**NAVIGATING THE HOTEL:**

Welcome to the Las Vegas Strip and, specifically, the southernmost hotel on the Strip, the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino. As with many of the newer Las Vegas hotels, the Mandalay Bay is enormous, boasting more than 3,200 sleeping rooms, several pools, and its own convention center. While the property is aligned neatly to the cardinal direction grid of South Las Vegas Boulevard, the entrance faces more of a NNE direction. Because this is a bit inconvenient for navigation, I’m going to rely on the age-old metaphor of an analog clock face. In fact, we’re really just interested in the afternoon hours for our needs.

Before we get started, it’s helpful to know that the middle of the clock face is covered with Mandalay Bay’s pools—the wave pool, the lazy river, the lagoon pools, and more. You’ll visit the center of the clock when you need to cool off after a long day of convention activities. The hotel and its various parts wrap around the pools nearly encircling them. Traveling through the hotel, our path will slowly arc around the pools counter-clockwise. Our navigation begins at the bottom of your clock face at six o’clock.

When you arrive at the front entrance, you will enter the Mandalay Bay’s palatial lobby on the Casino Level. As I said, we are at six o’clock. Take several steps into the lobby. The bell desk is immediately to your left. Continue straight into the lobby and a long registration desk is on your left. At the far end of the lobby in front of you are floor-to-ceiling windows looking out onto the pools. On the right side of the lobby, across from the registration desk, is MB Lifestyle where you can purchase locally logoed clothing, snacks, and other souvenirs. In between the registration desk and MB Lifestyle is a large statue of Michael Jackson. The square base, with benches backed up to all four sides, make for a good lobby rendezvous point.

If you had entered the lobby at the front doors and turned to your right, you would find the mobile check-in counter on the right. As you continue to the right through the lobby, your path splits. To the left are the elevators to the sleeping rooms. To the right, you will begin to hear the sounds of a water feature and find railings that lead you to both an escalator and stairs that take you down to the Beach Level. Head down to the Beach Level and to your left are the doors leading to the transportation lobby and one of the dog relief areas.

Instead of taking the right branch of our lobby split, we travel down the left branch through a short hallway to the guest room elevators. Imagine that the circular elevator lobby is a wheel with six spokes. Three of the spokes contain banks of elevators and three of the spokes are hallways. The two types of spokes alternate. Let’s focus on the elevator banks first. Each bank of elevators contains eight cabs, four on each side, and serves specific floor numbers. The floor ranges are 2-16, 17-30, and 56-69. Entering from the main lobby, the elevators for floors 2-16 are immediately to your left. You will find the floor ranges increase as you move clockwise around the hub of the wheel. One level below, on the Beach Level, the spokes are organized in just the same fashion.

You need your room key not just to get into your room, but to take the elevator to your sleeping room floor. The key is an RFID proximity card, meaning you need only hold it against the lock on your room door for your room lock to open. There is neither a need to slide the card into a reader nor is there a front or back side to the card. Like the sleeping rooms, the elevators also have card readers. When you step inside an available elevator, you must hold your room key up to the reader before pressing the button for your floor. Just above the center column of buttons for selecting your floor is a rectangular-shaped box a little smaller than a three by five index card—this is the card reader. Please note that your room key will take you to YOUR FLOOR ONLY.

When you reach your floor and step out from the elevator bank, you will again be at the hub of a wheel. However, there are now only four spokes to the wheel. One spoke contains the bank of elevators from which you have just disembarked. The other three spokes contain sleeping rooms. Each spoke has signage indicating its range of room numbers. Again, the room number ranges increase as you move clockwise around the hub of the wheel.

Let’s head back down to the Casino Level elevator lobby. As mentioned earlier, three spokes of the wheel are hallways. The first comes from the main lobby. The second hallway, between the low-floor and the middle-floor elevators leads out to the casino. The third hallway, between the middle- and high-floor elevators leads to Hazel Coffee &Cocktails. For those of you needing an early morning coffee fix, Hazel opens at 5:00 a.m. to serve premium coffee and a variety of breakfast items. Hazel also stays open late, beyond midnight, to serve those interested in a jolt of a different variety.

Taking the hallway leading into the casino, we are approaching five o’clock on our clock face. There are wide carpeted paths heading off to both our right and left. Take the path to the right and the casino will be on your left while a number of shops are on your right. Among the retail stops are Hazel Coffee & Cocktail (a different entrance) and a number of high-end clothing options. Following this path to the end of the casino, you can head straight to catch the Mandalay Bay Tram to the Luxor and Excalibur properties. Turning left instead of heading to the tram, you can find the House of Blues, the Shoppes at Mandalay Place, and the entrance to the Cirque de Soleil show, *Michael Jackson ONE*.

As we emerge from the guest-room elevator lobby into the casino, though, the carpeted path to the left is of greater interest to meeting attendees. This time, the casino is on the right and, save for a handful of slot machines, food outlets including The Noodle Shop and Seabreeze Café begin to appear on the left. We’ll essentially be traveling in a straight line from the five to the four on our clock face. As the carpeting gives way to a faux riverbed stone floor, the casino ends and the restaurant options multiply.

The arc between four and three o’clock on the face of our clock are filled with a broad variety of options, too many to mention them all. The menus for many of these restaurants can be found both on our website and NFB-NEWSLINE®. To the right is Mizuya, while Bayside Buffet and Fleur are on the left. Nearly straight ahead is Citizens Kitchen + Bar, serving American comfort food twenty-four hours a day. To the right of Citizens are a few more restaurants including Lupo, Wolfgang Puck’s first Italian restaurant. Continue past Citizens to the left for another half dozen options including Libertine Social and Steakhouse. It’s this left path that takes you towards the meeting space. You’ll notice a slight incline as you emerge from the gauntlet of dining options. I should point out that on the right side is a Starbucks which will no doubt be an important stop for many.

### MEETING SPACE:

We have now reached nearly two-o’clock on our metaphorical clock face. The Mandalay Bay’s convention center begins with a flooring change from riverbed stone to terrazzo. Immediately to the right is a hallway leading to the hotel’s Event Center; none of our meetings or activities take place in the Event Center. Straight ahead is a wide hallway. The left side leads to the Border Grill, the food court, and the South Convention Center. The right side of the hallway gives way to a staircase flanked on either side by a down escalator and an up escalator. Continue down the left hallway just beyond the escalators and stairs to find elevators on the right wall. All three (down escalator, stairs, elevator) will take you down to the North Convention Center’s lower (ground) level where you will find the entirety of our meeting space for the convention.

After descending the escalator or stairs, the Bay View Patio is to the left, the Islander Registration Desk is straight ahead, and the meeting space is to the right. The elevators are just off to the right between the stairs and the registration desk. The Bay View Patio is straight ahead when you step off the elevator. The doors out to the Bay View Patio will take you to a second guide dog relief area.

If you take a right at the bottom of the stairs or the escalator (or make a U-turn to the left when stepping off one of the elevators), you will enter our convention meeting space. The corridors connecting our meeting space are L-shaped and you are standing at the intersection of the two arms of the ‘L.’ The short arm of the ‘L,’ called the Conference Promenade, extends out in front of you to the breakout spaces. Bay View Court, the longer arm of the, ‘L’ is to your left and leads the way to the Islander and South Pacific Ballrooms. It could be noted that this is one hotel space that conforms cleanly to cardinal directions. The Conference Promenade runs east-west while Bay View Court runs north-south.

Heading straight ahead along the Conference Promenade, you will find on your right a large breakout space called Tradewinds. It is broken into six sections, lettered A through F. Sections E and F are immediately to your right while the remaining sections are further down the promenade on the right. Beyond Tradewinds B is a small hallway to the right providing access to Tradewinds A and breakout rooms Mariners A and B. On the left side of the Conference Promenade are a series of smaller breakout spaces, each of which break into two or three sections. Closest to the intersection of the arms of the ‘L,’ you will find Shell Seeker B and A followed by Coral C, B, and A. At the end of the promenade on the left are Tropics B and A.

If, from the intersection of the ‘L’, you instead head left down Bay View Court from north to south, you will first pass Islander Registration Desk on the left which will be home to consolidated registration activities beginning on Tuesday, July 9. Next on the left you will find men’s and women’s restrooms. Across Bay View Court from the registration desk and the restrooms is Islander Ballroom, home to the Exhibit Hall and the Independence Market. When you reach the end of the Islander Ballroom, there is an intersection of sorts. The South Pacific Ballroom is ahead on your right. Immediately to the right is a hallway that runs between the Islander and South Pacific Ballrooms. Along the left side of this hallway are four large sections of the South Pacific Ballroom lettered D through A, all of which host meetings throughout the week.

Back at the intersection, opposite the hallway on the left side of Bay View Court are stairs that lead up to the Border Grill, a contemporary Mexican restaurant serving both lunch and dinner. Continuing further south along Bay View Court are additional sections of the South Pacific Ballroom. Sections F and J, both on the right, will be used for meetings on Seminar Day such as Rookie Roundup. For the remainder of the week, the doors to South Pacific Ballroom F and J are the entry doors for Resolutions, the NFB Board Meeting, General Sessions, and eventually the Banquet. Opposite the South Pacific Ballroom F is another set of restrooms. On the wall between the men’s and women’s restrooms are ten mobile device charging stations.

At the end of Bay View Court, a modest hall turns to the right. Down this hall are a set of elevators and an escalator that will take you up a level to the food court in the South Convention Center. Head straight out of the elevators or turn left off the escalator to cross the foyer to the food court. If you’ll remember the transition to terrazzo several paragraphs ago, there was a wide hallway, the left side of which led to the South Convention Center. Had you continued down that hallway, you would have passed the Border Grill and the stairs leading down to the lower level of the North Convention Center. Beyond the stairs, still on the right side of the hallway is BBQ Mexicana, a quick service counter open for lunch. At the end of this long corridor is the same food court I mentioned above. At this stage of the journey, you have reached the twelve on the face of our clock.

The food court is host to a number of reasonably priced food options including Bonanno’s New York Pizzeria, Johnny Rockets, Nathan’s Hot Dogs, Pan Asian Express, and Subway. The food court is accessed via a gradual incline on its right side or three steps on the left. There is a variety of seating within the food court. Many of the booths and high-top tables offer outlets and USB charging stations.

Beyond the food court are the ticket counter and entrance to Mandalay Bay’s Shark Reef Aquarium, host to sharks, giant rays, sea turtles, and more.