



# MARYLAND FEDERATION NEWSLETTER SPRING 2012



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**Ted Jensen**

If showing up is half the battle, we make it easy for you! The Federation Mini-Convention will feature engaging speakers on interesting topics, a chance to influence the future of NARFE, fine fellowship, and a good lunch. Please join other active members and leaders for a two-day business meeting in Bowie April 30-May 1.

A highlight of this meeting will be a once-in-a lifetime opportunity for many of us. In the course of a meeting at Collington (a wonderful residential retirement community in Mitchellville near Bowie and home to many former Federal employees), I had the good fortune to meet Mr. Bill Broadwater, an original Tuskegee Airman. Bill has agreed to speak with us on the morning of May 1 about the history of the Tuskegee Airmen. This will be our time to honor the service of these true American heroes who helped win WWII and change history when they came home.

A key session of the meeting will be that of U.S. Representative John Sarbanes, MD 3rd Congressional District, as he gives us his insight into the likely next round of negotiations on Federal Issues. On the political front, we will feature updates on the recent legislative session in Annapolis, which addressed many pocketbook issues, and the latest action at the Federal level.

Bridget Boel, the newly appointed Director of Marketing and Recruiting at Headquarters, will join us on May 1 to talk about the new Strategic Plan for Recruiting and share her own fresh ideas with us. We also have as a speaker Dennis Martin, Membership Chair for the Virginia Federation, which has had consistent success in signing up new members. You will also hear from our newly appointed Electronic Communications Committee, which is off to a strong start.

Another matter of importance to the future of NARFE will be discussion of the proposed rewrite of the National ByLaws. Those of us who attend the National Convention in August will have to decide what to do, and we need to know what our members think. A lot of work has gone into this effort, but there are some serious concerns about the product we have seen to date. By the time we meet on April 30 we will most likely have the latest and best version we will get. I have asked our resident expert, John Stackpole, Federation Parliamentarian, to anchor a panel discussion to help us chart the right course.

The National Convention will be in Reno, Nevada, August 26-30. It promises to be another critical meeting, and your Executive Committee urges chapter leaders and members to attend and make your

*(continued on page 3)*

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264	Hyattsville .....	Thomas LoJacono
306	Hagerstown .....	Ed Wurmb
357	Takoma Park .....	Betty Brown
409	Frederick .....	Mary Lou Blessing
410	West-Mar .....	Donnie Gibson
422	Laurel .....	Bill Anderson
581	Gaithersburg .....	John Padan
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1127	Rockville .....	Jennifer Ramsey
1143	Leisure World .....	Barbara Walter
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1261	Delmarva .....	Eleanor Kaul
1363	Bay Area .....	JoAnne Groves
1372	Tidewater .....	Evelyn Kirby
1466	Calvert County .....	Shelly Zimon
1519	Glen Burnie .....	Stan Jacobs
1522	Susquehanna .....	Harold Forst
1734	Howard County .....	Burdelle Dowdell
1747	Greater Bowie/Crofton .....	Dorothy Campbell
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1972	Waldorf/La Plata .....	Richard Campbell
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### The Maryland Federation Newsletter

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voices heard. We hope to have a large delegation from Maryland. In addition to the fun and business of the Convention, the venue is a good one. The hotel and meeting rooms and on-site restaurants are excellent. Nevada is a beautiful part of the country, so come early or stay after the Convention if you can. We have invited all candidates for National office to come to our Mini-Convention. So far four incumbents have accepted. For those who plan to go to Reno, we have scheduled a prep meeting on July 17. This is a useful session for anyone attending the Convention, and especially helpful for first timers.

On another convention theme, the Site Selection Committee for the Maryland Federation did an outstanding job in researching the best venues for our next Convention. Two of the members, Jackie Roberson and Doug Newton, had so much fun working on that project that they volunteered to co-chair our 2013 convention at the Carousel Resort in Ocean City. We are most grateful. While we are moving more and more into electronic communications to conduct day-to-day business, there is value in social gatherings that bring together people with a common purpose. The people who make these meetings work deserve our appreciation. We have pictures of some of them in this issue.

You will notice something a little different in this issue, two articles from other organizations. We will do this from time to time, recognizing that our interests go beyond issues specific to Federal employees and retirees. We all share an interest in living a long, healthy life. In the case of the article from AARP, we all care about our electric bills and service, and many of our members are in Pepco's service area. I know many of our members also belong to AARP. AARP in Maryland will run an article in its newsletter about the value of joining NARFE. In general, we should follow the lead of our State Legislative Committee and try to reach out to other organizations when our interests overlap.

I hope to see many of you at a Chapter meeting or in Bowie or in Reno. It's up to us to stick together and do our best for NARFE and our communities and our country. ●●

## TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

Linda Adams



L-R: Bill Broadwater, original Tuskegee Airman; Ted Jensen, MD Federation President; Byron Morris and Earnest Blake, Tuskegee Airmen

The [Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site](#) is located at Tuskegee University. The National Park Service is currently renovating and expanding the [Tuskegee Airmen Historic Site](#) adjacent to Moton Field Municipal Airport. If you are in the area, you should visit both National Parks. They are within 10 minutes of each other. Both are very interesting historic sites and well worth your time to visit. I was just there this month and thoroughly enjoyed the Parks and was enthralled by all of the exhibits.

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## REMINDER TO ALL CHAPTER TREASURERS

Don't forget to file your annual tax return form EZ 990. All Chapters must file every year without exception. If you fail to file, your chapter may lose its tax exempt status. This is a serious matter. In the last two years, IRS has pulled tax exempt status from 35 chapters. Once this status is lost, it is a major headache to get it back with nasty forms to complete and a fine to be paid. Please advise Federation Treasurer Dick Strombotne when you file, and contact him if you need help with the form. Thanks for your attention to this. ●●



*Evelyn Kirby, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Pres./  
Legislative Director*

Evelyn Kirby

## **LEGISLATIVE ONSLAUGHT CONTINUES**

In the past couple of months we have been a punching bag for those who believe that ‘shared sacrifice’ means ‘shared attacks’ on all in the Federal community. This will likely not change soon. We must continue to speak out and to engage in hard-hitting legislative advocacy. A sliver of relief came via public outcries from Senators Cardin and Mikulski, House Minority Whip Hoyer and Representative Van Hollen when attempts came to subject *current* employees to drastic increases in pension contributions. That bullet was dodged at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, and we as a Federation thanked these four for their roles in stemming these hits. Sadly, those new to Federal Service, under FERS, in January 2013 and after, and those with less than five years’ service, will see retirement contributions rising to 3.1%, from the now .8%, unless repeal is put forward and passes.

Look at this amazing list of bills striking at active employees and their futures: *H.R.270*—Mandatory two-week unpaid furlough for employees; *H.R. 3835 and S.2079*—Another year of pay freeze; *H.R. 3844*—Ending within-grade step increases; *H.R. 235*—Workforce cuts and three-year pay freeze; *S.2065*—Workforce cut and pay freeze through June 2014; *S.1476*—Pay freeze through 2014 and no employee bonuses; *S.178 and H.R. 408*—Pay freeze through 2015 and limit to number of workers; *S.1936*—Five-year pay freeze and limit number of staffers; *S.644*: - End defined benefit portion of FERS annuity; *H.R. 3713*—Sharply increase pension contributions, end FERS supplement, and raise pension contributions for new hires; *H.R. 2114*—Cut workforce by 10% by 2015; *H.R. 657*—All but Defense, VA, and Homeland Security [which have 60% of federal jobs] hire one employee for two who leave; *H.R. 3029, H.R. 3487,*

*H.R. 3662, S. 1476, S. 1611*—Hire one employee for three who leave; *H.R. 1779*—No executive branch hiring in a year when a federal budget deficit budget is projected; *H.R. 3494*—Reduce workforce to October 2007 level; *S.178*—Limit size of workforce and extend pay freeze through 2015; *S.261*—Cut workers’ compensation for older employees; *H.R. 87, and S.712*—Endanger some employee rights. Details on each bill and more can be seen at [www.thomas.gov](http://www.thomas.gov). Additional bills hitting current employees may come. The bills and their sponsors don’t address negative impacts these will have on service delivery and other work, the difficulties to face when new blood will not seek Federal jobs, or the speed with which those now active will opt to retire, leaving massive holes in the knowledge base of the Federal cadre. Retirees are not to breathe easy either. Attacks on the drawing boards will aim at health benefits programs, and pensions.

We have no safe benefit or money. I applaud Maryland activists who have called Congress, sent emails and letters, button-holed Representatives in town hall sessions, grocery stores and elsewhere, talked back to anyone who says we didn’t earn our way and don’t deserve promises made. Note that Maryland was commended for its activism at a meeting on February 24 with the HQ Legislative Department. HQ also reported that across the country there are examples of changed minds and attitudes when NARFE members get the facts straight about false and demeaning statements voiced in speeches, articles, the press and broadcasts. Maryland... Let’s keep those hard facts and truths rolling out to naysayers. And cast your votes in the April 3 and November 6 elections for those who are on YOUR side.

GEMS enrollment is increasing as more people become computer savvy and share addresses. I call on Chapter Presidents to emphasize GEMS sign-up constantly, particularly one-on-one at meetings. Say you will give their email addresses to NARFE HQ for them...then do it. Strip away excuses not to get

*(continued on page 5)*

GEMS. HQ leaders tell me that any new member who provides an email address is automatically enrolled in GEMS. BUT for those not new, and for those whose email addresses have changed, we in the chapters and/or the members themselves must tell HQ of interest in GEMS and/or updated information [email AND postal addresses, and phone numbers] on an ongoing basis. This is not exciting work, but it is critical to our success.

On our Maryland legislative side, check out the State Legislative Committee's Facebook site: [Maryland NARFE Legislative Advocates](#). This is the first official Facebook site for the Federation. It covers mostly issues relating to long-term care insurance premium annual tax cut proposals—so far. It's a work in progress, but a good first step and learning tool. Applause to the SLC for this important launch.



*Jim Cowie, Federal Legislative-  
Committee Coordinator*

**FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE  
UPDATES**

Jim Cowie

Some of the members of the Federation Legislative Committee (FLC) are now in different Districts. We would like to have up to three Coordinators for each District, working as a team, with good liaison with the Chapter officers in their District who are involved in Legislation. For example, we would hope to encourage two election forums in each District, at venues which are convenient for members from different chapters in the same area, to attend.

In Evelyn Kirby's article, there is a long list of actions being proposed in the House and the Senate which would continue to call on the Federal community to bear the brunt of reducing the Deficit. The proponents believe that the Federal Government has too many people doing too many things inefficiently, and being rewarded by generous pay and benefits paid for by taxpayers. While there is always scope for improvement, this philosophy is more driven by ideology than by factual evidence. Even the associated emphasis on the Deficit is misplaced, since the top priority in the short term must surely be to promote economic recovery. Hence pressures have arisen in the current Congress to accept compromises which accommodate this distorted ideology without the pain being distributed in any reasonable manner. There were good reasons why pay parity had long existed between civilian and military employees, but this continues to no longer be the case despite, changing circumstances in our military commitments. The more recent blow to the Federal community was

the agreement for new Federal hires, and those with less than five years of service, to have to make higher pension contributions to help pay for the ten-month requirement to continue to fund unemployment benefits and avoiding reducing Medicare payments to Doctors. In its original form, this change would also have applied to all active Federal employees. Hence we need to be aware that, even our most committed supporters may be forced to agree to a compromise which would otherwise be unacceptable and this threat will remain for as long as the current political stalemate continues.

NARFE has put considerable emphasis on "fairness" and "rationality" in defending our interests, but there is not much evidence that this plea is getting through to those we would like to persuade. It may be helpful to consider why this might be the case. For those who are hardest hit by the economic downturn, they may well be envious that Federal employees have not suffered as much as they have. Those who have the financial resources to protect their interests are not likely to willingly surrender the advantages that they have, and the controlling powers in the House believe that they were elected to address voter dissatisfaction, and feel they have to honor that commitment. These reasons seem plausible as to why we are having such difficulty in stemming the ideological tide against us. However, a recent book [Fairness and Freedom, A History of Two Open Societies, New Zealand and the USA](#) offers an additional explanation. "Fairness" in New Zealand is defined as "not taking advantage of other people," but the book suggests that many American conservatives argue that "fairness" is "hostile to capitalism, destructive of National Security and dangerous to Liberty," and that "unfairness is virtuous and insepa-

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nable from freedom.” If this carries much weight, it is not surprising that our requests to be treated fairly will often fall on deaf ears. However, it emphasizes that we are more likely to get understanding and support from uncommitted voters if we can share with them the overlapping interests that we have in areas of their concern. We will pursue this in the FLC.

It seems likely that the rest of this year will concentrate on electioneering, with the fate of the Federal community very much affected by the balance of powers in the next Congress and White House. If the forces that have been consistently against us prevail, then we can expect all the items on Evelyn’s list will be implemented and worse, since there would likely be a roll back of some of the sequestration currently to be applied to Defense and National Security being added to the domestic column. We could then anticipate that there would be an inevitable deterioration in the quality of Federal

Service, with functions being reduced and greater reliance on contractors and private activity at higher expense. It is important for our credibility that NARFE fights for a quality Federal Service in the future and not be tempted to focus our attention on protecting just current employees and retirees. Even if the election produces a more favorable outcome for the Federal community, then we must still expect that Entitlements will need to be addressed, with a more balanced approach, which we should be more willing to support than the one-sided attacks we currently are facing.

If ever there was a time to actively get involved in election activity, this is it. It is not just a question of trying to protect our interests, but the contributions of the Federal Government to society are being misrepresented with dire consequences, if this is not challenged successfully. Let us all pledge to do what we can to prevent this result. ●●

### **NARFE-PAC: Protect Your Interests** by Jim Cowie

Many of us have to choose between supporting favorite charities including saving the world, but we are now in circumstances where we need to consider the best ways to save **our world**. The best reason for supporting NARFE-PAC is less that it gives donations to our most supportive Representatives, but more that NARFE selects constituencies that are very competitive and gives support to the candidate who supports our positions, especially if opposed by someone who is very much against us. Who controls the House, Senate and White House has a major effect on how well we can defend our interests, and every seat counts especially if the elections are close. Hence you can find NARFE-PAC donation documentation in most of the *NARFE* Magazines and you are warmly encouraged to protect your interests by making a contribution.



Jeanette Green

*Jeanette Green*  
Secretary

**REPORT GIVERS:** When making a report at a Federation Board meeting **please** give me a copy of your comments for backup. A hard copy helps ensure accuracy of the transcription.

**Chapter Secretaries:** An easy way to access the electronic F-7.

1. On top of the Internet page type in [www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org) and click GO
2. On next page it asks Are you a NARFE member? Log in
3. On next page it asks Last Name, Member ID, Sign In
4. On next page it asks NARFE Officer Home Page. Click
5. On next page click Chapter Activities
6. On next page it asks email, make and provide a password, Sign In
7. On next page click F-7 Update
8. Follow instructions

If you cannot access this form send the following information to me and to Headquarters as part of an email message or by regular mail: chapter name, number, location, meeting dates and dues. First and last names, phone number, email and mailing addresses for each officer and chairman position. Thank you. ●●

## REPRESENTATIVE VAN HOLLEN'S "MEET AND GREET" IN FREDERICK



L-R: Ted Jensen, MD Federation President; Representative Chris Van Hollen; Kathy Siggins, VP Legislation Chair, Chapter 409

Representative Chris Van Hollen held a "Meet and Greet" event on March 14 in Woodsboro, MD. Kathy Siggins, VP Legislation, Chapter 409, and Ted Jensen, Federation President, discussed NARFE concerns with him. Kathy gave Representative Van Hollen a recent *Frederick News Post* editorial with misinformation about Federal pensions and a copy of the excellent response from Chapter 409 President Mary Lou Blessing. Kathy also gained his support for a semi-postal stamp to raise money and awareness for Alzheimer's research. Ted and Kathy thanked him for his steadfast support of the Federal community, and specifically for his efforts to protect the civil service. Ted expressed concern that the constant assaults on active Federal employees would keep the best people from government service to the detriment of the Nation. Representative Van Hollen understands NARFE's concerns and continues to be very supportive. He is seeking election in the newly drawn 8<sup>th</sup> District, which now includes parts of Frederick County, Carroll County and Montgomery County.

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Ed Bice

*Ed Bice,  
State Legislative Chair*

### STATE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

For the 2012 General Assembly session the State Legislative Committee (SLC) had two issues, both of which have been priorities on our agenda for some time: an annual tax credit for the purchase and retention of long-term care Insurance (LTC) and senior tax relief (equalizing the senior exemption for all over the age of 65).

SB 35—sponsored by Senator Klausmeier, District 8, with 13 cosponsors, and the companion bill sponsored by Delegate Hubbard, District 23, with 46 cosponsors, are the bills on LTC. Both would allow an annual \$200 tax credit for the purchase and retention of new LTC policies starting in 2013 and beyond. This annual credit would replace the present \$500 one-time credit. Thirty-six states now have an annual tax credit ranging from \$125 to \$300.

The importance of our efforts cannot be minimized. In 2012 it is projected that expenditures for residents in nursing homes will reach \$1.1 billion dollars under the Maryland Medicaid program. Sixty-six percent of Maryland residents in nursing homes are on Medicaid which is above the national average.

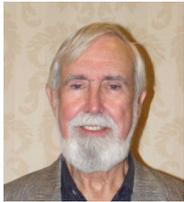
This year we worked hard to get cosponsors for the bills and organizations and individuals who would offer written and/or verbal testimony at committee hearings. The following gave their support: United Seniors of Maryland, Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, Baltimore County Association of Senior Citizens Organizations, Elizabeth Cooney Care Network, Alzheimer's Association, American Council of Life Insurers, and Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot.

SB 730—sponsored by Senator Muse, District 26, and HB 874 sponsored by Delegate Aumann, District 42, with 24 cosponsors, address the equalization issue. The legislation would equalize the exemption by increasing the amount for elderly taxpayers and their spouses in three steps beginning in

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2014 to the same amount for a non-spousal dependent.

The SLC will no doubt support other bills in this session which will be beneficial to Maryland's seniors. I will report the results of our legislative efforts at the next Federation Meeting. ●●



*Chuck Thomas, USM Representative*

## **UNITED SENIORS OF MARYLAND**

Chuck Thomas

The USM Legislative Committee has been actively reviewing the proposals before the Maryland General Assembly that may impact on seniors. Listed below are some of the issues that the Committee has voted to support:

*SB 35/HB 347 – Income Tax credits for Long-Term Care Premiums.* This bill was one of our two priorities for this year. It changes the present one-time credit of \$500 to annual credits of \$200.

*HB 288 – Baby Boomer Initiative Council.* This bill would establish a twelve-member council to study boomer issues and provide reports to the governor and General Assembly. This is basically a continuation of an existing Baby Boomer Council.

*SB 404 – Sales and Use Tax Exemption.* Home Wheelchair Lifts and Stair lifts. This would add these two items to 19 others, such as crutches, wheelchairs, wigs, etc., to the list.

*HB 665 – Fall Prevention Awareness Week:* Falls are a significant problem. This would direct attention to the problem and emphasize preventative actions.

*SB 730/HB 874 – Income Tax Seniors Relief Act.* This is one of our two priority proposals for this legislative year. The bill would correct the disparate treatment in personal exemptions afforded to seniors claimed

on another taxpayers return and those senior taxpayers who filed their own returns. In consideration of the current fiscal situation, the bill would close the gap over a three-year period. While USM voted to support the bill, they chose to submit written rather than oral testimony.

*SB 560 – Transfer of Title and Registration to Surviving Spouse.* This bill would alleviate the requirement for a surviving spouse who was a joint owner of a vehicle until the current vehicle registration expires.

*SB 995/HB 1158— Medical Marijuana Oversight Commission.* This bill would allow use of marijuana for medical purposes upon a doctor's prescription with strict guidelines and oversight.

*SB 941/HB 1257. Protection of Elderly Adults from Financial Abuse – Reporting Requirements .* This bill would require an employee of a bank or other financial institution to report to appropriate officials instances of suspected financial abuse of individuals 65 years of age or older. It would also require financial institutions to train employees to recognize such abuse. ●●



Dave Roseman, MD-PAC Treasurer

### MARYLAND-PAC: USING IT FOR YOUR BENEFIT

Dave Roseman

The Maryland NARFE-PAC filed its annual report on January 16, 2012 for the period covering January 13, 2011 to January 11, 2012. Our starting balance was \$4,236.50. During the period we collected \$2,153. in 95 contributions. We had total expenditures for fund raising events in the amount of \$2,650, leaving us a balance of \$3,739.50. Over the year we supported 27 fund raising events. Our goal for each sponsored event is to have representatives from the Delegates' or Senators' District attend, as well as a member of the State Legislative Committee if possible. Each chapter should develop relationships with their representatives and advise them of our position on bills of interest to NARFE. The chapter can also advise delegates who have been supportive of our issues and who we expect will continue to be friendly, who we have a PAC and would consider supporting them if they make such a request. The PAC has provided us with quality access to a good number of legislators, but we must continue to grow the number of legislators that will give us a fair hearing. The best way for us to do this is for the local chapters to cultivate and work with their delegates and then propose support through the PAC they believe that this would be useful in furthering our relationship with the delegate. During the time the General Assembly is in session delegates and senators are not allowed to hold fund raising events. This is the time we should be out developing relationships and also making contributions to the PAC. Building our PAC fund will enable us to broaden our support of delegates in the future. During these difficult times

when legislatures are cutting services and raising taxes we need to be especially vigilant and active to ensure that we have the opportunity to present our views and suggestions for legislation. Anyone wishing to contribute to Maryland NARFE-PAC should send a check and the below form as per form instructions. Together we can make a difference.

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<p><b>MARYLAND/PAC DONATION (MD/PAC)</b></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Chapter No. _____</p> <p>Amount Enclosed \$ _____</p> <p>Make check payable to MD/PAC (Note on check "Chapter #")</p> <p>Mail to: Dave Roseman, MD/PAC Treasurer 6 Thorburn Road Gaithersburg, MD 20878</p>
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*Barry Grier*  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President/Membership*  
*Director*

Barry Grier

## **RECRUITING: NO NEED TO “REINVENT THE WHEEL”**

Each year we scratch our heads attempting to come up with some new ideas for recruiting new members. Trust me. There is no need to “reinvent the wheel” to quote an old axiom. That reminds me of another old phrase of wisdom: “Can’t see the forest for the trees.”

Then, there’s another old tale that comes to us from South Africa and it’s referred to as the “Acres of Diamonds.” It’s about an old prospector mining for diamonds for years with no luck whatsoever. One day he walks out his back door and stumbles over a lump of ground in his backyard. Removing the earth, the old prospector finds one of the largest diamonds ever discovered in the land. Further diggings result in one of the largest fields of raw diamonds ever discovered. You’re probably wondering “What does this have to do with recruiting new members?” It’s very simple.

Your “Acres of Diamonds” comes to you each quarter from Headquarters and may be the answer to all of your recruitment possibilities. Since you haven’t guessed by now, it’s called the “Recruiter’s Journal” right there in your own backyard so to speak. It’s full of some of the most successful techniques in recruiting that you will ever find. It could prove to be your “Acres of Diamonds.”

In fact, I call the Journal my recruitment “Bible.” I have been collecting the Journals for approximately three years and find them invaluable in designing recruitment programs. Why put your brain in creative shock when all you have to do is reap the benefits of some of the most successful NARFE recruiters in the country. No need to “reinvent the wheel” my friends. Or, better yet, remove those trees and give the Recruiter’s Journal a try and you’ll find a forest of ideas!

Now, don’t keep those Journals in the basement collecting dust. Pass them on to the next chapter President and/or Membership Chair. In fact, you might consider establishing an “archive” of ideas relating to recruiting. This stuff is great to keep the creative juices flowing and designing recruitment programs that have been found to work. I never have seen an idea in the recruitment Journal that was highlighted because it failed.

Now that we are coming out of the doldrums of winter and are doing the “Spring up” thing with our time pieces one hour ahead, it’s also a time to give serious thought of putting the Recruiter’s Journal to work for you in devising a recruitment plan for the rest of the year. And, to make your task even easier, you also can access the Journal on line through the NARFE website.

In fact the Journal has been given a complete “do over” and it really looks great! There is no excuse for the lack of a recruiting plan. The Recruiter’s Journal gives us some of the best and proven strategies used by top recruiters in the country.

To access the Journal, simply log in as a member and click on the NARFE “Officer Home Page” button. On that page there is an archive where you may access previous issues as well. There you have it, my friends, your own recruiter’s archive that you will be able to access at the push of a button.

Let us not forget how productive a chapter recruiting contest can be if you promote it with some creativity. How about putting up a poster that shows who is leading and the names of everyone in the running as is done in many fund raising campaigns. And, don’t be stingy about the prize awarded. A one hundred dollar bill can do a lot toward developing incentive among your members to compete. You may be surprised at the amount of enthusiasm and competitiveness that may evolve from such a recruiting contest. It’s up to the chapter leadership to keep interest high in your meetings and newsletters as the contest progresses and the competition peaks.

*(continued on page 11)*

Also, besides the top winner, there should be a second and third place winner as well to add to the competition.

The majority of chapters developed chapter plans last Fall and now is the time to bring them forward if you haven't already done so. If you have, incorporate some of those great ideas from the Journal into your plans as well. There's no need to "reinvent the wheel" and failure "to see the forest for the trees" is not an option. And, your "Acres of Diamonds" already are available to you. Go for it!! ●●



*Dick Strombotne*  
*Membership Retention*  
*Committee Chair*

Dick Strombotne

## **MEMBERSHIP RETENTION COMMITTEE REPORT: A MEMBERSHIP PERSPECTIVE**

### **Online Activity Module (OAM)**

**Background.** Last July, the NARFE Information Technology Advisory Committee recommended to the National Executive Board (NEB) many changes to the information technology systems in NARFE HQ, with an emphasis on those that would assist chapters with their recruitment and retention efforts. The Information Technology staff has acted on a number of those recommendations, including one to **make membership information available to chapters and federations on a day-to-day basis and online.** Late last year the Online Activity Module (OAM) was mounted on the NARFE website as a supplement to the monthly M112 and the quarterly M114 membership reports. The IT staff deserves a huge "Thank You" for acting promptly.

**Accessing Reports.** The chapter President, Secretary, Secretary-Treasurer, and Membership Chair can access the OAM immediately after signing on to the website and clicking on Officer Reports. **It is simple and easy to do.** The officers need only enter their email address and password and they can start accessing the available reports. The top line reports are for the F-7, Officers Roster, Member Roster, and for the purpose of this discussion, the all important Activity Reports. Clicking on the Activity Reports button

brings up a set of 11 report modules, including in particular: New Members, Reinstatements, Dropped for Non-Renewal, and Payment Status Changes.

The situation is somewhat different at the Federation level as Secretary-Treasurers do not yet have access and only six Activity Reports are currently available, excluding the significant Payment Status Changes report. (By the time this newsletter appears that may well have changed.)

**Dropped Members Report.** The Dropped for Non-Renewal report does not include reinstated members as the M112 report does. In the OAM when a member is reinstated his name comes off the dropped member report. (Example: for Maryland NARFE in 2011, the M112 reports show 2,616 dropped members while the OAM shows 1,819.) This makes it more useful for member retention efforts than the M112 membership reports. HQ is currently changing its schedule of dues notices to add more notices and earlier notices. Until there is some stability in the HQ schedule, I would recommend that chapter retention efforts give first priority to those dropped members whose Expiration Date is eight to nine months earlier, as reported in the OAM. This ensures that the dropped members who have not responded to **all** of the various notices from HQ will be the target of the chapter's efforts.

**Process.** How to do this? The OAM reports typically give the user a choice about the time period of interest, e.g. last year, last month, last quarter. The Dropped for Non-Renewal report asks for a start date by way of drop down menus. Enter the Start date and click to get the report. It may take several minutes for any one report to download depending on the size of the chapter. Next click on the blue button "Save in Excel File." After the requested report is in an Excel file there is no need to keep the OAM open. It takes just a few steps to select the dropped members with specific Expiration Dates in the Excel file. First, highlight all the records. Next, sort on Exp (Expiration Date). Delete any excess records, keeping only those for the month(s) of interest. This file listing the dropped members can be used for personalized letters or for phone calls. This procedure should be repeated each month or whenever the

*(continued on page 12)*

letters are sent or phone calls are made so that they don't go to members who have already been reinstated. Contact me directly if you have questions about adopting this process in your chapter.

### **Lapsed Member Mailing**

Maryland NARFE's mailings to lapsed members include a single mailing in November 2010 and monthly mailings since February 2011. Letters urging the lapsed members to reactivate their membership in NARFE have gone to 1,805 eligible former members and 142 have rejoined for 206 years of membership. Records from NARFE HQ report that from January through December 2011, Maryland NARFE had 879 reinstated members compared with 2,616 non-renewal members, for a 33.6% renewal rate, the best of all NARFE federations. A quick analysis indicates that if the rest of NARFE's federations had the same high response rate, NARFE would add almost 1,800 more members from the ranks of the dropped members. That reasoning has led HQ to decide to add a fifth dues notice to its current set of four dues notices but has not set a date for implementation.

### **Dues Withholding Incentive Program (DWIP)**

Maryland NARFE's original DWIP that started in February 2011 was phased out in January 2012. Through October 2011 some 842 rebate offers for \$5 were mailed. Thirty-five of these members have signed up for dues withholding; a 4.2% response rate. Following the October 4 Board meeting, the rebate was increased to \$10. Through January 2012, these \$10 rebate offers have been sent to 263 members and 15 have switched to dues withholding, a response rate of 5.7%. It appears that the \$10 rebate offer has the intended effect of getting a greater share of acceptances, but the overall statistics are small. At a recent meeting of Region II federation officers called by RVP Ron Bowers, the DE, NJ, and PA federations reported that they have their own versions of a DWIP with a \$10 rebate offer.

In a revised DWIP, starting in November, 2011, Maryland NARFE is sending offers of a \$10 rebate to new members about seven months before their membership expires. The initial response rate to this rebate offering has been about five percent. Finally, in a third version of DWIP, Maryland NARFE has started sending

\$10 rebate offers to members who joined after March 2007 and before April 2010. No results are available at this time.

### **R&R Efforts by HQ**

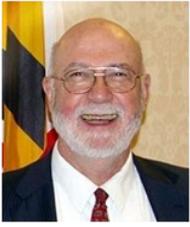
NARFE HQ is stepping up their membership recruitment and retention efforts in a number of ways. (See the NARFE 2012 Membership Plan (revised) posted on the Officers page of the website.) HQ started telemarketing to non-renewing members in June 2011 and brought back 888 members. The HQ project targeting dropped members from more than a year earlier has resulted in 97 reactivated memberships in Maryland since October 2011 (dues category = AI). HQ has started expanding email messaging to new members through a new **eConnect** program. This program will be encouraging new members to renew online. HQ reports that the online national Chapter 2363 (**eNARFE**) has 2,207 members through January and that 286 (13%) of them have Maryland Zip Codes. Finally, Bridget Boel will be the new Director of Membership Marketing, starting March 19, replacing John Clements who retired at the end of February. ●●

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### ***SERVICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR***

*Ted Jensen*

Congratulations to Don A. Bender, Chapter 1519, for his selection as Service Officer of the Year for Maryland and for Region II. Don exemplifies the spirit that makes NARFE a valuable organization. Don retired in April 2007, jumped into chapter activities right away, and was a fully trained and effective Service Officer by the end of the year. Not only did Don help individuals, he shared his knowledge with the broader community by writing regular columns about NARFE issues in a monthly publication for seniors. Well done and thank you to Don, and to all the other great Service Officers in our Federation.



*Dick Strombotne  
Treasurer*

Dick Strombotne

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

This is a summary report (unaudited) of revenues and expenditures and the resulting net worth of Maryland NARFE from December 31, 2011, through February 29, 2012.

Net Worth: 12/31/11	\$77,798
Revenues thru 2/29	\$13,159
Expenditures thru	(\$10,076)
Net Worth: 2/29/12	\$80,881

Rebates of Ten Percent funds from NARFE headquarters totaling \$10,909 made up most of the revenues. Notable expenditures include \$5,017 for the Board meeting in February, expenses totaling \$1,814 for the State and Federal Legislation Committees and \$1,646 in expenses for Membership Recruitment and Retention. Any member who wishes to see the complete financial summary may request one from Dick Strombotne, Treasurer, by calling 240.632.9881 or emailing to [DickS.narfe@comcast.net](mailto:DickS.narfe@comcast.net). The financial report for the first quarter of 2011 will be available at the Min-convention on 30 April - 1 May, 2012.

As of the end of February, Maryland NARFE's four certificates of deposit held assets of \$36,017. They have current values ranging from \$8,046 to \$9,463, interest rates ranging from 1.30% to 2.23%, and maturity dates from 2/27/2013 to 9/3/2016. ●●



*Dave Roseman,  
Budget Officer*

Dave Roseman

**MARYLAND FEDERATION OF CHAPTERS  
BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR FY2012 AND FY2013**

At the February Federation Board Meeting the proposed Federation Budgets for FY2012 and FY2013 that were printed in the Winter 2011 Federation Newsletter were discussed and voted upon. The budgets were approved without any changes from the budgets that were presented in the Winter Newsletter. Both budgets take into consideration lower membership dues and project a small deficit in FY2012 and a \$6900 deficit in FY2013. The budget provides significant funding for Membership/ Recruiting, Chapter Assistance and Training. All are designed to help us keep our current members and get new ones and thus strengthen our organization. We have also maintained sufficient funding to accomplish our lobbying activities at both the Federal and State levels. We are also using funds to increase our ability to expand our active employee membership and utilize a variety of social media so that they may have an easier way to participate and make their feelings known. The budget chart in the Winter Federation Newsletter shows the FY2012 and FY2013 budgets. ●●

**ELECTRONIC  
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE (ECC)**

*Linda Adams, Co-Chair*

The Maryland Federation has established an Electronic Communications Committee (ECC). The committee consists of Linda Adams (409), Maxine Howard (1990), Jim Lish (1972), and Chris Spain (251). The ECC has been charged to develop an action plan to enable the chapters and the Maryland Federation to maximize the use of electronic communications. The ECC had an initial meeting and selected Maxine Howard and Linda Adams as co-chairs. The ECC is currently gathering information available to the committee such as the recent Public Relations survey compiled by Dorothy Campbell, various websites at the Chapter and Federation levels, social media websites, etc. Once the existing information is compiled and reviewed, the ECC will again meet to see what direction it will pursue to reach its goal. The committee will be contacting the Maryland chapters to have their input on their needs and recommendations for future communications processes. The ECC and the Maryland Federation Executive Committee hope it will have your support in this effort.

At the National level, Pat Dempsey is the Chair of the National Configuration Advisory Board (CAB) and also the Region II CAB representative. Maxine Howard will act as the ECC point of contact to CAB. Both groups will interact to complete and support each other's similar goals. They also hope to coordinate its efforts with Federation committees as well as the local chapters and their various committees.

As you can see, this will be a huge effort on the part of all within the Federation. We expect the task to take close to two years to complete. The ECC is anxious and excited to proceed with this task and will be contacting various groups within the next few months. If you have any questions or would like to contact the committee, please contact the committee through [NARFE409@hotmail.com](mailto:NARFE409@hotmail.com) or any ECC member individually. The ECC will be keeping you informed of their progress as this effort continues.

Thank you ahead of time for your participation in this effort. ●●

**LOOKING TO EXCEPTIONAL AGERS TO HELP  
UNLOCK THE SECRETS TO A LONG, HEALTHY  
LIFE**

*Karen Stewart, Recruitment Manager, IDEAL Study*

Attendees at the NARFE Maryland Federation Board meeting in February learned of an interesting opportunity for seniors in our area. IDEAL stands for Insights into Determinants of Exceptional Aging and Longevity. Researchers from the National Institute on Aging want to know why some people live in excellent health into their 80's, 90's and older while others face failing health much sooner. To unlock the secret of exceptional aging, researchers are recruiting healthy, active seniors 80 and older into the **IDEAL Study**. The 'exceptional agers' who qualify for the IDEAL study can walk a quarter of a mile unassisted without pain or shortness of breath, have no significant memory loss or cognitive impairment, and have no serious current or past medical conditions for which they take medications. IDEAL study participants will become part of the longstanding Baltimore Longitudinal Study on Aging. Each year they will come to Harbor Hospital for a complete physical and cognitive assessment.

Dr. Ferrucci the principal investigator of the study says, "... we hope to identify the mechanisms that are critical for exceptional aging and longevity. In the future, these mechanisms could be enhanced, therefore allowing many more people to be healthy and productive up to very late in their life." The volunteers for IDEAL study will be making an enormously important contribution to our knowledge about aging. It is a generous legacy to those who come after.

If your chapter would like materials about the study for distribution or to arrange a speaker, email Karen Stewart at [IDEAL@westat.com](mailto:IDEAL@westat.com) If you or someone you know might qualify as an exceptional ager and are interested in participating in the IDEAL

*(continued on page 15)*

Study, call 1-855-80 IDEAL (1-855-804-3325) to see if you qualify. ●●

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## **AARP D.C. and AARP Maryland Battle Pepco Rate Hikes and Demand Reliability**

*Pat Jones, AARP District of Columbia and Kelli Holsendolph, AARP Maryland*

In the latest battle for better reliability for Pepco customers, the District of Columbia (D.C.) and Maryland State Offices of AARP are saying “NO” to Pepco. AARP D.C. has waged a letter-writing and advertising campaign to stop a proposed electric rate hike in the District. More than 4,600 letters from D.C. residents who oppose the rate hike have been collected and delivered to the D.C. Public Service Commission (PSC). Pepco has asked the D.C. PSC to approve a \$39.7 million a year electric rate increase for the District of Columbia. This would increase customers’ monthly electric bill by an average of about \$5 a month. The D.C. PSC’s decision is expected late Spring.

If Pepco’s D.C. rate hike proposal is approved, rate-payers would:

- Pay more for basic electric reliability. AARP says Pepco must be held accountable for meeting stronger standards of reliability and customer service in D.C. before rate increases are considered.
- Pay some of the costs for conversion from analog to the new digital electric “smart meter.” AARP believes that D.C. customers should not pay for smart meters before knowing if the new meters will provide promised benefits.
- Have less input regarding a new surcharge that Pepco could levy. AARP believes that public input regarding new surcharges should not be reduced.

AARP officially intervened in the Pepco rate case in Maryland in January 2012. Pepco serves about 530,000 customers in the Maryland counties of Montgomery and Prince George’s. In Maryland, Pepco is requesting more than a \$68 million increase. The utility says it needs the money to provide more reliable service and better customer service. AARP says “NO” to Pepco in Maryland because why should consumers

have to pay more for what they ought to be getting (reliable service and good customer service) in the first place?

The AARP Maryland message to the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) is no guaranteed rate increases (profits) for Pepco until they guarantee reliable service to consumers.

AARP Maryland will continue outreach and advocacy on this issue through advertising, town halls, tele-town throughout the spring and early-summer. A decision on the Pepco rate case in Maryland is expected in early July.

Join **AARP Maryland** for its **Pepco Rate Case Town Hall**:

**Sunday, April 22, 2012**

**1:00 pm - 3:00 pm**

**National 4-H Youth Conference Center**

**7100 Connecticut Avenue**

**Chevy Chase, MD 20815**

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## **UPDATE ON THE CONFIGURATION ADVISORY BOARD (CAB)**

*Pat Dempsey, Chair*

In the Fall 2011 newsletter I wrote an article about the NARFE Information Technology Advisory Committee (NIAC). The committee had submitted its report to the National Executive Board meeting in July. The report was favorably received and there has already been activity on some of the recommendations. In the article I focused on three major initiatives and I want to address those. The report recommended that a Configuration Management Board (CMB) be established. This recommendation was implemented by the establishment of the Configuration Advisory Board (CAB). The CAB started meeting in December and contains representatives from each of the regions. I will discuss the CAB a little later.

Another recommendation was that NARFE provide online reports that are geared toward specific functions. This idea has been embraced by headquarters. The Online Activities Module (OAM) is being developed with a substantial amount completed. I will not go into any detail about the OAM because we can

*(continued on page 16)*

read an article about it in the April issue of *NARFE* magazine. I will say that the OAM has received very favorable reviews by those who have used it.

The third initiative was Usability Methodology. What is Usability Methodology? This might be over simplifying the process but I tend to think of it in terms of having real users test any new system. In the case of NARFE, we need to get some members to volunteer to test new things. We especially need members with limited computer skills. If a new online report can be used by everyone, then we are on the right track. A word of warning: this sounds simple but it can be difficult to do. At this time we are just beginning to look at it.

Now back to the CAB. We have had a few meetings but we have a long way to go yet. We are working on a charter that will define our scope, but there are some things that we have a strong consensus on right now.

- The CAB will manage changes requests for items relating to Information Technology (IT). We hope to be able to make this as transparent as possible. This means that if anyone makes a request to change the system then we owe them a response. Also, all proposals and recommendations need to be online for everyone to see. We need to work out the details on how these requests will be done and how they will flow through the organization.
- The CAB will recommend IT changes after evaluating the proposals.
- The CAB will help with implementing Usability.
- The CAB needs to consider IT security.
- The CAB should not only make recommendations on small and medium changes but also on major changes to IT, or IT strategy.

There are issues that the CAB needs to address as part of its charter that are not yet resolved. One of the major issues is the scope of the charter. Will the CAB deal primarily with IT issues or should the group look at other issues as well? A good example of this is access to data. If someone feels that they should have access to NARFE data it is partly an IT issue to get them access. However, it is also a policy issue within NARFE as to who should have access. The IT and policy aspects often get combined into a larger issue but they need to be addressed properly.

Think about how you interact with NARFE. Getting a report is definitely IT related. Do you look at the NARFE web site? Part of the web site is IT related but much of it is text, what is often referred to as content. Should the CAB worry about content? How to draw the line will be a challenging task in the coming months and we will welcome your input.

There is also the question of how the CAB will communicate with the various NARFE components. Headquarters staff is present at the CAB meetings. We also need to talk to the Regional Vice Presidents and the Federations about their concerns, especially as to the overall responsibilities of the CAB. In order for the CAB to be a success we need buy-in from the various components in NARFE. As the CAB representative for Region II, I recently had my first meeting with Ron Bowers and the Federation presidents. Based upon the first meeting I expect that there will be some variation among the Federations on how they will communicate to the CAB. Within the Maryland Federation, I will be working with the Electronic Communications Committee. What this means for you is that this will be the group that you should talk to about CAB issues. I would ask you to remember that we are all just getting started.

The CAB can offer an opportunity for NARFE to receive recommendations on how to change the organization for the better. I urge that you read the article on the Online Activities Module in the April issue of our magazine. See also Dick Strombotne's article in this issue about his initial experience with these new online reports. I look forward to working with you either directly or through the Electronic Communications Committee. ●●



*Saj Durrani*  
*Resolutions Chair*

**FROM THE RESOLUTIONS  
COMMITTEE**

Normally, in even-numbered years the Resolutions Committee focuses on resolutions relating to National By-laws. However, those bylaws are currently being revised. Therefore, this year we invited resolutions only about *non-bylaws* issues, such as membership, legislation, or policies and procedures.

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**Only one resolution**, proposed by the Gaithersburg Chapter, was received by the deadline of March 1. It **asks NARFE to support legislation that would roll back the increase in pension contributions by new Federal Employees**. Such an increase was included in a new law in February 2012, and the Resolution points out that this would make it difficult for the federal government to attract talented employees.

The "Full" Resolutions Committee (FRC) consists of the Executive Committee and the Parliamentarian (the ex-officio members), plus a Chairman and a few members appointed by the President (what I call the Appointed Resolutions Committee or "ARC"). The ARC has **recommended that the Resolution be adopted as presented.**

The FRC will consider this input and formulate its recommendation, which will be voted upon by the Federation's Board in the Mini-Convention on April 30-May 1; if approved, it will be forwarded to HQ for adoption at the National Convention in August. It is a rather lengthy process, but it is necessary, in order to ensure that any proposal affecting national-level activity receives full review at all levels of our leadership.

Next year we expect to receive many more resolutions. For now, I am happy that we had only one item – and we are done with it! (As an aside, I thank the Gaithersburg Chapter for submitting it – otherwise the Committee would have had nothing to show that it still exists.) ●●



L-R: *Chapter 969 representatives: Joel Ekhaus, Doug Hubenschmidt, Shirley Carroll, Bob Schultz, Mary Ruth Horton, Bernie Goldsborough, Pat Myers & MD Federation Alzheimer's/Lupus Coordinator Barbara Jacobs*

## **ALZHEIMER'S AND LUPUS DONATIONS**

*Barbara Jacobs, Alzheimer's/Lupus Coordinator*

Chapter 969 officers attended the Maryland Federation meeting in Bowie on February 7, 2012 at which time a check in the amount of \$3,200 for Alzheimer's research was presented. This amount of money was made possible through the many efforts extended by Chapter 969 members and friends of NARFE by collecting donations at the September Alzheimer's/Hospice fund raising at local merchant sites. In addition, monies are made through cake raffles at various Chapter 969 luncheons (cakes are donated by members.) Also Chapter 969 contributed \$50 for Lupus at this time. In addition, \$500 for Alzheimer's and \$500 for Lupus was received from Chapter 357 Takoma Park. The basket was then passed around the room and \$140 cash was received for Alzheimer's.

During calendar year 2011, Maryland Federation Chapters donated \$14,454.97 to the Alzheimer's Re-

search Fund and \$264.96 to Maryland Lupus Foundation. The Alzheimer's donation figure does not include a \$13,019.28 donation from an estate for which the Federation received credit. The Alzheimer's Association policy does not permit extending the credit to the chapter the deceased members belonged to.

The total donations figure includes those processed through the Chapter Coordinators and donations sent direct to the Alzheimer's Association by members. Donations from individual Chapters ranged from \$1,228.00 to \$0.00. I am not reporting these figures to indicate a competition to see who the larger donors are as it is expected, but not necessarily true, that a larger member chapter will donate more than a smaller chapter. However, \$3,275 was sent directly to the Association but the donors' chapters were not entered on the checks and there is no way for the Association to know which chapter to credit the donation to. Please advise your members to enter their chapter number on the check so your chapter receives the credit. At least one chapter, 409 Frederick, donates to the local Alzheimer's Association as well as to the National organization.

The Alzheimer's Association maintains records on a July-June Fiscal Year Basis. For the period July 2011 - January 2012, Maryland donated \$9,023.81. Again, not to imply competition, it is the highest in Region II and 7th in the nation. The contributions of all types are significant and much needed and appreciated.

Thank you for all your contributions and many thanks to all the chapter coordinators. ●●

## PHOTOS FROM AROUND THE MARYLAND FEDERATION



### PIPERS ENJOYING THE CHAPTER 409 LUNCHEON



L-R: Jurgen Piper, Past President, MD Federation and Chapter 409; Mary Lou Blessing, President Chapter 409; Ted Jensen, MD Federation President; Dottie Piper, Chapter 409 Member

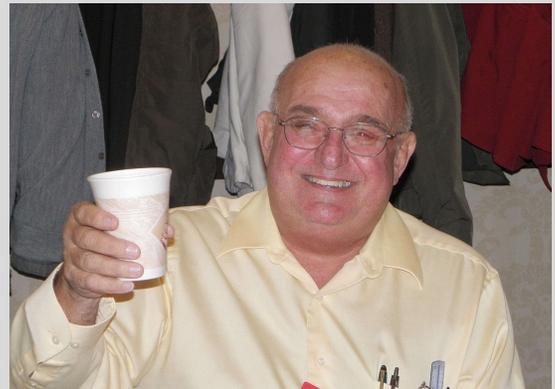
At the young age of 101, Jurgen Piper (left) is enjoying his lunch with wife, Dottie (right), Mary Lou Blessing and Ted Jensen. The Piper's were honored this past year at a Chapter 409 luncheon meeting for both their dedication to NARFE and Jurgen's 100th birthday.



### FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING



L-R: Board Support for Registration, Marty Strombotne and Bette Jensen



MD Federation Photographer, Tom Longo



Presenter Karen Stewart from IDEAL

## FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING (CON'T)



General view of the Board Meeting.



L-R: Katherine Williams from Chapter 357 presenting the chapter donation of \$500 for Alzheimer's and \$500 for Lupus to Barbara Jacobs, MD Federation Alzheimer's and Lupus Chair

The following pictures are of the hotel site review by the Convention Committee. We hope these photos will heighten your interest in attending the Convention.

## CONVENTION SITE REVIEW



View from Carousel Hotel in Ocean City



Convention committee sitting in atrium at the Carousel Hotel.



Convention Committee with Carousel sales representative. L-R: Kim Hefner, Doug and Laura Newton; and Arlene Page.



**National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association**  
**Maryland Federation of Chapters – Chartered April 5, 1956**  
**Maryland Federation Newsletter**



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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**2012**

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| TBD            | Spring Social Media Workshop  |
| April 20       | Registration for Federation Mini-Convention   |
| April 30-May 1 | Maryland Mini-Convention, Bowie   |
| July 17        | Preparation for National Convention   |
| June 30        | Nat. Conv. Delegate Forms Due   |
| July 20        | Nat. Conv. Hotel Reservations Due   |
| July 30        | Deadline for Fall Newsletter  |
| August 2       | Registration Due for National Convention  |
| August 26-30   | National Convention, Reno NV  |
| October 2      | Federation Board Meeting  |
| October 26     | Federation Fall Training. Mark the date; topics and details will be announced when available. |