September 9, 2021

NFB Potomac Chapter Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. and 18 participants were present.

The minutes were approved without correction.

Treasurer’s report: A written report was not yet available for this month, so the official report was tabled. However, Sean reported that the only transactions for this month were payments for the bus to Charlie Brown’s funeral, plus the usual expenses for VPAD and PAC. This verbal report was approved by the membership.

Blind Equality Achievement Month (formerly Meet the Blind Month: This event will be held on Saturday October 9 at the waterfront in Alexandria. We will meet around 10 am. We will pass out flyers, brailling demos, etc. We will obtain a mayoral proclamation from the mayor of Alexandria. Go out for coffee or lunch afterward. The Alexandria chapter will partner with the Potomac chapter to obtain a mayoral proclamation from Justin Wilson. Christine will send a request for volunteers to help with this event. Karen is the contact person for Alexandria chapter members who want to help with this event. Evelyn will write up directions to the place where everyone will meet. Tracy can provide a banner to be used at the event.

The state convention will be going entirely virtual. Christine will distribute a list of activities that need to be done during the convention. We are looking for individuals to sign up for roles that interest them.

Emergency preparedness:

Christine spoke about basic emergency preparedness. Topics included situational awareness, always knowing where exits are in a public place, and identifying what to do in an emergency (e.g., whether to leave, call 911, make noise, or send a silent emergency alert from your phone. It was also suggested to always have a “go bag” handy: suitcase with things you’ll need for 2-3 days that is pre-packed. Include clothes, water, medications, important papers.

Christine is looking for creative chapter programming ideas that will make people want to keep coming back. Feedback on things to do or not do.

Several members suggested some sort of game night such as chess or Bunko.

The chapter picnic is Saturday from 3-7 pm at the Halversons’ home. Everyone should wear a mask in the house and spend most of the time out in the back yard. Food will include burgers, hot dogs, and chicken and macaroni and cheese donated by Chick-Fil-A.

Christine announced that in addition to the live monthly presidential releases, President Riccobono will be reinstituting the 15-20-minute recorded releases to be played at chapter meetings. Before this month’s release was played, the chapter debated whether and when to play the releases at future meetings. Chapter members seemed to agree that the presidential release should be interactive. Another idea was to have members listen to the release ahead of time and bring thoughts or questions to the meeting for discussion.

The abbreviated presidential release was played. Highlights included:

* Work to improve implementation of Section 508 as it relates to government technology enforcement. NFB is gathering info from blind people regarding Section 508 barriers such as inaccessible job applications, websites, etc. with federal government or public-facing website. If you have stories to share, reach out to Valerie Yingling at vyingling@nfb.org.
* We are preparing for our October awareness campaign, which has been rebranded as Blindness Equality and Achievement Month (BEAM). Use the hashtag BlindMonth on social media, and send planned events to web@nfb.org so they can be added to the webpage. White Cane Awareness Day proclamations can be found on our website.
* The next live presidential release will be on Friday October 1 at noon Eastern.

Chapter members joined in reciting the NFB pledge.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Arielle Silverman, Secretary, NFB Potomac Chapter