

NARFE News

Tri-Cities Chapter 1192

NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES (NARFE)
ADVOCATES FOR CURRENT AND FORMER FEDERAL EMPLOYEES!!

VOLUME 2004, ISSUE 2

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2004

MEETINGS: 1ST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH @ 11:30 AM, RED LION HOTEL AT COLUMBIA CENTER - KENNEWICK
NO MEETINGS - JULY & AUGUST

President Report (Carl Gallion)

As the hot summer days begin to change to the splendor of Fall - I hope your family has enjoyed the bounties of our land and made wonderful memories of warm-weather activities.

May found a dedicated group of Chapter 1192 delegates attended our Federation Convention in Vancouver, WA. Larry Vancil from Bremerton was elected President and Dwight Pace from Spokane was elected Vice President. We passed a very conservative budget, conducted many workshops on important NARFE issues, voted on bylaw and resolution changes and renewed friendships with fellow delegates from all parts of Washington. This continues to be an exceptional event in our NARFE year; one I would highly recommend to all chapter members.

Over the summer months, our NARFE chapter has made great progress towards planning our Washington Federation Convention to be held here in 2006. Committees are forming and brain-storming sessions have produced some exciting ideas that will surely make our Chapter's 2006 contribution one that will continue the proud tradition set by the previous Tri-Cities convention in 1997. Please search your talents and five zero eight eight ambitions and volunteer to help us to make this event happen.

As we began our monthly luncheons on Sept 1st, our fall program schedule promises to make our meetings most enjoyable. Please join us on the 1st Wed. of each month to learn current legislative happenings as well as follow our progress on various Chapter events.

Fall brings us to the beginning of our Chapter renewal. We'll need a Nominating Committee to canvas for candidates for chapter offices for 2005. This is THE way to not only find out first hand how things are done but to lend your influence on getting things done. We always need fresh ideas. Make time to participate in YOUR NARFE chapter.

Five (5) members attended the National Convention in Reno, NV. (August 28 thru September 2, 2004). Johanna Caylor was our voting delegate. We will be anxious to get feedback from the delegates as they participated in this national event. **Don't** forget to mark your calendar for all the up-coming elections. Exercise three three four zero your voice in candidate selections as well as the November general election. This is your time to vote for the candidate that will support our NARFE platform, dedicated to improving our hard-earned retirement benefits.

Public Relations (Dolores Rizzo) –

The **2004 WSFC Convention** held in Vancouver WA at the Red Lion Quay is history. Delegates attending in Vancouver included: Carl Gallion, Marguerite Rosson, Estelle Bellefeuille, Joe and Jolene Kuhns, Johanna Caylor, Sigrid Preston, Lyell Bingham, Al and Dolores Rizzo, and guest June Monteagudo. Chapter 1192 received a Certificate and check for a 1% growth in Chapter Members last year (4/01/2003 thru 3/31/2004). The **2005 WSFC Convention** will be hosted by Puyallup Chapter May 15-16-17, 2005 at the LaQuinta in Federal Way.

The **2006 WSFC Convention will be held in the Tri-Cities**. The dates are set – May 16-18, 2006, at the Shilo Inn in Richland. We will need lots of assistance and we are certain we can count on our members to all chip in and help make the 2006 Convention a success as they did in 1997. We will need Hosts and Hostesses and lots of cookies for the Hospitality Room so when you get the request to volunteer – please step up to the plate.

The **Biennial National Convention** was held in Reno, Nevada August 29 thru September 2, 2004. Delegates representing Chapter 1192 included: Johanna Caylor, Joe and Jolene Kuhns, Mitsuko (Midge) Loth, and Sigrid Preston.

The **2006 Biennial National Convention** will be in Albuquerque, NM. Those of you with computers – please go to the NARFE website www.narfe.org and find out all the Convention news. **There is a name change** – National **Active** and Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) – The resolution was one of many submitted for a name change but this particular one was submitted by a Montana Chapter. The name change will be phased in by 2006.

HIDDEN NUMBERS – Somewhere in this Newsletter are three (3) hidden numbers. These numbers are the last four digits of members ID#. If one of these is yours, bring this letter to the next NARFE Chapter Meeting and you will receive reimbursement for your current Chapter Dues of \$5.00 OR if you live out of state - mail the section with your ID # to Newsletter Editor and you will receive a \$5.00 reimbursement.

NARFE-PAC (William Darke):

"Politicians do not have an easy life. Somebody is always interrupting it with an election." --*Will Rogers*

Today we have a sound retirement system and a model group health insurance plan. We worked and paid for these benefits during our careers so we could depend on them in our retirement. In order to maintain our benefits, we must remain watchful to ensure that Congress doesn't take actions that would reduce them.

This year is an election year. If you've been watching, you are probably aware that the Bush administration is proposing medical savings accounts for our health insurance program. This would allow the young and healthy members to opt out of the regular risk pool and pay lower rates for reduced coverage. This would have the effect of dividing the risk pool, leaving the older and less healthy retirees to pay higher premiums for their existing coverage. The Kerry camp, on the other hand, wants to open the FEHBP to the uninsured, which would five four three four probably not be to our benefit either.

One way we can try to stem the onslaught on our benefits is by contributing to NARFE-PAC. For a donation of \$15 you can help preserve our benefits and receive a lapel pin in recognition of your contribution. For the 15 month period ending March 31, 2004, only 12 of our more than 300 members have made contributions and the contributions totaled \$305. I would like to thank those who have contributed, and would like to see more of you join the fight to preserve our benefits. Please use the forms in your NARFE magazine or see me at one of the chapter meetings and I will send it in for you.

Legislative Report (Pierre Saget) :

Of potential interest to those who have or will have Social Security (SS) income in addition to CSRS income is a new Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) bill HR 4391 introduced by Rep. Kevin Brady (R-TX). This new bill would provide increased benefits for low and medium-wage earners but a decreased benefit for high-wage earners and would essentially amount to another method of "means testing" for SS benefits. NARFE President Fallis voiced concerns: ie; doesn't repeal or reform GPO, that federal retirees who have 30 years or more of SS earnings would no longer be exempt from WEP, and finally he urged full repeal of the WEP & GPO and was supported in this by several state teacher's associations.

A second issue of much more importance requires support from each of our members. On July 8, 2003, the House responded to NARFE's concerns when it passed HR 2631, a bill introduced by Rep. Tom Davis (R-VA) that would require FEHBP to provide a prescription drug benefit for federal annuitants age 65 & older that would be at least as generous as the drug coverage available to other FEHBP enrollees, namely annuitants age 64 and younger and active federal workers. Approval by the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs chaired by Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME), a federal-friendly lawmaker, would clear the measure for action by the full Senate.

But time is running out in the current congressional session. The committee and Senate must act between Sept. 7th, when Congress reconvenes and as early as October 1st, when it will probably adjourn. *That is why now it the time for all NARFE members to deliver the following message to both of their Senators by phone, fax or e-mail:*

"I urge you to protect my earned FEHBP drug benefits by asking Chairwoman Susan Collins and the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee members to Approve S.1369 and H.R. 2631 at their earliest opportunity. I would appreciate a response from the senator to my mailing address at: _____" All NARFE members can use the toll-free number, 1-866-220-0044 to reach the Capital switchboard and ask for the Senator by name.

The **2005 Legislative Conference** dates are set: Saturday, February 26 through Tuesday, March 1, 2005. Typically, Sat. is registration and an evening reception and/or dinner. Sun & Mon are the break-out sessions and speakers (lunches and dinners), and Tuesday is the visit to Capitol Hill.). **Our chapter should strive to have an attendee for this upcoming conference in 2005.**

Local Addresses are:

Senator Maria Cantwell (D)
Federal Office Bldg.
915 Second Ave., Ste 3208
Seattle, WA 98174
206-220-6400 OR 202 224-3441 (DC)
E-mail: Maria_cantwell@cantwell.senate.gov
<http://cantwell.senate.gov>

Senator Patty Murray (D)
Federal Office Bldg.
915 Second Ave., Ste 2988
Seattle, WA 98174
173 Russell Senate Office Bldg. #111, Washington, DC 20510
202 224-2621 OR 206 553-5545 Seattle
E-mail: Senator_murray@murray.senate.gov
<http://murray.senate.gov>

Representative Richard "Doc" Hastings (R)
1323 Longworth House Office Bldg.,
Washington, DC 20515
202 225-5601 OR 509 543-9396 (Pasco)
WebSite: www.house.gov/hastings

Congressional Co-sponsor Score Card for NARFE Hot Issues

<u>Bill</u>	<u>Sen. Murray</u>	<u>Sen. Cantwell</u>
S1369 FEHBP Drug Benefit	YES	NO
S 623 Premium Conversion	YES	YES
S 349 GPO-WEP Repeal	YES	YES

Now would be a great time to contact our local Congressman, Doc Hastings, and ask for his support on H.R. 2125. You are encouraged to use FAX, e-mail, or contact his local office here in the Tri-Cities. (Mail situation in Washington, DC is still questionable and slow at best)

ALL FEDERAL EMPLOYEES AND RETIREES ARE URGED TO CALL THE WHITE HOUSE (888-225-8418) TO ASK PRESIDENT BUSH TO PURSUADE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE CHAIRS TO MOVE NARFE's PRIORITY "PREMIUM CONVERSION" LEGISLATION TO THE FLOOR. IN ADDITION, MEMBERS COULD ALSO FAX A MESSAGE TO 202 456-2461.

Alzheimer's Report (Lyell Bingham) - New brochures will be available at the October meeting. Reports from National Convention indicate the winner of the Computer raffle in Reno was not from Washington State. Joan Veasey, National Alzheimer's Chairman, announced the Computer raffle and the raffle for several donated items and organized by her committee collectively raised \$27,000 for Alzheimer's research. Major winners will be published in NARFE Magazine. Thanks to all Chapter members and friends who bought tickets.

Program Chair (Jack Keating) :

September 1, 2004, Western and Cowboy Poetry, our own Clark Crouch. If you missed the meeting, you missed a good Program. Reviews were great!

October 6, 2004, Jeanne Dillner, CEO of SIGN (Surgical Implant Generation Network), Discuss the world-wide program to improve the well being of persons with broken and damaged limbs who don't have access to health care.

November Meeting, Report of Nominating Committee and election of officers.

December Meeting – Installation of 2005 Officers and bring canned goods for the Tri-City Food Bank.

Service Officer News (Estelle Bellefeuille):

"PROTECT YOUR PENSION" (excerpted from Anna May Hanson, Service Officer, Chapter 1701 Renton). Good advice from the National Center for Retirement Benefits tells us to.

#1. When STARTING WORK, create a "pension File." Keep all documents from your employer or pension plan, copies of letters and memos about the plan, and compensation records, including W-2's and Social Security Forms.

#2. Educate yourself about how your plan works.

#3. If you think your pension is incorrect, hire a professional to check the numbers. Most errors involve wrong years of credited service, failure to calculate benefits for those who worked past 65, and mistakes with average earnings and interest rates. For a list of 30 Serious Errors in Pension Plans, visit www.ncrb.com or call 1-800-666-1000.

Living Benefits Claim Form (FE-8)

Use: Enrollees who are terminally ill with a life expectancy of 9 months or less use this form to claim living benefits under the FEGLI program.

Electronic Copies: There are no electronic copies of this form.

Paper Copies:

Employees who wish to apply for a Living Benefit must contact OFEGLI by calling 1-800-633-4542. OFEGLI will send you an application form.

Annuityants who wish to apply for a Living Benefit must contact OFEGLI by calling 1-800-633-4542. OFEGLI will send you an application form.

Agencies **cannot order** the FE-8.

If you have any questions on this or any other program you may call me at 783-8461 or the Service Center 376-8972 on Tuesdays from 9:30 AM to 12:00 Noon. Office is located in Room #137 in the Federal Bldg., 825 Jadwin Ave, Richland.

FEHB Open Season dates for 2004 are November 8 – December 13, 2004. Changes in enrollment are effective January 1, 2005. Local FEHBP Fairs will be held in Tri-Cities on October 21st. SSA-Kennewick: 9:00 – 10:00 a.m., Richland Fed. Bldg: 11 am – 1:00 pm; and Stevens Center 2:00-4:00 pm. Retirees are welcome to visit Health Care Providers at this event...they are there to answer your questions. NARFE will have a table at the various locations.

Tricare for Life may be advantageous to many Medicare-eligible military system beneficiaries who are now covered under the FEHB Program as Federal civilian retirees, family members, or former spouses. Any federal employees, retirees and survivors who are eligible for Tricare for Life and want to **suspend** their FEHBP enrollments should contact the Office of Personnel Management at **1-888-767-6738** to obtain the necessary forms.

Sunshine News (Anne Ross) Cheer Up/Thinking of You/Get Well Cards were sent to several members/co-workers ☐under the weather☐ since last issue. Please call 586-3355 to notify me of anyone you feel may need cards. Our own Deacon, Al Rizzo is recuperating from recent surgery at his son's home in Seattle area. Cards may be mailed to their home address.

Sympathy and Condolences to the following NARFE family members and/or co-workers: Robert J. Drake, Nick Karagianes (brother passed), and Pierre Saget (Mother Simone passed).

NEWSLETTER (Johanna Caylor-Editor): IF YOU ARE ON E-MAIL - PLEASE SEND YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS TO: caylorx2@aol.com OR give it to the Telephone Caller when they call you about the meeting. We hope to be able to send an E-mail version of the Newsletter to cut duplicating and postage costs in the future. (Editor)

Membership News (Johanna Caylor) **May 20-21, 2004, Federal Employees in the Federal Building were invited to our Membership Drive (USPS-INS-DOE-GSA-IG). It was great to visit with former co-workers and meet new federal employee friends. WELCOME** to our new chapter members **APRIL 2004 through AUGUST 2004:** John Acosta (USPS), Jay Augustenborg*, Michael K. Barrett*, Kathy A. Beecher*, Dennis A. Brown*, R. Paul Carter*, Connie J. Castleberry*, Ronald Crouse* (USFWS), Luke C. Ellis, Jr. (USPS-TX)*, Julie K. Erickson*, Joe M. Escamillo*, Craig A. Groendyke*, Rudolph F. Guercia*, Ronald L. Higgins*, Kathy M. Hintzen*, Gregory Hughes* (USFWS), Larry D. Johnson*, Paul Kruger*, Harold B. Litz, Richard W. Mayo*, Peggy Sue Nazarali*, John P. Neath*, Ellen J. Olsen*, Cathy D. Poyner*, Gil M. Ramin*, Keith E. Reagan* (GSA), Ralph W. Russell*, Mary Beth Smith (USPS-TX)*, Harold J. Stafford, Jr.*, John E. Trevino*, Steve A. Wiegman*, and Barbara Williamson*. (* indicates Current Federal Employees or CFE's – **another acronym to add to your list**)

Reinstated members: David J. Boehning*, Marlene Dick (LSA), Barbara J. Greer, Marilyn McNeil, Robert D. Larson, Jack Rhoades (**D/W**)

Transfer In: John S. Treadwell (from Walla Walla Chapter).

Members signing up for **Dues Withholding** include: John Acosta, Donald A. Binder, Lyell R. Bingham, Wm. J. (Bill) Blunt, Barbara and Clark Crouch; V. Lee Hobbs, E. C. (Gar) Norman, Maynard Plahuta, Norman and Vicki Ravely, Diana Santos, Marilyn L. Walker

Taking advantage of **LIFE Membership** include: Wu S. Chin, Jeannie Compton, William (Bill) Darke, Robert Larson, and Danny Skinner.

The above members signing up for LIFE Membership or Dues Withholding will receive a \$10.00 rebate from our Federation. This \$10.00 rebate carried forward on July 1st. Current Federation Membership Chair – Lois Pace indicated \$750.00 has been budgeted for the \$10.00 rebates and when the \$750.00 fund is depleted, the \$10.00 Reimbursement will end for our current Budget Year – July 1 thru June 30th 2005.

Delinquent or lapse(d) members - you will receive this newsletter issue in hopes that you will reconsider your choice and renew your NARFE membership. If you have misplaced your renewal slips, mail your \$34.00 checks to Johanna (return address) for transmittal to the National Office.

While on the subject of Membership - the Chapter just received the April Semi-Annual Roster (M114 Report) prior to going to press in May and I have reviewed it with a fine tooth comb. Some members have relocated and moved out of state. It would be helpful when you change your address, **please give the person you talk to at 1-800-456-8410 - your new phone number and new area code.** I am finding many moved out of state and the roster still indicates a 509 area code. Please help us to keep our Chapter records current and accurate.

NEW INCENTIVES MEANS MORE MEMBERS – As long as the member **OR** prospective member is a CFE, renewal is indefinite and based on the established reduced fee structure at that time. When federal service is completed, the **now retired federal employee** would renew based on existing chapter/national dues structure. Remember – Membership fees increased JULY 1, 2004 – do not try to join NARFE using the old forms. New forms have a date on the back of the forms (07/04). They will be returned to you with a letter stating the current fee(s) and delay the process of joining NARFE. The new dues structure is still a bargain to be kept abreast of information concerning your benefits – future retirees and current retirees.

NARFE Greeting Cards & Calendars: These cards and calendars are sent to NARFE members **as a gift**. You are under no obligation to do anything other than use the cards and calendar as you see fit. I have heard negative comments from newer members about “reminders” received. Simply tear them up...do not even open them if they upset you. If you do not want the cards, bring them to the next luncheon meeting and give them to Anne Ross, Sunshine Chairperson, for use within our Chapter. ***IF you do not want to receive these cards, OR*** if you have not been included on the gift list, you must contact the National Vice President in writing or via email: natlvp@narfe.org

Newsletter is published Qtly. by NARFE Chapter 1192 . All rights reserved. Copies are mailed to all members-in-good standing and others. Johanna Caylor, Editor, 375-0739 or E-mail: caylorx2@aol.com
