



NATIONAL ACTIVE and RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES TIDEWATER NEWS

Maryland Federation of Chapters
TIDEWATER CHAPTER 1372



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NARFE is Our Nonpartisan Advocate by Evelyn Kirby

Well, folks, the major snowfalls we've endured have dubbed us History-Makers! I hope you weathered the storms with good memories and no sad tales. I'm hoping to reschedule our planned speaker for the cancelled February 10 meeting--Bill Ferguson, Chair of the MD NARFE State Legislative Committee.

Keeping on a legislative track, mark your calendars for two important dates: September 14 is the Gubernatorial Primary Election and November 2 is the General Election. As we get deeper into 2010's coming political drama, bear in mind that while NARFE is a political organization--which lets it advocate on behalf of current and future retirees on Capitol Hill, with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, and before others--, it is also nonpartisan. As you and I, and all members, do official NARFE business, e.g. discuss and distribute information in our newsletters, business meetings, and NARFE-related emails, we must be nonpartisan. This is why when we extend invitations to candidates running for office we always invite those from all major parties to speak with us, not just one individual. Of course, you and I will engage in healthy and courteous political talk with each other...that's normal, that's American. BUT, what you and I must also do without fail is perform official NARFE duties and all forms of official NARFE communication in a completely nonpartisan manner. Thank you for your support in this.

Back to NARFE's advocating for us, I give full credit to the Greater Bowie-Crofton Area chapter for the following excerpt from their newsletter. Please pass this handy summary message on to others. "Who Was Responsible? --for our survivor benefits? --for election of survivor benefits for a post-retirement marriage spouse? --for allowing our participation in 'Open Season' and allowing changes to FEHBP coverage? --for enactment of FERS in 1986? --for protection of annual unreduced federal retiree COLAs against proposed delays and reductions? --for steering the passage of the Long Term Care Security Act of 2000? --for preventing High-3 from reverting to High-5? If you answered NARFE to all these questions, you were right! And if you think any other organization would have obtained them, you're very wrong. No other group cares about Federal civilian retirees."

Legislation Updates by Sally Nichols

Federal: The Obama Administration's budget for FY 2011 does not recommend any reductions in the earned retirement and health security of Federal annuitants and workers. The next steps are House and Senate budget resolutions which begin in the respective Budget Committees. Budget Committee members and chairs and Congressional leaders will jockey among themselves while a new entrant, a Bipartisan Fiscal Commission was established by an Executive Order on February 18. NARFE is concerned that this commission could single out active and retired Federal employees for sacrifices not required of other workers or retirees.

NARFE has applauded the Obama Administration's suggestion that older Americans who received no COLA in 2010 be offered a one-time payment of \$250. When the Administration first endorsed this proposal in October 2009, it was argued that Federal, State, and local government retirees, who are not eligible to receive Social Security, should also be offered relief. NARFE will work with Congressional leaders and the Administration to ensure that all retired public employees receive equivalent compensation.

State: Twenty NARFE members, including our own Evelyn Kirby, attended a hearing on S.B. 190, "Seniors Tax Relief Act," in Annapolis on February 16. This is "our" bill. The companion bill, H.B. 658, has not been scheduled for a hearing in the House as yet. Another one of our bills, S.B. 460, on income tax credits for long-term care insurance premiums, was heard on February 24. Also on February 24, NARFE members testified on S.B. 406, "Fairness in Taxation for Retirees Act," which aims to exclude interest and dividends from retirement plans for taxation for retirees. Please contact Evelyn Kirby or me for information on how you can show support in Annapolis for bills backed by the Maryland Federation of NARFE Chapters. The more NARFE members who appear at hearings, the louder our messages to legislators will be about senior and civilian pension tax relief.

NARFE-PAC: March is NARFE-PAC month. The urgent need for your NARFE-PAC contributions has never been greater. Federal workers and retirees may soon see their benefits in the crosshairs of a targeted effort to get the Government's fiscal house in order. Please use the form on page 22 of the March issue of *NARFE* magazine to make your contribution. If the contribution is \$20 or more, you may request a NARFE-PAC pin, and it will be mailed to you.

Get Ready for Harrison's All You Can Eat Buffet and Alice Craig, Poet by Dorothy Greenwood

We will be returning to Harrison's Chesapeake House Restaurant on Tilghman Island in March for an "All You Can Eat" Buffet. Directions: From Route 50 take Easton Parkway (Route 322) to Route 33 to St. Michaels and Tilghman. After crossing the Knapps Narrows Bridge onto Tilghman Island continue approximately one mile. The restaurant will be on your left.

Social Hour with cash bar begins at 11:30 a.m., with lunch to follow at 12:30 p.m. Menu includes "All you can eat" buffet of fried oysters, chicken, ham, stewed tomatoes, green beans, red boiled parsley potatoes, coleslaw, biscuits, sweet tray, iced tea or coffee. The price of \$18.00 includes tax and gratuity. Please pay by cash. Reservations are required and must be made by Saturday, March 6 by calling Dorothy Greenwood at 410-822-2674 or Anne Haas at 410-745-2217. Reminder—no cancellations will be accepted after Sunday, March 7, 2010. If you do not cancel in a timely fashion or do not attend, you are responsible for payment.

A change of pace for our March meeting-- Alice Craig, the wife of member Bob Craig, will be our presenter. Alice is a local prize-winning poet. She will read some of her poetry and give the background of the poem.

Now is the Perfect Time to Sign up for Dues Withholding by Louise Woods

We are encouraging members to sign up for **dues withholding**. As an incentive, the first year **only** that you have dues withholding, the Federation will rebate \$3.00 and the chapter will rebate the chapter dues for one year. This is a total rebate of \$10.00 for members of our chapter and certainly something to consider. We have already had one member from our chapter sign up for this special. This incentive will be tried for a period of time and then evaluated.

Dues withholding is a win/win situation. The member wins because there will be no more renewal notices to put aside and sometimes forget and in addition there is a 15 percent discount over the annual dues price; NARFE wins because headquarters does not have to spend the money to send renewal and sometimes second renewal notices. So give this a thought; it is very easy to do. See me for the forms that need to be completed.

I sent welcome letters to new NARFE members: **Carol Darrell** of Queenstown, **Eleanor Murphy** of Easton and **Kathryn Sall** of Stevensville. We welcome the following NARFE member who has transferred from another chapter to ours: **Nancy Hesser** of Crocheron. We look forward to meeting each of you at a future meeting.

Sadly we note the passing of **Claudia Wuigk**, **Cecil Forrest** and **Gloria Hawks**.

Don't forget about the **recruiting contest** for cash prizes for the winning chapters which sign up the most new members. If you need applications and information about recruiting, please let me know. To get credit for your recruitments, be sure to write "1372" on the chapter line of the application and **your member number** which is listed on the label of your NARFE magazine. For you and the chapter to get credit both pieces of information are required. National is still sending \$8 checks to members who recruit active Federal employees. Let us see how well our chapter can do in this competition.

Helping Yourself is Easy by Evelyn Kirby

I am not a computer whiz. So when, as you read on, I say we have user-friendly ways for you to stay current on legislative and other matters, you can take that information to the bank. I urge you to use these easy methods and to become an activist in issues important to you. I also welcome interest from you, whether you use a computer or not, in being included in any alerts we get asking for support for pending legislation. Remember such support can be done via letters, calls, visits to legislators and/or just showing up at hearings. Talk with me, Sally Nichols, or Louise Woods about your interest and we can help you get tuned in and involved.

At the **national level**, advocacy for Federal legislation and federal policies beneficial to us is the bread and butter work led by NARFE Headquarters. This includes the crackerjack Legislative Staff directed by Dan Adcock and supported by top notch analysts, some of whom have experience on congressional staffs. While we don't want to jam their phones with constant inquiries, I know they are amenable to helping us as needed. They are at 800-456-8410. For service at your fingertips go to narfe.org, and sign in using your name and NARFE Member ID which is on the address label of your monthly NARFE magazine. You will be amazed at the useful information you find. For example, after clicking onto "Membership", you can go to "Join GEMS" (Global Electronic Messaging System). Typically on Friday that system releases brief, critical electronic messages about pending issues. It provides you steps and links to follow to relay concerns directly to your Senators and U.S. Representative. It even can write your letters. Wow! I can't say enough about the ease of this process or its importance to you and to NARFE. It is a painless way for you to 'act

up' on attacks on your earned benefits and other matters. On narfe.org you can also click onto "Legislation" to have instant access to information and links to sites that offer details of pending bills, their status and much more. Of course, you can call Louise Woods, our MD NARFE Federation Federal Legislative Committee member, too, and she will help you.

For easy access to state level activities and legislative priorities, click on mdnarfe.org. Here you can find MD-specific information, e.g. alerts about hearings on issues such as tax relief and tax credits that the MD NARFE Federation State Legislative Committee (SLC) members will have spent hours working on in your behalf. It also provides simple links to other sites which should be of interest to you, e.g. Federal agencies like Social Security and the Office of Personnel Management, the MD General Assembly (for bill status, text, hearing dates, and more), Congressional links, and more. Actually, mdnarfe.org is in perpetual motion. It houses useful material relevant to all 34 Maryland NARFE chapters. Content changes frequently as new NARFE officers are elected, different topics are discussed in the MD Federation Newsletters available there, and other updates occur. Plus, you can contact Sally Nichols, our SLC member, with questions about our State Legislative Program and bills we are especially backing.

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