

NARFE Chapter 1192

February 4, 2009, Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER President Nancy Crosby called the Chapter's regular monthly meeting to order, 12:00 p.m., Red Lion Hotel, Kennewick, Wash. She welcomed 33 – 31 members, 1 non-member guest (Gwen Howell), and, the program speaker; introduced the head table; and, asked Frank Griffin to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

MEETING MINUTES Secretary Mary Binder highlighted the January Chapter minutes. There were no questions or comments. The minutes were approved. Copies of the Chapter and Executive Board minutes for the January meetings were available at the meeting and are posted on the Chapter's Web site.

TREASURER'S REPORT President Nancy provided the report for Treasurer Philip LaMont, who was absent. Balance on hand reported at the January meeting was \$7,636.44. For January, receipts were \$674.26 and disbursements, \$628.30, leaving a balance on hand of \$7,682.60. Obligations are projected at \$3,150.00 leaving an unobligated balance of \$4,532.60. Nancy said that while we're in pretty good shape at the moment, this could change. Nancy also thanked Joanne Shadel for helping Carolyn Reeploeg with collecting money and checking in members for today's meeting.

Monies collected at the February meeting Luncheon, \$384; Alzheimer's Fund, \$20; NARFE-PAC, \$0; Newsletter Fund, \$18; and 50/50 Raffle, \$34 collected/\$17 awarded.

DISTRICT/OFFICER/COMMITTEE REPORTS

District VP Carl Gallion reported that he installed the Yakima chapter's officers in January, which completed the installation of officers for all 4 of his district's chapters. He attended the Federation's Executive Board meeting in January. A key concern remains the drop in membership numbers, especially retaining members. He'll be involved in a "Retention Attention" workshop Friday in Wenatchee with district membership chair and co-chairmen. Retention Attention is a Federation initiative to assist chapters in improving membership retention. Carl also reported that currently retirees' COLA was in the minus zone but, if that remains through the year, it does not mean annuities would be reduced. There just would be no increase. Carl reminded members about the annual NARFE scholarship program for graduating high school seniors. Information and an application are in the February *NARFE* magazine. And, Carl reported that Federation President Dale Brighton announced that Bob Wiley is the new Federation Alzheimer's chairman.

1st Vice President Gary Hagedorn shared a story regarding a hotel discount he received during the holiday season using the "ID" number provided in an ad in a recent *NARFE* magazine. Rather than \$155/night, his rate was \$48. President Nancy said she's also had good luck using the ID numbers for discounts when she's traveled.

2nd Vice President Carl Gallion thanked those who brought food contributions. He said cash is also accepted. See Carl or Nancy, or one of the other officers.

Alzheimer's No report.

Hospitality Carl again complimented the Red Lion staff for being extremely responsive and accommodating in working particular dietary issues. He reported that the menu for the next two months would be non-meat because of the Lenten season, so hopefully there would not be dietary issues.

Legislative Mary Binder reported for Legislative Co-Chair, Don Binder. *The Washington Times*, Tuesday, Feb. 3, had an article by Mike Causey, senior editor at Federal News Radio, on NARFE's "premium conversion" initiative. NARFE leadership has encouraged members to contact their Congressional delegation regarding this initiative and, to date, many members have. Copies of the article were available at the meeting.

Responding to a member's question regarding support from our Congressional delegation for this and other NARFE initiatives, Mary said there is support, but cost remains an overriding issue as it has for years. Carl stated that a primary focus is maintaining those benefits we currently have, including COLA and health benefits. And, President Nancy reminded members that Larry Williams keeps up the Chapter's Web site; she encouraged members to use it to see announcements and updates, and to get Congressional contact information.

As a reminder, both Don and Mary are scheduled to attend the 2009 NARFE Legislative Training Conference, March 7-10, Washington, DC.

Membership For Chairman Johanna Caylor, President Nancy reported that Johanna sent her a report with updated membership information. It will be included in the March/April Chapter newsletter.

NARFE-PAC For Chairman Don Binder, Mary Binder reported that March is NARFE-PAC month. Watch for information. She also said contributions are always welcome, but especially now after the recent elections, and with all the economic issues Congress and the Nation are facing.

Newsletter For Johanna, President Nancy reported that she, Mary Binder and Johanna will be working on the Chapter's March/April newsletter, which is projected to be out by the end of February. Nancy encouraged members who may be receiving the newsletter via the USPS to use e-mail, if possible, as it is cheaper for the Chapter. She requested those members send her their e-mail address.

Public Relations Gary Hagedorn has assumed the PR duties from President Nancy. He stated that after reading the NARFE PR handbook, he realizes there is more involved than just sending out a monthly press release announcing the Chapter meeting. He said he does not want anything to fall through the cracks so is asking members to let him know about potential PR opportunities.

Service Officers No report.

Sunshine Chairman Anne Ross reported that Douglas Fults and Dirres Cohoe passed away. And, [as reported in January], member Ernest Page passed away. Anne stated that she recommend Ernest's wife contact the Service Center for assistance in contacting OPM. [Carl reported at the January meeting that he was able to help Ernie's widow while he was in the Service Center.]

Website A reminder to members to check the Chapter Web site for updates and other information.

NEW BUSINESS

WSFC Convention President Nancy reported that both she and Secretary Mary Binder received packets with registration forms and other information for the May convention in Wenatchee. Nancy said she had copies for those interested in attending. Keynote speaker will be NARFE President Margaret Baptiste. And, Nancy passed around "booster" list sign-up sheets for those wanting to donate \$1 and have their names appear in the convention program as "booster" supporters. Members can also sign up at the March Chapter meeting.

TSP Withdrawals President Nancy said that the mandatory withdrawal requirements for those individuals turning 70 ½ years of age this year has been postponed for a year, and may become permanent. This also applies to other IRAs; so, if individuals have just started withdrawing, they may reduce the withdrawal amount.

Food Bank President Nancy thanked members for their contributions to the food drive and said she would take care of getting items/cash donations to the food bank.

OLD BUSINESS

BC/BS and Hearing Aid Coverage Chapter member Dick Bradley provided an update on getting his hearing aids, including additional testing he had done, additional information he received, comparison price shopping he did, etc. He said his next update will be on the payment/reimbursement process with the new hearing aid coverage offered by the Blue Cross/Blue Shield health plan.

PROGRAM

Railflex Jan Brienza, sales manager, provided members an overview on the background, concept and "first-ever perishable ship-train" operations now providing unit-train, 5-day, coast-to-coast delivery with the "cold chain" not broken. The local Wallula facility employs 90-100 full-time employees and about 20 part-time employees, all with benefits. Currently, two trains leave the facility weekly, Thursdays and Saturdays, for the East Coast. Anyone wanting a tour of the facility or more information can contact Jan, 509-546-7647.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Drawings Al Lake won \$17, 50/50 raffle; Betty Maupin won the free lunch.

Executive Board Meeting The meeting will follow the Chapter meeting; all members are invited to attend.

Next Chapter Meeting Wednesday, March 4, Red Lion Hotel, Kennewick.

March Meeting Program Dr. Madhu Sahai from the Rod Coler Center, will discuss the center's services.

ADJOURNMENT

Deacon Al Rizzo Reflecting on today's program, Deacon Rizzo asked members to "look inside" themselves and see how their internal "train" is doing – is it safely going from points A to B. What is it carrying – what value system and are we living it

Meeting adjourned 1:09 p.m.

Mary Alice Binder
Secretary