2018, January Minutes of the NFB.SFV meeting

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM and began with the pledge to the American flag and NFB pledge.

Trivia question: What’s your favorite pizza flavor?

In attendance:

Sharon Wattson, Joe Otoole, Jo Anne Seaman, Mike Wyszynski, Jane Suh, Bill Grosjean, betsy Estrada, Racquel Decipeda, Olga Tobias, Lynn Nishihara, Nancy Urquilla, John Albarran, Nebiyu Dingetu, Jenny delos Santos, Nick Guttinger, Julian Vargas, Jaymee Castillo, Joy Stigile, Rochelle Yohai, Ron Hilliard, Karen Elo, Sheila Biglang-awa, Robert Stigile, Laura Nunez, Nicole Matheny and Portia Mason.

26 members including 3 invitees: Jenny, Nick and Mike.

Announcements:

Jo Anne went to Arizona last Christmas and visited her great grandnephew James William turning 3 months old on January 7th.

Racquel announced for those who are interested in fishing, she will send out the 2018 fishing license applications. For those who are interested in skiing, she will also send out the Achiever’s applications. She skis with the Disabled Sports USA of Orange County and they started last December. The trips are all scheduled first weekend of the month. Let her know if you are interested so she can make arrangements for someone to do the evaluation and no need to travel to Orange County for it. Application consist of a $45 fee and also have your Doctor sign a paperwork saying that you are OK to ski. Another paperwork for you to sign the waiver. The group goes on a 2 day trip. Saturday & Sunday is when they ski. She can arrange for car-pool if you need it. Either you will leave on a Thursday or on a Friday, depending on who you are travelling with. You pay per night for lodging. With the food, you can just share with whoever you share the condos with. She is the trip coordinator for that club. She’s in-charge with the condominium arrangements. The condos are a full unit with kitchen, shower/bathroom, bedrooms and living room. Venue is in Mammoth. Travelling within 5 hours. She added that it’s a lot of fun and it will teach you to overcome your fear. So, please join and inform her if you are interested.

Sharon announced that she and Joe are engaged.

Sheila announced that Junior Blind of America or JBA has changed its name since the beginning of this year. They are now called the Wayfinders Family Service.

Joe announced that the AIRSLA (Audio Internet Reading Services Los Angeles) were sending out an email to all of those people who, at 1 point, whether they’re required to sign up for the service. They were asking those people who live in the Greater Pasadena, Sierra Madre, San Gabriel Valley and East L.a. and He requested, if you get an email to please respond back to the survey. They are applying for a grant through an organization in Pasadena. They’re trying to collect data. If you could get a chance to please sign up for their AIRSLA service. It’s a free service and it’s on the App store and Android.

Secondly, he was reading an article in the Foundation Fighting Blindness. There’s a company back east that developed the stencil treatment for those who has RetinitisPigmentosa. They are willing to test your blood type and the type of RP to see if it matches the stencil treatment. If you are interested and would like to be a participant, check out the foundation fighting for Blindness. They’ll send you the kit for you to take it to your Doctor and have your Doctor send it back to them.

Sheila thanked Lynn for bringing the refreshments Sharon thank her as well for the chocolate party favors that she gave out at the Holiday party.

Robert announced the E-LA cart LLC, the NFB and the Lighthouse for the Blind in San Francisco have been working together. A press release was given last week that those table machines manufactured by E-LA cart are all now accessible. He explained that if you go to a restaurant especially like Apple-Bees, Red Robin, Elephant Bar or Chiles and etc. You might probably come across a little machine on your table. Those are table top machines that sighted people can view menus, can order their food without a waiter or waitress and they can actually pay their bill right through that machine. Those machines have been inaccessible to the blind. These machines are manufactured by E-LA Cart. You will very soon find that those tabletop machines will be accessible and will have a headphone jack. And it will have some voice guidance but still don’t know what kind but definitely there will be a speech guidance. Thank the NFB and the Lighthouse for the Blind, they both worked with E-LA Cart so those tabletop machines can be use by visually impaired and blind people. We can now view the menus, order food and pay the bill on-line.

His 2nd announcement is, that the NFB has a scholarship application available on-line for any High School Senior student and/or college student.Must be a full-time in College and have a 3.0 GPA or higher, he encouraged them to apply. He suggested for Jenny to apply. Deadline is on March 31st. If you become a scholarship finalist that means that you will be one of the 30 scholarship winners and you will be brought to the National convention in Florida. You’ll get a chance to receive anywhere between $3,000 and $12,000 in scholarship plus other stuff such as: electronics things, check from Google or a check from Kirtzwyle and/or etc. It’s quite an experience in a lifetime aside from receiving scholarships that might range from $3,000 and might become $5,000 and all the way up to $12,000 and can be even raise up to $14,000. So, he encouraged all the students to apply. It will also be an excellent opportunity to be amongst the 2500 to 3000 blind people gathered in a week and an experience that you will never forget. So, please apply.

Secretary’s report for the November minutes. Submitted by Sheila. The minutes was sent out to the list serve. Hopefully, everybody had read them. We had decided at the start of the New Year, we would just approved the minutes and we would be doing the corrections and/or additions at the time of the meeting. Robert asked if anyone had any corrections or additions to the minutes. He corrected Bernard’s last name. Instead of Bernard Cunanan, his last name is Falkon.

Sheila clarified Jenny’s school as Valley Academy of Arts (VAAS).

Julian made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Sharon.

Treasury report done and read by Sharon. Report for January 13, 2018.

December 9, 2017 a deposit for $117.

Ending balance $5,699.54

December 14, 2017 deposit made for $100.

December 26, 2017 deposit made $70.

December 28, 2017 $150 transferred to NFB.

January 11, 2018 PAC payment $50.

Beginning balance on January 12, 2018 $5,869.54.

A withdrawal for $448.50 for tablet.

$132.50 to reimburse Robert for Christmas dinner for family.

$75 for the One-touch Self-defense Class Instructor.

Total withdrawal is $656.

Ending balance is $5,113.54.

Sharon announced and expressed her condolences to the lost of Lynn’s mother who passed away just before Christmas. The entire members extended their condolences to her and her entire family.

Committee Reports:

Fundraising:

Sheila announced that Portia had proposed since she’s doing the Amway business, Portia would like to help out raise funds by giving a certain percentage from anyone who would purchase Amway products from her and that the proceeds will be donated to our Chapter.

Sheila came up with an idea as part of the Fundraising Program, she would like to start a FUN-raising activities for Chapter members. She started of with the Birthday Club where we would commemorate and recognize the birthday celebrants of the month by having a birthday cake and singing a birthday song for them.

January celebrants are: Sheila, Jayme, Karen and Joy.

Sharon volunteered to bring the birthday / Valentine cake for next month in our February meeting.

Joy announced for those who would like to purchase Carl’s Jr booklet and Bob’s big boy’s coupons to let her know because she still has some left.

Nicole also announced that she also have the Carl’s Jr. booklet and battery chargers for those interested to approach her as well.

Robert informed everyone that he also still have 10 battery chargers left. Approach him after the meeting.

Carl’s Jr. Booklet might have the expiration date for December 31, 2017 but will still honor them.

Twin Vision Library in Tarzana has donated books for blind children in the Philippines. On the same note, since the NFB oversees Twin Vision books and through the American Action Plan, they have decided to close the location here in Tarzana. The owner of the place is taking away the space. It will be transferred to the National Headquarters in Baltimore.

Sports and Activities:

Racquel announced our first activity for the year is the One Touch Self-defense Seminar in the afternoon.

For the fishing trip, she’s encouraging everyone to do the fishing trip and apply for their fishing license. The license is for lifetime. You just have to get your enhancement sticker and it’s only $6. Available in Walmart, Big5 or any Sporting Goods store.

She’ll send out an email for everyone to think about what kind of seminars you would like to have this year so we can invite speakers. And also to discuss any indoor or outdoor activities that you would like to do this year.

Joe suggested to have a conference call to discuss more about the Sports and Activities.

Robert talked about the Best in Tech and gave a breakdown of income and expenses. $5,000 from the vendors. $460 from the raffle sales. Withdrawal of $1,863 for lunches. $200 for Uber/Lift gift cards. $147 to Ben Pomeroy for water, coffee and supplies. Over-all that gave us $3,378.90 profit from Best in Tech.

It was also discussed and suggested to pay for Bernard Falkon’s dinner at the Holiday Party. But he couldn’t make it due to other appointments.

Joe made a motion to approve $50 gift card to give out to Bernard and seconded by Joy.

Best in Tech was great this year. There were only a few things that needs to be changed. Robert, Racquel and Ben would like to see few things changed such as the registration. Ben would like to have the event again at the Braille Institute.

Robert would like to let everyone know that we need to get a special day insurance certificate through the Affiliate. If we do that we would get a million dollar policy to cover all and/or anything that could happen during that day. That will cost the Affiliate $200 for any Chapter who would like to do special events.

Braille institute would like to see it in their calendar again. Robert added that it would be a great match because they’re not asking for us to pay anything or any of our funds. All their asking for is for us to work with them with the registration and be able to help them out in advertising the Braille Institute.

Julian made a motion to have 2018 Best in Tech. Seconded by Joe.

Further discussion was made on contributing to the Affiliate. The Chapter had contributed in the past an amount of $1,000.

Racquel added a suggestion of donating to the AIRSLA since they do most of our audio recordings for Best in Tech every year. They post it on their website so people can listen to it again. Julian made a motion to make a donation of $150 to AIRSLA in showing our appreciation. Seconded by Rochelle.

Robert opened the discussion for new business. 1. 2018 National Convention in Orlando Florida will be the last year. The next convention might be either California in 2019 or In Las Vegas or Colorado. But definitely it would be in West Coast. The dates are July 3rd to July 8th, 2018. For any of the brand new members and/or have not been to the National Convention, there is a Jernigan grant that you can apply for. The deadline is April 15th.You need to write a letter why you would like to attend and what you think you might incur in expenses. Send the letter to the State President Ever Lee Hairston. Contact Robert if you need any help for that. After receiving your letter, Ever Lee will write a letter to the Jernigan Grant Committee. They usually give out $400 to $600 per person. This is for all first time attendees. Our Chapter will also provide grants and will be discussed by our Chapter Board.

The Room block is available to make reservations and you can find the information at the NFB website: nfb.org. You can probably start looking for airfare and roommates for the hotel.

Robert discussed the 2nd item on his list which is our California State convention dated October 25 through 28th at the LAX Marriott. Room rates $129 a night plus tax. Planning committee hasn’t been quite decided yet and he will be a part of the Committee. They are looking at what the Affiliate can do to have breakfast each morning. Robert added that he would love to see all of our Chapter members attend the State Convention.

Our current State President Ever Lee will not be re-running as President. 3 people have put their name in for President and those are Rochelle Houston,Jim Barber and Tim Elder.

Nebiyu inquired about the CSUN convention which will happen on March 15 to 23 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel. Exhibit halls will be on March 21st, 22nd and 23rd. he will forward the information and details through email.

Robert played the Presidential release.

Topics: Washington Seminar, National President’s goals for this year, NAC National Accreditation council and AER American Education Rehabilitation. For more questions regarding the Presidential release, please ask Robert. It was suggested to read the Braille Monitor for more information.

Joy made a motion to accept Mike and Jenny, and re-voted Nick. Seconded by Julian.

50/50 raffle $56. Olga won $28.

Racquel made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Seconded by Julian.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:05 pm.

Submitted by:

Temporarily at your service,

Sheila B.