Volume 3, Issue 3

March 2017

**In This Issue**:

NFB Pledge

Meeting Announcements

Talking Books Workshop

Monthly Raffle

Annual Dues

Call for Resolutions

Upcoming Conventions

10 Things You Didn’t Know

Technology Tidbits

**NFB Pledge**

I pledge to participate actively in the effort of the National Federation of the Blind to achieve equality, opportunity, and security for the blind; to support the policies and programs of the Federation; and to abide by its constitution.

**Meeting Announcements**

Our next meeting will be on Saturday, March 11, from 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. We meet at The Fountains, 4451 Stack Blvd., Melbourne, FL, 32901.

Anyone needing transportation, please call Joe Naulty, (321) 768-9500, no later than Tuesday, March 7. This is to ensure you are placed on our SCAT list for pick-up. As a reminder, SCAT charges a fare of $1.50 each way, for a total of $3.00. Drivers are unable to make change. Fare cards may be purchased by calling (321) 635-7815, option 403 or 604. Fare cards cost $15.00, which provides for 10 trips

Our guest speaker will be Deb Martin, one of our Board members. Deb is the Director of the Talking Books Library in Cocoa, FL. She will speak about the Talking Books Library and demonstrate the various equipment used to enjoy accessible books. Please come and join us for this interesting topic.

**Talking Books Workshop**

Deb Martin, Director of the Brevard County Talking Books Library and guest speaker, will discuss the free NLS services provided to our county residents. The Talking Books Library is a wonderful service that provides accessible materials for those who have a print disability (blind, low vision, physical disability or other which impede reading traditional print materials). You can learn how to use the digital talking book player bookshelf mode on the players and how to download audio books (BARD), using different technologies. Volunteer coaches will be available to assist new and experienced users. The following is a list of workshops that will be available:

* Victor Reader Stream
* Android phone or tablet
* iPhone or iPad
* BARD Express for PCs

Come learn and try out these accessible apps and services, share your thoughts and ideas and help to shape the future of inclusive technology.

**Monthly Raffle**

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter will begin holding a monthly 50/50 raffle. Tickets are $1.00 each. A 50/50 raffle is a fundraising tool where the participants purchase one or more raffle tickets. When the raffle ticket is drawn, the winner splits the pot with the chapter. So, the more who participate, the larger the pot. All attendees are encouraged to play as it will benefit the chapter.

**Annual Dues**

Any members who have not yet paid their dues to remain in the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter are encouraged to do so. Membership dues are $10.00, which will maintain your active status through December 31, 2017. Your dues help keep our chapter in The Fountains, provide for refreshments at meetings, cover the cost of printing our monthly newsletter and many other costs associated with the running of the chapter. Your dues also keep you as an active member of the National Federation of the Blind. Members who have not paid their dues as of March 31, 2017, will no longer receive copies of our monthly newsletter, “The Visionary”. Please remit your dues at our next chapter meeting or mail to:

Melbourne Space Coast Chapter

P. O. Box 120311

Melbourne, FL 32912

**Call for Resolutions**

Camille Tate, one of our Board members, has been selected to participate on the Resolutions Committee for the State of Florida Affiliate. For those unfamiliar with this committee, it is a group that meets at the State Convention to decide what resolutions will be the focus of the State Affiliate. The resolutions are the direction the members want the Affiliate to go. For example, on the national level, the NFB made resolutions regarding web accessibility for all public websites (federal, state and local government, as well as public colleges and universities). As a member of the State of Florida Affiliate, you have the right to bring resolutions forward that will affect the lives of the blind in the state. Resolutions are voted on during the General Session at the State Convention. Members of the NFB vote on all resolutions brought to the floor at General Session.

Any chapter member with an idea for a resolution for the state, please see Camille Tate at chapter meetings, contact her via email, Yankiecat1999@cfl.rr.com or phone, (321) 412-1945.

**Upcoming Conventions**

State of Florida Affiliate Convention

The National Federation of the Blind State of Florida Convention is fast approaching. This year’s annual convention will be held at the DoubleTree Hotel Downtown Orlando. The address is 60 S. Ivanhoe Blvd., Orlando, FL, 32804. Registration is open until May 8; if you miss this deadline, you may register at the Convention. The registration fees are as follows: $20, or $25 if you register at the Convention; and $40 for the banquet, $45 if you purchase tickets at the Convention. Additional details will follow as more information becomes available. Please see Joe Naulty if you are interested in attending the State Convention.

National Convention

The National Federation of the Blind will hold its annual convention at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando, FL. This year, the convention is from Monday, July 10, through Saturday, July 15. The Rosen Shingle Creek Resort is located at 9939 Universal Blvd, Orlando, FL, 32819. The room rates are as follows: single and double rooms are $83/night; triples and quads are $89/night. There is a 12.5% hotel tax. Reservations require a one night deposit of $95, which is only partially refundable. Any cancellation prior to June 1,will be a forfeit of half of your deposit and after June 1, a forfeit of your entire deposit. Please contact Joe Naulty if you are interested in attending. More details will follow as they become available.

The annual convention will continue to be held in Florida through 2018, so if you have never attended one, this may be your best opportunity. The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter encourages all members to attend Conventions. Without our Conventions, there can be no National Federation of the Blind. It is at your State Convention and National Convention where you, the members, vote for the leaders of the National Federation of the Blind, learn how your Federation has worked for you and where your Federation is going in the future.

You will meet many others across your state and nation who live the life they want. There will be vendors who sell products and have services accessible to the blind. Additionally, there are sessions held by various groups, committees and divisions that can teach you the philosophy of the Federation, how to advocate for yourself and what is out there for you to live a full and satisfying life. It is at Convention where the divisions meet and hold elections because distance make face to face meetings impossible.

**10 Things You Didn’t Know** About Cortana

1. Cortana is an intelligent personal assistant created by Microsoft for Windows 10, Windows 10 Mobile, Windows Phone 8.1 (where it now supersedes Bing Mobile), Microsoft Band, Xbox One, iOS and Android.

2. Cortana can set reminders, recognize natural voice without the requirement for keyboard input and answer questions using information from the Bing search engine.

3. Cortana is Microsoft’s answer to Apple’s Siri.

4. It is named after Cortana, a synthetic intelligence character in Microsoft's Halo.

5. Jen Taylor, the character's voice actress, returned to voice the personal assistant's US-specific version.

6. To develop the Cortana digital assistant, the team interviewed human personal assistants. These interviews inspired a number of unique features in Cortana.

7. Microsoft has integrated Cortana into numerous products such as Microsoft Edge, the browser bundled with Windows 10.

8. Searches will only be made with Microsoft Bing search engine and all links will open with Microsoft Edge, except when a screen reader is being used.

9. Cortana includes a music recognition service. Cortana can simulate rolling dice and flipping a coin.

10. Users can change the settings so that Cortana calls users by their names or nicknames. It also has a library of "Easter Eggs", pre-determined remarks.

**Technology Tidbits**

By Peter Corboy, Feb 03, 2017

Reprinted from: http://www.designboom.com/design/nomad-sensor-jorge-paez-02-03-2017/

The Nomad wearable sensor is a digital guide for people with visual impairments

The Nomad sensor is a headset concept by industrial design student Jorge Paez that hopes to tackle some of the obstacles met by those with vision impairment in their day to day lives. The proposed device would empower people with limited vision, decreasing dependency and improving the psychological and psychosocial impacts of sight loss.

“Due to the aging population of the baby boomers and other factors, it is projected that the number of people living with a visual impairment will more than double in the next 30 years,” says Jorge Paez, the mind behind the headset. “Even though technology has advanced rapidly, living with a visual impairment is still a monumental obstacle”.

The Nomad works by utilizing four LiDAR proximity sensors, similar to the ones used on autonomous vehicles. These four sensors and a 180° rear mounted camera detect obstacles that the user would otherwise not see. All this is mounted on a pair of specially designed bone conducting headphones. The benefit of bone conducting headphones is that they do not impede on the user’s hearing, which is crucial for those who are visually impaired. By conducting sound through the temples, the ears are free from obstacles. When the Nomad detects an oncoming obstacle, the user is presented with a series of dings, which indicate to them where the obstacle is. As the obstacle gets closer, the dings increase in speed, indicating the obstacle’s distance.

On top of indicating obstacles, Nomad would guide users through their physical environment. By utilizing Blindsquare — an app much like Google Maps, specifically designed for people with visual impairments — Nomad is able to paint a picture of the user’s environment. Blindsquare provides the user with information about their route, such as on-coming crosswalks and different landmarks on the way. The advantage of Blindsquare is its ability to give directions where traditional GPS can’t-indoors. By combining the power of Blindsquare and Nomad, users are able to go where they please with peace of mind.

Nomad’s durable design is attributed to its ABS housing. All the electronics are housed within injection molded ABS shells, which protect them from harmful UVA lights, as well as moisture and harsh conditions. The interior shell is covered in a water and oil resistant fabric to ensure comfort when on the head. All sensors are placed in reinforced areas to reduce damage from every day use. The front facing sensors are attached by a simple screw mechanism, which allows for quick and easy repairs in case of emergencies.

On top of all this, Paez’s’ concept also includes a digital assistant, similar to Google Home or the Amazon Echo, that would assist users with obtaining public transportation tickets, among other things. Users would have tickets sent to their phone using a simple voice command.