



National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association
Gaithersburg Chapter 581

In our fifty-fifth year of supporting most of the Montgomery Upcounty Communities

OCTOBER 2011

Our Next Membership Meeting:
October 25th (Tuesday), 10-12 a.m.
Rooms A-B, Rosborough Center,
Asbury Methodist Village

Other Upcoming Events

October 19th (Wednesday)
Chapter 581 Board Meeting
Conley Hall, Trott Building
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

October 20th (Thursday)
MD Senior Citizens Hall of Fame
Awards Luncheon
Glen Burnie, MD

October 26th (Wednesday)
Deadline for Newsletter Articles

November 1st (Tuesday)
MD Federation Training
Bowie, MD

November 3th (Thursday)
Newsletter Assembly
Library, Edwards-Fisher Bldg.
9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

November 17th (Thursday)
Chapter 581 Board Meeting
Conley Hall, Trott Building
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

November 22nd (Tuesday)
Membership Meeting, 10-12 a.m.
Rooms A-B, Rosborough Center,
Asbury Methodist Village

December 10th (Saturday)
Chapter 581 Annual Holiday Party
The Flaming Pit Restaurant
Gaithersburg, MD

Put these dates on your calendar —

“Australia – Two Months in the Land Down Under”

The speaker at our October Chapter meeting will be Jennifer Monahan, an explorer, writer, and speaker from Hershey, PA. She will recount to us her two-month trip to Australia – it was such a fascinating trip, she wrote a book about it. Jennifer is a past federal government employee, having worked for both the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Postal Service. And – her parents are long-time Chapter 581 members, Eleanor and Meredith Williams!

At our monthly Chapter meetings you’ll be updated on legislative developments, both on the federal and state levels, and current Chapter happenings, all in the company of fellow federal government retirees – please plan to attend.

PRESIDENTS’ MESSAGE...Larry Lange and John Padan

Many, many thanks: A very special thank-you goes to our immediate past Chapter president, Dr. Mary Anne Scott – we sincerely appreciate her dedicated service to NARFE and our Chapter the past three years. The usual term of office for our Chapter officers is two years; Mary Anne agreed to serve as Chapter president an additional year to ensure that future incoming Chapter presidents will be in office a year before the biannual NARFE National Convention. And – we’ve learned that Mary Anne and her husband, Dr. Tom Kitchens (our intrepid newsletter editor for the last ten years) – are moving to Tennessee at the end of this year. We additionally extend our heart-felt thanks to Tom for his great work in assembling all the articles we Email him each month into a finished newsletter. Mary Anne and Tom will be *greatly* missed, not only for all their work and contributions to NARFE and Chapter 581, but also because they’ve been great friends. Many thanks, and our sincere best wishes for your safe move to, and future residence in, Tennessee.

Recent decisions: The main decision of the September 22 executive board was the consensus vote on the two-year budget to be presented to the chapter, as required by our bylaws, for a membership vote. The budget, having been advertised in the September newsletter, also received a consensus vote at the September 27 chapter meeting. A further decision, really two, by the board was to narrow the choices for the holiday party venue down to two: the Flaming Pit, which wanted to raise the price by \$2, and the National Lutheran Home, which was tempting but not forthcoming with cost data. The co-presidents were given the authority to decide on a venue before the December 10 date became booked everywhere. The Flaming Pit agreed to hold the line on costs if we guaranteed at least 40 persons. We agreed. Also, the board decided to have Mary Ann Jung, already booked by the chapter for our entertainment, to portray Rosalie Calvert. Please note the date on your calendar and count on joining us for the usual excellent meal, superb entertainment, and wonderful camaraderie on December 10.

Presidents’ (continued on page 4.)

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Jim Cowie, MDFed Federal Legislative Committee Coordinator for District 4 and more



The Supercommittee has started its deliberations in private, and NARFE is continuing to urge members to contact Representatives, Senators and the President, with written or phone messages, as well as interactions with our Representatives, arranged by our Chapter Presidents or District Coordinators. Much sample material has been provided within the "Protect America's Heartbeat" Campaign. Roger Dahlman will be giving further details of how one can participate. If one can personalize a recommended outline, and preferably write it by hand, it is likely to be more effective than submitting a standard form.

Our present legislative techniques rely very heavily on documentation issued by HQ and the Campaign, which essentially has the local legislative officers as cheerleaders to promote the spread of our messages. However, the Maryland Federation has decided to experiment in two ways, to see if we can supplement the current approaches, by drawing on the talents of MD members who have experience and interest in some aspects of the wide range of topics covered by legislation.

Two ideas seem to have potential and we hope to see if we can make them effective. First, we have members who were involved in foundational federal research, in areas such as Biotechnology and Genetics Research which have generated significant commercial economic benefits. It would help improve decision making if we could show the continuing return on such early investments. Second, encourage members with interests in a particular field, such as the Environment, or Economic Development, or Committees in Congress or the Senate, etc., to track what is important in their field of most relevance to NARFE and the overlap of our interests with other influential groups in their field. Our member would be acting more like a correspondent in the media and need not be an "expert" but would be expected to draw on sources of information widely available.

The main objective of this suggestion is to draw more on our talent to try to influence, in our favor, the middle of the political spectrum - moderates of both parties and independents - who are very likely to determine the results of the next election.

If any member might be interested in either of these two proposals, please get in touch with me to explore possibilities. We intend to give this our best shot with no idea, as yet, as to whether we can be effective.

Cowie (Continued in right column)

STATE LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Dave Roseman, MD PAC Chair and MD Fed Budget Officer



As you all know the State Legislature is not currently in session. There will be a special session of the legislature starting on October 17th to deal with redistricting of Federal Congressional districts based upon the 2010 census. While Maryland didn't gain or lose any districts there was some shift of population. This requires the legislature to redraw the map of the districts so that each district has the same number of people in it. As a rule the party in power uses this as a time to redraw the lines so as to strengthen their districts and weaken the opponents' districts. Montgomery county will probably end up with parts of districts 4, 6 and 8.

The State Legislative Committee is working in preparation for the upcoming January session. We have reached out and are forming coalitions of the like minded. For example we had Stuart Rosenthal who is editor of the Beacon Magazine and the Commissioner of the Commission on Aging join us and discuss issues. He indicated that he would like to work with us on senior issues. We are also attending a number of state delegate fund raisers. This is giving us the opportunity to educate our delegates and sell our positions. As the political season heats up we will try our best to keep you informed.

Cowie (Continued)

We are pleased to announce that Doug Newton has agreed to become our chapter representative for NARFE - PAC so he will be encouraging you to make contributions to this worthy cause which helps politically to defend our interests.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Larry Lange, Treasurer

All Funds Summary, September 22, 2011

Checking Account	\$11,451.37
Certificate of Deposit (Restricted Chapter Life Membership funds)	\$2,977.58
TOTAL CHAPTER ASSETS	<u>\$14,428.95</u>
Working Capital	\$11,451.37

For Franklin Press Note

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

*Jim Short,
Membership Chairman*



For the month of August we added three new members, two members were reinstated, and two members transferred from other chapters, but we lost fourteen members. As a result our chapter realized a net loss of seven members.

Please welcome the following new members: Shailesh Desai • Art Diem • Paula Moore.

The following transferees should be made most welcome: Virginia Phillips • Victor Wright.

Please welcome back the following reinstated members: Catherine Dwyer • Marlene Haywood.

The following members were dropped for non-payment of dues as of May first. If you know any of these people, please give them a call and try to convince them that they should renew their memberships, and encourage dues withholding.

Ieva Bolsteins • Hattie Dickens • Mary Hazes • Erica Heit • Martin Hershkowitz • D. Innamorata • Marcia Mirman • Moira Notargiacomo • Eric Okin • Leslie Shapiro • Leonard Soffer • Bruce Stadel • Carolyn Taetle.

Since this is the beginning of a new NARFE year, let us all make a New Year's resolution to increase our efforts to recruit new members, and especially encourage current members to renew.

AN IMPORTANT REQUEST TO ALL MEMBERS OF CHAPTER 581

PLEASE! ANYTHING that affects your mailing address (if you're changing addresses, are a "snow bird" and will be away for the winter months, are moving out of the area, etc.), it's very important that you contact BOTH the NARFE National Office to so advise them (1-800-456-8410 or memberrecords@narfe.org) and our own Membership Chair, Jim Short (301-330-5084 or jshort@comcast.net). We mail our monthly Chapter 581 newsletter under a bulk mail permit, which provides us a very low postal rate, but the Chapter is charged first class postage for any newsletter that is returned to us by the U.S. Postal Service if it cannot be delivered to the address of record we have for you. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

NOTES ON MEMBER RETENTION

Dick Strombotne, Chair, Federation Membership Retention: 240-632-9881 or DickS.narfe@comcast.net

Declining Chapter Membership. The increase in national dues to \$40 from \$29 (1-year) went into effect last March. In the following six months, Gaithersburg Chapter 581 has lost 51 voting members to 1299. By contrast, in the same period in 2010, the chapter lost 31 members to 1347. Chapter 581 is not alone. In Maryland, in the past six months, all but two chapters had a loss of voting members. In fact, Maryland NARFE lost 553 voting members in the last six months compared with 269 in 2010. Why? There are multiple reasons, but the main one is the dues increase and a secondary one is the new eNARFE national chapter. Read on for details and what YOU can do about it.

Recruitment. In the six months after the dues increase, national NARFE recruited one-third fewer new members than in the same period in 2010 and Maryland NARFE similarly had one-third fewer new members. Chapter 581 is part of that trend.

Retention. There are only three months of data to assess the effect of the dues increase on retention because of the three month grace period given members who do not renew their membership. Even so, that is enough to start gauging those effects. Nationally, NARFE had 20 percent more non-renewals in the past three months (June, July, & August) than in 2010. In Maryland, there were 7.4 percent more non-renewals. Different percentages but same results - more non-renewals.

RETENTION (continued on page 5.)

MANY THANKS TO THOSE WHO WORKED IN OUR NEWSLETTER ASSEMBLY ON SEPTEMBER 2nd

There were fifteen members who helped fold, wafer seal, and affix address labels to our September 2011 newsletter; as always, thanks very much – we couldn't have done it without you! They were:

Ronnie Van Alstyne	Charles Garfinkel
Tom Kitchens	Mary Klepek
Larry Lange	Charles Matkovich
John Nolan	John Padan
Marty Piper	Mary Anne Scott
Keith Steele	Dick Strombotne
Midge Wiehl	Eleanor Williams
Meredith Williams	

And many thanks to our extremely diligent proof-readers on whom we depend to make this Newsletter what it is!

OPPORTUNITIES IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY FOR YOU TO VOLUNTEER

Larry Lange, Co-president and Treasurer, Chapter 581

We have been contacted by two organizations regarding volunteer opportunities that are available in Montgomery County for seniors. If you, or friends or neighbors of yours who are not NARFE members, may be interested in doing volunteer work in your communities, please contact the following persons directly:

Tricia Wilson, of the Heyman Interages Center in Rockville (301-255-4234, or twilson@accessjca.org) will discuss with you opportunities for adults age 50+ who would like to volunteer as tutors and mentors in public schools. The commitment is typically one hour a week; Ms. Wilson currently has openings at the Gaithersburg Elementary School and at Brown Station.

Marcia Custer, of The Senior Connection (Email marcia.custer@seniorconnetionmc.org or 301-962-0820, ext. 14) is looking for persons to volunteer for The Senior Connection, a nonprofit agency which helps adults over the age of 62 in Montgomery County to live independently. This organization puts seniors in contact with volunteers who provide free transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping, social visits and other basic support needs.

IMPORTANT REMINDER – FEHBP OPEN SEASON RUNS FROM NOVEMBER 14TH TO DECEMBER 12TH

Congressman Chris Van Hollen’s 9th Annual Federal Employees Health Benefits Forums cosponsored by MD NARFE will be held Monday, November 14th from 9 a.m. -11 a.m. at the Holiday Park Senior Center, Wheaton, MD, and Thursday, November 17th from 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. at the Executive Office Bldg., Rockville, MD. Our CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield representative, Jennifer Malave, will make her annual presentation to us on the Open Season at our November 22nd Chapter meeting.

Our 50/50 Winners at the September 27th Chapter Meeting

To the Chapter 581 Treasury	\$22.00
First place Tom Selle	\$ 9.00
Second place Jim Cowie	\$ 7.00
Third place Donnie Sue Ferrell	\$ 6.00
Total	\$44.00

CHAPTER 581’S NEWSLETTER- BY- EMAIL

The Chapter 581 NBE progress is good. Currently we have about 10% of the membership of the chapter enrolled. If you are an email user, please consider joining the ranks of the NBE and take advantage of reducing the paper clutter at home. Your electronic version of our newsletter would be as close as your computer. You’d always know when our activities are scheduled so you don’t miss anything. And remember, we need your active participation in the Chapter to help protect your Federal Retirement Benefits in these difficult times.

Presidents’ Message (continued from page 1.)

Members who do not attend chapter meetings: Last month we asked our readership why so many members apparently applaud NARFE’s goals but do not attend our meetings. We were not being critical but just curious. We received two thoughtful answers, which made us pleased that people do read the newsletter (hopefully, more than two) and took the time to reply. One person is still working and wished we held meetings now and then at times other than during working hours. We explained how the chapter, in concert with other chapters in Montgomery County, has reached out to our active members by holding a special meeting for them on a Saturday in April the last few years, and this year on an evening in late July. The turnout has been so low that we concluded that our actively working members are just too busy to include us in their schedules. Another respondent recommended broadcasting our chapter meetings via web camera. I think that may be the way we are heading as our younger and more computer literate members become the majority. Perhaps selected programs, such as our annual forum with our Maryland delegates and senators could be shown live. Just a thought.

Volunteers: Twenty people fill the 27 jobs involved in running the chapter. We are always beating the drum to seek additional volunteers, as our population is not static. Many thanks to **Roger Dahlman** who (a couple of months ago) volunteered to represent the chapter as our “Protect America’s Heartbeat” Captain. More recently **Doug Newton** volunteered to serve on the Federation convention site-selection committee and also to be the chapter’s NARFE PAC representative. Thank you both for volunteering. Now we need to be concerned over how to produce our newsletter when long-term editor Tom Kitchens and his wife relocate to Tennessee toward the

RETENTION (continued from page 3.)

eNARFE Chapter. In last Spring’s recruitment letters to the OPM blind mailing list of recent retirees and survivors, NARFE offered potential members the option of joining “traditional NARFE” or eNARFE, a **national chapter** where chapter communications would be conducted electronically. Federations receive Ten-Percent Fund revenues based on where eNARFE members live. MD NARFE received Ten Percent Fund revenues for 131 eNARFE members in the past five months. Maryland NARFE had a slightly lower number of new members from that same OPM mailing. The total number of new members from the OPM mailing and the number of eNARFE new members from that mailing is almost identical to the new members coming to Maryland from the OPM mailing in 2010. The existence of the eNARFE chapter is one contributor to the lower number of new voting members in chapters.

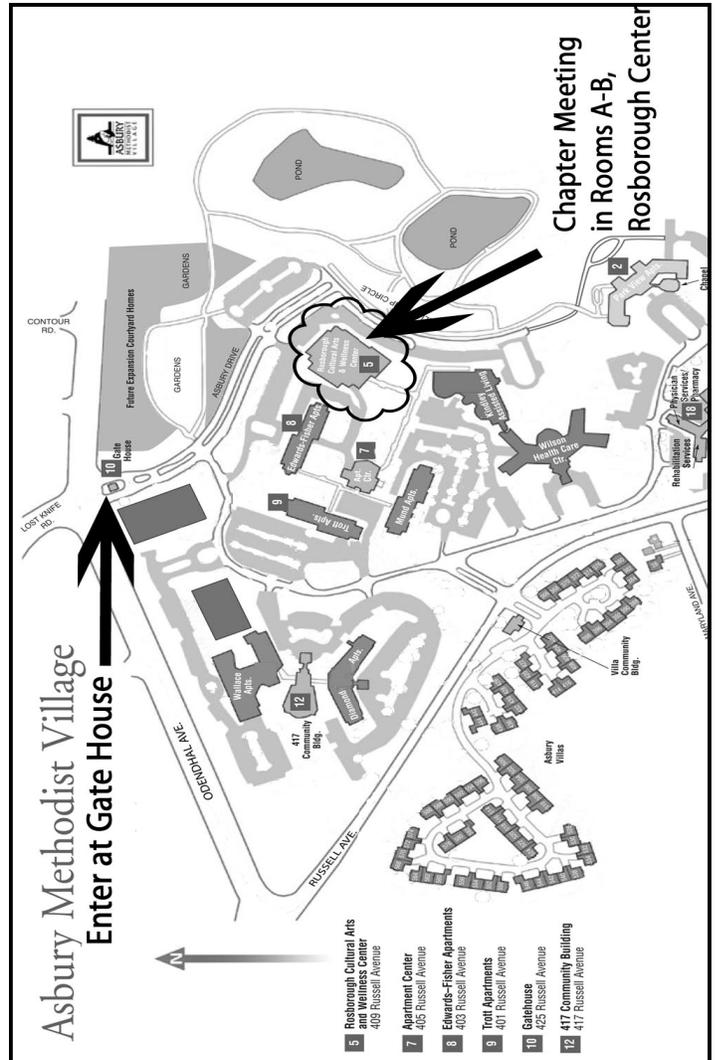
What YOU can do about it. Adopt the slogan Each One Reach One. Step up your own personal efforts to bring new members into NARFE. You know a friend, a neighbor, a family member, or a colleague at your former federal agency and their spouses who are eligible to become NARFE members. **Do them a favor.** Give them a membership application from NARFE magazine, invite them to join, and let them know that NARFE is working to help preserve **their** earned retirement benefits. Direct them to the website, www.narfe.org, where they can join online. Give them your Member ID number and chapter number so they can identify you as the recruiter on the membership application. Be persistent. Ask them more than once if they don’t join when first invited.

Offer to assist Jim Short, Membership Chair, in his efforts to bring back members who have not renewed. Volunteer to work on a chapter membership recruitment committee reaching out to current federal employees at your former agency. And of course, do what you can to keep this chapter vibrant and effective. Attend chapter meetings, especially the December Holiday Luncheon, the April Legislative Forum, and the June Picnic.

FOR OUR MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Enter Asbury Methodist Village in Gaithersburg at the intersection of Odendhal and Lost Knife Roads by the Gate House. Continue straight at the four-way stop on Asbury Drive. The building on your right as the road curves is the Rosborough Cultural Arts and Wellness Center (Bldg. 5 on the map below). The meetings are held in Rooms A-B, directly across from the indoor pool. You can also ask for directions at the Asbury Gate House.

NOTE: All meetings are now in the Rosborough Center.



year’s end. Your frantic co-presidents will appreciate any ideas.

Coming events: Please make especial note of the Upcoming Events on page 1. Congressman Van Hollen’s Annual Health Care Forums will be held in November, and our Chapter Holiday Party (yes, we’re already making plans for it and we hope you are too) will be on December 10th. At both the October and November Chapter meetings we will have a sign-up sheet for those who intend to attend our Holiday party.

A personal appreciation of the FEHBP: I (John) had rotator cuff surgery about 7 weeks ago and so have been out of my sling for a little over one week and heavily involved in follow-up physical therapy. Thanks to Medicare and the FEHBP I have not had to worry about the costs. That is a wonderful feeling that all of us have been enjoying. If you want to keep enjoying benefits such as this please be responsive to the “Protect America’s Heartbeat” campaign and its requests that you keep in contact with your elected representatives.

**Gaithersburg
Chapter 581**
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Chapter 581 Gaithersburg - Chartered December, 1956

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Three important Websites

www.narfe.org
www.mdnarfe.org
www.mdnarfe.org/chapter0581



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