2021 March minutes of the meeting

National Federation of the Blind of California

San Fernando Valley Chapter

The meeting was called to order at 10:06 am. We began with the Pledge of Allegiance, the NFB Pledge and the 1 minute message.

Trivia: Would you wear green on Wednesday for St. Patrick’s Day?

In attendance:

Sharon Watson, Julian Vargas, Jane Suh, Joy Stigile, Robert Stigile - President, Joe OTOOLE,

Lynne Nishihara, Anthony Melena, Lindsay Kerr, Ron Hilliard - Member-At-Large, Juanita Herrera – Vice President, Karen Elo, David and Valerie Delawder, Jaymee Castillo, Keith Caballa, Sheila Biglang-awa - Secretary, Nancy and John Albarran.

Total: 19 members

Announcements:

Julian shared a brief reminder that he will be re-starting his tech discussion group but expanding it to low and non-tech ways of being more independent, productive and the fun stuff that we have to do as blind people. If anybody did not receive the email that he sent out and would like to be on the list, to please let him know via his email at help@techjv.com. This group discussion will be held in Zoom and the first meeting might probably be next month. Another fun announcement that he shared was about a new audio social network that’s really taking the world by storm and it’s called “Clubhouse”. It’s all audio and no video involved. The interface reminds him a lot of Zoom. The only way to get on it is by invitation only. It’s only available on IOS devices. No Android yet. It’s a new thing and this is also a good way to network with people. This is like a combination of Zoom and Link In where you can do a lot of professional or social networking. Another thing that he would like to mention in his announcements is, if any of you experience a situation with your phone where it starts to bulge in certain area like it starts to get bigger, this is what you call bulging battery. Companies will actually replace your devices even if there are out of warranty. If this happens, this is a potentially dangerous situation. This means that the lengthy value of the battery of the phone is expanding. If this gets squeezed or punctured, it can potentially explode. The last thing that he would like to touch on is the upcoming stimulus money. He just wants to remind everyone to be vigilant of scams. There’s a lot out there that are looking to steal your personal info. Not necessarily to steal your stimulus check but they want access to your personal identity or your money or anywhere in between. Never give your info to someone who would call you unsolicited. You can find the right and known good numbers of IRS or the Social Security on their actual websites.

Anthony decided not to move to Texas. He started submitting resume to different companies and he announced that he got a part-time job as an Accessibility Website Tester. Then he has a second interview for a College Adviser position in USC on Wednesday.

Nancy announced that John has been officially working at DCRC – Disability Community Resource Center, for 3 months now, working as a Peer Specialist Training Coordinator. So, on Thursday, he graduated his first class that he trained as Peer Advocate.

Robert’s announcements are as follows: The CAGDU call has been changed to every other Saturday. If you want the Zoom link, please let him know.

The NFB website has been down and some of the list serves hasn’t been working.

Then at 3:00 pm today, there will be a Deaf/Blind organizing meeting via Zoom. So, if you know anyone who’s deaf/blind and would like to invite them, please let him know so he can send the link.

And for tonight, he would like to remind everyone that it will be daylight savings time. Time will move an hour forward.

His next announcement is if you are creating Zoom meetings and needing captioning service and it’s called “Otter”. There are 2 platforms of it. There’s a pay account and free ones. On the Zoom web, go on to your account. Under settings, you’ll find captioning and it will say “live captioning”. Turn that on. Then when you start the meeting, you go to on the more tab. Start the live captioning and they will receive a text format of everything that is being spoken. It transverse as it goes to each conversation. You can follow along on your braille display if you are using this kind of device. This is an F.Y.I. for those who would like to create Zoom meetings or for those who are deaf/blind.

Sharon also announced that the AIRA is having a Zoom meeting to the Sand Diego Zoo today at 1 pm. If you missed it, Nancy said that you can catch it on their YouTube channel.

 Secretary Report.

Julian made a motion to approve the February minutes, seconded by Sharon and the motion carries.

Treasury Report.

Nancy sent out the February Treasury Report on March 8, 2021 on the list serve.

On the same note, Robert discussed on a couple things the he needs the Chapter’s assistance in. As we are all aware he appointed Nancy to be our Treasurer and she’s doing a good job. They both went to the bank and found out that Nancy is still not on the bank account yet. The bank has Robert and Malik on the account as Key Executive holders. So, in order to remove Malik as a Key Executive holder and put Nancy on the account as just the Treasurer. Robert needs a motion from the Chapter.

Julian made a motion to remove Malik as a Key Executive holder and have Robert remain as a sole executive holder, seconded by Ron and the motion carries.

Robert also added that it would also help the bank if we can go ahead and have a special election to have Nancy elected into the Treasurer’s position. So, Julian made a motion to nominate Nancy as Treasurer to fill out the rest of the vacancy, seconded by Sharon and the motion carries.

These would now help us to get everything situated with the bank. Nancy would be able to get on to the account and be able to do her own banking and keep track more without Robert’s assistance.

The Presidential Release

Robert sends out the link on the list serve. Prior to the Presidential Release, it has a place for you to send questions and it will go to Cris Danielson at cdanielson@nfb.org. Put the subject line as: PR with what ever number the Presidential Release is. For example, this upcoming release will be Presidential Release #503. Now, the next release will be live on April 5th, Monday. The one after that will be on May 3rd and the last one before the convention will be on June 1st. Time will be at 8 pm Eastern time and 5 pm our time. If you log in 10 minutes before it starts, they have a survey where you can participate by answering the questions. The results of the survey will be shared at the end of the Presidential Release. Robert recommends everyone to tune in and participate.

2021 National Convention

Registration started in March 1st and ends on May 31st. Sign up at nfb.org/convention. Registration is free but if you are able to, you can provide a donation.

There are a few changes to this year’s convention’s registration. The first thing is that, there is an updated version that came out in December 2020 about the Code of Conduct. Robert suggested to read it and you can find it on the website: nfb.org and find the Code of conduct. You need to click on the registration form that you agree on the Code of Conduct. There is a star field that you need to check and you can’t get pass the registration without it.

 Secondly, this year there will be only one registration for voting and for registering for convention. So, if you want to vote, you need to put in the phone number that you’re going to be using for voting when you register.

Upon registering, you need to answer if you need a Spanish translation or a captioning. You can also answer yes or no if you are attending the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children. You can also fill out if you wish to donate. If you’re done with all of that, you can just click to submit and you will get a confirmation email. Now, if you did not get a confirmation email, Robert will advise you to send an email to Community Relations at nfb.org and let them know that you did not get a confirmation email for your registration.

If you know of someone who wants to register for the convention and they do not have an e-mail, do not put in your own email or put in a fake e-mail. Either you can send all their information to Robert or you can send it to Genevieve White at the National office and her e-mail is jwhite@nfb.org.

Convention will be virtually from July6 thru 10. There is going to be a banquet. If anyone’s planning on getting together for banquet parties, to please let the National Office know.

If any of you heard the Presidential Release, it was discussed that the next National Convention will be in person in New Orleans, Louisiana. If everything goes well, the year after that it will be in Houston, Texas.

Robert also announced that the deadline for the National Scholarship application is March 31st. You can find the form at nfb.org. The applicant should be a full-time student with a 3.0 GPA or higher.

If anyone is interested to join the Performing Arts Division to be part of their choir group that is being handled by Rachel Grider, 1st Vice President in California. You need to register to be a part of it. Practices will start in April. Go to <http://nfb-pad.org> for more information.

For the Bell Academy, they are going to have a 2 week sessions in June, July and in August. Like last year, they would be needing mentors and would need to go through a background check and the Affiliate will pay for that. If you’re interested, please get in touch with Robert.

Next item on the list is that you can get free white canes or slate & stylus. Just go to nfb.org and sign up to receive one.

Robert also suggested that you sign up for the Newsline so you can get good information, new publications and so forth. Take note that Newsline is not available on Androids. Let Robert know if you know of someone that are Android users so they can find it more necessary to have it for Android phones.

Survivor’s Task Force

Robert wanted to mention that you do not need to be a survivor to assist if you want to help. You can sign up for one of the pillars if you need to register and they usually meetings are every couple of weeks. So, if you want to help, you can go to nfb.org/survivors. You will receive an e-mail with the link to join the meeting.

Robert discussed about the things that are changing, for instance, the update of the Code of Conduct. Another thing that is changing is that the National Office is looking at every single constitution of every Chapter within the United States of the NFB. He brought up a point that if you do need to file a violation of the Code of Conduct, you can go to code.nfb.org if you want to do it online or you can call the National Center and dial extension 2475.

HR431 is our bill in Congress to get refundable tax credit for equipments. We need people to contact their Congressional members and get co-sponsors. If you need assistance, Robert is willing to help.

Affiliate’s Fundraising.

Robert sent out on the list serve about the River City Chapter in Sacramento. They are doing a beef jerky fundraiser which you need to fill out a form to choose what kind you like and what size. You need to pay for it via Pay Pal.

CAGDU is doing a fundraising by selling shirts, hoodies, bandana and coffee mugs. There’s a link to take you to the pop-up store. Shipping fee is $9. What they have is a picture of a German Shepperd, Black Lab, Yellow Lab and Golden Retriever on surf boards surfing. Underneath that it says CAGDU. On the back side, it says “National Federation of the Blind. Live the life you want.”

Robert mentioned to those who are an Amazon user, Amazon has a program called Amazon Smile where they can give money back to charities. NFB of California is listed as one of the charities. This is an easy way for you to give back to the Affiliate. If you purchase an item, just go to the Amazon Smile. If you need help, you can reach out to Robert.

Lastly, there will be a form coming out soon for an Affiliate fundraiser of a recipe book. So, start thinking of your own recipes and fill out the form. And in that form you will write about why this recipe is something that you like or why you chose this and how you put this recipe together. This way, we can get to know member across the State. We’re going to put this in a cookbook and sell it for $15 or so. If this goes well, we might do this for several years. So look out for that.

Julian made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Nancy. The meeting was adjourned at 12:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sheila Marie B.C.

Cell: 818-404-7646

Chapter Secretary

NFB.SFV