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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 will be Saturday, August 10, from 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. We meet at The Fountains of Melbourne, 4451 Stack Blvd., Melbourne, FL, 32901.

**VISION LOSS PRESENTATION (Arlene Naulty)**

The Fountains sponsored a meeting directed to people with vision loss and family members on July 22 at The Fountains. Those in attendance filled every seat, and the information was most interesting. Guest speaker was Hetal D. Vaishnav, MD, a well-known ophthalmologist and eye surgeon at The Eye Institute in Melbourne. Dr. Vaishnav spoke on eye diseases and explained how the eyes can be a window into viewing other illnesses. In his detailed PowerPoint presentation, he provided current, concise information and fielded many questions from the floor. The MSCC officers in attendance were: Camille Tate, President; Joyce Taylor, Vice President; Joe Naulty, Treasurer; Noralee Smith, Board Member; Arlene Naulty, Board Member, along with the member residents of The Fountains.

MSCC Charter Member, Marilyn Womble, worked with The Fountains to gather names and contact information of supporting agencies; The Fountains prepared that information for distribution to those present. This was a very important event for anyone with vision loss or those with friends and family members needing more information.

**2019 5th ANNUAL CAR AND BIKE SHOW (Arlene Naulty)**

**Fifth Annual Car and Bike Show Coming Soon!!!**

Saturday, October 12 is going to be a very big day for the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter, NFBF. This year, we are conducting our Fifth Annual Car & Bike Show. The event is scheduled in October which is White Cane Month. Every Chapter member has a responsibility to support all citizens who are blind and those with low vision. The show is a major fund raiser for the MSCC and requires everyone to be involved. The Fountains is our host and Hometown News is a strong sponsor. Both The Fountains and Hometown News have been with the Chapter and this event from the very beginning in 2015.

Funds raised assist with getting Chapter members to important meetings within Brevard County and the State of Florida. Funds also cover printing expenses, meeting registrations, as well as a broad range of activities which support community awareness of blind issues.

Every Chapter member is needed to work with this project. Gift cards and service certificates are needed to support the car owners who display their cars and bikes. Spectators attending the Show will be invited to purchase raffle tickets. Every Chapter member needs to request raffle prizes from businesses and professionals with whom they have a special connection. The cards and certificates will be collected by Joe Naulty. If needed, the prizes can be picked up; otherwise, they will be collected at the August and September Chapter meetings.

Members will be receiving letters of introduction and flyers to present when requesting a door prize or gift card. Because October 12 is just a short time away, it is important to get started now with the important work of securing items needed for the raffle.

We expect to have more than 75 cars and bikes. In order to ensure the success of the event, everyone is needed to be involved. We look forward to working with our members on this project as October 12 draws near. Please call Joe Naulty (321) 768-9500 or Julia Savage (703) 869-7727 with door prize pickup needs or answers to questions. Every member is needed to ensure success.

**TRANSIT ONE MEETING (Maria Rigogliosi)**

On July 16, Joe and Arlene Naulty, Joyce Taylor, and I attended the Transit One meeting at the Melbourne Airport. Ms. Bacot (pronounced Baco), Executive Director of the Florida Public Transportation Association and Coordinator for Transit One, was introduced. Her experience is extensive in dealing with accessibility to public transportation. Space Coast Area Transit’s Scott Nelson, Transit Director and Carmen Baez, Customer Service Supervisor were also present. A wide scope of transit issues was discussed. Some key points discussed were the addition of new routes for Paratransit; the purchase of new buses; and an app that will give transit users the “ability to know when and where the bus they’re waiting for is located, as well as the proximity of arrival.” Buses will announce each stop, the message will also include if this is a transfer stop, along with the destinations of those buses. Another meeting of Transit One is being planned, hopefully at the Melbourne Airport.

**SPACE COAST AREA TRANSIT MEETING (Arlene Naulty)**

Monday, July 29, representatives of the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter met with Scott Nelson, SCAT Director and Carmen Baez, SCAT Customer Service Supervisor. Topics on the agenda included new equipment, upgrades/changes to para transit routes, recent training for SCAT staff members and driver recognition.

Much of the discussion was directed to the Intelligent Transit software and hardware to be installed in 2019 and 2020. Riders will see improvements when making reservations, receiving notifications of ride arrivals and other upgrades as this new system is implemented.

Maintaining open communication with SCAT, as our transportation provider, is an important factor in making the system work at its best for all riders with special needs. It was agreed to reconnect early in 2020. The MSCC was represented by President, Camille Tate; Vice President, Joyce Taylor; Treasurer, Joe Naulty; Board, Maria Rigogliosi and Board, Arlene Naulty.

**CHAPTER ELECTIONS (Camille Tate)**

We will be holding elections during our August chapter meeting. This year, four of the board positions are up for election. Those positions are Vice President, Treasurer, Board 2 and Board 3. Any currently paid chapter member may run for any position, but the Vice President must be blind and the majority of the board must be blind. We will take nominations from the floor and each candidate will be given two minutes to tell us about themselves and what they can bring to our chapter as a board member. You must be a currently paid member of the chapter to run for an open position or vote.

If you are interested in a board position, it is important you understand what that means. As a member of the chapter board, you are expected to attend monthly board meetings, any specially called board meetings and chapter meetings. While emergency situations may arise that prevent you from attending a meeting, consistent attendance is necessary to complete the work of the Melbourne Space Coast Chapter. Additionally, it is important that you have access to email. Often, information, including agendas, minutes and other files or documents are shared electronically. We may sometimes have to vote via email.

One important aspect of being on the board of this chapter is that you are expected to help on various projects we undertake. For example, if we are planning an event, we expect all board members to play a role in the brainstorming and execution of the event.

If you have not yet paid your dues for 2019, you will not be able to run for a board position or vote. Please pay your dues prior to our August chapter meeting by sending to: P.O. Box 120311, Melbourne, Florida, 32911.

**NEWS FROM NATIONAL CONVENTION (Camille Tate)**

The 2019 National Convention was held at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. This year some of the focus was on diversity and inclusion. It is important to note that the National Federation of the Blind is a diverse organization that does not discriminate based on any characteristics. Our commonality is blindness and it affects each of us, no matter our race, gender, national origin, sexual identity or any other characteristic you can think of.

Resolutions, which are policy statements of the National Federation of the Blind and binding on all levels of affiliates, chapters, divisions, committees and groups, were interesting. It truly showed how the democratic process is integral to our organization. Two resolutions came to a roll-call vote (where a voice vote does not clearly indicate an outcome, so the delegate for each state gives the vote for their state affiliate). Just a sampling of the 21 resolutions are:

**\* Intersectionality:** This is a call to civil rights and advocacy groups to open a dialogue with blind people to include us. Some members of the NFB are also members of groups like the NAACP, NOW, etc., and are left out of their advocacy work.

**\* Spurious ADA Lawsuits:** Urging lawyers to ethically pursue ADA accessibility litigation and find alternatives to such. This is to address the issues resulting from lawyers who file nuisance lawsuits only to obtain money from certain entities. This does a disservice to the disabled community, in general, because the driving force is to win monetary gain.

**\* Learning Ally:** This controversial resolution, which passed by a narrow margin, urges Learning Ally, formerly Recorded Books for the Blind and Dyslexic, has moved their digital platforms in a direction that leaves out blind students. For years, their customer base was educational institutions, because they provided textbooks and other materials that are accessible for the blind and dyslexic students. In recent years, they have expanded into apps for smart phones and devices and now include non-disabled people as clients. The smart device app is inaccessible to blind students, which has always been Ally’s focus. The resolution urges them to make their app accessible to the blind and further urges educational institutions to not renew their memberships with Learning Ally until they do.

**\* Pearson:** In keeping with accessible materials, another resolution involves Pearson Education. For years, Pearson claimed to have accessible online software that blind students could use to perform in classes such as math and science. However, it has been proven time and time again that this claim is untrue, especially with My Math Lab. This causes hardship for the student, who then is unable to perform assignments or take exams. The resolution urges Pearson to work with us to make their software accessible.

**\* Entertainment Industry:** This resolution, which also came to a roll-call vote, urges the entertainment industry to employ blind actors, who have the skills to perform their roles. It also urges networks, like CBS and others to employ blind actors to portray blind characters. Often blind characters only reinforce negative stereotypes of blind people and these roles are not authentic because it is a sighted person playing a blind person.

Please take a look at all of the resolutions by visiting nfb.org/resolutions.

The 2020 National Convention will be held at the Hilton Americas in Houston Texas. The dates are June 30-July 5. As of this date, the room rate is $89 per night. You will be able to reserve your hotel room beginning January 1 (that is when the convention rate is available). Additional details, such as registration and banquet fees will follow, as they become available.

**2019 VISION RESOURCES FAIR (Camille Tate)**

The Viera Lions Club and Melbourne Space Coast Chapter are hosting the 2019 Vision Resources Fair on Wednesday, September 18, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. The fair will be at the Holiday Inn Viera, 8292 N. Wickham Road. We will arrange transportation with SCAT for our members to attend the Fair. We have invited several vendors and have received confirmations from CVI, BAAB and, tentatively, SCAT and DBS. This year, we have also invited all four of the NFB Training Centers and hope to receive a confirmation. We encourage all of our members to come to the event. Please contact Camille Tate for more information.

**BREVARD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS BUDGET HEARINGS (Camille Tate)**

We are still intending to attend the Brevard County Commissioners budget hearings in September. We are pleased that transportation is receiving funds for two paratransit routes in the budget. MSCC supports SCAT because without them we could become prisoners in our homes, unable to live independently. Stay tuned for more information. Any breaking news will be posted to our chapter’s list and imparted at the August and September chapter meetings.

**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.**