



NARFE NEWSLETTER

GREATER BOWIE-CROFTON AREA CHAPTER 1747

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

Volume 35 No. 9

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May 2017

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 18. Election of Officers and Legislative Action Yearly Summary. Meeting held at **Kenhill Center, 2614 Kenhill Drive, Bowie, MD 20715.**

❖ **General Meeting:** Thursday, June 15, 6:35 PM. Baysox Buffet and Ballgame plus Installation of Officers. Dinner at **Bowie Baysox Stadium, 4101 NE Crain Hwy, Bowie, MD 20716**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JERRY KURSBAN

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE. We need someone to volunteer and serve as President of Chapter 1747. Our Executive Board voted at our April 6, 2017 meeting to **PAY THE CHAPTER PRESIDENT \$100 PER MONTH** on the 28th day of the preceding month to perform the duties of President. At a minimum, we are required to have a President and a Treasurer. We need two people—or four, if they want to split responsibilities—to step forward and keep the chapter going. Please contact either Bob Cullen at ba3537@aol.com (301-202-4783) or Ed Bice at de3637@verizon.net (301-464-3748) if you would be willing to serve. Nominations and elections of officers will be made at our May 18 Chapter meeting which will be held at the Kenhill Center.

MARYLAND FEDERATION OF CHAPTERS 43rd BIENNIAL CONVENTION will be held Sunday evening, April 30, through Tuesday, May 2, at the Holiday Inn Oceanfront, 6600 Coastal Highway in Ocean City, Maryland. The Convention aims to elect officers for the next two years, to discuss resolutions, and to provide workshops on legislative and membership issues. Check in time is 3 PM on April 30 and checkout time is

11:00 AM on May 2. The room rate is \$69 which will be available from Sunday, Apr 30 through Thursday, May 4. For reservations call 410-524-1600. Cost of registration is \$45 which includes luncheon Monday and Tuesday. The Monday evening banquet costs an additional \$45 per person Please contact Jerry Kursban at 301-261-3329 if you wish to attend.

REMINDERS: We will participate in both the Bowie and Crofton Memorial Day Parades. The Crofton Parade is Saturday, May 13 at 10:00 AM. The Bowie Parade will be held on Saturday, May 27 at 11:00 AM.

UPCOMING NARFE WEBINARS from the NARFE Federal Benefits Institute:

May 11: Estate Planning
June 22: Creating a Second Career
July 27: Survivor Benefits.

Register now. See the full schedule at www.narfe.org/institute. Note that Tammy Flanagan, our NARFE webinar presenter, also writes a weekly column entitled "Retirement Planning." for www.GovExec.com

Check your May 2017 NARFE Magazine. I strongly recommend you read the article "10 Things You Probably Didn't Know About Retirement Planning" on pages 22–27. And take the test. I was amazed at how much I did not know. Also read the article on the NARFE Legislative Training Conference, (pages 30–34 with my picture on page 34) and the article "Anatomy of a Super Advocate" on pages 36–38.

Please mark your calendar and make a special effort to attend our May 18 meeting at the **KENHILL CENTER** when we will be able to bring our concerns to our State legislators and take nominations for Chapter Officers for 2017 and 2018. And send in your reservations to attend the Bowie Baysox game on June 15 when we will also install our new officers. Reservations accepted through June 5.

May you all follow Mr. Spock's advice to "Live Long and Prosper."

STATE LEGISLATION

Ed Bice

The 2017 General Assembly session ended on April 10. In 2016 Governor Hogan proposed an income tax exemption for FY 2017 and 2018 and budgeted for it in SB 387 and HB 455. The proposal would have increased the current state income exemption from \$1000 to \$5000 phased in over four years for seniors age 65 and over.

Unfortunately, these bills were not reported out of committee. Thus, members of the State Legislation Committee (SLC) met with members of the Governors' staff, legislative leaders, and the Comptroller during the summer and fall of 2016 to stress the importance of increasing this exemption for seniors, an act which would benefit Maryland as well. No such bills have been introduced for 2017.

The explanation provided for not reintroducing last year's senior tax-relief bill focused on the budget and the shortfalls in both 2017 and 2018 fiscal years. That explanation ignored the sales tax offset as well as the increased tax revenue from the small businesses due to increased senior spending, which make any lost revenue due to this tax break negligible. Moreover, bills were introduced to provide tax relief for first responders, hometown heroes, and the military. Obviously, the issue is not whether these individuals are worthy of a tax break; the issue is the hypocrisy of saying there is not enough money to offer a tax break for seniors, many of whom live on fixed incomes, and for which there is an offset to cost, but that there is enough money, regardless of the budget shortfalls, to offer a tax break to any other group of people, no matter how deserving,

The SLC supported four bills in the 2017 session as noted in previous newsletters. The only supported subject that passed both houses and was sent to the governor for his signature was the Task Force on Long Term Care Insurance Education and Planning as noted in SB 696/HB 952. The task force will examine the state of long term care education and consider options for improving efforts to educate Maryland residents about planning for long term care.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance on: February 28	\$9,557.62
Receipts:	864.08
Disbursements:	917.43
Balance on: March 31	\$9,504.27
Reserve for Alzheimer's Fund	\$250.00

Balance is for 2017.

DAYS TO REMEMBER

April 30–May 2	Md. Federation 43rd Biennial Convention Holiday Inn Oceanfront, Ocean City MD
May 7	Public Service Charity 5K Run/Walk
May 7–13	Public Service Recognition Week
May 13	Crofton Memorial Day Parade
May 14	Mother's Day
May 18	General Meeting: KENHILL CENTER Officer Elections & Meet Your Legislators
May 20	Armed Forces Day
May 27	Bowie Memorial Day Parade
May 29	Memorial Day
June 15	Baysox Buffet/Game and Officer Installation

NARFE News Notes

*The following items were reported in
Narfe's E-mail News Digests*

OMB Submits Government Reorganization Plan, Federal Hiring Freeze Over

This week, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a government reform plan, titled "Comprehensive Plan for Reforming the Federal Government and Reducing the Federal Civilian Workforce," which is available on NARFE's web site.

This plan was issued pursuant to the president's executive order directing OMB to submit a comprehensive plan to reorganize executive branch departments and agencies, and the presidential memorandum that imposed the hiring freeze, which called for OMB to produce a long-term plan to reduce the size of the federal workforce. With the issuance of this long-term plan, the federal hiring freeze is officially over.

OMB's plan directs agencies to draft Agency Reform Plans by June 30, 2017. The government-wide reform plan will be proposed as part of the president's fiscal year 2019 budget. The memo asks agencies to: eliminate, restructure and merge activities; improve organizational efficiency; and revamp workforce management to improve performance, increase accountability and reduce costs through avenues such as long-term workforce reductions.

Congressional approval will be required for many aspects of this plan, including eliminating programs and implementing restructuring and merging of agencies. Other aspects of the plan, such as those aimed at improving efficiency and workforce management, may not require congressional approval, but must operate within existing personnel law. Agencies also may have significant flexibility regarding workforce reductions, if they do not conflict with congressional appropriations.

Continued on page 3

OMB is seeking public input on the reforms, which can be provided here. While this request for input is directed at finding suggestions for fixing what is wrong with government, NARFE strongly encourages its members to comment to tell OMB what is right with government—what ought to be maintained and preserved in this process. If you have good, constructive ideas for improvements based on your personal experience, provide those as well.

President Trump Proposes 1.9 Percent Pay Increase

The White House confirmed this week that it will propose a 1.9 percent pay increase for current civilian federal employees for 2018. The pay raise will be included in the president's detailed fiscal year 2018 budget, set to be released in May. Congress has the authority to set pay in the appropriations process, but in the past several years, has deferred to the president's proposed pay increase. The White House did not specify what portion of the pay increase will go toward locality pay adjustments.

The proposed raise is equal to the increase in the Employment Cost Index for private-sector wages and salaries, minus 0.5 percent. NARFE is pleased that the administration has proposed an increase that tracks with long-standing statutory policy, but believes the president and Congress should pursue

a more robust increase given the years of below-market increases and pay freezes.

Consumer Prices Increase in March

Relevant to the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to civil service annuities for 2018, the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) increased 0.08 percent in March 2017. The new CPI-W figure for March 2017 was 237.656. This is 1.11 percent higher than the average CPI-W for the third quarter of 2016, which is used to determine the 2018 COLA.

Individuals receiving insurance benefits under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) received a 2.0 percent COLA in March 2017. Looking ahead to the 2018 COLA for FECA benefits, the March 2017 CPI-W figure (237.656) is 0.96 percent higher than the December 2016 CPI-W figure (235.390).

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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NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES (NARFE) CHAPTER 1747 ANNUAL SOCIAL EVENT AND OFFICER INSTALLATION

Date: 06/15/2017

Time: 6:35pm

\$26.00 includes: Game Ticket, Private Room, Buffet and Parking

Accepting payment through June 5, 2017

Buffet: Salad, BBQ Chicken, Beef Hot Dogs, Baked Beans, Chips, Popcorn,
Cookies, Strawberries, Tea/Lemonade

Alcoholic Beverages are not included in the price

Place: Bowie Baysox Stadium 4101 NE Crain Hwy
Bowie, MD 20716



TICKET ORDER FORM

Name _____

Telephone _____

E-Mail _____ Number of tickets ____

Amount Enclosed (\$26.00 x # tickets) _____

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

**Receipt Upon Request Contacts: 301 367-8989 or 410 353-1283