, Sengil Inkiala, Ellen Bartelt, Allen Larkin, and Basil Maurice

We want to sincerely thank Mark Paquette for being incredible with his sound and audio resources! Please stop by and thank Mark for doing such an outstanding job for us for many years.

Convention Overview

Thursday is a virtual business meeting for our Massachusetts Association of Blind Students. Friday includes a tour of the House of the Seven Gables, the exhibit hall, A welcome reception, fun team building activities, Comedians, karaoke and Music provided by DJ Andrew Johnson.

Saturday includes: scholarship breakfast, Breakfast for all of those who register for the entire convention, opening of general sessions, lunching around Salem, student Baja Bar, afternoon general sessions, and the banquet;

Sunday morning includes Breakfast for all who have registered for the entire convention, the NFB shattering low expectation discussion, business meeting, chapter, Division and legislative reports, and elections. Those who signed up, will also be going on A Trolley Tour around the fascinating city of Salem.

NFB PLEDGE:

I pledge to participate actively in the efforts of the National Federation of the Blind, to achieve Equality, Opportunity, and Security for the blind, to support the policies and programs of the Federation and to abide by its constitution.

Important Notes

Convention Registration:

Registration Deadline: for in person events if you want to be included in Saturday and Sunday breakfast, as well as have a fantastic meal at our banquet, the deadline to make that decision is March 4, 2024.

You can register by going to

<https://nfbma.org/civCRM/event/register?id=5&reset=1>.

We will be voting for three board members this year. Only due-paying members are eligible to vote. The Three positions that are being elected this year for a two-year term are being

currently filled by Sandra Burgess, Shirley Dorris and Masha Sten-Clanton

Our hotel is Salem Waterfront Hotel and Suites
225 Derby Street.
Salem, MA 01970
Telephone: 978-740-8788

Special NOTE: To members, family, friends, and colleagues of the National Federation of the Blind of Massachusetts,

We have captured the beloved president, Shara Winton. If you want her to be released by March 15, the beginning of your state convention, you must raise at least \$1,012. Otherwise, the convention will not run as smoothly or include surprises that your president has planned. Your president will be released if and when the money is raised.

The ransom can be paid in many ways.

1. Zelle the funds directly from your account to the NFB Massachusetts bank to treasurer@nfbma.org.
2. Directly on our website at <https://nfbma.org/donate-now> using PayPal or a credit/debit card.
3. Via our online auction link. www.32auctions.com/nfbma
4. Cash at the convention given to Sengil Inkiala or Allen Larkin. Feel free to ask your friends and family to help you raise the funds. I am sure you really need her at this convention!

Seriously,

Your NFBMA Presidential Kidnappers

Door Prizes:

Carol Maurice is our door prize chair for 2024.

You must be in the actual ball room when your name is called to claim your door prize.

Convention Updates:

Auction:

Our auction(both on-line and in-person) will benefit scholarship funds, statewide outreach and our legislative

actions. Numerous items including electronics, gift certificates, Timberland Gear, a beautiful Tandem Bicycle , food gifts, and much more! Our auction chair is Liz Lesperence she can be reached at 774-364-0195 or liz.karsok@gmail.com

. The auction Will be held Saturday during general sessions and the banquet. Auction items can be viewed on Saturday at the auction table, located near registration, and bids will be accepted. The opening bid for each item will be the highest bid registered at the auction table when items are auctioned off. If you are donating an auction item, please send a description of this item to Liz Lesperence by March 10, 2024.

Interested in serving on the board:

If interested, contact Shara Winton at SharaWinton@gmail.com or call 617-600-8130.

On-Site Registration:

All registration will be held near the Maritime Ball room entrance.

The convention registration package, including Friday night dinner, Saturday lunch, and banquet tickets is \$100.00.

To register online, go to <https://nfbma.org/civicrm/event/register?id=5&reset=1>.

You can find out more and register at <http://nfbma.org/state-convention>.

In-Person Registration will be open Friday from 3:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M. On Saturday registration will be open from 8:00 A.M. to 9:00 A.M. Please ask for an NFB of Massachusetts representative if you arrive after these posted times. Everyone must register in order to be eligible for our

convention room rates, to ensure you receive your membership benefits, and to vote during affiliate elections. Also, registration will ensure that your name will be in the running for our door prizes awarded at the convention. You must be **IN THE ROOM** when your name is called to be eligible for door prizes. You must wear your attendee badge to gain entrance to meals and events (no exceptions). Please wear your badges, particularly during breakfast and the banquet to receive the meal you requested. Please turn in your badges on Sunday morning at the registration table.

Guide Dog Users:

Please inquire at the registration table or Debbie Malone for information on the location of outdoor parking areas.

We welcome all attendees to our convention and embrace diversity, inclusion, and mutual respect. To that end, please keep the following expectations in mind when you join us in Salem.

The National Federation of the Blind provides support to members and advocates for our rights to live the lives we want through advocacy, public awareness, and mentoring. As a member or guest at our convention, you not only represent yourself but also represent our organization. Please be sure to dress in business, dressy casual or casual as described here: [Attire Guide: Dress Codes from Casual to White Tie Formal — Emily Post](#). We want you to enjoy your time with us and to make new friends and renew old acquaintances. Although we encourage members to socialize and have fun, the convention also provides an important opportunity to come together to continue the work of our organization, to learn about the important initiatives that we are

involved with on a local and national level, and to plan our work for the future.

Please Remember These Guidelines:

1. Welcome new attendees. Although you will undoubtedly enjoy time with your friends, please reach out to those who have never joined us before and help them to be comfortable. We welcome people from all walks of life and with diverse needs and experiences.
2. Attend and participate in sessions. NFBMA subsidizes your attendance at our convention. All of us work hard to raise the money that allows us to come together each year. It is expected that when you commit yourself to come to convention that you are also agreeing to attend sessions.
3. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances. If your behavior could possibly make anyone uncomfortable, even if you would not be upset by it yourself, do not do or say anything that could be considered inappropriate by anyone.
4. We understand that, for some, enjoying an adult beverage is part of the fun at the convention. However, public drunkenness and the associated behaviors that often accompany it not only reflect badly on you but also do not enhance our standing as an organization.
5. Please do not wear heavy colognes or perfumes, as some of our guests have chemical sensitivities.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, March 14, 2024

8:00PM – Student Division Business Meeting via Zoom:
Join Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/93976475347?pwd=Qy9KQWNmTWWhjSklnbmNrSytQSnl3dz09>

One tap mobile: +16465588656,93976475347#, *2022#

Dial by your location: +1 1646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 9 3 9 7 6 4 7 5 3 4 7

Passcode: 2022

FRIDAY, March 15, 2024

3:00 - 6:00 PM – Exhibit Hall

Maritime Ball Room A

6:00 PM – Nominating Committee Meeting

Only appointed delegates may attend.

7:00 – 8:45PM – Dinner and a Fun-Filled Team Building
Activity

Maritime Ball Room B

Join with friends old and new to enjoy a variety of scrumptious food stations and fellowship! Tables at this event will be assigned to make sure that we have the chance to welcome new people and get to know our NFBMA family better!

9:00 - 10:00 PM – Comedy Night

Maritime Ball Room

Join Mike Karsok as he makes us laugh and introduces us to three others up and coming comedians. Glenda Torres, Allie

Del Franco and Will Pottorff. You can catch all of these comedians around the North Shore, New Hampshire and beyond, making people laugh their socks off! Don't worry if you aren't wearing socks, you will laugh uproariously, anyway. Suggested Donation is \$5.

SATURDAY, March 16, 2024

7:30 AM – Scholarship class and scholarship Committee Breakfast

(by invitation only) Maritime Ballroom section A .

MORNING GENERAL SESSION:

Maritime Ball Room B

Join Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/93976475347?pwd=Qy9KQWNmTWWhjSklnbmNrSytQSnl3dz09>

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9:00 AM – Musical Selection

9:05 AM – Opening Ceremonies

Invocation by Kobena Bonney Cambridge Chapter,
Pledge of Allegiance Liz Lesperence, At-Large Chapter,
NFB pledge Allen Larkin, At-Large Chapter

9:15 AM – National Report

Mark Riccobono, National Federation of the Blind President

10:00 AM – Nominating Committee Report

Basil Maurice, NFBMA Springfield Chapter

10:05 AM – MOTIVATE-REPRESENT-PARTICIPATE – Shirley Dorris Waltham, Massachusetts
Cambridge chapter and NFB of Massachusetts Board member

10:20 AM – Perkins Library Update

Perkins Braille and Talking Book Library. Kim Charlson
Director

11:00 AM –

**Leadership Roundtable: Serving the Blind in the 21st
Century**

Representatives from Ma. Commission for The Blind, Carroll
Center, National Braille Press, and Perkins School for The
Blind

11:55 AM – Announcements

12:00 PM – Adjournment for lunch

12:00 PM – Student Luncheon-Maritime Ballroom A: All
Students and other invited guests are expected to attend
this delicious and informative lunch. We welcome you to
become motivated while enjoying a delicious Baja BAR .

AFTERNOON GENERAL SESSION

Maritime Ballroom B

Join Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/93976475347?pwd=Qy9KQWNmTWhjSklnbmNrSytQSnl3dz09>

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Dial by your location: +1 1646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 9 3 9 7 6 4 7 5 3 4 7

Passcode: 2022

2:00 PM – Artificial Intelligence and Blindness:

Join Minh Ha, Hai Nguyen Ly, and Mika Pyyhkala for an exciting conversation about Generative AI and how it is making life more fun and easier for people with disabilities. We will be diving into three impact areas: leisure, work, and everyday independence. AI is making it possible to do more things independently and confidently.

2:30 P.M.- NFB Blind Centers

Maureen Nietfeld from Colorado Center for the Blind and Georgie Sydnor from the Louisiana Center for the blind will discuss the ways that the NFB centers teach blind people to live independently and how to do it well with structured Learning methods.

3:00PM –“Perseverance keeps Honor Bright”-Dr. David Ticchi—Dr. Ticchi is a Trailblazer in all he has done, from winning many awards as an outstanding teacher, providing extraordinary community service, and about his uncommon commitment to the Federation. We will have the opportunity to hear directly from the man himself, about the many amazing things that he has accomplished in his remarkable life.

3:45 PM – MBTA and RTAG--Katarina Torres Radisic is a community Organizer at the Boston Center for Independent Living and facilitator of the Riders’ Transportation Access Group (RTAG), a community-based advocacy group that advises the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) on transportation matters impacting people with disabilities and older adults. She will discuss the creation of the Riders' Transportation Access Group and how they affect change from snow removal, good sidewalks and guide dog refusals.

4:15 P.M. Presidential Report:

Shara Winton, President NFB of Massachusetts

5:00 PM –

A fun and interactive event that will help all of you to get to know your affiliate Board!

5:30PM – Adjourned

SATURDAY EVENING BANQUET

Join Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/93976475347?pwd=Qy9KQWNmTWhjSklnbmNrSytQSnl3dz09>

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Passcode: 2022

Maritime Ball Room b

7:30 PM – NFBMA Banquet

Our Master of Ceremonies: John Oliveira, Cambridge Chapter

7:05 PM – 50/50 Raffle

Final sales to benefit NFBMA Scholarship Fund

7:10 PM – Annual auction by John Oliveira

Banquet Address:

National Representative, President Mark Riccobono , National President of the National Federation of the Blind

BELL Academy by Stephanie Valdez and Ellen Bartelt

Federationist of the Year Award by Shara Winton

NFB of Massachusetts Scholarship Awards by

Hai Nguyen Ly, NAPBC of MA.

Auction will Continue by John Oliveira

SUNDAY, March 5, 2023

Maritime Ball Room B

Join Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/93976475347?pwd=Qy9KQWNmTWhjSklnbmNrSytQSnl3dz09>

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Dial by your location: +1 1646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 9 3 9 7 6 4 7 5 3 4 7

Passcode: 2022

9:30 AM – Shattering Low Expectations Discussion

Debate Kyra Sweeney, AT-Large Chapter and another very engaged member

10:30 AM – Call to order and announcements.

10:35AM Mika Pyyhkala, NFBMA First Vice-president,
Debbie Malone, NFBMA 2nd Vice President,

10:45 NFB Business and Board Meeting

Treasurer Report: Kobena Bonney

PAC update: Speaker TBA

Chapter Reports:

Justin Heard, Cambridge Chapter,

Theadora Williams, Grater Springfield Chapter,

Debbie Malone, At-Large Chapter

Justin Heard, MABS

Stephanie Valdez, NAPBC

Elections

12:00 PM – Adjourn

OUR THANKS

Thanks to our board, chapters, members and exhibitors for generously donating door prizes and auction items.

Thanks to Everyone who appeared on the agenda or served on committees or helped in any way.

Thanks to Carol and Basil Maurice for their great job with the door prizes.

A big thanks to Liz Lesperence, Shirley Dorris and John Oliveira for taking care of all auction logistics.

We wish to thank Mark Riccobono, for leadership and dedication to the National Federation of the Blind. We truly appreciate your attendance at our 2024 Convention. The national perspective you bring to us and your leadership is so important to our achievement of equality, security, and opportunity.

