February 17, 2022 NFB Potomac Chapter Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. and 19 members were present, including 12 who participated in person and 7 who participated via Zoom. This is the first time in two years when the in-person group is larger than the Zoom group.

The icebreaker was, “What is one word you associate with Valentine’s Day?”

The minutes from the January 13 meeting were approved without correction.

The treasurer’s report was approved. Current balances are $1,978.15 in the general fund and $1,750.00 in the youth fund.

Sean announced that dues are due for 2022. Dues must be paid before March 17 in order to be eligible to vote in the April elections. Dues are $5 and can be paid by cash, check, PayPal from a bank account, or Square with a credit card. Please put “dues” in the transaction notes. Christine will distribute an email about this.

Smithsonian outing:

We will be going to the Future exhibit at the Smithsonian, Arts and Industries Building, on Saturday March 5 at 10:30 a.m. We will have a private tour with the theme: Innovation, a Double Edged Sword. The exhibit is a free AIRA access location. We may meet beforehand for breakfast or afterward for lunch. An email will be distributed shortly to collect RSVPs.

Committees:

The nominating committee will consist of Patty Droppers, Karin Jernberg, and Sandy Halverson. If interested in running for the board, contact one of these individuals.

The audit committee will consist of John Halverson, Billie Ruth Schlank, and Gary Grassman.

The presidential release was played. Highlights included:

\*NFB is pushing to make at-home COVID tests accessible to blind people. The national office has written letters to the FDA and contractors who handle COVID tests. NFB staff are now in productive conversations with White House officials about this issue. Out of 13+ FDA-approved tests, only one so far, from Q Health, is fully accessible with a smart phone. More information will be forthcoming.

Check out [www.nfb.org/covidtests](http://www.nfb.org/covidtests) for more information.

\*In the meantime, AIRA is providing free COVID test access. More information is available at [www.nfb.org/covidtests](http://www.nfb.org/covidtests)

\*Federationists are encouraged to share experiences with inaccessible at-home tests on social media (tag NFB and the White House) or on our survey at [www.nfb.org/legal](http://www.nfb.org/legal)

\*NFB is in the initial phases of planning a blindness civil rights museum. Share your feedback on what you would like to see in a blindness civil rights museum through an online survey at [www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org) or call 229-632-7878 before February 18.

\*2021 was our most successful year to date on the PAC plan and our first year exceeding $500,000 total.

National convention:

Funding is available for people who want to attend their first NFB national convention. Individuals can apply for the national Kenneth Jernigan scholarship as well as the NFBV McDonald fellowship. Find more details at [www.nfbv.org/mcdonald](http://www.nfbv.org/mcdonald)

NFBV will pay for banquet tickets for all members attending national convention. More information about the logistics of that process will be finalized and announced by February 28.

Silver Bells:

Sandy has been meeting with low-vision support groups and retirement communities. In addition to the weekend programs planned for this year, we would like to bring the programming directly to these retirement communities for shorter visits in the future. Our first weekend will be over St. Patrick’s Day weekend in Sterling, VA. At a recent retirement community visit, Sandy talked about the value of choosing your own food in a buffet line. One person who was at that presentation shared that she was inspired to get her own buffet breakfast. Another person shared that she gave up a week at the beach in order to attend Silver Bells. Silver Bells participants in the area will be invited to our chapter meetings.

Miscellaneous:

Chapter members are encouraged to submit ideas for chapter fund-raising, programming, and to sign up to serve on chapter committees.

We also need to think about the best way to invest our youth funds from the Kiwanis grants.

The national office will be conducting a BELL virtual program this summer for 100 participants nationwide.

Christine suggested having a Toastmasters speaker at an upcoming chapter meeting.

We also discussed the limited accessibility of local museums and accessibility barriers in the workplace.

There is a Chinese restaurant near the St. Georges church where we may consider having dinner before future meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Arielle Silverman, Secretary, NFB Potomac Chapter