Seniors Division, 2018 at national convention:

On July 3, the Seniors Division hosted a seminar, “Emergency Preparedness—How to Prepare to Remain in Place or Evacuate when Necessary.” Ms. Georgianna Cherry, Health Emergency Operations Manager for Florida, North Central Area, was our presenter. She focused on knowing your surroundings and thinking about what you need to do to evacuate from wherever you are—the hotel, your home, visiting friends, wherever you happen to be. She advised having a “go bag” with items you think you will need plus comfort items that will get you through about three or four days in an unfamiliar environment. If you have special needs such as a pet or you use a guide dog, or if you take medicine that must be kept chilled, learn from your local area disaster relief officials where you should go, and plan a strategy to get there. What services will you need to get to the best designated shelter that can meet your specific needs?

Next, have a chain of people that you contact, and they in turn will let others know where you are and what needs you may have. She emphasized getting as much information about local resources and where and how to access them, and then plan, plan, and plan still further. The more prepared you are, the more control you have over where you go and what happens to you when you get there.

Do not assume that services you believe you are entitled to will be available. Bring water, food, medicines, and change these in your go bag at least twice a year. Bring any important documentation such as bank and financial records, medical history, insurance policy, etc.

Finally, if you have others in your household that you are responsible for, make certain they know the plans you have made and know whom to contact and where to go.

Ms. Cherry distributed little emergency first-aid kits that can be packed in the go bag and added to with other items if need be.

In our annual business meeting of the Seniors Division, officers were elected as follows: president, Ruth Sager; first vice president, Judy Sanders; second vice president, Robert Leslie Newman; secretary, Shelley Coppel; and treasurer, Diane McGeorge assisted by Duncan Larsen.

Phyllis Chavez spoke about her first Washington Seminar experience and how she was able to put the training she has received from the Colorado Center into practice. She felt frightened and scared, but she learned that she could ask for help from others in her group or strangers as well. She enjoyed the meeting with legislators and the museum event held Tuesday evening of this four-day seminar. She stressed how important our legislative efforts are for all blind people across the country whether they are members of the NFB or not. She felt empowered and will be back again for many more Washington Seminars.

Ruth and Shelley spoke about the retreat, what its purpose is, and gave some details about the physical location of Rocky Bottom Retreat and Conference Center in South Carolina.

NFB members Nancy Yeager from Virginia and Carol Braithwaite from Alabama next informed everyone of upcoming events their senior divisions are in the process of exploring and noted what they have done this past year. These are newly formed divisions, and they are working on growing their memberships and fundraising activities as well as planning events for seniors in their states.

Theresa Gfroerer from Minnesota spoke about her experience losing vision and finding BLIND Inc. and their senior program. She also became an active member of the affiliate. She was proud of her accomplishments but wanted to also strongly encourage anyone who has the ability to get good training to take the opportunity and learn as much as you can. It will change your life for the better. Theresa is a tenBroek scholar, and she was having a fabulous convention experience.

Michael Hingson gave a presentation on Aira, what it is, what it can do, and basic instructions on how to use it. And, as always, we had our "not so silent" auction. Come next year. We need you, and you need us.