Volume 3, Issue 12

December 2017

**In This Issue:**

NFB Pledge

Meeting Announcements

Holiday Greetings

Membership Dues

2018 Schedule

Committees in the NFBF

State and National Convention

**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**

We will meet on Saturday, December 9, from 9:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m. We meet at The Fountains of Melbourne, 4451 Stack Blvd., Melbourne, FL, 32901.

Anyone needing transportation, please contact Maria, (321)795-7376, no later than Wednesday, December 6.

As a reminder, SCAT charges a fare of $1.50 each way, for a total of $3.00. Drivers are unable to make change. Please have your fare separated for the trip; we may not have the same driver for both trips. Fare cards may be purchased by contacting SCAT, (321)635-7815, option 403 or 604. Fare cards cost $15.00. Please ask for a paratransit fare card as those are the only ones usable for paratransit rides.

Our meeting this month is to celebrate the holiday with our chapter family. We will have entertainment from the KopyKatz, the group who performed last year. We all remember the Elvis impersonators! Come and enjoy.

**Holiday Greetings**

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter wishes all of our members a wonderful and safe holiday this year! We have given our thanks and now move on to the holiday parties! Eat, drink and be merry. We can jump start our new year in NFB style.

**Membership Dues**

Membership in the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter and the National Federation of the Blind, FL, will expire at the end of the month. Please pay your $10 dues at our next chapter meeting. You may pay by cash or check, made payable to MSCC at the meeting, or mail it to: P. O. Box 120311, Melbourne, FL, 32912. A lapse in membership will result in your ineligibility to vote or receive the chapter’s monthly newsletter, The Visionary. Let’s build our Federation!

**2018 Schedule for MSCC**

As we come to the close of another year, the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter is looking ahead to the future. 2017 has been a busy and engaging year and we must begin to plan our upcoming year.

MSCC will be planning our 4th Annual Car and Bike Show in celebration of White Cane Day in October. The tentative date is Saturday, October 13, 2018. The annual show is our chapter’s largest fundraising event and brings fun to our members and the public. Happily, White Cane Day falls into the NFB event, Meet the Blind Month. As part of Meet the Blind Month, chapters across the nation participate or host events that introduce the public to the blind and low vision. We, as a Federation, share with our sighted friends and friends we have not yet met, our joy, independence and zest for life.

In addition to our chapter’s car and bike show, there will be two conventions in 2018. These will be discussed later in this newsletter. MSCC will begin planning our attendance at these conventions.

As always, we will continue our efforts on behalf of all the blind and low vision in Brevard, including our work on transportation. It is and will continue to be, our biggest challenge. We must, as a chapter, encourage each other to participate in getting more funding for transit in our area. We can be a pebble, dropped into a still pond, that creates ripples, ever widening to affect the lives of not only the blind and low vision, but the elderly and other disabled citizens who need transportation. We will be asking our members to come to County Commissioner meetings and speak about the importance of a better funded transit system. We live, love, work and play in Brevard; it should not be hindered by lack of transportation.

Your board welcomes all suggestions for activities you would like to participate in. If you have ideas for meeting topics, please share. If you want certain guest speakers, tell us and we’ll try to obtain them. Work with us to make 2018 even better than 2017.

**NFBF Committees**

The National Federation of the Blind, FL, has committees you may be interested in. As many of you are aware by now, our chapter President, Camille Tate, was elected to the State Board. She became Legislative Director for Florida. Camille co-chairs the Legislative Committee with Merry Shoch, who lives in Tampa. They have restarted the committee and are working towards advancing the objectives of our National Office. They are also interested in issues that should be worked on within Florida. The next meeting will be Tuesday, December 5. Please contact Camille Tate, (321) 372-4899 for more information.

The second Thursday of each month, the Senior Concerns Committee meets. You do not have to be a senior to join this committee. Every other month, the NFBF has a 411 Interest Topic Call. On these teleconference calls, a member of the Affiliate board conducts a meeting, with a guest speaker, about topics of interest regarding the NFB; these topics can range on specific news from our National Office to how to conduct a chapter meeting, or what are the duties of a board.

The easiest way to find out about different committees and when they meet is to join the NFB Florida list serv. It is something similar to a blog, where members of the list serv can post on topics they are interested in, questions they may have or to just send out a friendly message to other members of the NFB of Florida. To join the NFBF list serv, or any other lists the NFB has, go to nfbnet.org. From there, you can search for lists from each state (of course, we are NFB of Florida), different divisions within the NFB as a whole or other special list (for example, Webmasters, Promoting the Use of Braille, Blind Parents and many others).

To see what is going on in the NFB of Florida, you may also visit their website, nfbflorida.org or Facebook, [www.facebook.com/NFBFlorida](http://www.facebook.com/NFBFlorida).

**State and National Convention**

The National Federation of the Blind, FL, will hold its annual convention over Memorial Day Weekend, May 25-28, 2018. The convention will be held at the Hilton Tampa Westshore Airport, in Tampa, FL. The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter is eager to send as many members as possible to next year’s convention. This is an important part of being in the NFB. Convention is where you meet other blind and low vision people from across the state, vote on your leaders for the future and find out what is going on in your Affiliate. Without conventions, there can be no chapters. You can get a look at accessible products, discuss the happenings in all areas of life that may affect you and meet others in our Federation family.

The room rate for the state convention will be presented at a later date. Registration and banquet fees have yet to be determined. The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter will pay the registration fees for any members who will attend the convention. Please consider if you wish to go. If MSCC pays your registration fees, you will be required to attend at least one day of convention; any member who does not attend will have to return their registration and any other fees to the chapter.

We will compile a list of interested members to ensure they will have the ability to attend.

The National Federation of the Blind will hold its annual National Convention for the final time in Florida, during the week of July 3-8. The convention will be at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando, FL. Room rates and registration fees have yet to be determined. MSCC will pay the registration fees for any members who wish to attend. If MSCC pays your registration fees, you will be required to attend at least one day of National Convention; if you do not attend, you will be required to return any fees advanced on your behalf.

Convention is a wonderful experience that all NFB members should partake in. You will meet many others in the blind and low vision community and fully enjoy your Federation family. MSCC will make every effort to bring you there. You will learn about accessibility products, be able to shop in the exhibit hall and learn about the inner workings of your Federation. We will keep you apprised of all the details as they become available. We strongly encourage all first timers to attend both conventions. It is an experience you will never forget.

The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Everyday we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. You can live the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back.