



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

904-993-2903

Hospitality / Sunshine

Gail Carroll

gailandrac@aol.com

904-786-7083

FROM THE PRESIDENT

It's no secret the best years of NARFE are far behind us. They peaked during the mid-1980's, give or take a few years. And there's no question that NARFE National, their professional staff, plus the dedicated service and advocacy by the many thousands of members over the past century, is the main reason the federal community receives the benefits we currently enjoy. And, in what has turned out to be our never ending "battle", to defend our earned benefits which we paid for, the groups mentioned above most certainly were very influential in winning a great number of battle skirmishes. Unfortunately, the never-ending battle continues. But, for various reasons, our "defense" (membership) have been sorely depleted since those peak years, and we need to increase our defense to keep from losing the battle completely.

Some of the reasons for those losses include the "mandatory chapter membership" mandate, (circa 1986), the inability to keep pace with the rapidly evolving digital era, non-active due to ageing and/or medical/physical problems of many active members, member deaths, the new FERS, eChapters and rapidly increases of National dues. You can also include complacency and even apathy. All have played a part in the loss of membership. Can and will NARFE survive? I cannot say, but I will say this, I hope it does survive.

At our September meeting, our state President, Evelyn Seabrook related how she recently did her part to recruit new members. Traveling by air, she seized an opportunity to inform federal workers about NARFE. Prior to her trip, she prepared small bags containing several appropriate NARFE brochures, a couple of NARFE logo pens, and a few pieces of snack candy and presented them to TSA agents she interacted with as she passed through airport terminals by introducing herself to them and telling them about our organization. It was, according to her, an eye-opening experience for her. So many she talked with knew nothing about or had even heard of NARFE. But they do now, and they were very thankful.

That was very bold of her, and she was happy she did it. But not many are going to be as bold or go to that expense and effort. But everyone of us know of friends, former co-workers, or even family members who are eligible to join NARFE but have not done so. So, review your NARFE speech, put on your "bold" hat and work your magic on those prospective members.

If each current member signed up just one member, it would double our current total membership count. Think about that, then think about what the federal community would endure without the NARFE organization. Also, as per President Seabrook, there will be a Florida Conference next year, more details to follow.

FYI: Chapter 1984 and other district 2 members, have been invited to join Clay County Chapter 1414 at the Hilltop Restaurant in Orange Park on December 5 for their Christmas Party. We did this last year and it was a very delightful experience. Lots of great fellowship, camaraderie, fun and games, plus a delicious dinner. Call me to register your reservation at 904-786-7083. Payment details to follow.

Lastly, I leave you with this. Someone needs to step up and take over as Chapter President. I am willing to help anyone, whomever it may be, but I am not getting any younger, and I do believe I have been in this position way too long. So, think about that and consider what you are willing to do to keep chapter 1984 active.

LEGISLATION

Here we go again. Last year we had more than the required number of cosponsors to get the Repeal of the GPO and WEP bill onto the floor for a full House vote. But unfortunately, the bill then requires about 100 signees to add the bill to the congressional calendar for it to be voted on. With over 300 cosponsors for the bill, we couldn't get 100 to add it to the calendar. How disappointing! At last count (Sept 27) H.R. 82 had 294 cosponsors. But instead of getting our hopes up for another attempt to right a wrong that should have been repealed long ago, we still may be faced with an almost complete shutdown of the federal government that will create more chaos and financial manipulation (debt) and more to our nation. That is a terrible shame put squarely on the face of our elected federal government leaders, every one of them.

If a shutdown occurs, it will not affect the annuity of federal retirees, Social Security or Medicare payments. Essential services will continue, such as, air traffic control, military, TSA, and other such agencies, but employees will be working without pay. Non-essential service employees will be furloughed until the shutdown is resolved, at which time the government returns to work, everyone will receive back pay and all will be back to normalcy. But a shutdown puts a very heavy burden on many thousands of federal workers. The list of problems and challenges it creates for many of them is long. A shutdown should never happen. Let's hope they can avoid it completely.

A summary of bills in congress that affect our financial status;

H.R. 82 has 294 cosponsors, 200 Dem, 94 Rep, Florida signees; CD 5,8,9,10,11,14,18,20,22,23,24,25,26,27 S.597 (Senate companion bill) 45 cosponsors, 39 Dem, 6, Rep, 3 Ind. No Florida signees.

H.R. 4260 has 101 cosponsors, all Dem, 1 signee from Florida; CD-24.

H.R. 4583 has 179 cosponsors, all Dem. 8 signees from Florida; CD 9, 10, 14, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25.

S. 2280 (Senate companion bill) has 4 cosponsors, No signees from Florida.

H.R. 5342 has 28 cosponsors, 27 Rep, 1 Dem, No signees from Florida. This bill was just introduced on Sept 5. It provides the equal treatment of public servants by updating the old formula which would provide a full Social Security benefit, thereby eliminating the WEP.

H.R. 716 has 28 cosponsors, all Dem, 2 signees from Florida; CD 22, 23. (Fair COLA)

H.R. 866 has 39 cosponsors, 36 Dem, 3 Rep, 3 signees from Florida; CD 9, 10, 23. (Equal COLA)

You can read about other bills endorsed by NARFE in NARFE magazine. Call/write your respective Congressional leader as you are encouraged to do. Believe it or not, it does resonate with them, even more so if you do it frequently.

Senator Marco Rubio
202-224-3041

Senator Rick Scott
202-224-5274

Rep. Neal Dunn (CD-2)
202-225-5235

Rep. Kat Cammack (CD-3)
202-225-5744

Rep. Aaron Bean (CD-4)
202-225-0123

Rep. John Rutherford (CD-5)
202-225-2501

Rep. Michael Waltz (CD-6)
202-225-2706

To find their local offices, go to
senate.gov or house.gov

If any numbers are incorrect, call the Capitol Operator at 202-224-3121 and ask to be connected to your respective congressional leader's office, then deliver your message.

It looks like a 4.7% pay raise for all current employees with a 0.5% increase in locality pay. Locality pay is distributed on an average basis to employees working at any one of the current 54 locality sites. So, employees at one site may receive less than the full 0.5% received by employees at a different site. Sounds clear to me.

As if we didn't have enough increases on gas, food and everything else to adjust to, federal employees and retirees share of 2024 FEHBP premiums will increase – on average – by 7.7 percent according to OPM. While this is a significant increase, it is (albeit) less than last year's 8.7 percent average hike.

Well thank goodness we have a COLA coming in 2024 that will help alleviate that increase. Really? According to latest information, the COLA for next year (if it isn't cancelled) will most likely be around the 3.3 range. Go figure. I think the people in charge at the Department of Labor and its minion the Bureau of Labor Statistics need to be replaced with common folk with a mortgage, one income, and children at home, who must shop almost daily for the best prices on the most essential commodities. It seems many with six figure salaries, and many others in position of authority have difficulty relating to the many challenges of the less affluent, more common folk.

MEMBERSHIP

Our chapter's current total is 47 members. I'm afraid our membership is only going to decrease. I don't see any influx of new members any time soon. But wait, a ray of hope has emerged. Florida Blue (BC/BS) is hosting a Health Fair at the UNF north campus on October 19, and at the Holiday Inn Orange Par on October 20. If anyone would like to participate and work with Greg D'Alessio, (President of Chapter 2273) at manning a NARFE information table, you can contact him at 904-624-7250 or at gregdale713@gmail.com.

HOSPITALITY/SUNSHINE

Gail Carroll

What a delightful meeting we had with Evelyn Seabrook, our state President. She was a Girl Scout, then a Girl Scout Leader and she put us right to work with an enjoyable hands-on activity to show us how to approach strangers so that we can recruit NARFE members. If you missed this meeting, you missed a good one!

On a sad note, Sue Bradstreet Smith died in June. She was very active in NARFE for many years. She will be missed. Remember, there is no October meeting. Be sure to attend in November so that you can get on the reservation list for our Christmas party at the Hilltop in Orange Park

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS ARE IN ORDER FOR THESE FOLLOWING MEMBERS

OCTOBER

1 Kenneth Goldman
3 Charles Rosengren
8 Walden Parker
13 Sue Stringer
25 Kay Woods
29 Alice Stiles
30 Evelyn Hinson

NOVEMBER

3 Cheryl Perrin
13 Joene Hall
20 Kenneth Bushroe
25 Sandra Wiley
26 Richard Crosby

DECEMBER

4 John Rains
7 Lucille Trotter
19 Gail Carroll

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 9	Columbus Day	December 5	Christmas party at Hilltop
October 31	Halloween	December 7	Pearl Harbor Day
November 11	Veteran's Day	December 7	Hanukkah begins at sundown
November 16	Chapter Meeting	December 15	Hanukkah ends
November 23	Thanksgiving	December 25	Christmas
		December 31	New Year's Eve

Here's wishing everyone, **A GHOSTLY HALLOWEEN, A Happy Thanksgiving, a very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!**

