Volume 5 Issue 5

May 2019

**In This Issue**:

NFB Pledge

Meeting Announcements

2019 Car Show

The High Roller Fundraiser

State Convention

National Convention

Legislative Alert

**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, May 11, from 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. We meet at The Fountains of Melbourne, 4451 Stack Blvd., Melbourne, FL, 32901. Due to on-going construction in the kitchen of The Fountains, our room may change prior to each meeting. In the event of any changes, someone will be available to direct you to the correct meeting space.

Anyone needing transportation, please call Maria Rigogliosi, (321) 795-7376, no later than Tuesday, May 7. This is to ensure you are placed on the list for transportation.

As a reminder, Space Coast Area Transit 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 at (321) 635-7815. The phone menu options have changed, so please follow the prompts. Fare cards cost $15.00, which provide 10 one-way trips.

We will have a 50/50 raffle at our next meeting. Tickets cost $1 each. The prize is half of the money collected. At our May meeting, the guest speaker will be Russ Davis, Treasurer of the Jacksonville Chapter and NFB Newsline Committee Chair for Florida. He will discuss and demonstrate our Newsline program. Russ will also be available to sign up any interested members.

**2019 5th Annual Car and Bike Show**

The Melbourne Space Coast Chapter is hosting its Fifth Annual Car and Bike Show on October 12, 2019. This is our biggest fundraiser and chance to educate the public about blindness. Each year, we hold a show to celebrate White Cane Day, which is observed on October 15. In 1964, Congress passed the White Cane Awareness Day Act. The white cane is our most ubiquitous symbol of freedom and independence. We expect our members to attend with their white canes and be visible to our sighted peers in the community.

White Inspector gloves will be given out so we can “see” the vehicles through touch. Vehicle owners will be on hand to describe their cars or motorcycles.

MSCC needs each member to assist with door prizes for our car and bike show. Door prizes create interest and fun. Over the past few years, door prizes have gained in importance. We would like each member to bring to us one item to be used as a door prize. For example, a gift card, bottle of wine or sparkling juice. We encourage you to contact professionals, businesses, grocery stores, auto shops, etc. Each year we place raffle tickets in the envelope given to each vehicle that registers and call the numbers off throughout the show. Anyone wishing to help plan our fundraiser, please contact Joe Naulty, (321) 768-9500.

**The High Roller Raffle/State Fundraiser**

The National Federation of the Blind of Florida is having a fundraiser that will run through National Convention in July. The High Roller is a raffle with a three-tier cash prize. First place will receive $1,000; Second place wins $500; and Third Place will receive $250. Each raffle ticket costs $5. Members received an envelope at our April meeting or via mail, with tickets to sell. Please return ticket stubs and the money collected to Camille Tate by our June chapter meeting. All stubs and monies must be turned in during our National Convention. Contact Camille, (321) 372-4899, for assistance with picking up stubs and money collected if you are unable to come to our June chapter meeting.

Attendance at National Convention is not required to win. Please ensure the ticket purchaser’s name and contact phone number is written on the stub.

**State Convention**

The National Federation of the Blind of Florida’s annual convention is over Memorial Day weekend, May 24-27, 2019. The convention is being held at the Embassy Suites, 661 N. W. 53rdStreet, Boca Raton, Florida. The hotel is well constructed and easy to navigate. Room rates are $99 per night, plus tax. There is a Manager’s Reception each night from 5:30-7:30 and breakfast is included.

Our annual state conventions are vitally important to maintaining our affiliate in Florida. It is at convention that you elect leaders (President, 1st and 2nd Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and the four Board members). Each year, elections are staggered so only a portion of the board is elected at the same time. As a current paid member of the National Federation of the Blind of Florida, you also vote on any resolutions (policy statements of the National Federation of the Blind of Florida). This is the one time each year that divisions may meet face-to-face. You can mix and mingle with other members of the National Federation of the Blind of Florida or the National Federation of the Blind that you otherwise may not see regularly. Renew old acquaintances or make new friends. Taking a walk through the exhibit hall may show you new products available for purchase. Last and certainly not least, come and learn what your affiliate has been doing since the last convention to further the work of the Federation.

If you are planning to attend our state convention, please make your plans as early as possible. To help with the room expenses, find someone whom you are comfortable sharing a room. Each hotel room, whether king-sized or double, comes with a pull-out couch. If two couples want to share, the double rooms can sleep four, plus an additional person on the pull-out sofa.

Registration and banquet fees are $25 and $40, respectively. This year, pre-registration can be completed either over the phone or online. The National Federation of the Blind of Florida is offering a Women’s Luncheon, to be hosted by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The registration fee for the luncheon is $25. You can register for this event on the same website and in the same manner as for the convention. Online registration can be found by visiting nfbflorida.org and clicking on the NFBF 2019 State Convention link. To call and pre-register, dial (800) 838-3006. The pre-registration deadline is May 5. After this date, registration will only be accepted at the convention and the rates increase by $5 each, except for the Women’s Luncheon. The affiliate must indicate to the hotel the number of lunches needed for the Women’s Luncheon and therefore there is no guarantee you can register after the May 5 deadline.

The MSCC board has decided we will cover registration fees only. If you are interested in attending state convention in 2019, please let Camille Tate know and you will be placed on the list. Per board decision, fees will not be paid in advance. They will be reimbursed following the convention.

**National Convention**

The National Federation of the Blind will hold its annual convention at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. The dates are Sunday, July 7, through Friday, July 12.

As with state conventions, our national convention is extremely important. Members have the opportunity to hear what our National Office has been doing since the last convention. You will meet new friends in blindness and renew old acquaintances. The exhibit hall is full of vendors, state affiliates and national divisions, all showcasing exciting products, news from their divisions and goodies from each state.

The room rate is $99 per night, plus taxes; the hotel tax is 13.38% and sales tax is 8.25%. You will be required to leave a deposit in the amount of one night’s reservation, with 50% refundable if you cancel by June 1. Call the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino to reserve your room at (877) 632-9001. The resort fee has been waived for the NFB National Convention. Rooms are on a first-come, first-served basis, so make your reservations as soon as possible. Please make sure to advise the reservationist that you are booking a room for the NFB Convention to ensure you receive the special room rate. It does not matter if you reserve a single, double, triple or quad; the price remains the same.

Registration and banquet fees are as follows: $25 (registration) and $70(banquet). Pre-registration online is now open. You may register online by visiting nfb.org/convention. There is no phone number to call and register; you must do so either online or at the convention, which increases fees by $5 each. If you need assistance completing the online registration form, please contact Camille Tate, (321) 372-4899.

The MSCC board has decided we will reimburse members for registration fees only. Attendees will be reimbursed following the convention. If you are interested in attending, please let Camille Tate know and you will be placed on the list. The deadline to pre-register is May 31. After this date, you can only register at the convention.

**Legislative Alert**

The National Federation of the Blind is pleased to announce that the Access Technology Affordability Act (ATAA) has been introduced in the House of Representatives and Senate. We are asking our members to contact their legislators so they can co-sponsor this important piece of legislation. To recap, ATAA is a bill that will provide a tax credit of up to $2000, to be used over a three-year period. For example, if you purchase Job Access with Speech (JAWS), the most widely used screen reader technology, for $895, you can file your taxes and receive that money back. Doing the math, this leaves you with $1105 in tax credit that can be utilized over the succeeding two years. One important fact to know is this tax credit is per individual, not per household. If there are two or three people in the household that must purchase assistive technology covered under this bill, then each individual may claim the $2000 tax credit. Additionally, it makes no difference if you have non-taxable income; you may file taxes to receive the credit. This bill has a sunset provision, which means this tax credit will be removed from the tax law five years from its effective date.

Contact Representative Bill Posey, Senator Marco Rubio and Senator Rick Scott and ask them to co-sponsor the Access Technology Affordability Act, H.R.2086 (Representative Posey (and S.815 (Senators Rubio and Scott). You may call the Capital Switchboard, (202) 225-3121 and ask to speak to their offices. Please contact Camille Tate, (321) 372-4899, for more information. It is through the collective power of our voices that enable us to reach our goals. Remember that we work for not only ourselves, but members across our Federation family and those who will come after us.

**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.**