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**In This Issue**:

NFB Pledge

Meeting Announcements

Open Board Meeting

Final Call for Resolutions

National Convention

Meeting with SCAT

Transportation Collective

Commissioner Meetings

Participation is Encouraged

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 Anouncements**

Our next meeting will be Saturday, May 13, 2017, from 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. We meet at The Fountains, 4451 Stack Blvd., Melbourne, FL, 32901. Anyone needing transportation, please contact Joe Naulty, (321) 768-9500, in order to be placed on the list for pick-up. Please call no later than Monday, May 8, as the list is submitted early in the week to SCAT. As a reminder, SCAT charges a fare of $1.50 each way, for a total of $3.00. Please remember that drivers are unable to make change. Fare cards may be purchased by contacting SCAT at (321) 635-7815, option 403 or 604. Fare cards cost $15.00, which provides 10 trips.

We will have our monthly 50/50 raffle during our chapter meeting. Raffle tickets are $1 each. The winner of the raffle will split the “pot” with the chapter, so the more who enter, the larger the potential winnings.

Our guest for May is Peter Poliey. Peter is a martial arts expert and a member of our chapter. Peter is proficient in several disciplines of martial arts. As a blind person, he can best understand the plight we face when confronted by a criminal bent on personal harm.

**Open Board Meeting**

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter will hold an open Board meeting on Monday, May 8, at 8 p.m. While our Board meetings are normally closed, MSCC has decided to open two Board meetings each year. Our next open Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for November, 2017.

Following the meeting’s adjournment, MSCC will open the call for comments, concerns and questions. During the call, we ask that all comments or questions be held until the meeting has been adjourned.

The call in number is (712) 432-0460. The access code is 548225#.

**Call for Resolutions**

Camille Tate, one of our Board members, was appointed to the Resolutions Committee for the State Convention. Any member who has a possible idea for a resolution, please contact Camille, (321) 412-1945. The Resolutions Committee will meet on Friday, May 26, 2017, at the State Convention. All convention attendees are invited to attend this open meeting.

**National Convention**

The National Federation of the Blind will hold its annual Convention July 10-15, 2017, in Orlando, FL. This is the final notice in our newsletter, as pre-registration ends May 31.

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter will pay your $25 registration fee to attend National Convention. After May 31, registration increases to $30 and must be paid in person, via cash, at the Convention. Banquet tickets are $60 and will increase to $65 after May 31. MSCC will not pay for banquet tickets.

If you wish to attend National Convention, please contact Camille Tate, (321) 412-1945, no later than May 25. This will give MSCC enough time to gather all the names and other information necessary to complete registrations.

Lodging will not be provided by the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter. Any member who wishes to attend the Convention, may contact Marilyn Womble. Marilyn and her husband, Jack, graciously offered any members who would like to go to the Convention to use their Orlando timeshare. The cost is $125 per person for the entire week of the Convention. Please see Marilyn directly, if you wish to accept this offer.

Anyone with questions about attending the National Convention or how to get to the Convention, please contact Camille for further information.

**A.D.A. / T.D. Transportation Meeting**

Wednesday, March 29, 2017, Joe Naulty, Arlene Naulty, Camille Tate and Maria Rigogliosi had a scheduled appointment to meet with Space Coast Area Transit in Cocoa. Jim Liesenfelt, Transit Director, and Carmen Baez, Customer Service Supervisor, provided a generous amount of time to discuss issues and explore possible solutions to improve transportation conditions for Brevard County citizens with disabilities and special needs.

The agenda covered a wide range of subjects including safety at bus stops, difficult crosswalks, photos of some of the issues, outlines of sensitivity training and communication upgrades. The meeting was productive. S.C.A.T. agreed to review the issues and the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter, NFBF, committed to an ongoing level of engagement with S.C.A.T and special needs citizens to keep progress moving in a positive direction.

Attention was also given to discussing some of the outstanding services provided by S.C.A.T. vehicle drivers. We will continue to work on the people who answer SCAT’s telephones and schedule the rides. There is much work to be done to achieve long- lasting improvements. The next scheduled meeting with S.C.A.T. will take place in August, 2017.

**Transportation Collective**

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter has listened to your concerns regarding using our county public transit system. As discussed at our April chapter meeting, we (Joe, Arlene, Camille and Maria) met with Jim Leisenfelt and Carmen Baez, in the SCAT offices in Cocoa. We engaged in a friendly exchange and expressed our concerns up to that date. After Maria reported on this meeting, she also volunteered to become the chapter’s point person for any future concerns, problems or issues with using SCAT or working with the staff. MSCC feels strongly that in order to affect change, our voices must be heard. Please bring any information or concerns you may have to Maria, (321) 987-6286. Any urgent issues may also be brought to a board member,.

In addition to heading what we can call our Transportation Committee, Maria will work with Camille Tate and Julia Savage to attend Transportation Planning Organization(TPO) meetings in the future. The TPO functions as the “designers” and “engineers” of the County’s sidewalks, stop lights and all other structures that deal with city planning when it regards transportation. If you have an accessibility issue with getting to and from bus stops, have a concern that a sidewalk is too narrow for you to navigate (with a wheelchair, walker or cane, etc.) or there is a fixed object blocking your travel on a sidewalk or is a hazard, the TPO is where to begin. Our chapter will attend their meetings, which are open to the public, to speak on our behalf to fix the problem.

**Scheduled Meetings, Brevard County Commissioners**

In the past few months, representatives of the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter, National Federation of the Blind Florida, have completed planned meetings with all of the five Brevard County Commissioners.

Wednesday, March 29, District One Commissioner, Rita Pritchett met with Joe Naulty, Camille Tate and Maria Rigogliosi. The agenda focused on funding for transportation, agencies in Brevard paying sub-minimum wages to persons with special needs and general Q&A. It was a productive meeting and we were well-received by Commissioner Pritchett.

Wednesday, April 26, District Two Commissioner, Jim Barfield met with Joe Naulty and Camille Tate. Similar topics were covered (transportation and sub-minimum wages) There was an added discussion related to Brevard citizens interested in starting small businesses and other enterprises where disabilities and special needs are more easily accommodated. Joe and Camille committed to providing Commissioner Barfield with information on low-interest loans to get a small business enterprise started.

The meetings with Commissioners Pritchett and Barfield conclude the plan to meet with all the commissioners. In all meetings, your board members were able to bring important issues for discussion. It is important every member of the M.S.C.C. initiate contact with their specific commissioner and create polite, meaningful dialogs to change what it means to be blind in Brevard County, Florida.

**Participation is Encouraged**

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter is reaching out to its membership. In the words of Chapter President, Joe Naulty, “we are a chapter on the move.” Over the nearly two years of its existence, MSCC has worked diligently to accomplish the goals and alleviate the concerns of the membership. Members of the chapter have participated in meetings with government officials, transit authorities and other community leaders to further the efforts of MSCC to advocate, educate and integrate the blind into Brevard County.

We are asking for our members to help their board and other interested chapter members in the volume of work it takes to not only run the chapter, but keep our name and mission in the public eye. You can help in many, small ways. Volunteer to make phone calls to other members, reminding them of our next chapter meeting or chapter event. If you know of someone in the community who may be interested in the work we do, please invite them to a chapter meeting or hand them one of our brochures (available upon request). Come with us to a County Commissioner meeting. It is hard for your government officials or community leaders to ignore you when you are standing right in front of them, with your white cane or white tipped cane. You can spread the word about our chapter events, like the upcoming Vision Fair and annual Car/Bike Show. There are so many ways in which you can help keep our chapter growing.

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter firmly believes that if we want to effect change, we must go to the halls of power, where change is determined. When MSCC went to our first County Commissioner’s meeting, no one knew who we were or that there were any “blind” or “low vision” people with concerns. It is important to go to their meeting places, speak before them and make our points. If someone is unable to travel, then write a letter or make a phone call to your government official(s).

At our last meeting, Maria Rigogliosi asked any members that would like to provide refreshments for our chapter meetings to please see her. The Fountains provides us with the coffee and water for our meetings, but the pastries and other refreshments have been provided by a few of our members. We would like to lift this constant burden and request others to volunteer.

**10 Things You Didn’t Know About the Ford Model A**

1. The Ford Model A, also colloquially called the A-Model Ford, the A and A-bone, among rodders and customizers, was the second largest success for the Ford Motor Company.

2. First produced on October 20, 1927, it was not sold until December 2, 1927. The Model A replaced the venerable Model T, which had been produced for 18 years.

3. The Model A was the first Ford to use the standard set of driver controls with conventional clutch and brake pedals, throttle and gearshift.

4. A previous model had used the name in 1903–04. This new Model A was designated a 1928 model and available in four standard colors.

5. The Model A was the first car to have safety glass in the windshield.

6. The engine was a water-cooled L-head inline 4-cylinder that provided 40 horsepower. Its top speed was around 65 mph.

7. The Model A had a wide range of body styles that ran from the Tudor, at $500 (in grey, green or black) to the Town Car with a dual cowl at $1200.

8. By February 4, 1929, one million Model A’s had been sold and by July 24, two million. In March 1930, Model A sales hit three million.

9. Model A production ended in March 1932, after 4,858,644 had been made in all body styles.

10. Its successor was the Model B, which featured an updated 4-cylinder engine, as well as the Model 18, which introduced Ford's new flathead (sidevalve) V8 engine.

**Technology Tidbits**

Reprinted from: https://www.forbes.com/sites/alanohnsman/2017/04/13/a-22-year-old-ceo-has-a-vision-for-making-self-driving-cars-a-reality/#143608a23c46

A 22-Year-Old CEO Has A Vision For Making Self-Driving Cars A Reality

By Alan Ohnsman , FORBES STAFF writer

As a teenager, Austin Russell started thinking about creating better 3D imaging technology while spending his last couple of years of high school at the Beckman Laser Institute at the University of California, Irvine, designing augmented reality and wireless power transmission projects.

Now, at just 22, that early obsession has resulted in an advanced laser LiDAR sensor that he says paves the way for self-driving cars to "actually work and be safe." Russell is CEO of Luminar Technologies Inc., a startup with operations split between Silicon Valley's Portola Valley and Orlando, Florida, that’s been in stealth mode since he founded it five years ago.

Having hit key technical performance targets, Luminar is emerging from its shell with plans to make 10,000 automotive LiDAR units this year at an Orlando factory. These shoebox-sized devices can be mounted on a car roof or integrated into a front fender, and will be sold to automotive and tech customers developing autonomous vehicles. In 2018, Luminar aims to scale up production to hundreds of thousands of the devices annually, and millions annually after that.

What distinguishes Luminar’s tech from existing LiDAR devices, made by companies including Velodyne, Ibeo and Quanergy, is how much farther they see and how much sharper the resolution is, according to Russell and Luminar co-founder Jason Eichenholz.

“We built a system from the ground up that delivers 50 times better resolution and 10 times farther range," an enthusiastic Russell told Forbes. "We have the ability to see dramatically farther out and we're the only system that can be specced high enough to actually be the first to meet the industry requirements for safety and performance."

Perfecting autonomous cars requires algorithms and artificial intelligence that can operate a vehicle as well or better than skilled human drivers, and relies on vision systems and sensors that provide instantaneous details of surroundings, preferably in 3D and in 360 degrees. LiDAR has become essential technology to do this, able to accurately monitor other cars, objects in the road, pedestrians, potholes and ice, in all weather and light conditions, though it remains costly and in need of refinement.

LiDAR’s importance is underscored by big deals, including $150 million invested in Velodyne by Ford and China’s Baidu last year, and Quanergy announced raising $90 million in 2016 to fund production plans. The vision technology is also at the center of a high-profile legal fight playing out in a San Francisco federal court, with Alphabet Inc.’s Waymo accusing Uber and its Otto self-driving truck unit of theft of trade secrets related to its proprietary LiDAR system.

Luminar’s LiDAR units detect and distinguish objects with precision at 200 meters compared with about 35 meters for competing systems, even black objects that conventional LiDAR can miss, according to the company. That distance is critical as 200 meters gives a car traveling at highway speed about seven seconds to respond to dangers ahead, versus a single second if the system only sees accurately 35 meters ahead.

Luminar achieves that by using a unique chip design utilizing indium gallium arsenide, rather than silicon, and a more sensitive laser that operates at the 1550-nanometer wavelength, instead of the 905nm wavelength used by competing LiDAR sensors, which provides 40 times more power.

And while competitors talk about massive cost reduction for their devices, with prices promised to fall from thousands of dollars per unit currently to hundreds of dollars each and less in the next few years, Luminar believes they’re moving too fast to cut the cost of technology that’s not sufficient for the task of autonomous driving.

“There's a huge race to the bottom in the race for commoditization of LiDAR,” Russell said. "It's getting to the point where these sensors are more appropriate for Roombas (robotic household vacuums) than autonomous vehicles. They don't have anything close to good enough to drive an autonomous car.”

Luminar has already supplied prototype devices to four companies that Russell declined to identify, and it’s in talks with “80 percent” of companies in the autonomous vehicle space. After it completes this year’s 10,000-unit run, “we’ll be working with everyone.”

He declined to provide the current cost of a Luminar LiDAR unit and a target price over time, though.

To date, Luminar has raised $36 million of seed capital from investors including Canvas Ventures, GVA Capital and 1517 Fund. (Not $150 million, as reported in a recent story.) Russell himself got a $100,000 fellowship in 2013 from PayPal founder Peter Thiel, which allowed him to suspend his studies of applied physics at Stanford University after his freshman year to devote himself full time to Luminar.

A "significant," though unspecified amount of additional fundraising is planned to support rapid expansion of production capability, “but we’re not talking about billions of dollars,” said the lanky, six-foot, four-inch Russell, who takes pride in the company being highly capital efficient up to this point.

Orlando, where Luminar has a 50,000-square-foot production facility, turns out to be an ideal location for a LiDAR company owing to the region’s extensive network of defense and aerospace companies with expertise in optics and photonics for NASA and military projects.

“Everybody is fighting over the same talent here in Silicon Valley,” Russell told Forbes. “But there's a lot of amazing talent we've been able to pick up in Orlando.”

That talent includes Eichenholz, Luminar’s co-founder and chief technology officer. Russell describes him as the “Kevin Bacon” of the photonics industry, owing to his extensive connections to all its key players. Though still quite young, having just turned 22 in March, Russell has a long-term vision for Luminar that doesn’t include it being sold.

“We've built this out to be a highly profitable, long-term company,” he said. “We're not trying to do this to burn a bunch of venture capital and hope to get acquired by someone. We're building up this business to have some substantial revenue.”

**How to Contact Your County Officials**

Below is a list of your County officials. Please keep this information handy, so you may get involved in continuing our mission to bring all of Brevard County’s blind and low vision citizens into the social and economic fabric of the county. Subsequent issues will list your state and federal Representatives and Senators.

Brevard County Commissioners

District 1

Rita Pritchett, Vice Chair

2000 South Washington Avenue, 2nd Floor

Titusville, FL 32780

(321) 264-6750

District 2

Jim Barfield

Merritt Island Service Complex

2575 North Courtenay Parkway, suite 200

Merritt Island, FL 32953

(321) 454-6601

District 3

John Tobia

Viera Government Center

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way

Building C, Suite 201

Viera, FL 32940

(321) 633-2075

District 4

Curt Smith, Chairman

Viera Government Complex

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way

Building C, Suite 214

Viera, FL 32940

(321) 633-2044

District 5

Kristine Isnardi

490 Centre Lake Drive, Suite 175

Palm Bay, FL 32907

(321) 253-6611

**Announcements**

* Guide Dogs and the Law: Sheriff Wayne Ivey is making a video presentation for law enforcement about safety issues for guide dogs and their users. Anyone who has experienced attacks or knows someone who has, please contact Joe Naulty, (321) 768-9500, to collate the information.
* The Brevard Association for the Advancement of the Blind’s next session will start in September. Please call (321) 773-7222 if interested.