



NARFE NEWSLETTER

GREATER BOWIE-CROFTON AREA

CHAPTER 1747

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

Volume 31, No. 2

www.NARFE1747.org

October 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. Saturday,** October 16, our health fair provides information on the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. It will begin at 10:00 AM.
- ❖ **General Meeting. Thursday,** November 18, Mr. John Hatton, Legislative Department, NARFE National Headquarters explains how Federal legislation affects our benefits.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dorothy Campbell

National Convention: New Officers, New Dues

I promised you a report on the NARFE National Convention but this is the short version, due to space limitations. More info can be found at NARFE.org.

Two items dominated the 5-day event: electing national officers and raising national dues. Elected to the top office to replace outgoing President Margaret Baptiste was former National VP Joseph "Joe" Beau-doin from Virginia, who had appeared at our March meeting. New National Vice President is Paul Carew of North Carolina, formerly Region X VP. Our new secretary, Elaine Hughes, also from NC, had been NC Federation president.

With a big margin our Region II VP Charley Saylor, from Towson, MD, easily claimed the position of national treasurer. In another win for Towson, former MD-Fed. President Ron Bowers easily won the Region II vice presidency. All new leaders will take office in November and serve for two years.

National Dues Jumps From \$29 to \$40

The highlight of the convention's first business day was decidedly the controversial debate over an increase in national dues. The By-Laws Committee, after rejecting 14 previously submitted resolutions, combined them in a new resolution they offered for consideration. But the delegates chose to instead support one of the rejected resolutions — a simple measure to raise annual dues from \$29 to \$40 and allow for multi-year discounts and a discounted dues withholding (D-W) rate.

After much lively discussion, that resolution was ultimately overwhelmingly approved in a secret vote by the "voting delegates" (chapter presidents/alternates and delegates-at-large) by a 4,409–1,672 vote. (These figures mainly represent the combined voting strength of all chapters calculated in proportion to their membership; our chapter had 18 votes.) Although our chapter had voted 3–1 against last year's proposed dues increase, recent, new, detailed information — which had never before been made available — now indicated a dire need for more revenue in light of a serious, steadily decreasing membership; not offset by recruitment.

Lessen Increase Impact With Multi-Year Dues or D-W

The increase boosts national dues to \$40 annually. Chapter dues is unchanged. To make the \$11 annual increase easier to swallow, members now paying dues annually can save by paying \$72 for two years or \$102 for three years; paying the 3-year rate results in an annual national rate of \$34 rather than \$40. This reduced rate of \$34 is also available to retirees who elect to pay dues via dues withholding.

Continued from page 1

Note: The \$40 is for national dues only; it does not include Chapter dues (ours is \$5 annually). However, chapter dues will be included in bills sent to 1-, 2-, and 3-year members and will be reflected in the amount deducted in monthly annuity checks of those on D-W. In addition, the National Executive Board set a new first-year membership fee of \$45; under national by-laws, “one-third of the membership fee...shall be returned to the Chapters in lieu of the first year’s Chapter dues.”

Again, this increase was a necessary one; my decision, and those of many of the hundreds of other voting delegates who reluctantly cast their votes for it, was not entered into lightly. And since NARFE Headquarters will need time to obtain new membership applications, the increase becomes effective on January 1, 2011 — meaning we should recruit new members NOW!

Efforts to Retain/Recruit Must Increase

While it may be harder to sign up new members at the higher dues rate, we cannot reduce our efforts to recruit and, more importantly, to retain current members. Our recruitment/retention mantra must remain what it always was: NARFE is the only organization that is dedicated and committed to protecting and preserving the earned benefits of federal retirees. Therefore all recruiters of retirees or those receiving survivor benefits should tell prospective members that and about the two money-saving options: reduced rate, multi-year dues and, for retirees, D-W. For more information, contact me, check out the Chapter’s website, or the national NARFE website (linked via NARFE1747.org).

Special Help Wanted

Now is the time for all good members to volunteer to help at the 2011 MD Federation Convention. It will take place May 2-3 at Bowie’s Comfort Inn and Chapter 1747 will be the “host chapter” — meaning that we will be expected to be helpful and gracious hosts.

Over the next few months, at every meeting and event, I will be seeking volunteers for a variety of assignments such as staffing registration/other tables, counting ballots for officer elections, being sergeants-at-arms, helping stuff delegate kits, decorating banquet tables, soliciting door prizes from businesses, and many more easy-to-perform duties. You can sign up for either one day or two, and can even work at two different tasks if you work both days. Contact me for more information or to sign up. I’m convinced we can make this MD Federation Convention the biggest and best one ever — and with your help, we will!

Rick Beach Wins Recruitment Contest

Chapter 1747’s 3-month Recruitment Contest, announced in April, has ended and we have a winner of the \$30 prize for signing up the most members. That’s the good news. The bad (and sad) news is that our winner, Rick Beach, had no competition, though he signed up only one member.

Please note that while other new members were recruited during the contest, those who recruited them didn’t furnish their membership numbers, as specified, on the membership forms.

While nearly every newsletter includes many names in the “welcome new members” list, be aware that they have been, with few exceptions, recruited by national NARFE through recruitment seminars and mailings that OPM does for NARFE — so the national office gets the credit for recruiting them. That’s a situation we need to change. So recruit, recruit, recruit — and put your membership number on each application you hand out. And for every “active” federal employee you recruit, you’ll get a signing bonus of \$8.00. That’s another reason for identifying yourself as a recruiter!

PROGRAMS

Howard Dobson

Saturday, October 16 ♦ Our annual health fair will be held in the **Multi-Purpose Room at Bowie City Hall**. Ours is the earliest date for any function that provides information on the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. We will have health plan representatives from: Aetna, Blue Cross/ Blue Shield, United Health Care, Kaiser Permanente, United Healthcare Vision, GEHA, and the American Postal Workers Union. We will also have specialists from the Lions Club available to give eye exams and other tests.

November 18 ♦ Mr. John Hatton from the Legislative Department at NARFE National Headquarters will talk on our legislative priorities. Mr. Hatton will answer questions on healthcare reform laws, the fiscal commission, and other current topics.

December 16 ♦ We will hold our Holiday Luncheon. Do you have suggestions for a restaurant or menu items? If yes, please contact me ASAP.

January 20 ♦ Income tax specialist Ms. Diane Polangin will speak and answer tax questions.

STATE LEGISLATION

Ed Bice

SLC: A Busy, Well-Spent Summer

In last month's newsletter was a listing, by district, of area candidates for the MD General Assembly that detailed how they responded to the survey sent them by the State Legislative Committee (SLC). The survey sought their positions on our three priority issues.

You might be interested in the final statewide tally of candidates' responses. The SLC mailed the survey to all 521 candidates and received responses from only 256 candidates.

Members of the SLC and other chapter members attended candidates' campaign fundraisers around the state this summer. In June I attended events for Delegates Jim Hubbard and Marvin Holmes, District 23, and Delegate Melony Griffith, District 25. These fundraisers afford us the opportunity to support those candidates who have indicated their support in the past for our legislative agenda. We were also able to meet other legislators, state officials and other interested group members to discuss our agenda and make arrangements for further discussions.

These events are a function of MD PAC; all are considered crucial to any success that we will have for our 2011 legislative program. And remember: You can help achieve our legislative goals these ways: contribute to MD PAC, and when called on during the MD Legislative Session, attend hearings in Annapolis and/or contact your legislators.

MD Property Tax Credit Deadline Extended

Eligible MD homeowners have until November 1, 2010 to apply for tax relief under the MD Homeowner's Property Tax Credit program — which limits the amount of property taxes a homeowner must pay based on income.

To receive this annual tax credit, homeowners — who must be age 70 or older — must file an application form (HTC-60) by the extended deadline of November 1, 2010. (Prior to this year, applications were due by May 1). Other eligibility requirements are:

◇ *A combined household income of less than \$64,000.*

◇ *Applicant must have lived in their home for at least 6 months, or will live in it for the next 12 months.*

◇ *A combined net worth (of everyone in the applicant's household) of no more than \$200,000 (this doesn't include the value of the primary residence or*

the cash value of any qualified retirement savings or IRAs).

To apply for the MD property tax credit program, eligible homeowners must fill out an HTC-60 application form each year. To get the form, call the MD State Dept. of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) at 1-800-944-7403, or download it, along with more detailed information, from the SDAT website at <http://www.dat.state.md.us/dsdatweb/htc.html>. Once a homeowner has been awarded a tax credit, applications are automatically mailed to them each year.

FYI: Some MD counties and cities offer supplemental tax credits; these include Anne Arundel Co., but not Prince George's. More on these supplemental credits are available on the SDAT website or by phone (above).

CHAPTER 1747 BUDGET REPORT

Balance on: August 1, 2010	\$3653.26
Receipts:	265.61
Disbursements:	14.22
Balance on: August 31, 2010	\$3904.65

DAYS TO REMEMBER

October 11 – Columbus Day Observed

October 31 – Halloween

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Wilda Raffensperger

CONDOLENCES

The following chapter member passed away recently. Our prayers and sympathy go out to his family and friends.

Jeff Raffensperger

Greater Bowie-Crofton Area NARFE News

NARFE News is published ten times a year (monthly from September through June) by Greater Bowie-Crofton Area Chapter 1747, National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, P. O. Box 504, Bowie, MD 20718-0504.

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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
1st Vice President	Howard Dobson	301-809-1645	hrd789@aol.com
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
Newsletter	Jessica Forman	843-347-9287	jessicaforman@yahoo.com
Programs	Howard Dobson	301-809-1645	hrd789@aol.com
Public Relations	Dorothy Campbell	301-464-6372	Dcbowie@aol.com
Service Officers	Bob Cullen	301-262-4783	ba3537@aol.com
	Paul Schuette	301-262-0975	paulschuette@verizon.net
	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
Photographer	Frank Lee	410-672-5065	fllee0716@verizon.net
Refreshments	Jack Calloway	301-262-3457	
	Dave Galliard	301-262-7261	
	Tom Page	301-262-3418	
Sunshine	Marjorie Laios	301-262-1566	

Saturday, October 16
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Multi-Purpose Room at Bowie City Hall.