



NARFE NEWSLETTER

GREATER BOWIE-CROFTON AREA CHAPTER 1747

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

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www.NARFE1747.org

December 2013

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GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS are held at the Bowie Senior Center, 14900 Health Center Drive, Bowie, 20716 in Room 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 or our website 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

❖ **Holiday Luncheon:** Thursday, December 19, 11:30 AM at the Blue Dolphin Seafood Bar and Grill. See Details on Page 3.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JERRY KURSBAN

The Maryland Federation conducted a Training Day for chapter officers on October 29, 2013 at the Bowie Comfort Inn. Training focused on how to Build and Maintain a Strong Chapter and How To Build Chapter Membership.

We learned about a program described as FOOD and FUN. In terms of turnout at monthly general meetings, the most successful NARFE Chapters held their meetings at a restaurant where food is served.

Do you believe that we should consider holding our Chapter 1747 monthly meetings at a place where food is served? I would like you to provide your feedback. Please send an email to Howard Gordon at flash@acm.org or call Chiquitta Thomas at 301-805-4108 and express your opinion. Over the past several years our chapter membership has slowly eroded. Would this change of venue help?

We could also use volunteers. Some would assist with mailing the monthly newsletter while others would call members who have not renewed their membership when it expired.

Ed Bice will be pushing ahead with our agenda as Chairman of the State Legislative Committee. Please contact your Senator and Representative and let them know you are out there at the grassroots.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

JOSEPH YOUNG

2014 Cost of Living Adjustment

The 2014 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for 58 million retirees and disabled Americans will be 1.5 percent. Social Security beneficiaries, civil service annuitants and military retirees will be among those receiving the adjustment in their January 2014 benefit pay checks. The 1.5 percent adjustment is designed to maintain retirees' purchasing power. Automatic COLAs were adopted so benefits for people on fixed incomes could keep up with rising prices. However, many seniors, according to the Washington Post, complain that the COLA sometimes falls short, leaving them to pinch their pennies. Advocates for seniors say the government's measure of inflation doesn't accurately reflect price increases that older Americans face because they tend to spend more of their income on health care. Yet, Congress is looking to change how the CPI is calculated. The current method of calculating the CPI is a tempting target for some lawmakers during negotiations over a budget resolution.

Had 58 million retirees and disabled Americans been operating under the chained CPI our COLA would have been less than the 1.5 percent received under the current CPI-W. A switch to the chained CPI, which is a real possibly because president Obama and more than 100 House republicans support budgets that would use the chained CPI rather than the current CPI-W, would lower annuities by 3 percent after 10 years, 6.2 percent after 20 years and 9.4 percent after 30 years. Over a 30 year time period, for a typical Civil Service retirement System retiree with a \$31,440 per year annuity, the total loss would be more than \$77,000.

The money saved in the budget by switching to the chained CPI is the real reason Congress wants to switch and not because it is a more accurate measure of inflation. Once again

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federal employees are called upon to help balance the budget on their backs.

By law, the cost of living adjustment is based on the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). It's a measure of price changes for clothing, food, housing, energy, medical care, transportation, education and recreation compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

The COLA was determined after the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics announced the September 2013 Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) on Wednesday, October, 30 2013. The September CPI-W figure forms part of the 2013 third-quarter average, which is compared to the previous year's average. Federal employees who retired within the last year will receive a smaller inflation adjustment, as their first COLA is prorated to cover only the months of the year during which they were retired. The COLA, an annuity adjustment, not a pay raise, will become effective December 1, and will be reflected in January 2014 retirement payments. Last year's COLA was 1.7 percent.

Federal workers disabled by a work-related injury or illness and receive benefits under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA), receive COLAs based on the calendar year change in the CPI-W. As of September, the index is 2.1 percent higher than the December 2012 index. The December 2013 inflation data needed to determine next year's FECA adjustment will be reported in mid-January.

STATE LEGISLATION

Ed Bice

The 2014 Legislative Program pamphlet has been finalized and is now available on the Federation website as well as the 1747 website. I encourage all members to go on our website and let me know what you think about this year's program. One of the State Legislative Committee (SLC) agenda items for several years has been a Long Term Care (LTC) insurance bill. Our 2014 legislation has changed from last year by increasing the dollar amount to an annual \$500 tax credit instead of a \$200 credit. We have sponsorship in the Senate and House. The House bill is sponsored by Delegate Jim Hubbard, District 23, Bowie. A new item in the program proposes to equalize the \$5,000 subtraction from income for public service retirees and increases the amount of the subtraction to \$10,000 for both military and public service retirees age 65 or older in phases beginning in 2015.

Members of the SLC continue to seek support for our issues. On November 5, Dick Strombotne, Bill Ferguson and I met with Robert Rehrmann, Principal Analyst, Department of Legislative Services, in a discussion of our LTC insurance bill.

On November 7th, Dick Strombotne, Joe Young, and I met with Sheila Hixon, Chair, House Ways and Means Committee, in a discussion of our issues. I continue to talk and meet with the House and Senate office-holders from District 23 (Bowie) and District 33 (Crofton).

CHAPTER 1747 BUDGET REPORT

Balance on: October 1, 2013	\$2245.91
Receipts:	273.91
Disbursements:	367.40
Balance on: October 31, 2013	\$2152.42

DAYS TO REMEMBER

- December 5 Last Day of Hanukkah
- December 7 Pearl Harbor Day
- December 9 End of Open Season
- December 25 Christmas
- December 31 New Year's Eve

LAST MONTH... at the Health Fair



HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

PLACE: Blue Dolphin Seafood Bar & Grill,
1166 Route 3 South, Gambrills, MD

DATE: Thursday, December 19, 2012

TIME: Social/Cash Bar: 11:30 AM; Lunch:
Noon

COST \$26.00 (includes tax and tip)

Payable by mail **AFTER** making reservations with:

Bob Cullen, 301-262-4783, ba3537@aol.com
OR

Louise Cole, 410-672-6528, col9135@aol.com
Mail checks to: NARFE Chapter 1747, PO
Box 504, Bowie, MD 20718

Please make all checks payable to: NARFE
Chapter 1747; all payments **must** be made by
Dec. 13. Cancellation policy: **No refunds** will
be made if reservations are not cancelled by
Dec. 16.

Message from NARFE

President Joseph A. Beaudoin

Thanksgiving is a time to count our blessings. Mine certainly include all NARFE members, proud of their federal service and willing to recruit others to join us in persuading Congress to respect the high calling of public service celebrated by President John F. Kennedy.

Harness the Power of the Press, Send a Letter to Your Editor

Letters to the Editor (LTEs) influence both public and elite opinion. LTEs are clipped by congressional offices, and put the NARFE name and brand before readers and potential members. President Beaudoin urges each NARFE member to use the Legislative Action Center to send our brand-new Letter to the Editor. After inserting your ZIP code, you will be provided a template for contacting daily and weekly papers in your area. The Legislative Action Center URL is: <http://narfe.capwiz.com/narfe/issues/alert/?alertid=63007081>.

Legislation Introduced to Eliminate One Leg of FERS 'Three-Legged Stool'

Once again, Sen. Richard Burr, R-NC, along with Sens. Saxby Chambliss, R-GA, and Tom Coburn, R-OK, has introduced legislation to eliminate the defined-benefit aspect of federal retirement, the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) pension. Inaccurately titled the Public-Private Employee Retirement Parity Act, S. 1678 would provide new federal hires with only the Thrift Savings Plan and Social Security in retirement. NARFE strongly opposes this legislation.



More from our Health Fair



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.

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Activity Coordinators

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	Donna Minner (Crofton)	410-721-9799	
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Holiday Luncheon ,December 19

The Blue Dolphin, Crofton, Md.

Check our Website at www.NARFE1747.org