# PCNFB Minutes for January 14, 2016

The meeting of the Potomac Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind was called to order by President John Halverson at 7 p.m. with 19 members and 2 guests present. Our icebreaker was to answer the question: If you could be any drink, what would you be?

Minutes. A vote was taken not to read the November 2015 minutes as they were sent out in advance. The minutes were accepted as written.

Treasurer’s Report for the Period November 12, 2015-January 14, 2016: General Fund: Beginning Balance: $8,179.07; total income was $818.00; total disbursements were $1,090.40; Ending Balance: $7,906.67. The bill for Hospitality from State Convention hasn’t come in yet, nor has the chapter paid the fee to the church for building use. The report of the Treasurer was accepted without corrections.

President Halverson told us that the staff at the Pentagon City Apple store was interested in providing VoiceOver training at no cost to the chapter on a Saturday from about 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. Apple has just come out with a new training curriculum for VoiceOver, and some new accessibility products will soon be on the market. The staff would like to have a list in advance of the topics we want covered.

Richmond Seminar. There are three issues this year: Increase the number of students receiving braille instruction by mandating that the State Department of Education require that the National Reading Media Assessment tool be used as an objective, research-based way, to evaluate the best reading media for students; currently, discretion is left up to individual school divisions, and there are no uniform criteria statewide. Out of the approximately 1200 visually impaired students in the state, only 100 receive braille instruction. The second issue is to make sure that the Virginia Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired remain a separate agency from the Division of Rehabilitation Services. The third issue is to gain more help from the state to open up more opportunities for the Randolph-Shepherd Program. The number of participants has fallen drastically since the mid-80s, but there are currently openings available, and there are more areas that could be explored. For example, opening more micromarkets, which are small convenience-type stores that are open 24/7, where people go in and actually can look and physically pick up items before purchasing them through a self-checkout system. The advantage of such a setup is that many more and varied items are available for purchase.

Washington Seminar. This year, the seminar will be held from Monday, January 25, through Thursday, January 28th. There are four issues this year: The TIME Act (Transitioning and Integration to Meaningful Employment), the AIMHigh Act (Access to Instructional Materials in Higher Education), urging Senate ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty which would make it possible to share material worldwide for the print-disabled, and the Space Available which would allow wounded veterans to ride free on military aircraft when space is available. Also, again this year, there will be a reception held for Congressmen and Senators in the Dirksen Building from 5-7 p.m. on Tuesday, January 26th. Stephanie DeLuca is in charge of setting up Congressional appointments for the state.

Philosophy. President Halverson posed the question: Why has the NFB been so effective working with Congress? Some answers included: The NFB is non-partisan; our members are well-versed and prepared when we make Congressional visits; our members have been consistently showing up year after year and developed relationships with various staff and legislators, and we’re expected.

Deepa Goraya will lead philosophy in February, Alex Castillo for March, and Charlie Brown in April.

Committee Reports. Joanne Wilson has agreed to be co-chair of the Membership Committee; Jacki Brown suggested that the rest of the committee be made up of newer members, which will immediately get them involved, and they will have a say in the direction and programs for the chapter.

Both Alex Castillo and Amir Ibrahamini joined our chapter this month.

Ways and Means: The Wine Tasting will be held on Saturday, January 6, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Bistro 360. Admission is $40 per person, and raffle tickets for a large gift basket will also be sold for $5 each. 15% of items purchased at the tasting will come to the chapter, as well as 20% of dinner proceeds for those who choose to dine there that evening. Some tasks which will require help include: setup, collecting money, raffle tickets, and filling out forms.

Social Committee. Sarah Blumberg is Social Chair. In addition to chapter snacks, she would like to plan an accessible tour of the National Gallery of Art on a Saturday. Also, she would like to look into a tour of the National Center in Baltimore perhaps accompanied by dinner and sightseeing and/or shopping.

There will be another chapter auction in May, with a date and place to be determined.

Presidential Release 446 was played. Major points of the release included: Time to make hotel reservations for the 2016 National Convention from June 30-July 5th, in Orlando Florida; the NFB is looking for testers to evaluate the accessibility of Social Security kiosks; Washington Seminar issues; the Transforming Braille Consortium will be showing a prototype of its 20-cell braille display, which is Bluetooth compatible, with space for a SD card, but not a notetaker, with a price expected to be around $500 when it becomes available.

Charlie Brown is helping NFB with the Help America Vote Act initiative; he’s looking for Spanish speakers who will be at Washington Seminar to participate in some non-scripted portions of a video.

Jacki Brown and Charlie Brown will be attending the January 2016 Winchester meeting on Wednesday, January 20th at 1:30 p.m. They have two seats available for anyone interested in joining them.

50/50 Raffle. $5o was available, and Sandy Halverson won $25.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully,

Patricia Droppers