



NARFE NEWSLETTER

GREATER BOWIE-CROFTON AREA CHAPTER 1747

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

Volume 33 No. 8

www.NARFE1747.org

October 2012

www.facebook.com/narfe1747

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS are held at the Bowie Senior Center, 14900 Health Center Drive, Bowie, 20716 in Rooms #2-4. Meeting dates are the third Thursday of the month at 10:00 AM except in July and August. There is never a charge to attend and all meetings are open to the public. Please check your current newsletter for any changes.

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, October 18. . Speaker: Ms. Zibby Kippelman, gemologist, of NovaGold, LLC. Bowie Senior Center.

❖ **General Meeting:** Thursday, November 15. Health Plan Open Season "Health Fair." Reminder: Fair is at Kenhill Center, old Bowie City Hall, Multipurpose Room.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DOROTHY CAMPBELL

National Convention: Something for Everyone

The 2012 National Convention was the fifth NatCon I've attended, but in my opinion it was the best of all of them, although I was highly disappointed that the delegates by a wide margin adopted a package of controversial bylaws. My rating of "the best" was still in order though, because of the speakers, the focus on membership (recruitment and retention), electronic communications, officer elections, NARFE's support of Alzheimer's Research, our legislative program and political fundraising efforts, and much more.

A new feature this year was "Lunch & Learn" sessions, and they proved to be a highly valuable and educational way to spend

our lunch breaks. I attended two; in different ways, they dealt with communicating and marketing NARFE's message to prospective members.

Both Same-Old and New Officers

All four resident national officers were reelected with no opposition, and will serve until the 2014 NatCon that will take place on August 24-28 at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando, Florida. However, the race for Region II Vice President (the region covers Maryland, D.C., Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania) was a hotly contested one, with two MD Federation officers challenging the incumbent VP, Ron Bowers (also from MD). Challenger Evelyn Kirby, MD Fed. 1st VP, Legislation, won in an easy victory, capturing over 66 percent of the vote; she will take office as our new Region II VP on November 1. She had our chapter's full support and votes, based on her platform as well as her demonstrated ability in her Federation/chapter positions; she clearly was the best candidate for the job. We wish her well in her new position.

Since I do not want to use up my whole column for the convention, I prepared a report for our website that goes into more detail. Check it out on NARFE1747.org. For those without e-mail access, I will mail a copy of the report to you the old-fashioned way, upon request.

FLASH! October 18 Meeting Program Change

Although last month's Program Schedule (in the September newsletter) announced that our October speaker would address Social Security/Medicare Part B, the SSA informed me on September 14 that they could not send a speaker this year; their schedule/budget would not cover it. They suggested they might be able to provide a speaker for some time in the Spring of 2013; at press time I was still seeing if we could revise our schedule to accommodate a SSA speaker.

IMPORTANT NOTICE for all members: All changes of address, whether temporary or permanent, as well as any other messages for the newsletter editor, should be sent to: NARFE Chapter 1747, P.O. Box 504, Bowie, MD 20718.

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Please check all your newsletters to find out if this or any other changes occur.

I am pleased now to inform you that I have secured someone who, while not speaking on October 18 on “social” security, might very well make you feel secure. Our replacement guest will be Ms. Zibby Koppelman, a certified gemologist from NovaGold, LLC, who will present “*Is Your Jewelry Box a Treasure Chest?*”

Ms. Koppelman will discuss the market for antique and estate jewelry, precious metals, diamonds, watches and coins. So come to our October 18 meeting and learn how these items are valued and about options to sell, redesign or keep family heirlooms. Everyone is welcome to bring ONE item for a free evaluation.

Chapter Officers Update/2013 Elections

On September 6, 1st VP President Lee Tuveson resigned from his position for personal reasons, and we thank him for his service to the chapter. He also resigned as a Service Officer.

Until we hold officer elections in May of next year, Lillie Watson, our Chapter’s 2nd VP, will move up to the position of 1st vice president. The position of 2nd VP will remain vacant, unless, of course, someone wishes to come forward and volunteer to serve for the remainder of the term. But I will take this opportunity to advise every member that we will have several openings on the Executive Board next year, and that anyone interested in serving as an officer need not wait to be approached, but should come forward and speak up. To assist you in learning more about running for office and serving our chapter, I have appointed Bob Cullen (who will be stepping down as treasurer next year) and Ed Bice as co-chairs of the 2013 Nominating (and Election) Committee. See page 4 for their contact info. They’re both available to discuss all the positions. Note too that we would like to have a new Service Officer as well, particularly one who is knowledgeable about FERS (please contact me since this is an appointed position).

Please keep in mind that the chapter does not run by itself; it takes active officers and committee chairs as well as active members to keep it functioning. Without activists, chapters fail and fold. Fortunately, Chapter 1747 has not yet, in its 32 years, had to face that situation; however, other chapters, both here in Maryland and across the country, have folded. Unfortunately, without enough new volunteers, even willing long-time activists cannot remain active forever — for a variety of reasons. So, again I appeal to all members — and particularly our younger ones: please come forward; volunteer to help out. It’s your organization, and it needs you to keep it strong and viable. Remember: YOU need NARFE — but NARFE needs YOU too!

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Questions—check our websites

www.NARFE1747.org or

www.facebook.com/narfe1747

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

JOSEPH YOUNG

The Right to Vote Revisited

Voting is a method by which groups of people make decisions. In many countries such as ours, people vote to elect their political leaders and to decide public issues.

The right to vote is considered by most Americans as one of their most important rights because it allows us to choose who will govern us. Citizens of democratic countries may elect their public officials either directly or indirectly. In direct elections, the citizens themselves vote for the officials. In indirect elections, the voters elect representatives, who then choose the officials. The President of the United States is elected indirectly through the Electoral College, made up of elected representatives from all the states and the District of Columbia.

Voting in the United States was not always a right, but rather a privilege given to a select few. During our colonial period, the right to vote was limited to adult males who owned property. It was thought that property owners had the strongest interest in good government and so were best qualified to make decisions. Most women could not vote, though some colonies gave the vote to widows who owned property.

After the United States became an independent nation, the Constitution gave the states the right to decide who could vote. Over time, each state abolished property requirements and, by 1830, all white adult males could vote. Only New Jersey gave women the right to vote; however, in 1807 New Jersey reversed that decision.

In the 1800’s and 1900’s, democratic nations extended the right to vote (suffrage) to many people who previously did not have that right. The Constitution of the United States has been amended several times for this purpose. The 15th Amendment was adopted in 1870, five years after the Civil War ended. It prohibited the states from denying a citizen the right to vote because of race. Women were not allowed to vote in most states until the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920. The 23rd Amendment, ratified in 1961, gave citizens living in Washington, D. C. the right to vote in national elections. The 24th Amendment, adopted in 1964 banned the states from requiring citizens to pay a poll tax to vote in national elections. In 1966, the Supreme Court outlawed the use of taxes in state and local elections. In 1971, the 26th Amendment lowered the voting age to 18 for all states and national elections.

All democracies limit the right to vote in special cases. In the United States and Canada, for example, people who are mentally ill or who are serving a prison sentence for committing certain crimes may not vote.

After the adoption of the 15th Amendment, several states used various means to deprive blacks of their voting rights by adding grandfather clauses to their constitutions. These clauses set voting requirements that no blacks could meet. In 1915, the Supreme Court of the United States declared such clauses unconstitutional. Many states also required blacks and poor whites to pay a poll tax or pass a literacy test to prevent them from voting.

To protect the voting rights of blacks and members of other minority groups, the United States Congress passed the Vol-

ing Rights Act of 1963. Under its terms, people who attempt to deprive others of their voting rights are subject to severe penalties.

While working as a technician in 2008 for the Prince George's Board of Elections at the University of Maryland College Park polling site, I was reminded of the history behind our right to vote and the great democracy in which we have the privilege to live. I was also reminded of the Freedom Riders, Civil Rights Marches, Supreme Court decisions outlawing unfair and unjust voting rights laws, and those individuals who gave their lives, blood, sweat and tears for our right to cast a vote.

As I witnessed thousands of young adults of all races, religions and ethnic backgrounds waiting for hours to exercise their right to vote for the candidate of their choice, I could not help but feel proud and reassured that democracy was alive and well in America.

We must remember that freedom is not free; it comes with a price that we must be willing to pay to protect and defend against all who would challenge the right of an American citizen to vote. Be ever vigilant and VOTE!

CHAPTER 1747 BUDGET REPORT

Balance on: August 1, 2012	\$4110.35
Receipts:	224.76
Disbursements:	0.00
Balance on: August 31, 2012	\$4335.11

DAYS TO REMEMBER

October 8	Columbus Day
October 31	Halloween

Looking Ahead to November: A Month for Choices

Not only is this November the month for critical national, state and local elections, but it's also when you get information to help you decide to keep your current Health Plan or switch to another one. This year on Thursday, November 15 Chapter 1747 will present its Open Season "Health Fair," — our annual event that features some of the largest plans in the FEHBP. Note: Open Season is November 12 — December 10.

Invited to take part this year were AETNA, APWU, CareFirst Blue Cross Blue Shield, GEHA, Kaiser Permanente and United Healthcare. As always, each plan's representative will speak; afterwards, they will each be available to respond to individual questions and offer materials at their individual tables.

It's a great opportunity to find out more about your own plan, as well as to learn about others. Be sure to attend the meeting that will take place at Kenhill Center (Bowie's old City Hall).

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Linda Pattison

Troy L. Sears

Statistics released in Reno at the recent national convention showed that overall membership has suffered a steady 30-year decline, but it is being earnestly addressed this year, according to NARFE National Secretary Elaine Hughes in "an extensive 2012 marketing plan... . Our approach," she said, "includes substantial testing of new marketing techniques. Extensive analysis of these tests will provide new avenues for large scale membership growth." Last year, NARFE hired Marketing General, Inc., a consulting firm specializing in association marketing; its 2012 plan is underway and its 2013 plan will be in place soon.

Closer to home, the MD-Federation is stepping up its innovative publicity and public relations efforts — like last year's internet ads — with its soon-to-be-released billboard ads in the Baltimore area. Here in Chapter 1747, we have increased meeting notifications and will provide more info about our activities to all of our local/community publications and other media outlets. We are also planning to look into other ways to get NARFE information out to the general public at little or no cost or by using NARFE's "matching funds" program. If anyone has any PR suggestions, please notify President/PR Chair Campbell.

Save the day! Put December 20 on your calendar now.

By popular request, the Blue Dolphin Seafood Bar & Grill (Rte. 3 South, Gambrills) will again be the place for Chapter 1747's Annual Holiday Luncheon. Join us for the cash bar at 11:30 a.m.; then opt for a great lunch, great company, and many door prizes.

Your \$24 (includes tax/tip) gives you a choice of one of three entrées: Crab Cake, NY Strip Steak, or Chicken Marsala; each comes with bread/rolls, salad, baked potato, green beans, and cake, coffee or tea. You'll choose your entree when you get there. Flyers and sign-up sheets will be available at our October and November membership meetings, or you can contact Treasurer Bob Cullen or Asst. Treasurer Louise Cole (see pg. 4).

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

Officers

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	Louise Cole (Odenton)	410-672-6528	col9135@aol.com
	Donna Minner (Crofton)	410-721-9799	
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	Dave Galliard	301-262-7261	
	Tom Page	301-262-3418	
Sunshine	Marjorie Laios	301-262-1566	

Thursday, October 18

Ms. Zibby Koppelman, certified gemologist from NovaGold, LLC
tells about what might be hiding in *your* jewelry box.