



# NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
BLIND MERCHANTS

*Live the life you want.*

## **The Blitz 2019 Fall Edition**

Hey there! Did you miss us? Sorry we've been away so long. Sometimes you have to choose between doing the work and talking about the work. We've been busy doing the work. But it's time to catch up on all things Randolph-Sheppard. Let's get started.

***Chicago! Chicago! Downtown Chicago*** - That's right. BLAST (Business Leadership and Superior Training) is returning to the Windy City in 2020 but this time we will be downtown. Contracts have been signed and plans are already underway for our next BLAST which will be [April 14-17](#) at the Hyatt Regency on East Wacker. There you will be able to enjoy all that the area has to offer. Whether you want to shop on the Miracle Mile, ride the Ferris wheel at the Navy Pier, visit the aquarium or museums, enjoy a walk in the park, take a boat ride around the city, or dine at some of the finest restaurants in the world, it will all be right there to enjoy. And as always, the training will be the highest quality available to the Randolph-Sheppard community. People are still talking about our last time in Chicago in 2016. That one will be hard to top but our team only sees that as a challenge to make this one even bigger and better. Mark your calendars! You don't want to miss this one.

***Mini Doesn't Mean What It Did Before*** - With BLAST essentially moving to an 18 month rotation, there were no plans to do a BLAST Conference in 2019. Then the opportunity to partner with Vistar and its large Northeast Show in Atlantic City presented itself. NABM President Nicky Gacos coined the name Mini BLAST and set plans in motion for the day and a half conference. Well, it turned out not to be so Mini. Almost 200 people showed up making it by far the largest Randolph-Sheppard Training conference in the country in 2019. The agenda was outstanding and was packed full of information. The Vistar Show featured 180 booths making it the largest trade show ever at a Randolph-Sheppard function. The feedback we have received tells us what a huge hit the event really was. NABM was very pleased overall with the Mini BLAST to say the least and

appreciated the opportunity to partner with Vistar. Who knows? There may be more of these sorts of events in the future.

**Heidi Chico Honored by NABM** - Wittern Group CEO and Past Chair of the NAMA Board of Directors Heidi Chico delivered the keynote address at the Mini BLAST and then was presented with NABM's inaugural Frances Lorraine Goranson Award. Goranson, a young blind woman living in South Dakota in the 1930's, was the first known woman blind vendor in the Randolph-Sheppard Program. Her story of determination and perseverance is an inspiration to all. The award will be presented annually to a deserving woman who exemplifies Ms. Goranson's pioneer spirit and dedication toward the advancement of women entrepreneurs. Heidi Chico's leadership, determination, and support of women within the National Automatic Merchandising Association, the Convenience Services Industry as a whole, and the Randolph-Sheppard community certainly make her a deserving first recipient of this award.

**Educating Education** – It is no secret that the Randolph-Sheppard community has become increasingly frustrated by the Department of Education. NABM was so frustrated that the Department of Education's administration of the program was one of the issues when NABM went to The Hill in May to talk to members of Congress. And most recently, NABM President Nicky Gacos, Terry Smith, and NABM member and New York blind entrepreneur Yvonne Reilly-Bachmore met with the House Education Committee staff to discuss concerns. However, there is optimism that things might change. The Senate finally approved Mark Schultz as the new RSA Commissioner. Schultz is the former VR Director in Nebraska so he comes with a lot of knowledge about VR although not so much about Randolph-Sheppard. Nicky Gacos and Terry Smith recently met with the Commissioner to educate him about our issues. We discussed among other things:

1. The need for RSA to provide much needed policy guidance on important issues and consider updating the regulations which haven't been revised since 1975 or at least clarify them;
2. The need for RSA to get involved with federal agencies if they know the federal entity is out of compliance rather than the only solution being the SLA filing for arbitration;
3. The burdens imposed on SLAs by the backlog in convening arbitration panels and approving state BEP rules;
4. The negative impact that changing the policy interpretation on the extent to which federal funds can be used to perform renovations will have on the livelihoods of blind people;
5. The issues related to states having to get prior approval on purchases that exceed \$5,000 and for sending blind vendors to training such as BLAST; and,
6. Concerns about state monitoring of state Randolph-Sheppard Programs.

Obviously, nothing was resolved. No promises were made. However, we are hopeful that Mr. Schultz will follow up on the issues and help resolve them to the extent he is able. Ironically, on the same day this meeting took place, Commissioner Schultz paid a visit to the National Federation of the Blind facilities in Baltimore where he discussed blindness issues with President Riccobono and other key staff.

***It's Not All Bad News at RSA*** – There is actually some great news from RSA albeit a little dated now. However, for those who haven't heard, RSA has hired two new staff to work in the Randolph-Sheppard unit. Christine Grassman was hired to offer mediation to parties to arbitration before the panel is formally convened. The goal is to give the parties the opportunity to resolve any conflict and avoid the lengthy and expensive process of arbitration. Christine is an attorney with mediation experience. To date, she has had only one mediation and it produced favorable results. James McCarthy was also brought on board. Jim will primarily be shepherding the arbitration cases through the process. Jesse Hartle is backing out of the arbitration world to a certain extent. All three staff will be involved in monitoring visits. We understand the first monitoring visit has been scheduled. If this is news to you, then relax. They aren't coming to your state. NABM is optimistic that by being fully staffed, RSA will be able to do more state monitoring on a more consistent basis. This is an important function of RSA in our opinion. So, with that said, please join us in welcoming Christine and Jim aboard.

***Smooth Sailing on the Highways***- We are not going to say rest area commercialization is dead; however, the issue seems to have absolutely no momentum. NABM and the coalition we are part of has worked tirelessly to educate members of Congress about the impact such legislation would have not only on blind entrepreneurs but on other small business owners and local governments. Those efforts are definitely paying off. We must not let our guard down. There will be future attempts to take these opportunities away from blind people. And the National Association of Blind merchants and National Federation of the Blind will be there when they do to fight to protect the opportunities for blind people.

***DoD: The Never Ending Story*** - Litigation seems to be the norm when it comes to DoD facilities. Here is a brief recap of recent cases:

- Hurlburt Field - Good news here. The arbitration proceedings in this Florida case has concluded and the panel ruled the priority applies to Dining Facility Attendant (DFA) contracts. What the Army will do now is unclear. Will it simply ignore the ruling and force the State to go to court to enforce the ruling? Or will it attempt to appeal to federal court? Time will tell but we look forward to the time when a blind vendor will be in charge of the food service at this facility.

- Camp Blanding - The Florida SLA has withdrawn its arbitration complaint in this case. The issue here was the Army did not want to exercise the option years of its full food contract indicating it instead planned on delivering meals to the troops in an alternative manner through the officers club. The SLA was able to get an injunction and was allowed to continue operating the contract for almost 2 years. The contract will end soon so to a certain extent the issue is moot.
- Eglin Air Force Base - You will recall last year, Florida won a huge arbitration case against the Tyndall Air Force Base. The panel ruled that the priority applied to the vending on the base and that the Exchange is subject to the vending machine income sharing provisions of the Act. Now, the SLA is taking on the same issue at another Air Force Base. The case has yet to be heard.
- Fort Knox - The Kentucky SLA filed for arbitration over a similar vending issue at Fort Knox. The state attorney who filed the complaint has since left state government and the SLA is uncertain as to the future of this case. The Department of Education has not convened the panel yet.
- King's Bay Submarine Base - This was a DFA solicitation that actually came out with a Randolph-Sheppard priority which may be a first. After first being told its proposal was in the competitive range, the Georgia SLA was later told it was not. This is the first case where RSA offered mediation to the parties and a settlement was reportedly reached although nothing has been signed to date.
- Fort Bliss - This case just keeps on going. The issue is whether or not the Army can split out the DFA portion of a contract and award it without the R-S priority. The Army prevailed in arbitration but thanks in large part to a letter to Congressman Pete Sessions that NABM helped get from the Secretary of Education stating the priority applies to DFA contracts, the ruling was overturned in federal court. However, the Army has since appealed to the Court of Appeals so we wait. This is a must win case for Randolph-Sheppard. No pressure on Peter Nolan and the Texas SLA (SMILE!)
- Fort Riley - This is a complicated case but at the heart of the case is the DFA Issue. Does the priority apply? This case is the exact opposite of Bliss. The arbitration panel ruled in favor of the Kansas SLA; however, a federal court judge ruled otherwise. Kansas has taken this one to the Court of Appeals. NABM is helping offset some of the legal fees in this case and the National Federation of the Blind filed an amicus brief. The NFB and NABM are involved because of the importance of this case to blind people. It is another must win case.

- Tyndall Air Force Base - The Florida SLA also has filed for arbitration against the Air Force due to its failure to recognize the R-S priority in a DFA bid. Are you seeing a trend here? The Florida SLA is involved in 4, count them 4, arbitration cases. They are fortunate to have a state attorney in Brent McNeal who sees himself as the defender of all things Randolph-Sheppard. Go get em guys.
- Fort Lee - After languishing in the Department of Education for over 2 years, this case is finally moving forward. At issue is the determination that the SLA's proposal was not within the competitive range. The Virginia SLA was the incumbent but lost the facility when the contract was awarded to Cantu.
- Fort Benning - The hearing in this Georgia case is expected soon. The issue here too relates to the competitive range. Georgia is the incumbent and remains at this site due to a court ordered injunction pending the outcome of the arbitration.
- Fort Sill - This situation is almost exactly the same as the Fort Lee case referenced above. The Oklahoma SLA was the incumbent but lost the contract when its bid was determined to not be within the competitive range. A federal judge refused to grant an injunction so the SLA is out and Mitchco is in pending arbitration.
- Leonard Wood - Perhaps this Missouri case offers some hope to the states challenging the Army on these competitive range issues. Here the SLA was the incumbent but was ruled out of the competitive range. The SLA got an injunction and eventually prevailed in arbitration.
- Fort Wainwright - This is another DFA issue. The Army issued the solicitation for DFA Services without the R-S priority. The Alaska SLA has just recently filed for arbitration.
- Luke AFB - This is the biggest disappointment. Luke Air Force Base announced its intention to award a DFA contract to AbilityOne. Despite NABM, the state NFB Affiliate, and Arizona's blind vendors urging the State to challenge this action, the Governor refused. In all likelihood, that opportunity has been lost forever.
- Marine Corps - In previous editions of The Blitz, it was reported that the Marines had awarded a multi-state contract for full food service to Sodexo. South Carolina had taken the lead and submitted a proposal on behalf of the states in the East. It was teaming with FSIG. California submitted a proposal for the other contract in the West. However, both proposals were rejected on technical grounds. South Carolina filed for arbitration. The Department of Education has yet to convene the panel.

Keneohe Bay Hawaii - Speaking of the Marines, here is another one where technical issues with the SLA's proposal eliminated them from consideration. The Hawaii SLA is the incumbent and was able to get an injunction until such time as the arbitration can take place, Therefore, Virgil Stinnett remains there as the blind vendor with his teaming partner Joe Blackstone.

San Diego Navy Base – This was another DFA case and the panel rule in favor of the California SLA in 2018. However, there is a footnote. We understand the Navy is preparing a new solicitation which will include the Randolph-Sheppard priority. This is very encouraging.

Before leaving DoD and the litigations, a couple of observations are in order. Most of these cases are totally unnecessary and a waste of taxpayer dollars. When will the military ever realize it is simpler to just abide by the law? And when will RSA issue guidance that would make it clear how the priority applies to military contracts? A couple of policy directives from RSA and the necessity for these arbitrations evaporates.

***A Cautionary Word About Military Dining*** - With all of this litigation, Randolph-Sheppard finds itself with a target on its back. DoD and others are scrutinizing the Program. They are watching. They are asking questions. One thing on their radar is the teaming arrangements utilized by states. NABM has been asked whether or not blind vendors are truly engaged in these operations. Some have gone so far as to allege the priority is being used as a front by the teaming companies to gain a competitive advantage over other companies. The questions themselves are concerning. There should never be a reason to ask these questions and the SLAs and Committees of Blind Vendors must ensure that their military dining arrangements are beyond reproach. They must insist that their vendors at these bases are present and engaged in the business and are decision makers. They must also ensure that the blind guy makes a minimum of 51% of the profit. If these things are not happening, we put all of these contracts at risk. Teaming partners will generally allow the blind vendor to be involved to the extent desired. We just need to make sure everyone of our guys are.

***Army Nutrition Care Contract: What's Cooking?*** - The RFP for the multi-state Nutrition Care contract is expected out any day now. The contract will cover the cafeterias and patient feeding in Army hospitals in 5 states - Georgia, New York, California, Missouri, and Kansas. The RFP is coming out with the Randolph-Sheppard priority. The 5 states have agreed that Georgia will take the lead in bidding and Georgia has selected Selrico as its teaming partner. If awarded the contract, a Georgia licensed blind vendor will oversee the service at all 5 hospitals. Five years ago, the Army bid out a similar contract for 8 Army hospitals but claimed the blind vendor priority did not apply. South Carolina was the SLA taking the lead at that time and they filed for arbitration. The panel ruled the priority did apply which is the reason the Randolph-Sheppard language was

included in the draft solicitation and is expected to be in the final one. Although South Carolina will not have a vendor benefit since the hospital in that state is not being included in the solicitation, they deserve a tip of the hat because without the arbitration victory Georgia wouldn't even have a chance.

***May Fly In a Huge Success*** - Approximately 100 blind entrepreneurs and other stakeholders showed up for the NABM Fly In and Critical Issues Conference held in May in D.C. It was another fantastic event with great speakers and lots of good information. The highlight was being able to spend time on The Hill talking to our members of Congress. A special thank you is in order to John Pare, Gabe Cazares, Melissa Krueger, and Kyle Wells from the National Federation of the Blind's National Office for setting up the member meetings, helping with the fact sheets, and for doing the training on advocacy. We addressed 3 issues on The Hill - 1. The Department of Education's administration of the Program; 2. The VA's continued refusal to comply with the Act; and, 3. Rest area commercialization. To see the fact sheets we left in the Congressional Offices go to <https://blindmerchants.org/day-on-the-hill-may-21-2019/> .

***GSA Are You Listening?*** - Last year NABM released a white paper on issues related to GSA. You can read that white paper at <https://blindmerchants.org/gsa-compliance-issues/> Recently, NABM President Nicky Gacos and Terry Smith met with GSA officials in Washington, D.C. The conversations seemed productive. They said all of the right things. But are they really listening? The same problems exist - security clearance delays, limitations on the state's vending facilities that reduce income potential for the blind vendors, unfair competition from cafeterias, micromarkets being awarded to private vendors, etc. NABM also provided feedback on a new permit template that was fraught with issues. Now, we hear they will soon be finalizing the template. Did they take to heart our suggestions? Will they allow us an opportunity to offer additional feedback before it is finalized? Will they seek feedback from the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind? If GSA wants a true partnership with Randolph-Sheppard, they will indeed allow such feedback. Before leaving GSA, we would be remiss if we didn't say our conversations usually also include GSA's frustration over poor service in some states. NABM can advocate but SLAs must be more responsive and blind vendors must make sure they are providing the highest quality of service. There are no excuses not to.

***Vendor Accounting: Declaring War on an Antiquated Custodial System*** - It is hard to believe that in 2019 there are still 5 states clinging to an antiquated Randolph-Sheppard model that treats the vendors more like sheltered workshop employees rather than entrepreneurs. In these states, blind vendors send in their cash (gross receipts minus cost of merchandise) each week. The SLA or nominee then pays the vendors' employees, pays all of the payroll taxes, pays the sales tax and other fees, pays the set aside and then at the end of the month sends the vendors what's left and says, "This is what you made." This approach

is an affront to blind people everywhere. It breeds dependence rather than independence. This approach demonstrates a fundamental belief by the agency, as well meaning as it might be, that it truly doesn't believe in the abilities of the blind. How can a VR agency for the blind place people into competitive employment if it doesn't believe blind people can handle their own paperwork? The National Federation of the Blind believes that low expectations create obstacles between blind people and their dreams. For this reason, NABM has set out to end such systems. Our job is made easier by the fact it is illegal to use set aside or federal dollars to pay employees to perform these functions. RSA has already directed two states to end the practice. We are working with another state that is fixing the problem on its own. A fourth state is in discussions with RSA. And we have put the fifth state on notice that it must change. NABM believes blind people can be independent business owners and we will end this custodial approach.

***Answering Your Questions No Matter How Odd They May Sound*** - NABM gets some really great questions which is a testament to the creative thinking of some of our blind entrepreneurs and SLA staff. We've decided we are going to share some of these actual questions with you. In each issue of The Blitz, we will pose a question and give you our answer. The first question is: Does managing a for pay parking lot or garage on federal property constitute a vending facility and therefore would be subject to the Randolph-Sheppard priority? You must refer to the definition of "vending facility" found at 34 C.F.R. 395.1(x) for the answer. The crux of the matter is that in order for the definition of a "vending facility" to be met, goods or services must be dispensed manually or automatically. Here a service (parking) is being dispensed manually (parking attendant) or automatically (payment kiosks). Therefore, the answer is yes. Now, there are a lot of factors at play as to whether or not managing a garage would be feasible. States would probably have to agree to share income with the federal entity in some fashion but there are advantages to the federal entity to not have to bid out the contract. Which SLA will be first to test our answer? We have an idea.

***What Is the SLA Really Supposed to Be Doing?*** - NABM was recently asked to present at a state vendor conference on the responsibilities of the SLA. There are two ways to look at that question. What "should" the agency be doing and what is the agency "required" to do. For this presentation, we focused on the requirements in the law. We reviewed 34 C.F.R. 395 and listed those things the SLA is required to do. To review that list go to <https://blindmerchants.org/exactly-what-are-the-responsibilities-of-the-sla/> .

***Jailbreak: States Warming Up to the Idea of Jail Commissaries*** - It is well known that Tennessee has been very successful creating opportunities for the Blind to manage and operate inmate commissaries. NABM has tried to facilitate taking that model to other states. However, states for various reasons have been slow to jump into these waters. But that may be changing. At least 3 states have recently submitted proposals to manage inmate commissaries and two more are

seriously looking into the possibility. NABM was recently in Mississippi where we accompanied the BEP staff on a site visit. That one looks very promising. NABM is excited about the possibilities and is willing to assist any state that wants to pursue opportunities.

***Guam Refuses to Play*** - When it comes to military contracts, you win some and you lose some but Guam refused to even get in the game. The Navy recently issued an RFP for the Naval Hospital on the island. The RFP came out with a Randolph-Sheppard priority. NABM did everything it could to secure that site for a blind person. We had some very positive exchanges with the Governor's Office. We laid out a simple plan with a teaming partner. Guam's VR officials refused to cooperate. We asked Guam to allow Hawaii to bid and still no cooperation. The blind consumers were very supportive but did not have enough influence to make it happen. Words can't describe how disappointed NABM was. In some ways, we came so close yet still so far away. However, we have not given up on Guam. We will continue to try to engage them and one day create opportunities for blind vendors there. With the large military presence, there are many government buildings that fall under the priority.

***Committee Chairs Are Talking and That's a Good Thing*** - Earlier this year, NABM President Nicky Gacos began conducting monthly calls for Elected Committee Chairs. The calls are held the **second Tuesday** of every month at 8:00 PM Eastern Time. If you are a Committee Chair and not getting notices about the calls, Contact President Gacos at [President@Merchants-NFB.org](mailto:President@Merchants-NFB.org). Zach Snow of Georgia and Michael Talley of Alabama Chair the calls. There are usually updates on important issues, a guest speaker, and discussion time. Terry Smith has been doing his Randolph-Sheppard 101 Training a few sections at a time. That has been very informative. Committee Chairs are encouraged to participate. Knowledge is power.

***NABM Welcomes New Board Members at Record Setting National Convention***- The only word to describe the National Federation of the Blind's July national convention in Las Vegas is WOW! 3,200 people attended and it was an amazing event from start to finish. NABM set an attendance record with approximately 125 attending the Merchants meeting. President Nicky Gacos presented a solid lineup of speakers and the organization conducted its annual business meeting. The members voted last year to expand the board by 2. Gary Grassman of New York and Michael Colbrunn of Minnesota were elected to fill the new seats. Zach Snow (Georgia), Melba Taylor (Maryland), Joe Higdon (Indiana), and Barbara Manuel (Alabama) were re-elected to new terms. Make plans now to attend NFB's 2020 national Convention which will kick off **June 30** in Houston, Texas.

***Meet the New BEP Directors and Say Goodbye to Some Others*** - Change is inevitable. Some longtime BEP Directors have departed. Carolyn Green, who supervised the BEP in Kansas for two decades has left BEP and is in another

position in the same department. Pam Geary in Alaska accepted a promotion and is in another position in State government. Charlie Garret in Georgia has left state government. We wish them all the very best. However, we do want to welcome aboard Matthew Miller in Kansas, Olivia Carr in Alaska, and Kathy Roat in Iowa. And we welcome back at least on an interim basis Teresa Eggleston who will fill in in Georgia until a permanent director can be hired. Good luck guys! Let us know how we can help. Oklahoma still has an opening but that position is expected to be filled in the not too distant future.

***He's Back!*** - Dan Frye has come back home. Many of you know Dan from his time working for NFB or his RSA days. Others know him from the time he served as the Executive Director of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind. After leaving Jersey, Dan worked for Aira. But now he's back in Rehab having recently taken over as the Director of Services for the Blind in New Hampshire Welcome home Mr. Frye.

***Wishing an Old Friend a Happy Retirement*** - An old friend and supporter is hanging it up. Mike Barclay with Southern Foodservice Management has retired. Under Mike's leadership, Southern has been an outstanding teaming partner with several blind entrepreneurs. He has also supported BLAST and contributed to our advocacy efforts. We will miss Mike but wish him a long and healthy retirement. And this is for you, Mike. Roll Tide!

***A Good Friend is Going Home*** - Gabe Cazares has left the National Federation of the Blind's National Office where he served as Manager of Government Affairs. Gabe was a good friend to NABM and a tremendous help with our fly ins. He accepted a position on Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner's senior staff. He will be sorely missed but we understand the draw of going home.

***Meet a New Friend: Melissa McCarthy*** - NABM would like to introduce you to Melissa McCarthy with BOOKMYGROUP. She has been assisting NABM with securing hotels for future BLAST Conferences and other events. She secured the hotel for our May Critical Issues Conference/ Fly In and got us the Hyatt Regency at a remarkable \$149 rate Downtown Chicago for next year's BLAST. She is a hard worker and does a terrific job She's available to help state BEPs find just the right property for your event. Reach out to her at [MMccarthy@bookmygroup.com](mailto:MMccarthy@bookmygroup.com)?

***On the Road Again*** - NABM has been on the road a lot as usual. So far this year, we've presented at vendor training conferences in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Virginia. Still to come between now and the end of the year are Illinois, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Utah. Whew! That's a lot of frequent flyer miles.

***Sign Up to Be Part of the Movement*** - In past issues of the Blitz, we haven't

really emphasized membership in the organization. However, we really would like to have you as a member. Dues are only \$10 per year. You help the cause but more importantly you will be part of something special. Join now by going to <https://blindmerchants.org/about/membership-form/>

**Upcoming Events** - Here's a look at events coming up over the next 9 months:

- **October 30 – November 1** – National Council of State Agencies for the Blind Fall Meeting in Jacksonville, Florida
- **November 18-20** – NAMA Coffee, Tea, and Water Show in Anaheim, California
- **February 10** - NABM Midyear Training In Washington, D.C.
- **February 10-12** - National Federation of the Blind Washington Seminar in Washington, D.C.
- **April 14-17** - Chicago! Chicago! Downtown Chicago BLAST at the Hyatt Regency
- **April 22-24** - National Council of State Agencies for the Blind Spring Meeting in Bethesda, Maryland
- **May 6-8** - NAMA ONESHOW in Nashville, Tennessee
- **June 30-July 5** - National Federation of the Blind National Convention in Houston, Texas
- **July 20-22** - NAMA Advocacy Day and Fly In in Washington, D.C.

**Check Us Out on Facebook** – Like the National Association of Blind Merchants on Facebook and keep up with the latest and greatest when it comes to Randolph-Sheppard.

### **Tidbits**

- We have sad news to report from Louisiana. Lee Frazier, the former vendor at Fort Polk, passed away on **September 20**. Lee was a good guy, a strong NABM / NFB supporter, and will be deeply missed.
- Congratulations to NABM Emerging Leader Adam Bevel of Arizona who was invited to address the 68th United Nations Civil Society Conference which was held in August in Salt Lake City.
- A shout out to the Indy Thunder who repeated for the 4th consecutive year as Beep Ball World Series Champs. The victory was fueled in part by 3 blind entrepreneurs- Joe Higdon, Ron Brown, and Ed Brown. Way to go guys!
- NABM's Terry Smith joined 5 Nashville area blind entrepreneurs in a skydiving adventure in July. The outing was organized by Melissa Chilton who was the only one in the group to have ever jumped. Check out Terry's video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqGJPE1Vybs>
- Congratulations to Stan Young who assumed his new assignment as one of 3 blind vendors assigned to operate the newsstands / gift shops at the Honolulu Airport. This is the largest Randolph-Sheppard retail operation in

the country.

- Barbara Badger, who handles most of the administrative functions for NABM, has a new addition to the family. Grand baby #2, Jonah Ellias Badger, arrived on [September 25th](#). And then came news that her son and his wife will be presenting her with grand baby #3 next year. Congratulations Nana!

**You Can Still Help** – Do you like what the National Federation of the Blind and NABM are doing to advocate for the program on a national level and to assist individual state programs and blind entrepreneurs? Do you enjoy reading *The Blitz* and being kept informed about what is going on in the Randolph-Sheppard community? If so, we can use your financial support. Over half of our support comes from the NFBEI subscriptions, but we count on donations to make up the rest. If you would like to contribute to the cause, we would welcome your donation. You can donate by sending a check to:

*National Association of Blind Merchants  
7450 Chapman Highway, #319  
Knoxville, TN 37920*

Make the check payable to NABM and write “NFBEI” in the memo portion of the check. Your support is greatly appreciated.

You can also donate by going to our website at [www.blindmerchants.org](http://www.blindmerchants.org) where we have added a new way you can contribute. We can create a bank draft for you so you can sign up for monthly giving. Contact Barbara Badger at [Barbara@merchants-nfb.org](mailto:Barbara@merchants-nfb.org) if you are interested in setting up bank draft donations.

If your state is one of the 12 that doesn't take advantage of NABM's subscription services, we'd welcome your involvement. Terry Smith would be happy to discuss the services with you.

**Share Your News with Everyone**– Help us keep everyone informed about what is happening around the country. Let us hear from you. Tell us what is going on in your state. What is happening in one state affects what is going on in another. NABM and the NFBEI offer the best vehicle to keep everyone updated on what is going on out there.

**GET THE BLITZ-READ THE BLITZ-SHARE THE BLITZ**

**PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE THE BLITZ WITH OTHERS AND  
DISTRIBUTE ON YOUR LISTSERVS. WE WANT ALL BLIND  
ENTREPRENEURS, BEP ADMINISTRATORS, and OTHER STAKEHOLDERS  
TO KNOW WHAT NABM AND THE NFBEI ARE DOING**

*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.*