PCNFB Minutes for March 10, 2016

The Monthly meeting of the Potomac Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind was convened at 7 p.m. by President John Halverson. 18 members and 1 guest were present. Our icebreaker was to name our favorite restaurant.

The minutes of the February 2016 meeting were accepted without correction.

Treasurer’s Report for the period of February 11 to March 10, 2016: Beginning balance was $7,461.63; income was $1,254.00 from Wine tasting admissions, gift basket raffle, 50-50 raffle, and membership dues. Expenses were 475.00 for national PAC plan, VPAD, yearly state membership fee, and rental of the room here at St. Georges; ending balance, $8,240.63. President Halverson asked if we have been billed for hotel expenses from the state convention, and our treasurer said that we have not been billed yet. There was also discussion as to whether we owed a $250 or $300 rental fee to the church, as we meet here 10 months of the year. Joe Hobson motioned that we raise our rental of the church space to $300 a year; the motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Sean said that he owes an additional amount for the chapter’s donation to the food pantry. We have not received money from Bistro 365 on proceeds from the wine sales. Justin Chan said he called the restaurant but they haven’t called him back yet. The treasurer’s Report was passed.

Apple Devices training. A representative from the Apple Store in Pentagon City was going to try to get to the chapter meeting, but they were unable to make it. President Halverson did inform us, however, that there will be six hours of training divided into three sessions. The sessions will be held in late May to Early June, before the store opens on Saturday mornings from about 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. The first area of training will be how to optimally set up your iPhone and learn the very basics of how the IOS works. The second area of training will be on managing your files, like deleting or making subdirectories. The third area of training will focus on the operation of some of their built-in apps such as calendar, maps, and Safari. Apple does have a new curriculum on IOS; it’s been read, but not officially rolled out yet. We won’t be using that curriculum.

The National Center visit will take place from Thursday evening, May 5th, through Sunday noon, May 8th. Fellows will arrive on April 5th, and the rest of us will arrive on the 6th. Dinner will be at 6:30 p.m., with evening programming after that. You must let Brian McCann know by April 22 if you plan to come. The best way to get there would be MARC or Amtrak, then taking a cab or a rideshare such as Uber from Penn Station to the National Center. Sandy Halverson reminded us to let Brian know if we have any special dietary needs, or if you’re a married couple.

Philosophy. Alex Castillo wasn’t present to do philosophy, so President Halverson stepped in and discussed the concept of “we” and “our” versus “they”, “them”, and “their”. “We” (members of the National Federation of the Blind) own the National Center; it is “our” center, “our” food, “our” federation, and “our” philosophy. not “their” building, programs, and facilities. Or “they” have a kitchen. President Halverson pointed out that this point was stressed much more 20 or 30 years ago.

Next Month, Joanne Wilson will present a program on how we can better integrate new members into the chapter. We’re going to go over our current roster, along with names from other lists, for example, those who get the Monitor, or those on the Free Canes list. We will each be assigned people to call and begin to form relationships which will strengthen and grow our chapter. New people need to have people that they can reach out to, and discuss questions they have about philosophy, or anything else that may have come up during a chapter meeting.

Nominating Committee. Charlie Brown will serve as chair of the nominating committee. If we have an interest in being on the committee, we need to let Charlie Brown know. Also, we must let Charlie Brown know if we are interested in running or not running for any particular office.

The goal is to get the nominating committee report out to the chapter the weekend before the chapter meeting.

Audit Committee. Deepa Goraya is Chair of the Audit Committee. Jacki Brown has agreed to serve, but a third person is needed.

Board Meeting. A telephone board meeting will be held on Sunday, March 20, at 3 p.m. President Halverson will email out the telephone number and pass code.

Auction. The chapter fundraising auction will be held on Saturday, June 11th at Turnbury Towers. Justin Chan and Jacki Brown reminded us to start gathering up items, from our house, from merchants, anything that is nice. Some suggestions: Gift baskets, jewelry, coffee, baked goods, dinners, restaurant certificates, etc. President Halverson will send around both a tax-exempt letter and a letter asking for donations and describing what we do. If we can go around in pairs, it’s more fun.

Arlington County Fair. The Fair will be the first or second weekend in August. The Chapter agreed to participate in the fair this year. Nancy Yeager will head up the committee, with Sandy Halverson and Sarah Blumberg assisting.

Presidential Release 448 was played. The NFB has a video on YouTube celebrating Read Across America Day celebrated March 2 showing people reading braille. President Riccobono reminded us of the advances we’ve made since the 1940s, and the tools we use have become diverse: Legal, technological, collaborations, etc. He told us that the NFB has reached an agreement with Amazon to make all their learning platforms and materials accessible for blind people. This will not happen overnight, but it will happen. It’s taken Amazon many years to reach this point, but they now have. On the legal front, the NFB won a suit in Maryland on behalf of a Montgomery County employee who has been denied accessible call center software to perform her job. This battle has lasted for five and a half years, and it was found that it was not an undue burden for the county to provide the accessible software she needed. Further, the jury found that it was not an accommodation to just simply pay her for having a job. Preregistration for National Convention is now open through May 31st, with registration being $25 a person, and banquet $50. After May 31st, prices will go up to $35 for registration and $60 for the banquet. Also, now’s the time to apply for Jernigan scholarships to convention. In 2015, there were 75 first-time attendees funded by this scholarship. The deadline for applications is April 15. The book, *The Power of Love: How Kenneth Jernigan Changed the World for the Blind edited by Ramona Walhof is available in paperback for $28.99, and digitally for $9.99.*

*Sandy Halverson then described the McDonald Fellowship Program. The program is not just for first-time attendees. The winners of the scholarships will be mentored during convention, and will be expected to report on their experiences at state convention. Each winner will receive up to $750 to attend convention. If the McDonald Winner is also a Jernigan Fund winner, they will receive the difference between what they receive from the Jernigan fellowship and $750.*

*Memory Book. Nancy Yeager made a motion that the chapter contributes $50 in memory of Michelle Miller. President Halverson made a friendly amendment to boost the amount to $100. The amended motion was passed.*

*50-50 Raffle. 33 tickets were sold. Justin Chan won the raffle.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Patricia Droppers,*

*Recording Secretary*