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**NFB Pledge**

I pledge to participate actively in the efforts 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 is Saturday, June 10, from 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. We meet at The Fountains, 4451 Stack Blvd., Melbourne, FL, 32901.

Anyone neding transportation, please contact Joe Naulty, (321) 768-9500, no later than Tuesday, June 6. We send our list of riders to SCAT the Wednesday before our chapter meetings to ensure that all receive service.

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, (321) 635-7815, option 403 or 604. Please remember to ask for a paratransit fare card. The cards cost $15.00, which provides 10 trips.

Our speaker for June is Dean Martineau, one of our chapter members. Dean will discuss NVDA screen reader programs. Dean has offered to assist any member who would like instruction on how to operate their smart devices. Please see him at the chapter meeting to exchange contact information, if you are interested in one on one instruction.

**Upcoming Events**

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter is sponsoring a Vision Fair on Thursday, September 14, at The Fountains of Melbourne. The Fountains is located at 4451 Stack Blvd., Melbourne, FL, 32901. This Fair is from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. and is free to the general public. We have invited agencies, businesses and organizations that have resources to assist the blind and low vision in Brevard County. At this time, we are expecting approximately 25 of our area’s agencies and organizations to participate. We encourage our members to attend this informative gathering. Invitees range from Division of Blind Services, Veterans Administration, SCAT and many others.

MSCC will hold its 3rd Car and Bike Show on Saturday, October 14, at The Fountains. This is our chapter’s largest and most successful fundraising event each year. We are working on several projects related to the show, including obtaining a proclamation from the County Commissioners declaring October 15 White Cane Awareness Day. All members are encouraged to attend because this day is about all of us who use a cane to navigate our world. Each year, the show gets bigger and better, netting our chapter the funds needed to continue the work we began in August 2015.

**Guide Dogs and the Law**

A matter has come to the attention of the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter. This important issue relates to guide dog users and their animals. We would like to inform our members of their rights under Florida law when they use their service animal.

The first thing you should all know is that this statute reads service animal. While most consider dogs to be service animals, the law makes no distinction between a dog or a pony or some other type of animal based soley on what the animal is. A service animal is defined as an animal that has been trained and certified to provide a service to its user. Therefore, a service animal can be a dog, snake, pony, pig or any other type of animal that has undergone rigorous training to provide service. These animals are required to wear a harness or other device that identifies them as a service animal and must be wearing this identification to be allowed in public areas where animals are otherwise prohibited.

In the State of Florida, there is a statute that governs and protects service animals and their users. Statute FL 413.08 has three subsections. These outline the offenses and their possible penalties under the law for violating them. No person is permitted to allow their dog to injure or kill a service animal. To do so is a 2nd degree misdemeanor for the first offense and a 1st degree misdemeanor for subsequent offenses. Additionally under this statute, no person may intimidate, injure or kill a service animal or its user and may be subject to criminal prosecution. The third subsection states that a person who intentionally allows their dog to attack a service animal may be prosecuted for a felony offense.

The problem with this statute is the definition of “reckless disregard”. This phrase is subject to interpretation that may and has, in some cases, obstructed the ability of a service animal user to receive satisfaction under the law. As “reckless disregard” can be interpreted by each prosecuting attorney in different ways on different days, perhaps the standard should be changed. Is it “reckless disregard” if the offending dog’s owner had their dog off-leash, where such action is prohibited by law? Or, is it “reckless disregard” to allow your dog off-leash and not muzzled when that dog has attacked other animals or people? Do we give dogs a “first bite” before legal action can be taken?

These are only some of the questions that arise when considering the gravity of an attack on a service animal. These animals are beyond pets. They perform an invaluable service to their owners. When a guide dog is attacked, then becomes unable to perform their duties, it affects more than the guide dog. Those who are blind depend on their service animal to take them out into the world, operating as their eyes, so they can live independently. If the guide dog that is attacked becomes afraid to work, they must be retrained. If the retraining does not work, the dog may be removed from their owner. The owner must then wait for another dog to become available. The cost of traning guide dogs is in the tens of thousands.

Following an attack on a Brevard citizen, Sheriff Wayne Ivey is making a video to be presented around the county to law enforcement. This video will teach officers of the law about guide dogs and how to handle incidents with them and the public. Any members who have ideas or suggestions, please let Joe Naulty, (321) 768-9500, know. Joe will pass this information along to the Sheriff to be included in his presentation.

**State Affiliate Lucky 7 Fundraiser**

The National Federation of the Blind, FL, is holding a raffle, as a fundraising tool. Each chapter has been given a number of tickets to sell. The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter is in possession of 100 tickets. Each raffle ticket costs $5, or three for $10 and enters the holder into a raffle to win $777. This is in celebration of the NFB’s 77th anniversary. We have a short window of opportunity to sell the tickets as all monies raised must be returned to our State Affiliate approximately two days before the last day of the National Convention in July. Attendance at the National Convention is not required to win. Anyone who purchases a ticket must put their name and phone number on the stub that gets returned to the Affiliate. The drawing will be conducted at the National Convention and the winner will be notified by phone. MSCC will give each member six tickets to sell. Please return the stubs and monies collected to Arlene Naulty ((321) 890-2839),at our June 10 or July 8 meeting.

**Fundraisers and Raffles**

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter will hold a raffle in August to win an audio Bible. The Bible will come in its own case, with 14 CD’s that may be played on a computer, CD player or DVD player. Raffle tickets are $1 and we will sell these tickets during our next three chapter meetings. The drawing will take place during our chapter elections. Please see Alan Kessler to purchase your raffle ticket.

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter will hold, during the monthly 50/50 raffle, an add-on to the prize. Winners of a 50/50 raffle win one half of the pot that is comprised of all raffle ticket sales at each meeting. In addition, we will also give to the raffle winner a Blue Tooth speaker. The speaker is in the approximate shape of a small football. You will be allowed to feel how small the speaker is at our June meeting. The chapter has purchased 10 of these speakers from Promise Treasures of Brevard and will use them in future raffles or as door prizes for those who attend our chapter meetings. When you purchase a $1 raffle ticket for the 50/50 contest, that will include the speaker as part of the prize. Please see Alan Kessler for more information at our June meeting.

**Request for Drivers**

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter is requesting drivers to help us achieve our mission and goals. It has become apparent over time that to meet our expectations of promoting our chapter and doing the work of the Federation, we need adequate transportation. There are some places we can not use Space Coast Area Transit to get to. Any members who have access to alternative transportation, please see Joe Naulty or Camille Tate. We are asking for two hours a month to help ease the burden of our single available driver. We have many tasks to accomplish and need our members to assist.

**Brevard Association for the Advancement of the Blind**

The Brevard Association for the Advancement of the Blind will have its next session beginning in September. B.A.A.B. performs an invaluable function to the blind and low vision in Brevard County. For two decades, this organization has taught those with vision loss to live in the sighted world. They meet every Friday, for eight weeks. They are looking to fill their class for the September session. Please contact Sully, (321) 773-7222, for more information or to sign up. SCAT provides transportation to attend B.A.A.B.

**National Convention**

The National Federation of the Blind Annual Convention is fast approaching. This year’s convention will be held Monday, July 10-Saturday, July 15, in Orlando, FL. Pre-registration will end on May 31. The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter will pay for registration until that date. Following May 31, registration must be completed at the convention in July. MSCC will not pay for registration after May 31. Lodging is not provided by the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter. You are not required to attend all days of the convention and your registration covers you whether you attend for one day or all six days. Please contact Camille Tate, (321) 412-1945, if you would like more information or to be registered. Marilyn Womble has graciously offered her timeshare for any members who need lodging to attend National Convention; please contact Marilyn for further details.

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

1. NVDA stands for NonVisual Desktop Access.

2. NVDA is a free, open source, portable screen reader for Microsoft Windows.

3. NVDA is programmed in Python. Python is a widely used high-level programming language for general-purpose programming, created by Guido van Rossum and first released in 1991.

4. NVDA currently works exclusively with accessibility APIs such as UI Automation, Microsoft Active Accessibility, IAccessible2 and the Java Access Bridge, rather than using specialized video drivers to "intercept" and interpret visual information. It is licensed under the GNU General Public License version 2.

5. Michael Curran developed NVDA due to concerns over the high cost of mainstream screenreaders.

6. To manage continued development of NVDA, Curran, along with James Teh, founded NV access in 2007.

7. NVDA uses eSpeak as its integrated speech synthesizer. It supports the Microsoft Speech platform synthesizer, ETI Eloquence and also supports SAPI synthesizers. Output to braille displays is supported officially from Version 0.6p3 onwards.

8. Besides general Windows functionality, NVDA works with software such as Microsoft office applications, WordPad, Notepad, Internet Explorer, Google Chrome, etc. It supports the basic functions of Outlook Express, Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint and Microsoft Excel. The free office suites LibreOffice and OpenOffice.org are supported by way of the Java Access Bridge package.

9. Support for email is provided with Mozilla Thunderbird version 3 or higher. However, NVDA will usually work with most email providers such as Yahoo.

10. Since early 2009, NVDA supports the WAI-ARIA standard for Accessible Rich Internet Applications, to facilitate better accessibility of web applications for blind users. WAI-ARIA (Web Accessibility Initiative – Accessible Rich Internet Applications) is a technical specification published by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) that specifies how to increase the accessibility of web pages, in particular, dynamic content, and user interface components developed with Ajax, HTML, JavaScript, and related technologies.

**Technology Tidbits**

10 iPhone and iPad Apps That Take Accessibility To The Next Level

Briallyn Smith November 16, 2015

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Accessibility refers to designing in a way that allows as many people as possible to access a physical product, service, environment, and/or app at its full potential.

In the past, accessibility has been seen as optional or a nice “bonus” feature, but that view is outdated and prevents hundreds of thousands of potential users from making use of your product or service.

Thankfully, Apple is playing a leading role in accessibility by ensuring that iOS devices come preloaded with a wide array of assistive features for those who have vision loss, hearing loss, or fine-motor control difficulties.

Apple’s Built-In Accessibility Features

A full list of Apple’s accessibility features for iOS can be found on their website, but it’s worth highlighting some of their stand-out innovations (many accessibility features are available for your Macbook or desktop as well).

For starters: VoiceOver, Siri, Speak Screen, and Dictation are native features that use auditory cues and text-to-speech technology seamlessly to allow those with severe vision impairment to navigate their iPhones and iPads. If an individual has low vision, iPhones and iPads offer several modifications (such as greyscale, font adjustments, and zoom) that can make their device’s display more appropriate for their needs.

Individuals who are hard of hearing may benefit from using some of Apple’s other accessibility features, such as closed captioning (available for media purchased through iTunes), a Mono Audio option (if hearing loss is more severe in one ear than the other), and vibrating alerts.

For those with motor difficulties, an Assistive Touch feature allows you to alter the pre-set gestures into ones that you are most comfortable performing. In addition to voice commands and Siri, touch accommodations can help you to customize your phone so that it works exactly the way you want it to.

Apple has also made strides to make their devices more accessible by having them link through Bluetooth to third-party technologies such as hearing aids, switch control devices (external navigation for those with motor difficulties) and Braille displays.

Accessible iOS Apps

While Apple has done a lot for basic accessibility needs, there are many iOS apps out there that can transform an iPhone or iPad into an even more fantastic tool for individuals with more specific requirements. These ten apps for people with disabilities offer solutions for problems faced by individuals with hearing loss, vision loss, fine motor skill impairment, developmental disabilities, and mental health concerns.

Apps for People who are Hard of Hearing

P3 Mobile

The P3 Mobile app (subscription required) was created by Purple Communications Inc., a company that provides communication options for those who are deaf or hard of hearing. The app allows deaf individuals to communicate with hearing individuals by providing a speech-to-sign translator. The app can be installed on your computer, phone, or tablet, and ensures a positive real-time communication experience.

RogerVoice

RogerVoice (currently in the trial phase for iOS) is an app created by Olivier Jeannell, who has hearing loss himself. The project was largely funded through Kickstarter, and was created as a way to allow people who are deaf or hard of hearing to communicate using the phone without the involvement of a third party. The app uses speech recognition technology to create closed captioning of conversations in real time, and allows users to maintain a private and confidential conversation. This service is currently available in both English and French.

Apps for People with Vision Loss

Tap Tap See

While Apple has included several ways to make navigating the iPhone and iPad easier for those with vision loss, there are still many complications affected users face navigating the real world. Tap Tap See is a free app that was developed to help blind or partially-sighted people identify everyday objects. All users need to do is take a photo of any object (be it a can of food, a shampoo bottle, or even an animal!) and the app will, with surprising accuracy, identify the object aloud.

Be My Eyes

Tap Tap See is an amazing app, but it’s identification ability does have some limitations in more complicated situations. This is where the functionality of free app Be My Eyes comes into play! Be My Eyes relies on volunteers to help individuals with vision loss navigate everyday situations such as checking the best before date on a bottle of milk, or confirming arrival and departure times at an airport.

The individual with vision loss opens the app and requests assistance, and is immediately connected via video chat to a volunteer (any sighted individual who has also downloaded the app). The volunteer can use the video feed to assess the situation that the person with vision loss is in, and answer any questions that they have!

Apps for People with Developmental Delays

ChoiceWorks ($6.99)

For individuals with developmental delays, understanding complex tasks or completing daily routines can be a struggle. ChoiceWorks is an app originally designed for children with autism, but could also be used in several other situations. The app allows you to create personalized routines using preloaded or unique images and audio that can be easily understood and followed. A “waiting” screen and “feelings” screen can also help users to understand how much time remains in an activity and provides a way for users to identify their feelings and follow through with an appropriate reaction.

Avaz (free to try)

Technology has made amazing strides when it comes to providing a communication outlet for those who have difficulties with language production. The Avaz app (Avaz Lite is free, Avaz Pro is $229) builds off of traditional communication boards that use images and written words. The Avaz app allows you to arrange your communication boards in the way that works best for you, and offers guidance for parents, teachers, and caregivers to help them use the tool most effectively. Custom images and words suited to users’ daily lives can be easily added, and the communication board can easily be printed for offline use.

Look, Cook, Eat (requires subscription)

Being able to cook nutritious meals is a very important part of independent living. For individuals with intellectual or learning disabilities, the many steps involved in preparing, cooking, and serving healthy meals can be overwhelming. Look, Cook, and Eat (subscription required) can run on your iPad or computer, and offers step-by-step instructions and recipes through images, videos, and text. Every menu has a main dish, side dish and a drink or dessert and nine new menus are offered each month. All recipes can be completed with nine or fewer ingredients and tools, guaranteeing a stress-free and positive cooking experience.

Apps for People with Mental Health Disorders

Optimism (free)

Society doesn’t always consider mental health disorders to be disabilities, but the truth is that these conditions can have a serious impact on an individual’s ability to get through the day. Apps like Optimism are excellent for helping individuals with mental illness track their symptoms, evaluate their well-being and to identify triggers that may cause their illness to worsen. Optimism is also a valuable app because it can be shown to a healthcare provider, helping them to understand the severity of an illness’ impact on your day-to-day life and to get a better picture of trends in your day-to-day health.

What’s Up (free)

Optimism is great for tracking symptoms of mental illness, but it doesn’t provide a lot of solutions in-the-moment. What’s Up? is a multipurpose app that is a fantastic resource for anyone with a mental illness. The app is discreet, friendly, and helpful and provides a number of self-administered interventions based in cognitive behavioural therapy and mindfulness (such as breathing exercises, grounding activities, and distractions) that can be incredibly helpful to anyone dealing with anxiety, dissociation, panic, or other overwhelming emotions during their daily activities.

For Anyone: MediSafe

Medisafe isn’t an app specific to those with a disability or mental illness, but many individuals with a disability may find it helpful. The app is intended to help those who have trouble managing their medications by providing clear instructions and reminders about when to take each one. The app can also let you know when it is time for a refill on your prescription.

Medications do not need to be entered using medical terminology, but can instead be described (eg “red, circular pill”) for ease of use. The app also allows for some communication with family members’ devices (if desired) and can be synced with both HealthKit and the Apple Watch so that you will never miss another tablet again!

Just the Beginning

Being able to use technology effectively in all aspects of one’s life should not be limited to an able population – everyone has the right to use technology in a way that is effective and that is designed for their individual needs. These apps are all great options for people who may otherwise have difficulty using technology, but I know that I’ve just scratched the surface of the great accessible technology innovations out there!