February, 2024 minutes of the Chapter meeting

The National Federation of the Blind of California

San Fernando Valley Chapter

Date: February 10, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 am We began with Pledge of Allegiance, the NFB pledge and the 1 minute message.

Question for today: What was your favorite movie that you’ve watched in 2023?

In attendance:

John Albarran, Sheila Biglang-awa -Secretary, Keith Cabala, Racquel Decipeda, David and Valerie, Delawder, Betsy Estrada, Ron Hilliard - Member-AT-Large, Tiffany Johnson, Lindsay Kerr, Candace Luther, Jo Anne Seaman, Robin Smith,

Joy Stigile, Robert Stigile-, President, Jane Suh, Donna roysner-guest, Lilia Mares

Shelby Felter, Karen Elo, Julian Vargas, Jaymee Castillo, Matthew and Carie Schrieber, Eddie Salcido-guest,

Bill Grosjean and Doris Vasquez-guest.

25 Members and 3 guests

Total attendees: 28

Robert added an input since its inline with the movies, him and Joy usually send it out in the e-mail each month, he mentioned that Steve Cook from Sout Carilina runs an audio described movie night on the 1st & 2nd Friday night of each month. Sometimes he throws in a 3rd movie night. But this month, he’s doing the movie Barbie again. Last night’s movie was the “Ghost”. Next month’s preview will be the movie “IT”. It’s all going to be audio describe, no screen or video. Robert can send you Steve’s e-mail with the Zoom link.

Announcements:

* John was proud to announced that him & his wife Nancy Albarran will be celebrating their 5th year anniversary next weekend. John was thanking Bill who introduced them both to each other and who had been there with them ever since they started.
* Matthew gave an update about the Hema care and the company Charles River Laboratories. He mentioned that him and Tim Elder had spoken with each other and settled and agreed that this company needs
* to clear the way and that they need to change things up. So that people can’t see can participate and be able go for the screening to see if you can be qualify for the donation and receive the compensation that comes with it. It was discussed that Tim will be drafting a settlement agreement letter and will send Matthew a copy.

In addition, Robert gave a little background so that people know why this is a great to be involved with an organization. With Matthew’s situation against the laboratory company is an example of a discriminatory case where he called Robert and asked who to approach with regards this matter. So Robert put Matthew in touch with our State President Tim Elder who’s actually an attorney. It Sometimes it takes patience, connections and advocacy and legalization so things can changed. Robert congratulated Matthew for doing this legal action.

* On the same topic with Tim Elder and discriminatory, Lilia shared that she also do get in touch with him regarding with a similar issue of reasonable accommodation as far electronic being sent and/or communication electronically. She lives in a housing on a mobile home park. Tim will be supporting her with reaching a settlement as far as setting things against discriminating her as a person with visual impairment. Robert aske Lilia to keep us informed about her situation. Lilia in return thank Robert in referring her with Tim Elder who’s an amazing person and not only that he’s knowledgeable person but also very humane. So Lilia really appreciates the help and support.
* Eddie piggy back on the topic about the movie audio descriptions, he gave an information about audiovolt.net where you can get all the movies that are being described. Robert added that Steve Cook actually gets those movies from.
* In behalf of Hearts for Sight, Racquel made the following announcements: February 17 Saturday, an adaptive sports day in Burbank. Hosted by the Burbank Rec & park, Food will be provided but you have to register first. Unfortunately, the website to register is not accessible. Racquel will give out the number for you to call if you need to register. Hearts for Sight will have a table so come by & say hello. It will be a day of all kinds of sports for different disabilities. Then the following day, February 18 Sunday will be the hike at 10 am in Culver City with a meeting time at 8:30 am. With this, Racquel asked if you know anyone who’s interested to be a sighted guide to please let her know because she can’t say yes to a lot of visually impaired people if she doesn’t have enough sighted guide.

On February 24th will be the bike ride from 10 am to 12 noon at the Long Beach Shoreline. All of these information will be sent out on the list serve.

* For the tech corner, Julian made the following announcements: the CSUN Assistive Technology Conference will be happening next month in Anaheim. You can take Access Service to go there. The dates will be from March 18th through the 22nd. For those who would just like to go to the exhibit halls, that would be from the 20th Wednesday  till the 22nd Friday. It will be from 9 am to 4 pm on Wednesday and Thursday, then Friday is from 9 am to 12 noon. It ‘s free to attend. You have to register and he highly recommends to do it beforehand at csun.at/register. You can also do it in-person but the online register makes the process much easier so when you get there they’ll have your badge ready waiting for you. Next, with another news about the Apple Vision Pro is now available at the beginning of this month. This is a part of a new category called special computing. Basically this device is wearable that you can wear it on your face like goggles. You can see through it but also can blend digital content with your physical space. This has a lot of potentials to it but it’s still on its early stage. The demos are available in the Apple Store by appointment. It costs $3500. Now, on the next Apple news, IOS17.3 recently came out and it has a very good security feature that Julian would like to recommend everybody to check it out and enable this feature in the phone settings. It’s called “Stolen Device Protection” which aims to protect your data if your iPhone is stolen. Then on the last thing, Julian is thinking to have a BBB-Breaking Blindness Barriers within the next few weeks. He would like to get some ideas from people as far as some topics to discuss or have speaker guests that you would like to recommend from different companies. Be on the look out for the e-mail for the next upcoming meeting. And if you’re not on his list, send him an e-mail at help@techjv.com.

Secretary’s Report

Corrections were the following: Sheryll’s last name is Thurston and the name of the hotel for the National Convention is Rosen Center. Another correction for the number of people who applied for the Washington Seminar. Originally, there was 22 who applied and only 15 who received a grant from the State Affiliate. So there were 6 or 7 people who were unable to attend.

 Joy made a motion to accept the January minutes with the corrections, seconded by Tiffany and the motion carries.

Treasurer’s Report

The Treasurer’s report was sent out in the list serve on February 8, 2024.

Karen paid her dues yesterday and that will be on the report for next month.

The 2024 Chapter election

The positions that are up for elections are: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Board Member. At this time we don’t have a Vice President and Treasurer.

Robert open up the position of the Chapter President and asked if there are any nominations from the floor. Jo Anne has nominated Robert in the position of President, seconded by Joy. Since he was nominated, he asked Sheila to handle the nomination. Sheila asked if there are any nominations. Joy moved the nomination ceased and that we elect Robert Stigile by acclamation. The nomination was ceased and everyone voted to re-elect Robert Stigile as Chapter President.

Robert then opened up the nomination for Vice President. We haven’t had a Vice President for a few months. He had received a request from Candace who’s interested in running as the next Vice President. For those who are interested to run as well will have the opportunity to run against her so Robert opened the floor for any nomination. Joy nominated Candace Luther as Vice President. Joy moved the nomination be ceased and that Candace Luther be elected by acclamation, seconded by Tiffany.

Robert opened the nomination for the position for Secretary. Joy nominated Sheila. Joy move the nomination ceased and that Sheila Biglang-awa be re-elected by acclamation, seconded by Robin.

Robert open the nomination for the position of Treasurer. As we all know, we didn’t have a Treasurer for a month. Our Treasurer Nancy Albarran got a new job and makes her work all the Saturdays of the month which is why she could not be a Treasurer anymore. Since we had this vacancy, Lindsay Kerr would like to be our new Treasurer. Joy nominated Lindsay Kerr for Treasurer. Joy move the nomination ceased and Lindsay be elected by acclamation, seconded by Robin.

Robert opened the nomination for the position of Board-Member-At-Large. Joy nominated Ron Hilliard as a Member-At-Large. Joy moved the nomination ceased and that Ron Hilliard be elected by acclamation, seconded by Bill.

Robert congratulated and welcomed the new Board for the coming 2 years!

Washington Seminar

Robert mentioned that they had a great discussion. They had 3 priorities that they took to Washington D.C. to discuss with our Congressional members and Senators. Blind American return to work Act which does not have a bill number yet and it hasn’t been introduced in the House or the Senates. However, they had a Congressional reception Tuesday evening. With this Bill for those who may not know, Blind American Return to work Act is that the Social Security disability insurance ahs a bracket of $2590 per month that a blind person can earn. If you go over that amount, you lose all of your benefits. What this Bill would do, it would change that earnings from losing everything to having more than you would in your Social Security. There is also a trail work program that you can do for 9 months. If you make over $1100 in that 9 months program, you might lose everything if you go over it which they would want the trial period / work period eliminated so the blind people can have incentive to go to work. AS soon as we have bill for it, Robert encourage everyone to ask your Congressional members to sponsor. Then the next issue that they spoke on which a lot of people were enthusiastic about it in Congress. They actually had 14 co-sponsors for the Medical devices Non-Visual Act which is HR1328 & S3621. All the medical devices with visual displays are inaccessible and the manufacturers will be called upon by the FDA to make the devices accessible. Then the last one, Website and Software Accessibility Technology Act HR5813 and S2984.We all know that we all have stories of inaccessible websites and apps and we need to get that changed.

The group of participants had laid the ground of these issues in Washington DC seminar. Robert actually saw a couple of Congressional members and they said they would be co-sponsoring and a lot of offices that they saw their aides. So now, Robert said that it’s time for the rest of us to help. Call your Congressional members and asked them to co-sponsor these bills. If you don’t know your Congressional members, Robert can help you find your Congressional member. But it’s not too hard to find it out, you can just go to house.gov and put in your Zip code. Racquel requested to send out the Bill numbers in the list serve.

State Convention

It will be from March14 to 17 at the Rancho Cordova Marriott. The hotel information can bee seen at nfb.org on the convention page. You can reserve a hotel room through that website or by calling. Room rates are $139 plus tax p a night for a king-size bed. $149 a night plus tax for 2 queen size beds. There are a lot of rooms still available. Then the pre-registration are as follows: in-person registration $30, banquet is $65. If you are going to attend by Zoom, fee is $25.

 After March 7th, all those fees will go up by$20.

For the Zoom attendees, you will have the following: the Board meeting on Thursday at 6 pm, the General Sessions on Friday and Saturday from 2 pm to 5 pm and Sunday from 9 am to 12 noon.

For in-person attendees only, on Sunday morning, there will be resolutions that will be voting on. There will be elections. The officers of the Affiliates are: President Tim Elder, 1st Vice President Rachel Grider, 2nd Vice President Robert Stigile, Secretary Shannon Dillon, and Treasurer Tiffany Manosh. Plus the 3 board Members: Brian Buhrow, Allison Depner from San Diego, and Carmen Barela will all be up for elections.

To keep in mind, Robert added that Zoom attendees will not be able to vote for resolutions and the election. The banquet will be cast on Zoom along with all the General sessions and the Board meeting. .

We have 8 Divisions and its all up to them whether or not, if each Division decide to have their meetings on Zoom.

 Door prizes will be given out via Zoom and in-person.

Student Scholarship.

The application is available on the State convention page. Apply before the deadline February 18th.

State Convention Basket

Lindsay suggested to have it as Beach in Spring where we could purchase and donate items worth $20 for the beach. It has been a discussion whether or not if we are going to have it as a virtual auction basket or an in-person / an actual one. With an actual basket, it has been suggested to put beach towel and / or something that you can put your drinks or phone in when you’re in the sand. Karen also suggested that the beach towel can be laid out first in the basket and then put everything else in it so it save space. Robert asked if he could have the list of name of the items with its description of each by March 1st. He also asked Lindsay to put out information about the basket on the list serve.

Fundraising.

Before doing the honor of introducing the new person for the Fundraising, a brief recap of what was discussed in the fundraising conference call on January 17th was shared by yours truly. There were only 6 members who attended the fundraising conference call and they were: Robert, Joy, Racquel, Lindsay, Keith and myself Sheila.

The suggested ideas were a virtual bingo game, a bowling day, Popping Good popcorn and in between you could throw in a food fundraiser such as Chipotle or Panda Express and etc.

Plus, since Robert had suggested to do a funday event,

I’ll come up with a couple of an outdoor activity for us

And probably to do it in between a fundraiser.

With all of these that had been said and had been suggested

I am turning it over to Ms. Robin to handle and implement this ideas to the fundraising committee and the Chapter.

And also, I was also invited by a group for non-profit organizations, an upcoming event - a nonprofit fundraising summit. This summit will teach you how

to tap into community funding, host successful events, help organize your funding and capture funds through marketing,

social media, and AI.

I’ll send you the link for the invite!

So good luck, Robin! She expressed that she’s excited to work with everyone in regards to fundraising and can’t wait what we could put up with to help the Chapter.

Joy suggested since it’s just an online, we can do the Poppin’ good popcorn at the beginning of April. Her and Robin will discuss it together.

Lastly, Robert asked Eddie and Donna if they’re interested to be a member of the Chapter. Then Bill translated it in Spanish for Doris if she too would like to be a member.

Joy made a motion to accept Eddie and Doris as new Chapter members, seconded by Robin and the motion carries.

Candace made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Bill. The meeting was adjourn at 12:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted;

Sheila Marie B.C.

Cell: 818-404-7646

Chapter Secretary

NFB.SFV