



NARFE NEWSLETTER

GREATER BOWIE-CROFTON AREA CHAPTER 1747

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

Volume 34 No.9

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May 2015

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, May 21, 10:00 AM. **Kenhill Center.** Maryland Legislative Update.
- ❖ **General Meeting:** Thursday, June 18, 11:30 AM. Nautilus Restaurant, Rtes 3 and 424, Crofton.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JERRY KURSBAN

Stand and Be Counted

Please make a special effort to attend our May 21 Chapter 1747 meeting which will be held at the Kenhill Center at 10:00 AM.

We will be holding our biennial election of chapter officers in accordance with Article I, Election of Officers and Executive Board of our Greater Bowie-Crofton Chapter 1747 By-Laws.

Section 1. Officers. states that "The officers of the Chapter shall be the President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer."

The Section also requires "elections be conducted at May meetings in election years."

But...don't just show up to be counted. Back up your vote by volunteering. If everyone just votes, who will actually do the work? Large job or small, the chapter needs **you** to continue its existence. Chapter 1747 needs more than by-standers; it needs members who will make telephone calls, write letters, do research, keep records—in short, do some of the things you did when you were an active federal worker. We cannot sit around and listen, leaving all the effort to someone else if we want to

expand, or even keep, the benefits others worked to earn for us. Use the form on page 3 to volunteer your help for Chapter 1747 and for NARFE. Can't think of anything you can do? Volunteer anyway. We'll find something for you. Need help? We'll find someone for you to work with.

Why Do the Numbers Matter?

At our May 21 meeting you will also have an opportunity to meet with your Maryland State legislators and express your views and concerns. To be candid, legislators are impressed by numbers of constituents, so the larger our turnout, the more likely these legislators will pay attention to our issues. If we don't care, why should they? Don't pass up this opportunity to show them you matter and you are concerned. Standing up and being counted is another case where you need NARFE and NARFE needs you.

The Days Dwindle Down...

We're down to just two meetings to buy chances to win a handmade one-of-a-kind quilt and benefit Chapter 1747's treasury. The quilt was designed and constructed by Margie Hill and donated to the Chapter by her husband Peter, who doubles as the chapter's sergeant-at-arms. You really can't put a value on such a unique item. It's a labor of love, and a sign of how important this group is to its members. So if you have a wedding coming up, or a birthday, or an anniversary, or for no reason at all, invest in a few more raffle tickets. You might just win the quilt. Don't forget how cold it was last winter--you might just enjoy having an absolutely unique car blanket or warm throw to wrap around yourself.



FEDERAL LEGISLATION

The recent budget plans passed by the House on March 25 and by the Senate on March 27 portend major reductions in federal pay and benefits and an increase in FEHBP health insurance premiums for both current employees and retirees.

The House bill proposes to increase the cost of Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) insurance, but would limit the federal contribution to a specific amount, which would be adjusted annually for inflation. Any additional cost above that amount would be paid by those enrolled in the plan. The House plan would also shrink the size of the federal workforce by 10 percent over 10 years by filling only one of three vacancies and would cut funding for the U.S. Postal service by \$40 billion. There would be a significant increase in the amount that federal employees would pay into the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) with no change in the defined benefit formula.

The Senate budget resolution seeks to balance the federal budget over 9 years by cutting mandatory spending by \$4.3 trillion. Federal retirement FEHBP is one of the mandatory spending programs included in the proposed cut, which also includes Medicare, Medicaid and Food Stamps.

The Senate plan also includes a proposed rule that would require brokers to adhere to a fiduciary standard, which means that a recommended investment product must be in the "best interest" of the client rather than merely "suitable." It is likely that NARFE will support this action when the rule is made public.

Previously, Senator Tom Coburn, R-OK, stated that "there is no guarantee to your federal pension based on the economics we face today in the country."

Given the evidence, is it not reasonable to conclude that federal active and retirement programs are a prime target for Congressional reductions?

What can you do?

❖ Attend a town meeting and express your views. The NARFE Legislative Web Page, www.narfe.org/legislation, provides a list of upcoming town hall meetings. The NARFE Legislative Activities page, at the Individual Level Toolkit, has sample questions you can ask. Check this page, www.narfe.org/heartbeat/resources.cfm.

❖ Increase NARFE visibility. Attend a community parade or festival, or show up and be noticed at our May meeting. In May we have parades in Crofton and Bowie, and in June, we have Bowiefest. Will you volunteer to attend? Let Ed Bice know.



With or Without His Notes, Gene Sumi Has the Answers

Gene Sumi, the education coordinator of Homestead Gardens, gave a highly entertaining and informative presentation on "Preparing your Garden for Spring" at our #1747 Chapter meeting on April 16. Some of his suggestions are given below.

Annuals need warm soil. The best time to plant summer bulbs is after the danger of frost has passed—usually after Mother's Day. For bushes and trees the best time to plant is early spring, after new leaves or buds appear. Perennials can be planted any time. Spring is the best time to apply lime to acidic soil, remove dead thatch, and aerate the soil. For new grass, provide lots of water initially, then only occasionally. For the most delicious tomatoes, he recommended Brandywine variety.

Plain Black Ink or Sizeable Color?

The Newsletter on the Web keeps adding little bits of real color, while the plain printed page gets more and more—well, plain. We're hoping that many of you will at least take a trial look at our web site to see the difference color makes. Postage is expensive, and just keeps on going up, while the more you do on the web, the less each thing you access costs you and the chapter.

Besides, text on the web is sizeable. If the type is too small for you to read, you can always make the size shown bigger. That changes only the view on your screen, not the page on the website. You never have to worry about permanently changing the website, or the type size, or making any other alteration. That is why the person known as "webmaster" is special. Only the webmaster can change the existing coding which creates the webpage. So please, give the web page a try. You can't hurt it and you might really like the difference color makes.

If you do, e-mail webmaster Howard "Flash" Gordon at flash@acm.org Put NARFE Newsletter in the subject line and include your zip code in the message. Flash must keep a written record of requests so you can be added to the e-mail permissions list and your address removed from the mail stickers National sends us.

CHAPTER 1747 BUDGET REPORT

Balance on: March 1, 2015	\$2297.73
Receipts:	617.31
Disbursements:	208.54
Balance on: March 31, 2015	\$2706.50

DAYS TO REMEMBER

May 9	Crofton Parade at 10:00 AM
May 23	Bowie Parade at 11:00 AM
May 25	Bowie Memorial Day Wreath Laying Ceremony; 11:00
June 6	Bowiefest; 11 AM–6 PM

Quilt Raffle Ticket Order Blank

Name _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Number of tickets ordered: _____ (1 for \$2, 3 for \$5, or 7 for \$10)

Mail this form with your check to NARFE Chapter 1747, P. O. Box 504, Bowie MD 20718

Coming in June...

Thursday, June 18, 2015

Nautilus Diner, Route 3 North, Crofton 11:30 am until ?

\$25 per person includes tax and tip

Your choice of:

- ½ Roast Chicken
- Broiled Tiliapia
- Fried Alaskan Pollack
- Roast Beef
- 2 Broiled Pork Chops
- Garden Salad with Chicken (no potato and vegetable included)
- Vegetarian Meal available on request.

Plus:

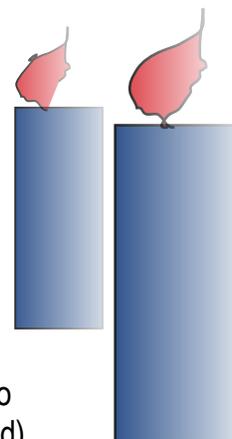
- Soup, Baked Potato and Mixed Vegetables,
- Nonalcoholic Beverage, and
- Your choice of Dessert--Strawberry Shortcake, Chocolate Mousse Cake, or Coconut Layer Cake.

Luncheon reservations may be made at our May membership meeting or by mail to NARFE Chapter 1747, PO Box 504, Bowie, MD 20718. Please make checks payable to NARFE Chapter 1747.

Payments must be made by June 12. No refunds will be made if reservations are not cancelled by June 15.

For information contact

Bob Cullen at 301-262-4783 (ba3537@aol.com) or Louise Cole at 410-672-6528 (col9135@aol.com.)



YES I will help Chapter 1747 this year!

Name: _____

Area I'll help in: _____

(Fill out and give to Jerry at May meeting)

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

Officers

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Assistant Treasurer	Louise Cole	410-672-6528	col9135@aol.com

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Activity Coordinators

Alzheimer's Fund	Vacant		
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	F. Miner and D. Evans		
NARFE-Net Coordinator	Howard (Flash) Gordon	301-464-2745	flash@acm.org
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	Tom Page	301-262-3418	
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Sunshine	Marjorie Laios	301-262-1566	

General Meeting May 21
Legislative Update and Important Chapter Votes
at Kenhill Center

Reserve your place for the June 18 Luncheon Now!