



NARFE NEWSLETTER

GREATER BOWIE-CROFTON AREA CHAPTER 1747

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

Volume 34 No.10

www.NARFE1747.org

June 2014

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

❖ **General Meeting:** Thursday, June 19, 11:30 AM. Picnic, Allen Pond Park, Bowie.

❖ **General Meeting:** Thursday, September 18, 10:00 AM. Check our website, www.NARFE1747.org, for place, time and program.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JERRY KURSBAN

Dues Increase

At our May 15 Chapter 1747 meeting, members voted overwhelmingly to approve an increase in our annual Chapter dues to \$8.00 beginning in October 2014. This increase, the first in approximately two decades, will amount to less than 1 cent per day per member, and puts us in line with the majority of other Maryland chapters which charge \$8.00 or \$10.00 annually. For those members who pay via automatic deduction, we have contacted NARFE national and they will contact OPM to put the increase into effect.

The Mini-Convention

The NARFE Maryland Federation of Chapters met on May 5 and 6 at the Comfort Inn in Bowie. As the host chapter, several of our members stepped up and provided support to make the event a success. Bob Cullen arranged for the appearance and introduced the mayor of Bowie, G. Frederick Robinson, who spoke to the gathering. Tom Lee served as the Sergeant-of-Arms leader. His duties included providing microphones to people who wanted to speak from the floor. Lillie Watson, Chiquitta Thomas, and Louise Cole operated the party room and received special thanks from Federation President Dan McGrath. Ed Bice spoke to the members regarding the outcome

of the recently completed 2014 Legislative Session and his plan for sending a pre-election questionnaire to candidates asking whether they will sponsor senior-friendly legislation (*See the State Legislation Report on page 3 for questionnaire results*). Ed also operated the NARFE PAC table while Dorothy Bice operated the raffle table. Jackie Wilson, ChiquittaThomas,

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Save Money and Get More Information in Less Time—But YOU Must Tell Flash!

We're halfway done with the repair work on our revenue leak. We passed the referendum to raise dues to \$8.00 and are now in line with the rest of the greater Washington area chapters. And we still have some tricks up our figurative sleeve, including revenue-raising raffles.

But the single largest-cost item of Chapter 1747 is printing and postage for our newsletter. We have two choices to save money. We can continue the newsletter at its current size, using color and pictures, but with fewer copies printed and mailed. Members would see the newsletter on our website; those with no computer access would still receive printed copies.

There's a significant savings for the chapter if even half of our members are willing to use today's technology. If you have a computer, or have access to one, and are willing to read the newsletter online, please let Flash know as soon as possible. You will need to e-mail him at flash@acm.org. Put NARFE Newsletter in the subject line and include your zip code in the message. If you do not have e-mail, or don't know how to use it, or simply want to continue receiving a printed copy, you do not need to notify him.

Directions for reaching our website and accessing the Newsletter are on page 5.

President's Message Continued from Page 1

Lillie Watson, Louise Cole, Donna Minner, Russ and Micky Ideo, Luz Naval and Howard Gordon assisted by preparing attendee packets, setting up tables, and assisting with registration. Our special appreciation to all our members who served so well.

The NARFE National Convention will be held in Orlando, Florida from August 24–28, 2014, at the Rosen Centre Hotel, www.Rosencentre.com. (See pages 44 and 45 of your June 2014 NARFE magazine for registration information and forms). Without exaggeration, this promises to be one of the most important NARFE conventions in its history. It is no secret that NARFE, like many national organizations, is losing members and revenues. There is a recognition that NARFE needs a higher level of professional management, such as a paid executive director, a marketing executive, or the ability to reduce and redirect revenues. Delegates will be asked to eliminate the offices of National Vice President and Secretary, reduce the number of regional vice presidents from 10 to 5, and to make membership in chapters optional rather than mandatory. Candidate Statements are available on pages 46–55 of your June NARFE magazine. (See page 43 for a summary of Executive Board Resolutions and Amendments.)

I hope you are enjoying a beautiful spring. I look forward to seeing you at our annual picnic on June 19.



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 1800s and 1900s, 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 vot-

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FEDERAL LEGISLATION

JOSEPH YOUNG

The Right to Vote is Precious

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.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Chapter Events

June 19, 11:30 AM, Chapter 1747 Annual Picnic
September 18, 10:00 AM, General Meeting. Check www.NARFE1747.org for details.

Regional/National Events

August 24–28 NARFE National Convention, Rosen Centre Hotel, Orlando Florida

STATE LEGISLATION

Ed BICE

2014 Legislative Wrap Up

At our May chapter meeting some of our legislators gave an excellent presentation on the 2014 legislative session. Present were Senator Douglas Peters and Delegates Joe Vallario and Geraldine Valentino-Smith, Democrats, District 23 and Delegate Tony McConkey, Republican, District 33. Senator Ed Reilly, and Delegate Cathy Vitale from District 33 were invited but had other commitments. Delegate Holmes from District 23 was also invited. Our guests gave a report on issues/bills before their committees in 2014. The last part of the meeting was devoted to questions and answers on a wide number of topics. I have been organizing this annual event for years and I regard this meeting the best in recent years. I thank our guests for their attendance and look forward to their return next year



The four state representatives who spoke at our May meeting. *Top:* Delegate Geraldine Vallentino-Smith; Delegate Tony McConkey. *Bottom Row:* Delegate Joseph Vallario and Senator Douglas Peters.

2014 Pre- Election Questionnaire

In April the State Legislative Committee (SLC) developed a survey questionnaire concerning three issues which were included in the 2014 Legislative Program. The questionnaire was distributed to all candidates for Governor and the General Assembly. Candidates were provided with a brief synopsis of the issues and the proposed legislative solutions. To help us focus our members and allied senior-friendly groups on candidates willing to support senior-friendly legislation, we asked the candidates to indicate by checking "yes" or "no" on the survey whether they would sponsor or cosponsor legislation on the following three issues if elected.

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Candidate for	Question 1		Question 2		Question 3	
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
Governor						
Ron George (R)	Y		Y		Y	
Heather Mizeur (D)		N	Y		Y	
District 23 Senate						
Douglas Peters (D)	Y		Y		Y	
David Grogan (D)	Y		Y		Y	
House						
Joseph Vallario (D)	Y		Y		Y	
Marvin Holmes (D)	Y		Y		Y	
District 24 Senate						
Bobby Henry (D)	Y		Y		Y	
Joanne Benson (D)	Y		Y		Y	
House						
Carolyn Howard (D)	Y		Y		Y	
District 33 House						
Henry Green (D)	Y		Y		Y	

Survey Questions

- 1) Equalize the tax subtraction from income for public service retirees and military retirees; extend the current exemption of \$5,000 on pensions of military retirees over age 65 to the pensions of federal, state and local public services retirees over age 65; and increase the amount subtracted to \$10,000.
- 2) Promote long-term care insurance to reduce the state MEDCIAID burden; replace the present one-time \$500 tax credit with two \$250 credits for two years; then switch to an annual \$500 thereafter on new long-term care insurance purchased.
- 3) Equalize the over-age 65 tax exemption for Maryland seniors; increase the special tax exemption of \$1,000 for elderly taxpayers and their elderly spouses to match the \$3200 exemption that can be claimed for elderly dependents.



**IT'S PICNIC TIME!
11:30AM JUNE 19
Allen Pond, Bowie
Rain or Shine!**

Cost \$18.00, pay by June 16

We will have lots of Barbeque — Barbequed Chicken, Barbequed Pork, Barbequed Bourbon Beef Brisket, and even Barbequed Baked Beans.

There's even more food — Potato Salad, Coleslaw, Rolls, Butter, and Condiments, catered by Adam's Ribs.

Soft Drinks, Water and Dessert will be provided by Chapter 1747.

Reserve your space by contacting Bob Cullen at 301-262-4783 (telephone) or ba3537@aol.com (e-mail). Mail your check for \$18 to NARFE Chapter 1747 at NARFE 1747, PO Box 504, Bowie, MD 20718.

Reservations must be made and paid for by June 16th.

State Legislation Continued from Page 3

First, equalize the tax subtraction from income for public service retirees to match military retirees; extend the current exemption of \$5,000 on pensions of military retirees over age 65 to the pensions of federal, state and local public services retirees over age 65; and increase the credit to \$10,000.

Second, raise the long-term care insurance credit to \$500 taken over two years; then add an annual \$500 on new long-term care insurance purchased.

Third, raise the tax exemption for over-age-65 Maryland seniors; and increase the special tax exemption to match the \$3200 exemption that can be claimed for elderly dependents.

The exact wording of the survey questions is given in the chart on page 3.

Please consider this information when making your voting decisions during this primary election.

Federal Legislation Continued from Page 2

ing 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 Voting 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 for the Prince George's Board of Elections at the University of Maryland College Park polling site in 2008 and the Woodmore elementary school polling site in 2012, 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, the Civil Rights Marches, the 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.

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 any American citizen to vote. Be forever vigilant!

CHAPTER 1747 BUDGET REPORT

Balance on: April 1, 2014	\$1867.63
Receipts:	399.37
Disbursements:	452.00
Balance on: April 30, 2014	\$1815.00

How to Read your Chapter 1747 Newsletter on the Internet

The first thing you have to do is get on the internet. To do that, you must have an Internet Service Provider (ISP) set up. This is the same group which you use if you have e-mail, shop on the net, or follow stock prices. If you can not access the internet, call your service provider for help. More likely, any area teen-ager can help you set yourself up.

Once you are actually on the Internet, look at the top of the screen. You will see a wide empty box, usually with a magnifying glass icon inside it and a cursor, often a blinking vertical line, at the left side of the box. Type this link into the box:

<http://www.NARFE1747.org>

It is the site name for the chapter website, and will take you directly to our webpage. (You may find that your service does not need the "http://" portion keyed in; all you need to type is www.NARFE1747.org. Be sure that you use the capital letters and the tag "org" when you type, or copy and paste the entire phrase into the address line.)

When you reach the chapter web page, you will see a large blue box on the left side of the screen. Put your cursor (It usually changes from the line to a small arrow) on the department you want to reach. Double click (two quick clicks close together) on the word "Newsletters" to reach the archive page. A window with a chart showing each month's issue by year will open. Again, move your cursor to the issue you want to read, (May 2014, for example) and double click on the month name. Another window will open showing page 1 of the May issue. Moving the vertical bar on the far right side of the screen will let you move up and down through the 4 pages of the newsletter. To return to the chart to select another issue, move your cursor to the left-facing arrow (←) at the top of your screen and click on it. Or you can simply select the word "HOME" on the top line of the blue box on your left. To select a word, move your cursor to the word and click on it.

Remember to close the internet connection when you are finished reading.

DAYS TO REMEMBER

- June 14 Flag Day
- June 15 Father's Day

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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**General Meeting June 19
Chapter Picnic
Allen Pond Park, 11:30 AM**

Reserve your place by June 16