



NARFE NEWSLETTER

GREATER BOWIE-CROFTON AREA CHAPTER 1747

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

Volume 37 No. 1

narfe1747.org

September 2018

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.

POSTAL ADDRESS: NARFE Chapter 1747, P.O. Box 504, Bowie, MD 20718

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

Sept 3	Labor Day
Sept 6	Executive Board Meeting, Bowie Senior Center, 10:00a-noon
Sept 10	Rosh Hashanah
Sept 20	General Meeting, Bowie Senior Center, Tywana Hamilton, MD Primary Care Physicians - Things that seniors can do to help maintain their health
Sept 20	NARFE Federal Benefits Institute Webinar, 2:00p - Retirement Forms: The Devil is in the Details

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Frank Lee

Our benefits, rights, and values have come under relentless and continuing attack. In previous times, we could assume that a right or benefit once passed by Congress would continue unless it was repealed by Congress. This is no longer true. Under the current environment, our rights, benefits, and values have been diminished or eliminated through administrative action.

Our forefathers divided our government into three competing branches, the executive, legislative, and judicial. The purpose of this division was to ensure that no one branch would become omnipotent and all powerful. We have an opportunity to apply these checks and balances on our government in the coming midterm elections. In the midterm elections we will elect or re-elect 1/3 of our senators and all of our representatives. We can

determine who will control the Senate and the House in the next session of Congress. We must select candidates who will protect our rights, benefits, and democratic values. We cannot afford to stay home and not vote. We must exercise our right to vote to protect and preserve our democratic form of government. Your vote counts!

June Social Event

The June Social Event held at the Bowie Baysox Stadium on June 14, 2018 was a big success. We sold a total of 44 tickets for the event and more than 40 people attended the event for a delicious buffet dinner and ball game.

2018 NARFE Elections

NARFE members voted directly for national officers for the first time. A total of 13,720 members voted, 9,614 by Internet and 4,106 by mail. For National President, Ken Thomas got 4,979 votes, Steve Lenkart got 3,777 votes, Jon Dowie got 2,583 votes and Ted Van Hintum got 1,875 votes. Because no one got a majority of the votes, Ken Thomas, Steve Lenkart, and Ted Van Hintum will participate in a run-off election. For National Secretary/Treasurer, Kathryn Hensley got 7,457 votes and Richard G. Thissen got 5,786 votes.

Future Attractions

We have some exciting presentations scheduled for Fall 2018 and Spring 2019. In September, Tywana Hamilton from MD Primary Care Physicians will talk on things that seniors can do to help maintain their health. Our annual Health Fair will be held at the Kenhill Center in October. In November, Care Patrol will present their service for helping families find independent and assisted living facilities. Anyone who may need to find an assisted living facility for themselves or for a family member should attend this presentation. Care Patrol will assess the family's need for assisted living care and identify assisted living facilities which meet the family's criteria. This service is free to the family. Our Holiday Party will be held in December at a place

to be determined. In January, Diane Polangin of Total Tax Service will return to talk about taxes. In February, a representative from GEBA will talk about Long Term Care Alternatives. Please plan to attend these exciting presentations.

General Meetings at a Restaurant

I plan to ask members whether they would like to hold an additional meeting at a restaurant. We currently are scheduled to hold the annual holiday party and the June general meeting at a restaurant. Officers from other chapters said at the June Training Academy that more members tended to attend meetings where food and drink were served.

Support Pay Raise

Please use the NARFE Hotline to contact your representatives to voice your support for a modest pay increase for civilian Federal employees. Our dedicated civilian Federal employees deserve a modest pay raise. They should not be subject to a pay freeze while their uniformed counterparts get a pay raise.

Membership Transactions

Membership transactions for June 1-30 included:

Members dropped:	3
Members transferred in:	0
Members transferred out:	3
Members passed away:	3
Members reinstated:	2
New Members:	1

Total Members (July 24) **658**

Vacant Positions

We have several vacant positions to fill including Assistant Treasurer, Secretary, and Service Officer. We will be seeking candidates to fill these vacant positions.

COME AND JOIN US AT THE NEXT GENERAL MEETING!!!

FEDERAL LEGISLATION
Jerry Kursban

ACTION ALERT

On August 1, the Senate approved a 1.9 percent average pay increase for federal workers in 2019. If signed into law, pay rates will increase 1.4 percent across-the-board, and locality pay rates will increase by an average of 0.4 percent as part of HR 6147. However, the House did not include a pay raise in its version of the legislation. The bills will go to conference to resolve

differences. Without Congressional action, there will be no increase since the Trump administration has clearly indicated its intention to freeze federal pay for calendar year 2019. You should take action. Contact your representatives and urge them to support the Senate version and include a pay raise for federal employees. You can use NARFE's LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER to find your legislator. Form letters are available to assist you.

NARFE's Big Three Legislative Priorities

NARFE has selected three legislative priorities for grassroots actions: (1) the proposed 2019 pay freeze; (2) postal reform and (3) federal benefit cuts. The president has the authority to set a pay raise or a freeze, absent congressional action. The president's Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) budget includes a provision which calls for a federal employee pay freeze in 2019. So, urge your Congressional representative to support a federal employee pay raise. The Postal Reform Act, as currently written, would force postal retirees to add Medicare Part B coverage to their existing insurance, or lose their Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) coverage altogether. This would set a dangerous precedent, that it is alright to change your benefits in retirement. Let your representative know that you oppose this requirement. Federal Benefit Cuts included in the President's FY 19 budget would eliminate cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for FERS retirees and reduce COLAs for CSRS retirees by 0.5 percent each year. Retirement annuity calculations would change from the current average of the highest three years of salary to the highest five. And federal employees covered under FERS would see their employee contributions increase one percent each year for the next six years without any corresponding benefit increase. Please remember that your legislators will interpret your silence as approval. So, don't let yourself become like a piñata. Let your legislators know that you oppose these cuts to your earned benefits. Please contact advocacy@narfe.org to learn how to participate in these NARFE supported grassroots activities.

FEDERAL UNIONS TARGETED

President Trump signed three executive orders that make it easier to fire federal employees and reduce the influence of federal unions. The first order sets forth principles to apply regarding employee discipline and removal. The second limits the use of "official time" when federal workers are compensated for performing their representational duties instead of standard work. It also prohibits union access of agency resources including office space, meeting rooms and computers unless paid for by the union. The third limits the scope of collective bargaining by federal employee unions. (See page 8 of your August 2018 NARFE magazine for details.) Also consult your August 2018 NARFE magazine regarding new TSP withdrawal options (page 8); protection from identity theft (page 9) and understanding your social security benefits (pp 31-36). Most important, please consult your NARFE Legislative Hotline available online at www.narfe.org or by toll free telephone at 800-456-8410, option 4, and the Legislative Action Center at www.narfe.org which provides a one-stop site to send a letter to Congress and more.

STATE LEGISLATION
Ed Bice

SLC Details 2019
Legislative Priorities and Forwards Legislation Survey

At the risk of boring you, it is still true that many Maryland taxpayers who usually itemize deductions on their state and federal tax returns will be in for a big surprise next year. They are likely to find that they can no longer itemize deductions on their state tax returns because they claim the standard deduction on their federal tax forms. As a result, they could well see their Maryland state and local income taxes **increase by hundreds of dollars.**

This is and should be an important and visible issue in this year's election campaigns for the General Assembly. The State Legislation Committee (SLC) of the Maryland Federation surveyed **all candidates** for the General Assembly in April regarding three income tax topics. The three questions sought a simple "yes" or "no" and were:

- 1) Permit Maryland taxpayers to itemize deductions on their Maryland tax returns whether or not they use the standard deduction on their Federal tax returns
- 2) Extend the tax exemptions of \$15,000 on pensions of military retirees over the age of 55 and the \$5,000 for those below age 55 to the pensions of Federal, State and Local public service retirees.
- 3) Increase the supplemental tax exemption of \$1,000 for elderly taxpayers and their elderly spouses to match the \$3,200 exemption that can be claimed for elderly dependents since the early 90's.

More than 120 responses to the survey or 21 percent, were received. With a handful of exceptions, all those who responded answered "yes" to all three of the survey questions. The SLC has re-sent the survey questionnaire to all candidates who are on the ballot for the General Election and who did not respond to the first survey. The results of the second survey will be reported in a later newsletter.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance on: May 31, 2018	\$10,576.45
Receipts:	327.40
Disbursements:	936.79
Balance on: June 30, 2018	\$9,967.06
Reserve for Alzheimer's Fund	433.00

IN MEMORIAM
June – August



CHAPTER 1747 OFFICERS

<u>Officers</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Contact Number</u>	<u>E-Mail Address</u>
President	Frank Lee	410-672-5065	fllee0716@verizon.net
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Asst. Treasurer	Vacant	--	--
Secretary	Vacant	--	--
<u>Committee Chairs</u>			
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Network Coordinator	Howard Gordon	301-464-2745	flash@acm.org
Service Officer	Vacant	--	--

WELCOME NEW MEMBER
--Auvonett Jones--

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PICTURES FROM BAYSOX EVENT – JUNE 2018



UPCOMING EVENTS

There will be more social events for NARFE Chapter 1747! Join us at the General Meetings to learn when and where!! General meets are held on the third Thursday of the month beginning September 20th.

Mark your Calendars for the following scheduled upcoming events:

- September 2018 - Tywana Hamilton from MD Primary Care Physicians, Topic: What seniors can do to help maintain their health
- October 2018 - Health Fair at the Kenhill Center
- November 2018 - Care Patrol, Topic: Service for helping families assess their need for assisted living facilities and find facilities that meet their requirements.
- December 2018 - **Holiday Party** (place to be determined).
- January 2019 - Diane Polangin, Total Tax Service, Topic: Taxes
- February 2019 - GEBA, Long Term Care Alternatives

COME AND JOIN US AT THE GENERAL MEETING