



NARFE NEWSLETTER

GREATER BOWIE-CROFTON AREA

CHAPTER 1747

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

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www.NARFE1747.org

February 2010

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS are held at Bowie City Hall (2614 Kenhill Drive, Bowie) on the third Thursday of the month at 10:00 AM in Conference Room 204. There is never a charge to attend and all meetings are open to the public.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS are held the first Thursday of the month at 10:00 AM in Conference Room 125, Bowie Senior Center. All chapter members are welcome.

NOTE: Chapter meetings are cancelled when Prince George's County schools are closed due to inclement weather. Otherwise, meetings are held as scheduled.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

- ❖ *General Meeting* Thursday, February 18., Ms. Karen Sank, emergency management.
- ❖ *General Meeting.* Thursday March 18, a speaker will discuss gardening topics.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dorothy Campbell

2010: A Busy NARFE Year

This is a busy and exciting year for NARFE members. On the national level, there's NARFE's 31st National Convention, to be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, August 29–September 2. There, delegates from chapters, federations and members-at-large will be acting on resolutions that cover the broad range of our interests, setting future policies for the organization, and electing new national officers. The convention also will mark the kickoff for the organization's 90th Anniversary, which actually will be celebrated in 2011. That milestone has been recognized in the theme of the 2010 national gathering: "NARFE: 90 Years Strong."

You will find more information on the convention in February's NARFE magazine and in subsequent issues. Attending conventions is one of the best ways to learn firsthand how an organization functions, and attending NARFE'S convention should be seriously considered by anyone who plans to play a more active role in our chapter.

Federation Mini-Convention

Maryland Federation conventions are biennial too, but are held in the years with no national conventions. Thus, the 3-day MD-Fed Convention will be held in May 2011, right here in Bowie. However, to consider and act on chapter and federation resolutions prior to this year's national convention, the federation will hold a mini-

convention at the Comfort Inn in Bowie this May 3–4. Again, the primary reason for this event is to take care of business; and the Bowie location makes it especially convenient for Chapter 1747 members to attend.

Last Call: The Region II Symposium

You can still register for the Region II Symposium on March 23–24 in Gettysburg, PA. A special project of Charley Saylor, our region's vice president, it's a highly useful educational seminar for those who are currently officers or who plan to become officers or committee chairpersons. Intensive training workshops cover chapter leadership/support positions and provide a wonderful opportunity to interact with members from other chapters in our region.

The hotel-room cost for this 1-night event is \$78/single and \$88/double, plus tax. The registration fee, which includes three buffet meals, is \$65. The chapter will pick up the registration fee for a limited number of members.

For more details on any or all of these events, or to register, contact me (*see back page*).

Thanks for the Help; But We Always Need More!

Once again, my thanks to Ed and Dorothy Bice for helping with the February newsletter mailing, and to Louise Cole for delivering the newsletter to the post office.

And a special thanks to Barbara Wheatley for her many years of dedicated service; she recently resigned from her position as second vice-president. This, of course, has left an opening for that office. Anyone interested in becoming second VP should contact me; and, of course, that member should also consider attending the Region II Symposium (see above) to learn more about doing that job.

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Another thanks, this time to Peter Hill, who volunteered at our November meeting to act as our “sergeant-at-arms.” Anyone else wishing to serve as back-up/share the responsibilities (handing out literature, rounding-up members when meetings begin and after coffee break, counting hand/standing votes, and helping to maintain order are some of the duties of sergeants-at-arms) should notify me at the next meeting.

Finally, please keep in mind that if you’ve got a couple of hours a month to give to our chapter, we can always find something for you to do. Try it; you’ll like it.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Joseph Young

Health Care Reform

The Senate leadership’s negotiated compromise to get the 60 votes needed to pass their health care reform bill in December contains language drafted and suggested by NARFE that would move to safeguard the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP). The protective language was added by the Senate leadership in response to concerns raised by NARFE and federal-postal organization allies regarding a proposal that would have the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) play a significant role in multi-state health care reform — partially administering a health care delivery system consisting of at least two national, private insurance plans.

The differences between the House and Senate-passed versions of health care reform legislation must now be reconciled. Beyond the role of OPM in the multi-state plans, nothing in the Senate and House approved bills has a specific impact on the FEHBP. Still, any comprehensive plan that changes insurance law, provider financing, taxation policy and health infrastructure will have some ramifications on how the FEHBP operates in the larger health system.

While NARFE considers the recent protections in the Senate bill a victory, that does not mean we have endorsed the overall health care reform legislation. NARFE continues to take no formal position on the whole bill since it continues to change and because it could limit the Association’s ability to effect change in the outcome of any final measure.

Budget Cutting Commission and Fast Track Procedure

Despite the short term increase in the debt limit, signed into law (P.L. 111-1230) by President Obama on December 29, allowing the government to pay its bills until February, another increase in the debt limit will be needed. Separate legislation (H.R. 1557 and S. 2834) to create a commission which could force changes to entitlement and other program spending and tax policy through the use of a Congressional fast-track procedure could be added to the debt limit legislation. NARFE is concerned that such a

commission could single out the earned federal civil service retirement and health benefits for reductions. To urge your two U.S. Senators to oppose the fast-track commission proposal use the Legislative Action Center on the NARFE website to send an e-mail to your U.S. Senators: <http://capwiz.com/narfe/issues/alert/?alertod=14498696>.

Medicare Part B Premium Protection

Federal, state and local government retirees who are not eligible to receive Social Security have seen their Medicare Part B premiums jump from \$96.40 to \$110.50 in 2010. Current law protects (“held harmless”) most other beneficiaries from a Part B rate hike when there is no Social Security cost of living adjustment. On September 24, the House passed H.R. 3631, the Medicare Premium Fairness Act, which would protect over 1 million federal, state, and local government retirees from the Part B premium increase in 2010. The Senate also needs to approve this needed legislation. Your Senators need to hear from you now if they are to resolve this inequity in the New Year. You can do that by sending them an e-mail through the following link: <http://capwiz.com/narfe/issues/alert//alertid=14260196>.

STATE LEGISLATION

Ed Bice

The Maryland 2010 General Assembly session opened on January 13. The session started with a budget shortfall of two billion dollars for budget year 2011. NARFE’s priority issues for the session now have sponsors in the House and Senate and bills have been cross filed. The issues are: equalize the tax exemption for over age 65, an annual tax credit for the payment of Long Term Care (LTC) premiums, and a uniform power of attorney in the state.

The addition of the power of attorney issue was added to our priority listing by the State Legislative Committee (SLC) as a result of recent meetings between the SLC and our Like Minded Organizations coalition created in the summer of 2009. The latter group is composed of military groups, labor organizations, and senior groups in Maryland. We continue to seek the support of other groups to join us in our efforts on behalf of over one million Maryland seniors.

Wondering why your federal withholding tax was reduced in your January 2 annuity payment?

OPM has reformed the tax brackets into which people fall for 2010, expanding the brackets from 6 to 8, with different amounts. The amount of federal tax withheld from retirees’ monthly payments is correct based on the withholding tables provided to OPM by the IRS. OPM also advised that any inquiries regarding the change should be directed to the IRS. (Source: NARFE Retirement Benefits Service)

PROGRAMS

Howard Dobson

Do you have an emergency box if you have to evacuate in a hurry? Do you know where your mortgage information and medical records are stored? What about daily medication, food, and water? On February 18, 2010, Ms. Karen Sank, from the Anne Arundel County, Office for Emergency Preparedness, will tell us how to prepare for those unforeseen situations.

Unfortunately, Gene Sumi of Homestead Gardens, our March 18 scheduled speaker, has advised us he cannot attend. We are seeking a replacement speaker to discuss gardening issues.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Doyle Carrington
Sandra S. Denton
Nan M. Fiore
Howard I. Ginsburg
Joseph F. Hester
Barbara J. Johnson

Myung J. Jung
Carey F. Lively
Melba Messner
Steven K. Randol
Ralph D. Welsh

As usual, we appear to have gained a lot of new members; however, the same report that lists these gains also lists six members dropped for nonpayment of dues and, even worse, 11 members who have been sent a "second-notice" letter. So, again, things aren't really as rosy as they seem, and necessitate a stepped-up retention program in which we will personally contact both the members whose dues are due as well as the dropped members. Anyone willing to make some calls should contact either Dorothy Campbell or Lillie Watson.

CHAPTER 1747 TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance on: December 1, 2009	\$3921.82
Receipts:	1265.53
Disbursements:	1457.75
Balance on: December 31, 2009	\$3729.60

DAYS TO REMEMBER

February 12 – Lincoln's Birthday
February 14 – Valentine's Day
February 15 – Presidents Day
February 17 – Ash Wednesday
February 22 – Washington's Birthday

Who Was Responsible?

- ◆ For our "survivor benefits"?
- ◆ ~~F~~election of survivor benefits for a post-retirement marriage spouse?
- ◆ ~~F~~ollowing our participation in "Open Season" and allowing changes to FEHBP coverage?
- ◆ For enactment of FERS in 1986?
- ◆ ~~F~~protection of annual unreduced federal retiree COLAs against proposed delays and reductions?
- ◆ ~~F~~ostering the passage of the Long-Term Care Security Act of 2000?
- ◆ For preventing High-3 from reverting to High-5?

If you answered NARFE to all these questions, you were right! And if you think any other organization would have obtained them, you're very wrong. No other group cares about federal civilian retirees. So keep this information at hand; it's helpful when recruiting new NARFE members or encouraging members to retain their NARFE membership.

NARFE happenings in 2009



Greater Bowie-Crofton Area NARFE News

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Dues payments, gifts, and contributions to NARFE are not deductible as Charitable Contributions for income tax purposes.

CHAPTER BOARD

Elected Officers

President	Dorothy Campbell	301-464-6372	Dcbowie@aol.com
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2nd Vice President	Vacant		
Secretary	Lillie Watson	301-262-5926	lwatson16@hotmail.com
Treasurer	Bob Cullen	301-262-4783	ba3537@aol.com
Assistant Treasurer	Louise Cole	410-672-6528	col9135@aol.com

Committee Chairs

Federal Legislation	Joseph Young	301-218-5187	JosephYoung48@yahoo.com
Membership	Lillie Watson	301-262-5926	lwatson16@hotmail.com
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	Lee Tuveson	301-262-3164	ltuveson@verizon.net
State Legislation	Ed Bice	301-464-3748	DE3637@verizon.net

Activity Coordinators

Alzheimer's Fund	Maria Francer	240-245-4328	
Community Events	Ed Bice (Bowie)	301-464-3748	DE3637@verizon.net
	Louise Cole (Odenton)	410-672-6528	col9135@aol.com
	Donna Minner (Crofton)	410-721-9799	
Meeting Sign-In/Greeter	Mary Catloth	301-390-2206	mcatloth@aol.com
NARFE-Net Coordinator	Howard (Flash) Gordon	301-464-2745	flash@acm.org
NARFE-PAC	Ed Bice	301-464-3748	DE3637@verizon.net
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	Dave Galliant	301-262-7261	
	Tom Page	301-262-3418	
Sunshine	Marjorie Laios	301-262-1566	

Thursday, February 18 ♦ Emergency Preparedness
General Membership Meeting