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**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 have our 4th Annual Car and Bike Show on Saturday, October 13, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. This is in lieu of our monthly meeting. The show will be at The Fountains of Melbourne, 4451 Stack Blvd., Melbourne, FL, 32901. We strongly encourage all of our members to attend, with your white canes. This is our chapter’s largest and most successful fundraiser, in addition to being part of the National Federation of the Blind’s Meet the Blind Month.

Anyone needing transportation, please contact Maria Rigogliosi, (321) 795-7376, no later than Tuesday, October 9, to ensure you are placed on the list for transportation. Please remember that Maria will no longer call to remind you of our meeting; call her as soon as possible to be placed on the list. As a reminder, SCAT charges a fare of $1.50 each way, for a total of $3.00. Drivers are unable to make change.

There will be no chapter meeting this month due to our car show. Come and join us in celebration of White Cane Day and the NFB’s “Meet the Blind Month”.

**Membership Dues**

All chapter members must pay their dues by January to remain current members in the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter and the National Federation of the Blind of Florida. Only members current in their dues will be allowed to vote, either on chapter business and elections or, during state and national convention. Dues are $10 annually. To continue receiving your chapter newsletter, “The Visionary”, you must be a current, paid member.

Please make checks payable to: Melbourne Space Coast Chapter and bring it to our next chapter meeting. You may also pay cash at one of our meetings. Checks may also be mailed to:

P. O. Box 120311

Melbourne, FL 32912

**September 11** **Budget Hearing**

County Commissioners Approve Preliminary 2019 Budget

Tuesday, September 11, presented a significant opportunity to see County Government in action. It was also a great time to observe the involvement of citizens and the possibilities for positive change. In the three years of the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter’s existence, this was the first time we had so many members and supporting citizens in attendance.

The County Budget includes funding for Space Coast Area Transit (SCAT). SCAT provides the TD and ADA services used by many of our members, as well as all other citizens with special needs. The first concern was that SCAT’s budget not be cut in 2019. Our members were present to speak on behalf of needed funding and improvement to the transportation services provided by SCAT.

Chapter President, Camille Tate, spoke on behalf of those requiring the service and the support of the expanding population of all citizens with special needs. Founder and Treasurer, Joe Naulty, expressed appreciation for what is being done with very limited funds…asking for improved funding for SCAT. Board member, Maria Rigogliosi, talked about the “shoestring” budget; member Ron Bryant outlined how the inability to drive and self-transport oneself affects all citizens in their quest for medical care, grocery shopping and everyday life functions. Members Glenda Heller and Peter Poliey described their limitations with route zoning and how living in North Melbourne still bars them from Gateway medical services and associated physicians in the southern part of the county. It was a very lively discussion…businesslike but impactful.

It is important to note here those who made a great effort to attend this important meeting and have their presence be seen and noted by the County Commissioners. We would like to take the time to recognize Ron Bryant for his efforts in galvanizing and organizing the van trip to this important budget hearing. Here are those members who attended this meeting and stood up for all disabled citizens in Brevard:

Camille Tate, Peter Poliey, Frances Munno, Victor Edmunds, Joe Naulty, Glenda Hellet, Ralph Munno, Bill West, Maria Rigogliosi, Ron Bryant, Joyce Taylor, Terry Riley, Arlene Naulty, Nora Lee Smith, Denise Woodard, Paul Layman, Marilyn Womble, Octavia Gardner and Judy O’Rear.

We must also thank our volunteer driver Bill Lowe. It was so important for everyone to be there and be seen.

The preliminary budget was passed by a 5-0 vote. It may seem a small thing but it was huge! Having 19 people in the meeting was a “first”. It was an opportunity for all to see the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter have the numbers, the strength to keep a focus and the persistence to keep coming back.

At the conclusion of our public comments, it was very impressive to hear that Commission Vice-Chair, Commissioner Kristine Isnardi and Commissioner Jim Barfield will work as a team to research the availability of funds from County mobility fees and perhaps other resources to improve TD and ADA services.

It must also be noted that Florida Today ran a front-page article on Thursday, September 13, about this meeting. Our Melbourne Space Coast Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind, Florida was mentioned. Clearly, hard work and good communication can change what it means to be blind. Living the life we want starts with teamwork and stepping out.

**4th Annual Car and Bike Show**

It is that time of year again! Join the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter in celebration of White Cane Day and the National Federation of the Blind’s “Meet the Blind Month”, on Saturday, October 13. Our car show is from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m., at The Fountains of Melbourne, 4451 Stack Blvd., Melbourne, FL, 32901.

We are pleased to welcome back our D. J., John Papadimitriou. We also will have ice cream, BBQ and pizza. This year, the chapter will be selling products at the car show. We are pleased to announce that MSCC received a $500 product donation grant from 4imprint. Com’s One by One program, which donates to one charitable organization each day of the year. We are pleased to announce there is a volunteer, who will mann our table, which will have information packets, raffle tickets and our products to sell.

**Holiday Calendar Raffle**

Our members who were given an envelope with raffle tickets to sell are asked to bring them, along with monies collected, to the car show or next chapter meeting. All ticket stubs and money collected must be returned by our November chapter meeting.

In review, each ticket costs $5. A drawing will be held each day between December 1 and 31. The winner Monday through Friday will receive $25. Tickets drawn on Saturday and Sunday win $50. On New Year’s Eve, the winning ticket receives $200. In addition, the chapter that sells the winning ticket for December 31 will earn $200. Tickets drawn as winners will be re-entered into the bundle of tickets to be drawn again, so one ticket has the potential of being a multiple winner!

**Vote, Vote, Vote**

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter, National Federation of the Blind of Florida would like to remind our members that November is fast approaching. On Tuesday, November 6 the nation will hold its mid-term elections. We are advising our members so they can exercise their right to vote.

Voting is both a right and responsibility of all American citizens. We want and need politicians that will work with us to make the blind equal members of society. No matter what your political affiliation or beliefs about politics, get out there and vote. If you are not yet registered, contact the Supervisor of Elections.

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2001 provides that each polling place have an accessible voting machine. It is your right as an American citizen to be able to vote both secretly and independently. If your polling place does not have an accessible voting machine or it does not work, contact the Supervisor of Elections (contact information is at the end of the newsletter). Be sure to bring your photo identification and voter’s registration card when you vote. Early voting will be available soon; do not wait until November 6 because many people will wait until then to cast their vote. Lines may be long.

It is important to cast your ballot if you wish to elect a politician that will listen to your pleas and work with us to change what it means to be blind.

**Open Board Meeting**

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter is considering holding an open board meeting at a date to be announced later. For our newer members, our chapter board meetings are closed, but we will hold up to two open meetings each year. During an open board meeting, we ask that members hold all comments and questions until the meeting is adjourned. At that time, we will open the floor for comments and/or questions. This is an opportunity for you, the member, to gain a glimpse of the work your board does each month. Stay tuned for further information.

**Contacting the Brevard Supervisor of Elections**

Lori Scott

Supervisor of Elections

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way

Building C

Melbourne, FL 32940

The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day 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.