Volume 3, Issue 7

July 2017

**In This Issue**:

NFB Pledge

Meeting Announcements

Lucky 7 Raffle

State Convention Wrap-Up

Legislation in the NFB

How to Contact Your Representatives

Chapter Elections

Japanese Man Receives Stem Cell Implants

10 Things You Didn’t Know

Technology Tidbits

**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 will be Saturday, July 8, from 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. We meet at The Fountains, 4451 Stack Blvd. Anyone needing transportation, please contact Joe Naulty, (321) 768-9500, no later than Tuesday, July 4, to ensure you are placed on the list for transportation.

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 contacting SCAT, (321) 635-7815, option 403 or 604. Fare cards cost $15.00; please make sure to ask for a paratransit bus pass, which will only work for paratransit trips.

Our July meeting will be an open forum. Your current Board will explain the various duties of all the positions open for election in August. This will be your opportunity to find out how the Board functions. We hope this will help you understand what each position involves. If you are interested in running during the elections, you can have your questions answered.

We will hold our monthly 50/50 raffle at each meeting. Raffle tickets are $1. We are also conducting raffle sales for an audio Bible; the tickets are also $1 each. These raffles are small fundraisers for the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter.

**Lucky 7 Raffle**

Please bring your raffle tickets, all monies collected and any unsold tickets to our July 8 meeting. This is the final day we can accept the raffle tickets. All tickets and monies collected must be turned in at the National convention. Please give your tickets and money to Camille Tate or Arlene Naulty at our July meeting. All ticket stubs must have the name and phone number, with area code, of the purchaser so they may be contacted if the ticket is a winner.

**News from State Convention**

The 2017 NFBF State Convention was a fun filled, informative gathering of the State of Florida’s blind, low vision and sighted family. There were many things to do and see, and this article will highlight some of them. It will also show you just how and why it is so important for members of the National Federation of the Blind of Florida to attend. Without the State Affiliate, there is no Melbourne Space Coast Chapter. Just like if there were no State Affiliates, there would be no National Federation of the Blind.

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter was represented at the State Convention by 8 members. While attendance at the Convention is not mandatory, we encourage all members to attend. You, as the membership, decide on future leaders of the Affiliate. We will announce when the next State Convention date is and where it will be held as soon as the information becomes available.

The first day and night were eventful. Registration, or the pick-up of materials for those who registered early, began first. Then, at 5 p.m., the Exhibit Hall opened up. MSCC had a table, where we sold messenger style bags and our folding business card wallets. There was a meet and greet, open from 6-10 p.m. Food was provided as members from around the state had the opportunity to mix, mingle and get to know each other.

The Resolutions Committee met at 7 p.m., where two resolutions were presented by our own Board member, Camille Tate. Following the Resolutions Committee meeting, the NFBF held an open Board meeting at 8 p.m. At 9 p.m., our NFBF Board held a mock chapter meeting. While planning the agenda for this year’s convention, the Committee scripted a mock chapter meeting to teach new leaders the way a meeting should be conducted. It was informative and funny at the same time!

Each year, NFB Florida members vote on the leadership for the next two years. In 2017, Denise Valkema was re-elected as President of the Florida Affiliate by acclamation (which means she was elected unopposed); and there were three Board positions open for election. Jorge Hernandez and Tekesha Saffold were re-elected (Tekesha moved to Board position 1); and Camille Tate was elected to Tekesha Saffold’s vacated Board position 3. Elections are one of the most important rights and responsibilities of membership in the Florida Affiliate and the National Federation of the Blind. To use the words of Carlton Walker, who spoke to us about being in the NFB, we are an umbrella. No piece of the umbrella can work separately, but only together does it perform its intended function.

As part of the voting process, the membership of the Florida Affiliate also vote on Resolutions. This year, the Florida Affiliate passed two resolutions, for the first time in four years. The first resolution came from our National Office in Baltimore. It urges the BANA(Braille Authority) not to drop Nemeth math code from accessible materials. Many readers of Braille have been using Nemeth their entire lives. There is discussion about leaving it up to each state which math Braille is used. This would create inconsistency in teaching methods and those who learn Braille in one state may be at a loss if they move to another state where the leading Braille code for math is different. This could mean the difference in getting a great paying job because the work materials are inaccessible or taking something else that may not pay as well.

The second resolution was written by Camille Tate. It is about the protection of service animals and their users from attacks by dogs. The resolution calls for a working relationship with the Attorney General’s Office and the NFB to ensure equal protection under Florida Statute 413.081,that covers attacks on service animals.

**Legislation News**

The National Federation of the Blind is working on several bills to improve the lives of the nation’s blind and low vision. Without the hard work of many, how far would we be now? It is an ongoing endeavor to make sure that we have access to buildings, education and technology. Without this legislation, we would be left behind. Below is a short list of some of the bills the NFB is currently working on with our elected officials. We encourage all members to participate in our efforts by calling, writing or emailing your elected officials; ask them to co-sponsor each bill, if they aren’t doing so already, or let them know your feelings on each bill. The 18th century philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, once wrote, “Man is born free, yet everywhere he is found in chains.” So, help your Federation break the chains of inaccessibility. At the end of this article will be a list of your federal officials. Our County Commissioners were listed in a previous issue.

* H. R. 620: The ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017. This bill is introduced by Poe, R-TX. It is aimed at a weakening of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The ADA is perhaps the most important legislation to us, as a disabled population. Oftentimes, the ADA stands between us and those who wish to discriminate in housing, education, transportation and employment.
* H. R. 1772: Accessible Instructional Materials in Higher Education Act (AIM HE). Even in this day and age of digital media and information, we still have blind and low vision students who do not have adequate materials to pursue their education. There are high school students who have to wait months to receive their books in an accessible format, putting them far behind their classmates. There are college students who do not have materials to do their classwork and study.
* H. R. 1734, S. 732: Accessible Technology Assistance Act. As we all know, buying accessible technology is often cost prohibitive. Some of us do not work and must live on a fixed income. Those of us who do work often can’t afford to buy assistive technology because it is so expensive. How do you decide what to pay for? Do you pay your rent and electric, or do you buy an $900 piece of equipment that can help you work in order to afford rent, electric and food? What if you need a CCTV, which can cost upwards of $3,000 or more? This bill provides a benefit for all of us who must purchase technology so we can live the life we want. The tax benefit is up to $2,500.
* H. R. 1377: Transition Into Meaningful Employment Act (TIME). All across the country, there are employers who participate in the Federal Sheltered Workspace, through the use of a 14-C certification. Under this certification, an employer can legally pay their disabled employees below minimum wage. Sub-minimum wage employees earn half or, at times, less than half the federal minimum wage. This bill will change the program so that over the course of six years, employers must raise their sub-minimum wage workers to the federal standard for all persons who work. This change is done in increments and staggered over the six year period.

These bills are what your National Office is doing for you as members of the Federation. We encourage you all to do your part. A voice of one can make a noise, but a voice of thousands can make a roar. We are a Federation and should work collectively to achieve the goals set out to ensure we can fulfill our dreams.

**How to Contact Your Legislators**

There will be times when the National Federation of the Blind asks members to contact their government officials when there is legislation we wish to initiate, oppose, or explore. This can be accomplished in a number of ways: by phone, mail, email or a visit to their office. I have listed below the names, phone numbers and addresses (local, or close enough) for your convenience. While Congress is in session, contacting your officials is best done through Washington, D. C.

* Senator Bill Nelson, Democrat

Washington, D. C.: (202) 224-5274

Orlando Office:

225 E. Robinson Street, Suite 410

Orlando, FL 32801

(407) 872-2161

* Senator Marco Rubio, Republican

Washington, D. C.: (202) 224-3041

Orlando Office:

201 S. Orange Ave., Suite 350

Orlando, FL 32801

(407) 254-2573

* Congressman Bill Posey, Republican

Washington, D. C.: (202) 225-3671

Melbourne Office:

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Bldg. C

Viera, FL 32940

(321) 632-1176

**Chapter Elections**

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter will hold elections at our August 12 meeting. All active members are encouraged to attend. You all will have the opportunity to elect the Board members who will achieve our mission. If you have not paid your annual dues ($10), please do so. Only paid members of MSCC will be able to vote.

**Japanese Man Receives Stem Cell Transplant**

Thank you to Brooke Evans, who forwarded the below article to MSCC for publication.

# Japanese man is first to receive 'reprogrammed' stem cells from another person

**World-first transplant, used to treat macular degeneration, represents a major step forward in movement to create banks of ready-made stem cells.**

* [**David Cyranoski**](https://www.nature.com/news/japanese-man-is-first-to-receive-reprogrammed-stem-cells-from-another-person-1.21730#auth-1)

28 March 2017

Thomas Deerinck, NCMIR/SPL

In a medical first, a donor's iPS cells were transformed into retinal cells and transplanted into a patient.

On 28 March, a Japanese man in his 60s became the first person to receive cells derived from induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells donated by another person.

The surgery is expected to set the path for more applications of iPS-cell technology, which offers the versatility of embryonic stem cells without their ethical taint. Banks of iPS cells from diverse donors could make stem-cell transplants more convenient to perform, while slashing costs.

iPS cells are created by removing mature cells from an individual (for example, from their skin) and reprogramming these cells back to an embryonic state. They can then be coaxed into a type of cell useful for treating a disease.

In the latest procedure, performed on a man from the Hyogo prefecture of Japan, skin cells from an anonymous donor were reprogrammed into iPS cells and then turned into a type of retinal cell, which was in turn transplanted onto the retina of the patient, who has age-related macular degeneration. Physicians hope that the cells will stop the progression of the disease, which can lead to blindness.

## A move from self-donation

In September 2014 at the Kobe City Medical Center General Hospital, [a Japanese woman underwent a similar procedure to receive retinal cells derived from iPS cells](http://www.nature.com/doifinder/10.1038/nature.2014.15915). But these were reprogrammed from cells taken from her own skin. Cells prepared in the same way for a second patient were found to contain genetic abnormalities, and were never implanted. Cells from macular degeneration patients, who tend to be elderly, might have also accumulated genetic defects that could increase the risk of the procedure.

The team decided to redesign the study according to new regulations, and so no more participants were recruited. This month, however, the researchers reported that the Japanese woman fared well[1](https://www.nature.com/news/japanese-man-is-first-to-receive-reprogrammed-stem-cells-from-another-person-1.21730#b1). The introduced cells remained intact one year after surgery, and her vision had not declined, as would usually be expected with macular degeneration.

In Tuesday's procedure — performed at the same hospital and by the same surgeon, Yasuo Kurimoto — doctors used iPS cells that had been taken from a donor’s skin cells, reprogrammed and banked. Japan’s health ministry approved the study, which plans to enroll a total of five patients, on 1 February.

Using iPS cells developed from a donor does not offer an exact genetic match, which raises the prospect of immune rejection. But Shinya Yamanaka, a Nobel-prizewinning stem-cell scientist at Kyoto University who pioneered iPS cells, has contended that banked cells should be a close enough match for most applications.

## Banking on the future

Yamanaka is establishing an iPS cell bank, which depends on matching donors to recipients on the basis of three genes that code for human leukocyte antigens (HLAs) — proteins on the cell surface that are involved in triggering immune reactions. His iPS Cell Stock for Regenerative Medicine currently has cell lines from just one donor. But by March 2018, he and his colleagues hope to create HLA-characterized cell lines from 5-10 different donors, which should match 30–50% of Japan’s population.

Use of these ready-made cells could extend the option of stem-cell transplants across an entire population, says Masayo Takahashi, an ophthalmologist at the RIKEN Center for Developmental Biology in Kobe, who devised the iPS cell protocol deployed in Tuesday's transplant. Banked cells are available immediately — in contrast to a wait of several months for cultivation of a patient’s own cells — and are much cheaper.

At a press conference after the procedure, Takahashi said that the surgery had gone well, but that success cannot be declared without monitoring the fate of the introduced cells. She plans to make no further announcements about patient progress until all five procedures are finished. “We are at the beginning,” she says.

Nature

doi:10.1038/nature.2017.21730

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

1. Audible Inc. is a seller and producer of spoken audio entertainment, information and educational programming on the Internet. Audible sells digital audiobooks, radio and TV programs and audio versions of magazines and newspapers.

2. Through its production arm, Audible Studios, Audible has also become the world's largest producer of downloadable audiobooks.

3. Content includes books of all genres, as well as radio shows (classic and current), speeches, interviews, stand-up comedy and audio versions of periodicals such as The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal.

4. In addition to the regular price charged for audiobooks, Audible offers subscriptions with the following benefits:

Credits: For a monthly subscription fee, a customer receives one or two audio credits. Most titles can be purchased with one of these credits. Some titles (usually larger books or collections of more than one book) may cost two credits, while others (usually very short works) cost only a third of a credit. (Users may also purchase a year's subscription at a time, for a discount, receiving all credits at once, but only in some countries.) Platinum subscribers also receive a complimentary subscription to the digital audio version of The New York Times or The Wall Street Journal.

Subscriber Discount: A subscriber may choose to purchase additional books without credits for a 30% discount.

5. Audible audio files are compatible with hundreds of audio players, PDAs, mobile phones and streaming media devices.

6. Devices that do not have AudibleAir capability (allowing users to download content from their library directly into their devices) require a Windows PC or Macintosh to download the files. Additionally, titles can be played on the PC (using iTunes, Windows Media Player, or AudibleManager).

7. On January 31, 2008 Amazon.com announced it would buy Audible for about 300 million USD. The deal closed in March 2008 and Audible became a subsidiary of Amazon.

8. The company is based in Newark, New Jersey's 1 Washington Park high rise office building.

9. Once a customer has purchased a title on Audible, it remains in that customer's library and can be downloaded at any time, or the customer may listen to the file directly from the website, regardless of whether it has been downloaded before.

10. Audible is the United States' largest audio book producer and retailer.

**Technology Tidbits**

10 best disabled apps and accessibility apps for Android

by Joe Hindy January 5, 2017

http://www.androidauthority.com/best-disabled-apps-and-accessibility-apps-for-android-586626/

There are many types of disabilities and most of them seem to have a habit of making life difficult. Whether it’s being hard of hearing, visually impaired, or physically disabled, chances are that you can’t use your smartphone or tablet the same way as everybody else. That’s okay because as it turns out, there are plenty of apps that can help you work your smartphone better. Here are the best disabled apps and accessibility apps for Android.

Assistive Touch

[Price: Free / $0.99]

Assistive Touch is an app that gives you virtual buttons. These virtual buttons allow you to navigate your device without having to touch it. It comes with a virtual home button, volume buttons, back button, take screenshots and more. It’s made for those who are physically disabled. Unfortunately, it has a variety of useless features as well, such as RAM cleaning, boosting, and other features. We highly recommend you don’t use those.

Commandr

[Price: Free]

Google Now is already a very powerful tool. You can use it to send texts without typing anything, open apps, search the web, and call people. With Commandr, you can expand the usability of Google Now to include things like turning on a flashlight (if your device has an LED flash), toggling various functions (e.g. Bluetooth, WiFi), and even add your own custom commands using Tasker. Being able to automate many tasks via voice commands has the potential to help those with physical disabilities get around their device more easily and with less frustration. Note, you will need Google Now on your device for this to work. It’s one of the better disabled apps on Android.

Google TalkBack

[Price: Free]

Google Talkback is an accessibility feature that is built into Android to help those who are visually impaired. Once activated using the Accessibility option in the Settings menu, Google Talkback will help the visually impaired interact with their devices. It’s pretty based compared to most disabled apps and accessibility apps. It adds things like vibration, spoken, and audible feedback. The idea is to help you understand what’s happening on your device better. It’s not the end-all-be-all of solutions. However, it is pre-installed on your device so you might as well try it!

Google Translate

[Price: Free]

Google Translate is a very powerful app. However, most would think that it’s only good for travelers going to distance countries. You can do a lot more with a little creativity. Perhaps its best featured for the disabled is its ability to listen to spoken word and put it into text. This can be a great way for deaf people to communicate with those who don’t know ASL. It’s not as targeted as other disabled apps and accessibility apps. It’s still a good option, though.

HelpTalk

[Price: Free]

HelpTalk is an app that can help assist in communication. It’s designed for those who are unable to communicate orally or through written word. It features a basic default profile that has a list of basic sentences and phrases. You can also create your own profile with whatever phrases you want. It uses a TTS engine for the speech and it is available in 12 languages. You can even use it to configure an emergency phone number, an emergency message, and an SOS button that will text a certain number if someone needs help. It’s one of the better disabled apps that we’ve found.

IFTTT

[Price: Free]

IFTTT stands for “if this, then that”. It’s an app that helps you set up automated actions. It can be used for a variety of things, including reading your text messages out loud, turning off your lights (if you have the right equipment), and all kinds of other stuff. With a bit of investment, you can make most of your house compatible with IFTTT which can make life a whole lot easier. However, it does take some work. The app is completely free. You can also find recipes for IFTTT with a simple Google Search.

JABtalk

[Price: Free]

JABtalk is an app designed to help non-verbal adults and kids communicate. With it you can build sentences from words, organize words into user-defined categories, import pictures and audio, and it even has text-to-speech capabilities. There’s also a backup feature With it, you can make sure to transfer your settings to a new device.. It essentially turns any Android device into an AAC (augmentative and alternative communication) device. It’s also completely free. It’s one of the lesser-known disabled apps. The only downside is that it has a few bugs here and there.

NotNav

[Price: Free / $31.27]

NotNav GPS Accessibility is an app that was reportedly made by blind people, for blind people. It is a simple GPS navigation app that helps those walking around while blind. It will continually announce things like the nearest street address, your compass heading, nearby crosswalks and roads, and any other waypoint that you define. It’s a pretty solid and simple app. You can buy the full version for $31.27. The full version includes turn-by-turn directions as well. It’s about as good as it gets in this space.

Tecla Access

[Price: Free]

Tecla Access is another accessibility app. It works kind of like a keyboard except you can use it all over the device to do all sorts of things. Most device functions and applications should be accessible. It’ll take you a few minutes to set up as well. There are also some bugs that can be annoying. Be sure to watch out for those. However, it’s still pretty good.

Voice Control

[Price: Free]

Voice Access is an app by Google. It’s for those who have physical disabilities. It utilizes the power of Google’s Voice Search to help you control your device. You can say things like “go back” or “go home” to navigate your phone. Additional commands includes “scroll down”, “click next”, and you can type with it. The app is in beta so there will almost certainly be bugs and issues that you’ll face. However, Google should make it better. Keep an eye out!