



FEDERAL BENEFITS EXPERTS

NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

WESTSIDE JACKSONVILLE CHAPTER 1984 NEWSLETTER

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NARFE'S MISSION STATEMENT

TO SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS BENEFICIAL TO FEDERAL CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES AND ANNUITANTS AND POTENTIAL ANNUITANTS UNDER ANY FEDERAL CIVILIAN RETIREMENT SYSTEM, AND TO OPPOSE THOSE DETRIMENTAL TO THEIR INTERESTS. TO PROMOTE THE GENERAL WELFARE OF FEDERAL CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES AND ANNUITANTS AND POTENTIAL ANNUITANTS, TO ADVISE THEM AND ASSIST THEM WITH RESPECT TO THEIR RIGHTS UNDER RETIREMENT, HEALTH AND OTHER EMPLOYEE AND RETIREE BENEFITS LAWS AND REGULATIONS, AND TO REPRESENT THEIR INTERESTS BEFORE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES. TO COOPERATE WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS IN FURTHERANCE OF THESE GENERAL OBJECTIVES.

Chapter President

Richard Carroll

gailandrac@aol.com

904 -786-7083

Chapter Secretary

Diana Kay Woods

diana.peters@comcast.net

904-342-9896

Chapter Treasurer

Roger Burkett

raburkett@gmail.com

904-318-4795

Membership Committee

Gwelda Brown

gweldabrown11@gmail.com

904-716-6118

Membership Committee

Kenneth Goldman

kenneth_goldman@bellsouth.net

904-693-8731

Hospitality / Sunshine

Gail Carroll

gailandrac@aol.com

904-786-7083

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Ah summertime, the time for trips to Disney World, exotic cruises, vacations at the beaches, or mountains, and all the other things that people want to do during the summer months. That's all well and good. For our September 28 meeting, our guest speaker will be Ms. Evelyn Seabrook, President of NARFE Florida Inc. I trust everyone will be ready to show up, get caught up and get back to what NARFE members are encouraged to do, i.e. advocate our Congressional leaders to defend our federal retirement and health benefits.

In case you missed it, NARFE held its 2023 Legislative Conference (Legcon23) June 21-22. It was another Zoom meeting, but it was very well organized and quite informative. You may have found some of the message familiar, but quite a large amount of the message content and the format was new and improved.

The first day power point presentations from the Advocacy staff at National was replete of helpful hints, do's and don'ts of what to do and how to stay focused. Soon after we heard from several of the Congressional Panel of Staff Speakers, which were introduced by Representative Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) a former USPS Inspector and Case Worker for the CIA. She is a cosponsor of HR 82 and is quite knowledgeable about those issues and their encompassing history.

We then heard from the following staffers, Logan de La Barre-Hays, (Rep. Garrett Graves (R-LA), Dr. Wendy Ginsburg (Rep. Jimmie Raskin (D-MD) and Natalie Stewart, (Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA). Their remarks were right on target and prior to meeting with the Senator or Representative, was a good addition to Legcon23.

We also heard from Brian Fitzpatrick (PA), Rob Wittman (VA) and Bill Huezinga (MI) to hear their input for a productive meeting which was another good addition. Later in the afternoon we heard from Senator Susan Collins (R-ME), Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Representative Jimmie Raskin (D-MD). Each speaker had information of value for those seeking an audience with their respective Congressional leader.

Day two, many of us thought, was meetings with our Congressional leaders. But alas, they were with the Congressional leader's staff, i.e. the Legislative Director / Advisor or Assistant, these included; Peyton Roth and Luis Hinojos (Office of Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL), Logan Anderson (Office of Senator Rick Scott (R-FL), James Thomas (Office of Representative Aaron Bean (R-4-FL), Carl Schuler (Office of Representative Michael Waltz (R-6-FL), Rick Podliska) Office of Representative Bill Posey (R-8-FL).

It's not the same trying to persuade a staffer to urge his/her lawmaker to cosponsor a bill. But after hearing personal experiences of monetary losses from several WEP retirees, my hope is they took our petitions to heart while relating them to their lawmaker bosses. It was interesting communicating with them, some were vaguely familiar with the WEP and GPO, while others were almost in the dark about them. And then there are some staffers that have been working on the Hill for many years and are quite well versed in those two issues. Some staffers even speak their own minds. For those that have cosponsored H. R. 82, S. 597 or H. R. 866, we thanked them and rightly so. The Advocacy staff at National and the contributing team members did a great job putting Legcon23 together.

LEGISLATION

As of this writing, the latest number of cosponsors for H.R. 82 is 286, very quickly approaching 290, which is the magic number to have a House member have it put on the Congressional calendar. It then requires a certain total number of signatures for a full House vote. We were at this same point last year and it failed due to not enough signatures for that calendar mandate.

But it took almost two years to get to that point in 2022. We will have achieved that this session in less than seven or eight months. With more calls and emails to our leaders, we may even surprise ourselves. Just because some may have a pessimistic outlook doesn't make it a reality. I say think positive.

On another issue, a new bill that may be gaining momentum, is H. R. 4260. The Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act of 2023 was introduced on 21 June of this year, by the Ways and Means Committee Ranking Member, Richard Neal (D-MA), and has 94 cosponsors already. (It is the previous H.R. 2337 with a new number for the 118th Congressional Session.) The bill would provide current WEP retirees with a \$150.00 a month payment, it also establishes for future retirees, a new, fairer formula that will pay Social Security benefits in proportion to the share of a worker's earnings that were covered for Social Security purposes. This provision is coupled with a benefit guarantee ensuring NO benefit cuts relative to current law for all current and future retirees. One Florida lawmaker has cosponsored it, Frederica Wilson, (D-FL-24). Start calling.

Senator Marco Rubio	904-354-4300	Rep Aaron Bean	CD-4	904-557-9550
Senator Rick Scott	904-476-2928	Rep John Rutherford	CD-5	904-831-5205
Rep Kat Cammack	CD-3 904-276-9626	Rep Michael Waltz	CD-6	386-302-0442

The President's budget proposal includes a 5.2 percent pay raise for the military and federal work force. No mention of any locality pay increase, but it almost always includes one. Also, recently there are four new areas under consideration to be added to the current list of 54 localities, and most of those 54 are to be expanded to cover larger areas. Workers in these localities receive the locality pay increase in addition to the COLA increase.

MEMBERSHIP

Our current chapter membership total is 50 members. I can't be sure, but I think one reason members are being dropped from our roster could be members may still be submitting the \$48.00 NARFE and chapter dues, which is what it was prior to 1 January 2022. After that date you would have to submit \$56.00 to renew your NARFE and chapter membership because on that date, NARFE national dues were increased from \$40.00 to \$48.00. Our chapter dues have remained at \$8.00 annually. If you submitted the \$48.00 on or after that date, you would have been entered as a National member only, and your name would not appear on our chapter roster. If so, you can rectify this with your \$8.00 check (or charge) payable to NARFE. Send it to NARFE, Chapter Services, 601 North Washington St, Alexandria, VA, 22314-7760. Be sure to enter "Chapter 1984 dues" on information line.

This does not preclude you from attending chapter meetings, you just won't be able to vote on any issues requiring a vote from the chapter membership.

HOSPITALITY / SUNSHINE

Gail Carroll

Starting back to NARFE Sept. 28th is almost like starting back to school! You should be excited to meet with chapter friends after your vacation! And you should be super excited because Evelyn Seabrook will be with us! She is our Florida NARFE President!! What an honor to have her as our speaker. Please be sure to clear your calendar so that you can greet her. Call all your NARFE friends and potential members.

On a much sadder note, we lost Johnnie Sue Bradstreet Smith. Richard and I attended her visitation/viewing. She lived an amazing 97 years and will be very much missed.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO OUR FOLLOWING MEMBERS ON THEIR SPECIAL DAY

JULY

6 Claude Cassady

25 Thom May

AUGUST

18 William Jimenez.

SEPTEMBER

2 Carmen Johnson and Hartford Strickland; 5 Deidra Cox; 7 Gloria Johnson; 19 Betty Yake;
20 Naomi Anders; 28 Rosabelle Judge

