



NARFE Chapter 242 Sarasota
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Website: NARFE242.US

Newsletter published: Feb, Apr, Oct, Nov, Dec

Sarasota Chapter 242 Newsletter

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There are still some spaces left on the Chapter 242 Board!
 Call, email or speak to anyone above to learn more. Secretary is a critical position that is not currently filled!

Chapter Meetings	Board Meetings
3rd Thursday	3rd Friday
@10:15 am at Mellow Mushroom Sarasota	10 am at Fruitville Public Library
December 15th	January 20th
February 16th	February 17th
April 20th	March 17th

President's Message

NARFE Chapter 242 President Bill Vander Heyden

And 3 Things to Bring

No matter which of the Holidays you celebrate, if you are reading our beautiful Newsletter, there is reason for joy that we have come safely through all the storms that have tested our faith the past couple years! Our Chapter is especially grateful that many of you feel comfortable to come out again and be part of things!

There are many organizations that represent us feds — active and retired — from Unions, to Federations, to Associations, to Groups unknown to me. Most, maybe all, represent very specific groups within the Federal Government. Only NARFE represents us ALL, each and every time the NARFE Legislative Action Center composes a letter, or our NARFE President goes to the Hill to call on lawmakers of both parties. It is for ALL of us. Read NARFE's Mission, Part 3, again: "To cooperate with other organizations and associations in furtherance of our general objectives."

Now for the fun part: our annual holiday luncheon that is both social and charitable. The date is Thursday, December 15th, 10:15 am, at Mellow Mushroom Pizza Bakers, 6727 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. Look deeper into the Newsletter for menu, how to make a reservation, the deadline for having your money in, and **3 things you can bring**. Besides lunch together we are holding a "Yankee Swap!"

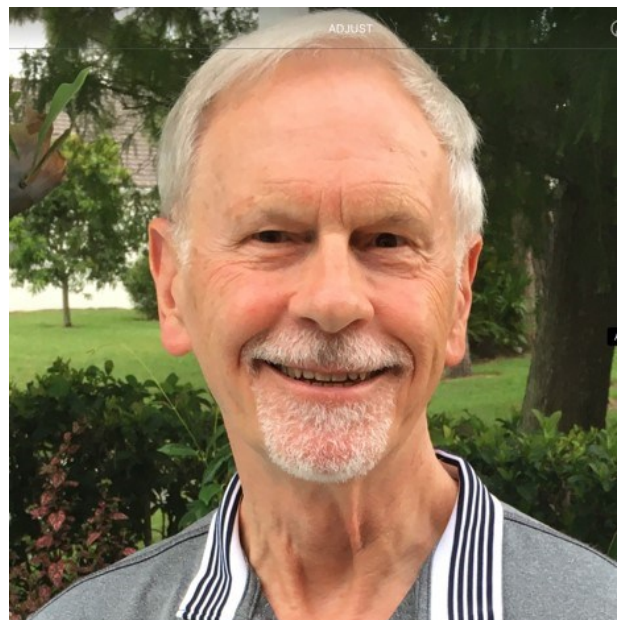
1. So the **FIRST** thing you can bring, if you want to participate, is a gift worth \$10.00! Remember to wrap it up....it's a surprise! The Chapter would like to resume the cus-

tom of members bringing things from home to raffle off as Door Prizes. The pandemic put a stop to many things as we were not meeting in person.

2. But now we are. So the **SECOND** thing you can bring is something from the house or garage that has been waiting for a "new home!"
3. Finally, the Chapter would like to resume the custom of members bringing in a check — the **THIRD** thing — made out to "All Faiths Food Bank" with NARFE242 on the Memo line. The Chapter will then deliver the checks to Food Bank Headquarters. Those of you who supported the Walk to End Alzheimer's in October might be doing double-duty, but then federal employees help when they can.

Peace out,

Bill Vander Heyden



Let's Meet (new location)!

Thursday, December 15, 2022 at 10:15 am

You must have a reservation and pay in advance to attend this program and luncheon!



Reservations must be confirmed with your treasurer, Dick Fredlund **by December 8** by:

- **Phone:** 941-924-1303
- **Email:** dfredlund@aol.com
- **Text:** 941-323-3250

Payment is due:

no later than December 11

Check for \$20 payable to

NARFE Chapter 242

**Mail to: Dick Fredlund
8339 Eagle Crossing
Sarasota, FL 34241-9438**

Menu: Buffet Style

- A big salad
- Meatballs and sauce
- A Selection of pizzas (a vegan one)
- Sweets
- A Selection of beverages (as we've been having)

When: Please arrive by 10:15, program begins at 10:30 am, lunch served at 11:30 am

Where:

Mellow Mushroom,
6727 S. Tamiami Trail
Sarasota, FL 34231.

Senior's Texting Code

BFF - Best Friend's Funeral
HGBM - Had Good Bowel Movement
ATD - At The Doctor
FYI - Found Your Insulin
BTW - Bring The Wheelchair
CGU - Can't Get Up
LOL - Little Old Lady
BYOT - Bring Your Own Teeth
FWIW - Forgot Where I Was
TTYL - Talk To You Louder

Program: Yankee Swap

- Bring a wrapped gift from home or purchase a gift at a \$10 price point. (examples: something new that someone might like that you don't use or a bottle of wine, lottery tickets, candy, candle, mug, soap etc.)
- Random numbers will be drawn at the meeting
- Number 1 goes first and chooses any gift
- Number 2 chooses a gift and either swaps with Number 1 or opens the gift.
- Number 3 chooses a gift and either swaps with Number 1 or 2 or opens the gift. Continues until last number chooses their gift.
- Number 1 can choose any gift or keep the gift they have.



Chapter 242 News for YOU!

Minutes from Chapter 242 Meeting



Mellow Mushroom Pizza Bakers

November 17, 2022 (Meeting Minutes)

Acting Secretary: Bill Vander Heyden

- ◇ Invocation and Pledge at 10:30 am led by Chaplain Bill Vander Heyden.
 - ◇ Twenty-seven present included the two presenters. The two presenters, Joe Frech, representing BC/BS and a Chapter member, and Susan Allgood representing Aetna, gave the updates to their health insurance plans for feds. They answered questions and had handouts on their plans. Tammy Flanagan reminded members that they have access to NARFE webinars which provide a wealth of information during open season and throughout the year; and FEDHub is a place where NARFE members can share information on FEHB & other issues of interest.
 - ◇ Minutes of October 20, 2022 approved.
 - ◇ Treasurer's Report from Dick Fredlund was accepted.
 - ◇ Walk to End Alzheimer's: Clara Schaefer gave a new final number: \$1,335.00. Perhaps have Joan report at each Chapter meeting on the status of our Alzheimer's fund, which raffle sales support, to keep the issue before our members.
 - ◇ Membership Chair: James Sylvester reported the upcoming dates that our joint ad will run in the Sarasota Herald Tribune. He explained how the link (wclynx.com) that he created works. So far there has been only one "hit." Between Hurricane Ian (September 28), its ongoing cleanup, and the advertising philosophy that an ad must appear many times for readers to see it, we remain hopeful of more "hits." One member asked about the possibility of using a QR Code to access the websites? Still, it is everyone's business to recruit! Jim also explained the plan to introduce the new Chapter 242 website,
- NARFE242.us, created by Bill Leatham and already stood up. To avoid confusion, the other website, www.NARFE.net/site/chapter242 will remain in use until the newspaper ad campaign concludes in March. Both websites resolve into one another.
- ◇ Jim invited any members present who have transferred from Venice 717 to Sarasota 242 to give him names of other Venice members whom he is willing to call and invite to transfer.
 - ◇ Someone suggested that if libraries and doctors offices are once again putting out magazines, we begin to ask about their displaying the NARFE magazine again.
 - ◇ Joan Graham then explained the "Yankee Swap" for the December 15 holiday party. As most present liked the idea and showed by a hand-raise their willingness to attend, the Board will seek to implement the plan. The Mellow Mushroom would like to offer a buffet that day to make it more festive. Bill Van will work with the owners and staff on the menu. Since it will be a BUFFET of appetizers, salad, pizzas, & light desserts,
 - ◇ Bill Van reminded those present (and those reading these minutes) of the Chapter's tradition of making a donation to the ALL FAITHS FOOD BANK. Bring your check to the December 15 party, and the Chapter will deliver them to the Food Bank.
 - ◇ Meeting Adjourned at 1:10 pm.
 - ◇ Next meeting: December 15 @ 10:15 am, Mellow Mushroom, 6727 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota.
- NO NEED TO WAIT FOR NEWSLETTER TO OFFER MENU CHOICES. SIMPLY CONTACT DICK FREDLUND ASAP TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT & SEND IN YOUR MONEY.**



Membership Report

James Sylvester / Chapter 242 / Membership Director

Greetings to all chapter members and visitors!

I would like to build on prior comments concerning membership activities that were made at our October and November luncheons.

We have a talented group of board members that are working together to develop our chapter website (NARFE242.us) and the information found within it. But this is only a beginning...

Beyond the website, we can explore taking advantage of a social media account (such as FEDHUB, Facebook or Instagram), radio, local T.V./cable options and additional newspaper clips to tell the Chapter 242 story. The board will move forward exploring, selecting, and developing these communications, but we want it to be a team effort - please join us!

I am interested in exploring newcomers' events in the local Sarasota area. These may be events sponsored by local Chambers of Commerce, job fairs, and local festivals. We can inexpensively create a recruitment display that could be easily transported for use at these and other events. I am looking for ideas where to find active and retired clusters of federal employees or annuitants.

Anyone who has knowledge of past members of the now disbanded Venice NARFE Chapter, please let me know and I will gladly contact them and invite them to join Chapter 242. This holds true for any past NARFE members from any chapter. This could be a very productive source for recruitment, but we need leads. We must crack the nut concerning how to reach out to all the active federal

employees in Sarasota. Many employees work during the day and are effectively shut out of participation at our luncheon and board meetings— Your ideas are welcome.

In closing, our continued success as a chapter depends mightily on our ability to attract new members while keeping the ones we got! If this means increasing the frequency and/or variety of group activities so, be it. There is a lot to do in Sarasota, many friendships to be made and we all deserve to enjoy our life after retirement—Let's do it together!

PUBLIC RELATIONS

PR DIRECTOR

PR is defined as the practice of managing and disseminating information from an organization to the public to affect their public perception. Without good leadership it is much harder to promote the values and reputation of our organization. Ultimately good PR drives recruitment and retention of new members.

Legislative Report

Miles Toder / Chapter 242 / Legislative Director

NARFE Rallies Likeminded Organizations in Urging Congress to Protect Our Merit Based Federal Civil Service System

In late October, NARFE drafted a letter to the leadership of the U.S. Congress urging them to pass legislation this year that protects America's civil service system from future attempts to create broad exceptions to the competitive civil service. The draft letter was circulated to dozens of like-minded organizations including professional associations, those representing public sector workers and retirees, labor unions, government watchdogs, think tanks, and universities across the country to coalesce the views of NARFE members and other Americans who are concerned about the future of our professional and nonpartisan civil service. The signed letter submitted to Congress last month urges them to close a statutory loophole in the merit-based civil service framework of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 which currently allows the Executive to regroup federal employees to the five narrowly defined excepted schedules (A-E) currently established in the law without the consent of Congress. This would assure future continuity of government through changing administrations, preserve institutional knowledge and expertise and safeguard the rule of law and adherence to the Constitution.

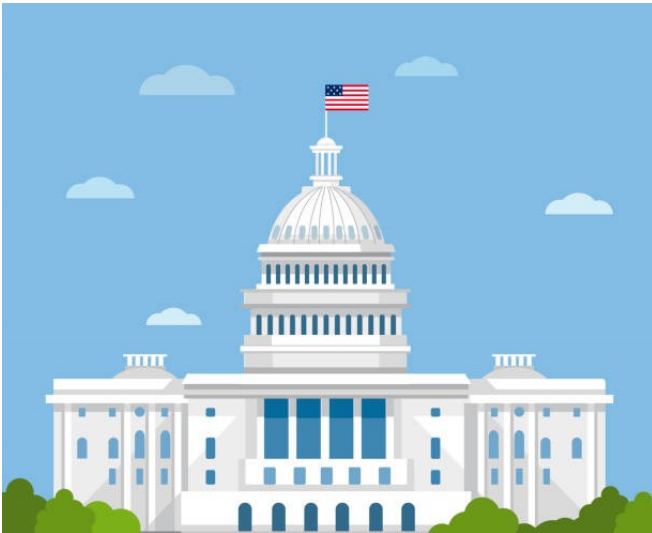
NARFE has focused on an executive order that was issued by the previous administration at the end of its term by creating a broad new exception (Schedule F) to the merit-based civil service system. Civil service rules ensuring merit-

based hiring and firing would not apply to positions reclassified into this new excepted service schedule. While this exception was not fully implemented, early steps by agencies including the Office of Personnel Management suggest it could apply broadly, potentially affecting tens of thousands of positions. The size of the exception threatened to eviscerate the basic rule integral to a merit-based system, expanding well beyond the purpose of the limited statutory exceptions.

NARFE Urges House to Pass Bill That Would Prevent Return of Schedule F

If Schedule F returns, positions considered "of a confidential, policy-determining, policy-making or policy advocating character" could be reclassified, allowing employees in newly converted positions to be removed at any time. Normal due process safeguards ensuring termination for cause would no longer apply and these positions could be filled with handpicked and potentially unqualified individuals. These hirings and firings, even on a small scale, would cause substantial disruption of government operations, forcing each new administration to spend additional weeks, if not months dealing with the aftereffects of their predecessor's decisions. This reclassification would also undermine the credibility and morale of the civil service resulting in poor performance on the part of unmotivated or incompetent employees sometimes with disastrous consequences as demonstrated at the state level e.g. Flint, Michigan and Jackson, Mississippi.

NARFE acknowledges that every administration holds the authority to exercise its executive power appropriately. But those powers are limited by the Constitution and laws of the U.S. If government employees owe their jobs more to personal or political allegiance rather than merit, they will be more beholden to the party in power instead of the law of the land. That erodes safeguards for the rule of law within the executive branch which could undermine the power of Congress and set the stage for greater inter-branch conflict. It also has the potential of further eroding trust in government on the part of the American people.



The NARFE-led coalition argued that it is critical that Congress act this year to prevent future threats to this system. Proponents of Schedule F are still at work, crafting plans that would jeopardize America's professional civil service system. NARFE commended efforts taken thus far to protect the civil service, especially by House passage of the Preventing a Patronage System Act (H.R.302) and inclusion of the bill's language in the House-passed 2023 National Defense Authorization Act. The letter also supported language included in the Senate's draft Financial Services and General Government

appropriations bill. But it urged that more be done to include language to prevent a return of Schedule F or other similar efforts in year-end legislation passed by both chambers. Doing so would provide a check on abuse of executive powers from any administration by limiting the ability of the executive branch to bypass the entire framework of the merit-based civil service created by an Act of Congress through the creation of broad new exceptions to the application of merit-based rules.

In the aftermath of the mid-term elections, the parties are choosing new leadership. There are already other time-sensitive legislative issues such as this year's budget and a pending railroad strike to resolve before the closing days of the 117th Congress. It will be worth watching to see how strengthening our civil service fares to better manage the 21st century challenges facing the nation and the rest of the world.



HOT TOPICS

Connect with Members

NARFE Florida, Inc.

FEDHub community page!

Check Out the Retirement Zone!

BENEFITS

Updates and Information YOU can use!

Announcement of Suspension Period for Federal Long-Term Care Insurance Program Applicants

OPM is suspending applications for coverage under the FLTCIP to allow OPM and the FLTCIP carrier, John Hancock Life & Health Insurance Company, the time to thoroughly assess benefit offerings and establish sustainable premium rates that reasonably and equitably reflect the cost of the benefits provided, as required under 5 U.S.C. 9003(b)(2). For additional information about FLTCIP premiums, you may visit LTCFEDS.com/about-premiums.

OPM has determined that a suspension of applications for FLTCIP coverage, including coverage increases, is in the best interest of the program. OPM published a [Federal Register Notice of Suspension](#) for current and newly eligible individuals applying for coverage under the FLTCIP after the final regulation was published.

As of December 19, 2022, individuals not currently enrolled may not apply for coverage, and current enrollees may not apply to increase their coverage. The suspension will remain in effect for 24 months, unless OPM issues a subsequent notice to end or extend the suspension period. Eligible individuals who submit an application for FLTCIP prior to the start of the suspension period will have their application considered. If the application is approved for coverage, then the individual will receive a benefit booklet and schedule of benefits with complete coverage information.

Current enrollees' coverage status will not change as long as they continue to pay premium. For those in a claim status, there is no change to

coverage or the claims reimbursement process as long as benefits have not been exhausted.

The need for long term care can happen to anyone at any time. It can be because of an extended illness such as cancer, a disabling event such as a stroke, a chronic disease such as multiple sclerosis or Alzheimer's, or a permanently disabling automobile or sporting accident.



The Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program

In many cases, however, people need long term care due to aging. As we live longer, into our 80s, 90s, and even beyond, health conditions that we've managed successfully for years may become worse. We may lose our ability to function independently on a day-to-day basis, resulting in the need for assistance.



The National Family Caregiver

Support Program (NFCSP)

NFCSP provides grants to states and territories to fund various supports that help family and informal caregivers care for older adults in their homes for as long as possible.

<https://acl.gov/programs/support-caregivers/>

Resources

What you need to know!

NARFE Dues Information

National NARFE dues are \$48.00 a year. Our Chapter dues remain at \$7.00 a year. When you renew, make CERTAIN that you are billed for \$55.00. Then you will know that you have paid your Chapter dues too.

Both rates are a bargain! Certified by Congress, NARFE is the only organization whose priorities for the 117th Congress include supporting policies that protect and enhance the earned retirement and health benefits of federal employees and retirees.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

NARFE Chapter 242 Service Officer

Joan Graham

941-893-7804

joansrq42wls@gmail

OPM Retirement Information 1-888-767-6738

- Forms request
- Report a death.
- Automated answering system, menu of topics annuitants call about most frequently.
- Call between the hours of 7:40 AM and 5:00 PM eastern, Monday through Friday
- Talk to a Customer service specialist.
- Call early in the morning before the other retirees wake up! Try to avoid Monday and the day after a holiday for best luck. Patience is a virtue!

Thrift Savings Plan "ThriftLine" 1-877-968-3778

Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213

Medicare at 1-800-633-4227

The Department of Veterans Affairs

For VA benefits, call 1-800-827-1000

Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) to report the death of a Military Retiree or Annuitant call 1-800-321-1080

Florida Representatives in Congress:

The Honorable Rick Scott

801 North Florida Avenue Suite 421 Tampa FL 33602

Tampa Phone: 813-225-7040 Website: rickscott.senate.gov

The Honorable Vern Buchanan

Sarasota Office: 111 South Orange Avenue, Floor 2R, Suite 202W Sarasota, FL 34236 Sarasota Phone: 941-951-6643 Fax: (941) 951-2972 Website: buchanan.house.gov

The Honorable Marco Rubio

Sam M. Gibbons U.S. Courthouse 801 North Florida Avenue Suite 1130 Tampa, FL 33602 Florida District Phone: 813-853-1099 Website: rubio.senate.gov/public/ Toll free in FL 1-866-630-7106



Parting Glances

NARFE Meetings are places to meet friends, make friends, and learn!



Susan Allgood as she gives the 2023 updates on Aetna's FEHB options at the Chapter 242 November 17, 2022 meeting.

Twenty-five Chapter 242 members enjoying their surroundings and seeing each other at Mellow Mushroom Pizza Bakers, 6727 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota.



Parting Glances

NARFE Meetings are places to meet friends, make friends, and learn!



Joe Frech is both a BC/BS Representative and a Chapter member. Both he and Susan Allgood had handouts and answered questions for members.

