



# NARFE NEWSLETTER

GREATER BOWIE-CROFTON AREA CHAPTER 1747

**National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association**

Volume 35 No.2

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October 2016

**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, October 20: Open Season Health Fair held at Kenhill Center.

❖ **General Meeting:** Thursday, November 17: Office of the Attorney General, Consumer Protection Division. How to Avoid Becoming a Victim of Scams.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**JERRY KURSBAN**

Approximately 900 delegates attended the 34th NARFE National Convention held August 28–September 1, 2016, at the Grand Sierra Resort, Reno, Nevada. Only 2 of 17 Bylaws Resolutions voted on received the required two-thirds majority: They were Optional Chapter Membership and One Member, One Vote. These resolutions had been strongly indicated for passage in the NARFE Strategic Plan and the National Executive Board (NEB). Bylaws Resolutions defeated included authorizing the NEB to adjust dues during interim periods between conventions; reducing the number of regions from 10 to 5; and extending membership eligibility to military and certain other groups who support NARFE's mission. Richard Thissen was reelected President, John Dowie was reelected Secretary/Treasurer, and Evelyn Kirby was reelected Region II Vice President. The National Executive Board met immediately after the close of the Convention and took action to close eChapter 2363, whose members will be placed in the National Division.

The decisions made at the Convention will have a major impact on the future of NARFE. They are intended to arrest the decline in NARFE membership. In the two year period 2014–2016, eNARFE Chapter 2363 increased 51 percent to 32,824 members, while total NARFE membership declined 9.6 percent to 220,081. The decline in the number of members who are not members of eNARFE declined 15.5 percent to 187,257. Closer to home, in

our Maryland Federation of Chapters, membership declined from 15,483 in June 2014 to 13,316 in June 2016, a decline of 14 percent, while eNARFE members living in Maryland increased from 1,734 in June 2014 to 2,708 in June 2016, an increase of 974 members.

## There Is A Free Lunch (But You Need To Volunteer To Get It)

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS. There will be a MARYLAND NARFE FEDERATION BOARD MEETING on Thursday, September 29 and the annual TRAINING DAY on Friday, October 28. Both events will be held at the Bowie Comfort Inn from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. Chapter 1747 is the host chapter. The Executive Board Chapter will pay the \$20 registration fee, which includes lunch, for five attendees from our chapter.

We particularly want members to attend the Training Day because we need members to assist with several of our Chapter functions, including the creation and distribution of our monthly newsletter, membership, public relations, Alzheimer's coordinator, and backup for our service officer and webmaster. We need to change the name of our chapter since we are no longer just Bowie and Crofton. Soon we will need a committee to update our chapter constitution and by-laws. It is not too early to look ahead to next year when a number of our current officers have indicated that they will need to be replaced in the future. So, please step up and indicate your interest in serving the chapter. Our Executive Board meetings, which are held the first Thursday of the month at the Bowie Senior Center, are open to any member. It is a good way to find out what needs doing in the chapter.

Please consider attending the Federation Meetings, particularly the annual Training Day, as we look to the future of the Chapter. Many chapters have disappeared because no one will commit to a few hours each month. Remember, the more volunteers we find, the less each one has to do. So call a friend and work together. With about 1200 members, we should not be calling on the same people each time we need some help. Reach out and try something new by doing something for NARFE.

## FEDERAL LEGISLATION

HOWARD WATERWORTH

### NARFE-PAC:

#### What it Does and How it Works

NARFE-PAC is the political arm of NARFE. It exists to further NARFE's legislative mission by electing members of Congress who support and understand the federal community. NARFE-PAC makes political contributions to fed-friendly congressional candidates. These contributions allow NARFE staff to attend fundraisers in DC and NARFE members to attend fundraisers locally to build and strengthen relationships with lawmakers while using the opportunity to discuss and share NARFE's viewpoints on important issues. In this way, NARFE-PAC is crucial to defending the earned pay and benefits of the federal community.

NARFE-PAC, by law, is completely separate from NARFE. That means no membership dues or general NARFE funds go towards NARFE-PAC work. Only direct contributions to NARFE-PAC fund this action.

NARFE-PAC follows a consultative process when deciding which candidates should receive NARFE-PAC funds. That means NARFE-PAC first solicits a federation recommendation in writing from the NARFE-PAC coordinator, who consults with the federation to reach a consensus recommendation that is passed along to the NARFE-PAC Board, which makes all final PAC decisions. The NARFE-PAC Board is made up of the two elected national officers and the legislative director.

Final decisions are based on a variety of factors, including, but not limited to, the candidate's support on NARFE issues, the federation recommendation, the influence the candidate can exert in support of NARFE goals, the competitiveness of the race and the overall NARFE-PAC budget. The candidate's support of NARFE issues is indicated primarily by the candidate's NARFE voting record. Challengers or open-seat candidates who do not have a NARFE voting record are asked to fill out a candidate questionnaire. Statements on NARFE issues, bill co-sponsorships and personal meetings are also used to determine support from NARFE.

All PACs are governed by strict regulations such as: only NARFE members may be asked to give to NARFE-PAC and that PAC contributions are NOT tax deductible.

NARFE-PAC has already reached several goals set at the beginning of the 2015–2016 election cycle. Contributions from members have exceeded the \$1 million mark for the first time since the 2009–2010 cycle. NARFE-PAC has also sent NARFE members to over 45 local fundraisers, a record. Disbursements to candidates are also increasing, and will continue to rise prior to the election.

Last month I reported on NARFE accomplishments during 2015. Perhaps some of the success can be attributed to our political action committee

NARFE members interested in learning more about NARFE-PAC, including accessing contribution and disburse-

ment data, can go to the NARFE-PAC section of the NARFE website, [www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org). To make a contribution, contact our chapter PAC chair Ed Bice.

For more information regarding NARFE-PAC contact Jason Freeman at NARFE Headquarters. He can be contacted by phone: (703) 838-7760 + 266 or by email: [jfreeman@narfe.org](mailto:jfreeman@narfe.org).

## HELP WANTED

FRANCES STEBURG

### WIN \$50

Since we have merged with Chapter 1122, our Chapter needs to revise our Chapter name to include 1122. If you have an idea(s) for a new name, please call or email any of the Board Members with your idea(s). The Executive Board will review the submissions and decide what the new name will be. If you are the lucky one, the Board will pay you \$50 for your winning submission.

### ELECTION YEAR for Our Chapter

Besides election for our President in November, our Chapter will also be looking for members who will be interested in leading our Chapter in a new and better direction. All board positions will be up for filling. Just check in our Newsletter to see what positions are available. New board members will be elected in May 2017 and officially installed at our meeting in June. So, please start thinking about throwing your hat into our "politics".

### CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Is there anyone out there that would like to help send out our newsletter (snail mail). The different stages for this include removing labels of individuals that are not receiving snail mail from the mailing labels provided by NARFE headquarters; putting the remaining labels on the newsletter; placing these into a tray according to instructions from the Post Office; and taking them to the local Post Office for mailing. It is ideal for 2 people to handle this operation or for 1 eager individual. Mailings are done 10 months out of the year. Contact any Board member if you are interested.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance on: July 31, 2016	\$9844.31
Receipts:	461.26
Disbursements:	227.14
Balance on: August 31, 2016	\$10078.43
Reserve for Alzheimer's Fund	\$40.50

NARFE is only as strong as its members.  
Volunteer to help NOW!

# The 2016 National Convention

*The following letter written by NFI President Jane Lemley is an excellent summary of events at the 2016 NARFE National Convention.,*

My husband, Bob, and I along with 23 other delegates from Florida attended the 34th NARFE National Convention held August 28–September 1, 2016 at the Grand Sierra Resort, Reno, Nevada. The convention started with opening ceremonies, a Memorial Service and a report of NARFE's Alzheimer's research and donations on Sunday evening. NARFE has not quite reached its goal of \$12 million dollars but the group voted to raise the bar to \$13 million by the next convention in 2018. Each morning we received a summary of what happened the previous day. Copies of the summaries are located on the NARFE website under the 34th Convention Banner.

On Monday morning approximately 900 delegates and guests began the business of the convention with reports from President Richard Thissen and Secretary/Treasurer Jon Dowie. The Bylaws committee then gave its report. They started with a number of Bylaw Resolutions and combined duplicates and similar resolutions down to 17 to vote on. Those 17 included Optional Chapter Membership; One Member, One Vote; NEB Authorized to Adjust Dues during interim period between conventions; Term Limits for Regional Vice Presidents; Changing to 5 Regions; adding to the Bylaws the requirement to maintain the structure at 10 Regions; Proportional Distribution of Dues; Adjust Dues within COLA Limits; Provide Mission Related Funding to Zip Code Based Chapters; Remove the two two year term limit of the President; NEB meeting agenda needs to be published online on the NARFE website at least 14 days before the meeting; Open the NEB meetings for members; NEB members exercise equal voting status on all issues (record votes on policy issues and publish that information online within 14 days); Create Regional Federations of Chapters; NARFE Membership Eligibility (extend membership to military and any other person who supports the Mission Statement of NARFE) and Limit the Amount of Funds for Salaries and Expenses of Regional Vice Presidents. There was considerable discussion on all of these items with the session lasting until 7:00 pm Monday evening. The electronic voting took place on Tuesday morning. When the final tally was completed the only resolutions that passed with two-thirds majority were One Member, One Vote and Optional Chapter Membership. All others were defeated.

John O'Brien from OPM told us no one is happy about the Increases to Long Term Care Insurance Premiums He also recommended that members use the new online tool that compares plans in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program to make sure you are getting the coverage you need.

Tuesday was another full day; President Thissen and Secretary/Treasurer Dowie were reelected for another two-year term. We had a presentation by Tammy Flanagan 'Staying on Track in

Retirement'. One of the upcoming online seminars will be on this topic. We had a very informative presentation by Jessica Klement, Legislative Director on the status of upcoming proposals and indicating that 'Maintaining Benefits Equals Victory'. President Thissen gave his acceptance speech maintaining NARFE is his top priority. Secretary/Treasurer Dowie gave his acceptance speech noting that NARFE is out of time and we have many challenges ahead of us. In the afternoon the Regional Caucuses were held. Region III had two nominees for Regional Vice President, Jerry Janci, our current RVP, and Clarence Robinson, Georgia Federation President. The electronic voting took place on Wednesday morning with Clarence Robinson being elected as the Region III Vice President.

Wednesday started with the PAC-Breakfast featuring keynote speaker Mark Bunge, Senior Vice President, Hart Research Associates. He gave us a rundown of what the various polls show concerning Presidential and Congressional Races.

In the General Session we had a presentation by Steve Bauer who was attending his last NARFE Convention as FEEA Coordinator since he is retiring. He reminded delegates of FEEA's beginnings in 1986, 'a brave new venture' as he described it. He went on to describe the many ways FEEA has helped over the years as he said 'We fill a void'. On Thursday the delegates voted to rename the NARFE-FEEA Scholarship the Steve Bauer Scholarship.

The delegates voted to direct the NEB to revise the NARFE Mission Statement to be consistent with the Association's Articles of Incorporation; setting a goal of establishing NARFE Federal Senatorial and Representative District Liaison Teams in All States; to amend the NARFE Structure Plan to establish an "intermediate NARFE management structure" that incorporates the current responsibilities without the authority limitations imposed on them by the NARFE Bylaws; to allow federation congressional and senatorial liaisons to contact all NARFE members residing in their jurisdictions using the NARFE email system; to issue a new NARFE ID number when a membership ID transferred from a deceased member to his or her spouse; and provide for expanded access to the NARFE email system to federation area/district officers or directors. Resolutions rejected included: to support passage of the Caregiver Advise, Record Enable Act on hospital discharge policies and directing the NEB to adopt the NARFE Strategic Plan. The Legislative Plan for the 115th Congress was approved. The total plan is too long to include here but can be found under the Convention Banner on the NARFE website.

Thursday was a rather short business day. Awards were given to Service Officers and Recruiters. The top recruiter is from Chapter 32 in Washington State recruited 99 members. Past President Margaret Baptiste administered the oath of office to the newly elected and re-elected National Officers.

The site selection for the 2020 Convention was announced. It

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will be at the Westin in Scottsdale/ Phoenix, AZ. The 2018 Convention will be at the Hyatt Regency Waterfront in Jacksonville, FL.

At the banquet Thursday evening we learned that the National eChapter 2363 was closed. We have since learned that those members are now in the National Division. The Federation Presidents have access to email those who have an address within that state but are limited to only advocacy or Federation Activities. The National only and National Life members now shown on a chapters' membership list will be moved to the National Division at some point.

Jane Lemley,  
NFI President

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*Kathy Siggins requested all NARFE Chapter Presidents to share this letter from the Alzheimer's Association with chapter members.*

To those of you who attended the NARFE Convention in Reno, thank you for stopping by the NARFE—Alzheimer's Association exhibit booth. We hope you enjoyed your convention and feel more inspired and more committed to the work we are doing together to bring an end to Alzheimer's disease. Now more than ever, we appreciate your continued support through the NARFE Alzheimer's Research Campaign.

As a friendly reminder, NARFE is now an official National Team for the Walk to End Alzheimer's ®. Our goal is to raise \$50,000 across all NARFE regions. These funds will support the mission of the Alzheimer's Association to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. As a NARFE member, you can help by encouraging your friends and family to join your team! And when you register your NARFE team by September 23 with a minimum of \$25 raised, you'll be entered in a raffle to win your very own Walk Hoodie!

Five simple steps to register:

1. Visit [www.alz.org/narfewalks](http://www.alz.org/narfewalks)
2. Click on "Start a team"
3. Find the closest walk to you by typing in your zip code
4. Enter your NARFE chapter name in your team name
5. Complete the online registration form to gain access to your Participant Center where you can gain access great fundraising and team recruitment tools!

Top 5 NARFE teams to date!

- ❖ NARFE 97 — Lexington, KY \$2,384  
14 Members Recruited
- ❖ NARFE CA Federation — San Diego, CA \$715  
4 Members Recruited
- ❖ Flagler Fed — Flagler County, FL \$615  
5 Members Recruited
- ❖ National Active & Retired Federal Employees 672 —  
New Braunfels, TX \$435 4 Members Recruited

- ❖ NARFE (National Active and Retired Federal Employees) — Topeka, KS —409 8 Members Recruited

The top fundraising team for NARFE Walk will be awarded the NEW traveling trophy!

Helpful fundraising tips:

- ❖ Make a self-donation! Our Walks do not have a registration fee so please consider making a donation when you register.
- ❖ Share your story. This Walk is personal and your fundraising should be too. Fundraisers who include a photo and story about why they walk on their personal page raise three times as much as those who do not.

For any questions about the Walk, please contact Jeff Kaplan at [jkaplan@alz.org](mailto:jkaplan@alz.org).

Your donation will strengthen our efforts to advance Alzheimer's care, support and research. From face-to-face support to online education programs and promising global research initiatives, your gift makes a difference in the lives of all those affected by Alzheimer's and other dementias in your community and across the world. Thank you for your continued support.

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*National President Richard G. Thissen's report on the convention results follows.*

Dear NARFE member,

Good afternoon. Having just returned from the NARFE 34th Biennial National Convention in Reno, Nevada, I would like to share some important outcomes from that gathering.

Recent extensive strategic planning led NARFE's National Executive Board to submit a number of resolutions to the Convention. These were based on our strong commitment to the long-term health of the Association and our ability to successfully drive NARFE's mission well into the future. Of significant note:

- ❖ Membership in a NARFE chapter is now optional. New members now will simply join NARFE. With their welcome information, new members will be provided the option to also join a local chapter. Likewise, renewing members may choose to belong to NARFE as a national member or opt to enjoy the benefits of their local chapter as well.

- ❖ All members will continue to receive all benefits provided by NARFE, including: NARFE magazine; access to the members-only portion of the NARFE website and blog; and access to the NARFE Federal Benefits Institute, the Legislative Hotline and NARFE NewsWatch. In ADDITION, members have enhanced benefits. With passage of a One Member, One Vote resolution, every member now has a vote and a say in NARFE governance and the election of NARFE officers. All are eligible to run for National Officer and Regional Vice President (RVP) positions. (Per NARFE's bylaws, only members of chapters and federations are eligible to run for chapter and federation offices.)

- ❖ Please note, with the passage of optional chapter membership, the National Executive Board incentive program that

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## DAYS TO REMEMBER

October 2:	Rosh Hashana, New Year, (starts at sundown)
October 6:	Chapter 1747 Executive Board Meeting, Bowie Senior Center, 10:00 am
October 10:	Columbus Day
October 11:	Yom Kippur, Day of Atonement, (starts at sundown)
October 20:	1747 OPEN SEASON HEALTH FAIR KENHILL CENTER, 10:00 am - noon
October 28:	NARFE Federation Training Day Bowie Comfort Inn, 8:30 am-3:30 pm
October 30:	Daylight Saving Time ends
October 31:	Halloween

*Letter from National President Thissen Continued from page 4*

established the eNARFE chapter has been rescinded. All members from this chapter are now national members with all the benefits listed above and will, upon renewal, be provided the option to join a local chapter.

For those of you who serve in officer positions and/or would like further information on implementation of these changes, your federation president, federation membership chair and federation secretary have been provided extensive notes.

These few changes will usher in a new day for NARFE. With them, great strides have been made to ensure the continued success of NARFE and our important mission.

Thank you for your membership.

Richard G. Thissen  
NARFE National President

### *From NARFE's Legislative Hotline...*

#### **VA Accountability First and Appeals Modernization Act of 2016**

The VA Accountability First and Appeals Modernization Act of 2016, H.R. 5620, passed the House this week. H.R. 5620 intends to ensure that veterans have access to the care, services and benefits that they have earned, and to restructure the current process by which veterans can appeal their initial benefits. While the White House has commended the changes to the benefits appeal process, it is "very concerned" with the many provisions that would strip away due process for fired Veterans Affairs (VA) employees.

The bill drastically reduces the entire length of an appeal to a total of 77 days for a fired employee. Much like previous VA "reform" bills, the legislation contains a claw-back provision, in which the VA Secretary would have the discretion to recoup a previously awarded bonus or relocation expenses. Additionally, senior executives would not be able to appeal removals or demotions to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB), but rather appeal to an internal Senior Executive Disciplinary Appeals Board.

This bill sets a terrible precedent for all federal employees. It denies federal employees' rights they are currently afforded and limits due process. Like similar bills trying to expedite the firing of federal employees, it makes senior executives more susceptible to politically motivated reprisals. Those not working at the VA would be wise to pay attention, as the VA is often viewed as a test case for the rest of the federal workforce.

#### **How to Make Your Voice Heard in Congress**

NARFE members are encouraged to use the Legislative Action Center located on the national organization website, [www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org), to easily send letters to members of Congress.

The site provides sample letters on variety of NARFE issues. You can submit letters to the editors of local newspapers and track NARFE-related bills and votes, inform your state-level representatives, or, of course, send them to your national Congress members.

#### **BEWARE**

**The IRS scam is still out there. DO NOT provide information to anyone who contacts you by phone. The IRS will only contact you by snail mail.**

#### **Are You A Round Peg? Could You Squeeze Into A Square Hole???**

**Can you recite the Pledge of Allegiance?** You are part-way to becoming a Sergeant-at-Arms. Another part of this job requires the ability to turn folding chairs to face a different direction. Could you do that as well?

**Can you compare two lists of names?** You can pull email names from the pile of address labels National sends our chapter for the printed newsletter.

**Can you add a circular wafer to pre-folded newsletters** to keep them from unfolding (and to keep the Post Office happy with us)? You can help mail the newsletter.

**Do you ever go out to eat?** You can help select a restaurant for the Holiday Party or a spot for the June picnic.

**Did you retire recently?** Can you call OPM for specific questions? You could be back-up for our service officer.

**Can you take a picture with your smart phone?** Then you can help Frank Lee or Flash Gordon with club photos.

**Are you tired of playing on the web and ready to make it work for you?** You can be the back-up person for Howard (Flash) Gordon for web and social media stuff.



Members at the September General Meeting listen to Brian Welch, of Bright Energies, who told them how to save money and help the environment at the same time. That's a double win—saving you now and the world later. Below, President Jerry Kursban and Brian Welch.



**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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