



NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES



Volume 11, Issue 2

Hagerstown MD

February 2019

From the Desk of the President

We had a great Membership Meeting on January 11, 2019 at Western Sizzlin. Mr. Jay Kelsh, Elder Abuse Program Manager from the Washington County Commission on Aging, gave us a very informative and interesting briefing on Elder Abuse. Jay gives periodic briefings at the Commission on Aging. You can call 301-290-0275 if you are interested in attending a briefing.

The following is good information about Maryland Income Taxes

Maryland Income Taxes Again - Dick Strombotne

If you usually claim the standard deduction on your Maryland income taxes, you can skip this article. It is intended to inform and advise people who usually claim itemized deductions on Maryland income taxes.

What is the problem? The big increase in the standard deduction on Federal tax makes it attractive for people to claim it for 2018. It saves money on federal taxes. If you do that then **you cannot claim itemized deductions on your MD taxes**. You can estimate how much your MD state and local taxes will increase easily. Look up the amount of itemized deductions on the MD tax return for 2017 Subtract the amount of MD standard deduction: \$4,500 for joint filers and \$2,250 for single filers. Multiply the result by 8%. That is the amount of the increase in your MD state and local taxes for 2018, roughly. If you don't like the result, read on.

Let your state legislators know that they need to roll back the increase in MD state and local income taxes on people who claim the Federal standard deduction. The Maryland General Assembly goes into its 90-day session January 9, just two days before our January 11 membership meeting. Call the toll-free number for the General Assembly, 1-800-492-7122, and tell the operator who you want to speak to. When you call a legislator's office a staff member will usually answer. Say who you are and that you are concerned about not being able to claim itemized deductions on your Maryland taxes.

Key legislators are members of the House Ways and Means Committee (HW&M) and the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee (SB&T.) The Chair of SB&T is Senator Nancy King, District 39. The Chair of HW&M is Del. Anne Kaiser, District 14. Delegate-elect Julie Palakovitch Carr, District 17, will be a new member of HW&M. These Senators and Delegates have fellow members from their districts who can be called and asked to support legislation to fix the problem.

After legislation is introduced to address the problem there will be hearings by the relevant committees. Usually, there is only about a two weeks notice of hearings. It is vitally important that NARFE members be present at those hearings to let the committee members know that the matter is important. You can park at the Navy-Marine stadium lot for \$5 and ride a shuttle to the General Assembly area of Annapolis for \$1. Hearings usually are scheduled to start at 1:00 pm and there is no telling when the bill of interest will be heard. Look for an email message from Chapter President Charlie Garfinkel to inform you about the key hearings. The website for Maryland General Assembly is at <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frm1st.aspx?tab=home> It is a marvelous source of information about committees, legislators, reports, etc.

Patricia Nix, President, NARFE Hagerstown Chapter 306

Treasurer's Report

Dec. 17, 2018	Balance		\$ 969.80
		Credits	\$254.33
		Expenses	<u>\$164.10</u>
Jan.16, 2019	Balance		\$1060.03

Pandi Reed, Treasurer

Secretary's Report: Membership Meeting January 11, 2019

President Pat Nix welcomed members and guests to our first Hagerstown Chapter 306 Membership Meeting of 2019. She reminded us of: the 50/50 and free lunch drawings, the Alzheimer's collection can, the chapter Special Raffle, and canned goods donations. She reminded us to remember our waitresses. Following the Pledge of Allegiance and the invocation, all enjoyed lunch.

President Pat Nix introduced our guest speaker, Jay Kelsh, Elder Abuse Advocate with the Washington County Commission on Aging. He gave an excellent briefing on Elder Abuse that was well received by the members. NOTE: If you missed Jay's presentation, check the Senior Activities Center's monthly calendar; he gives this presentation there periodically.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- a) March 10-13, 2019 – National NARFE Legislative Training and Report to Congress (now known as LEGCon 19) will be held in Alexandria, VA.; details to follow.
- b) May 5-7, 2019 – 2019 Maryland Federation Biennial Conference at the Dunes Manor Hotel in Ocean City, MD; room rate is \$98.35 (good for entire week); details will follow.
- c) Totem Pole 2019 – Wednesday, July 17, 2019; group ticket rate is \$35. Barb Ware has a contract for 20 seats for the 2:00 p.m. performance of SOUVENIR. A 25% deposit is due to Totem Pole in April with the balance due in June. Contact her to reserve your ticket(s): barbware44@myactv.net or 301-331-2605.

OLD BUSINESS

- Chapter 306 is still in need of a NARFE PAC Coordinator. Training will be provided. Talk with President Pat or Vice President Ed about this.
- Pat mentioned our successful Christmas Party.
- Chapter Weather Policy – see the January 2019 newsletter for this.

REPORTS

- Vice President/Legislative Chairperson Ed Reed gave the following report: (a) read pages 33-36 of the January 2019 NARFE magazine which describe National NARFE's Advocacy Program for the 2019-2020 Congressional Session; (b) see page 43 of the same issue (Application for Life Membership); (c) in the February issue of the NARFE magazine, see instructions to Maryland Federation members on the 2019 One Member One Vote procedure to follow when voting for new officers and any new By-Laws and/or resolutions; (d) read the NARFE Perks section of each NARFE magazine; (e) shared information on the upcoming Maryland Federation Board Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, February 5 in Bowie, MD.
- Secretary Barb Ware was out of town. Please note the minutes of our December Christmas Party appeared in the January 2019 newsletter.
- Treasurer Pandi Reed reported the following: "In the checking account last night, we had \$1,011.80. We collected \$42.00 for the 50/50. I reminded the members, I would collect NARFE-PAC Checks at the March Membership Meeting to mail to NARFE. Also, NO chapter check would be sent into NARFE, but their checks would be sent as a group from Ch.306 for NARFE PAC. Ed told the group that the \$250.00 donation award is an aluminum drinking cup this year, but I did not have a current list of all the gifts. Dorothy Smith won the 50/50, donating \$11.00 back to the chapter. Joyce Chestnut won the free lunch drawing and donated the full \$11.00 back to the chapter and Ed Reed won the special raffle of \$25.00 and donated the full amount back to the chapter."
- Membership Chairperson Dorothy Smith gave a report that can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.
- Special Raffle Coordinator Dorothy Smith's report is also found elsewhere in this newsletter.
- Alzheimer's Co-Coordinator Charley Ware was out of town; there was no report.
- Service Officer Tom Brudenell may have a report elsewhere in this newsletter.
- Newsletter Editor Dot Buhrman announced **NOON ON MONDAY, JANUARY 21, 2019**, is the deadline for the December newsletter.
- Public Relations Coordinator Joyce Chestnut continues to submit monthly meeting articles to the *Herald Mail*.
- Guest Speaker Coordinator Russ Wingerd's report: February – Mike Barnhart, National Park Service; March – Eric Morrow, Financial Advisor; April – Buck Browning, Executive Director, Fort Ritchie Community Center; May – Kim Torsiello, Health- Related Issues. Russ would still like to hear from members with suggestions for additional 2019 speakers.

DRAWINGS

See elsewhere in Secretaries minutes.

NEW BUSINESS

- Two items were attached to the agenda: (a) document titled ELECTION 2019 – NARFE Maryland Federation New Voting Process One Member One Vote (OMOV) Starts in 2019; (b) biographical information about today's speaker Jay Grayson Kelsh.

UPCOMING CHAPTER 306, MARYLAND FEDERATION, and NATIONAL NARFE MEETINGS

- a) Friday, January 25, 2019 – Leadership Team meets at the Commission on Aging, 10:00 a.m.
- b) Friday, February 8, 2019 – Membership Meeting held at Western Sizzlin' Restaurant; gathering time 11:30 a.m.; lunch at 12 noon.
- c) Friday, February 22, 2019 – Leadership Team meets at the Commission on Aging, 10:00 a.m.
- d) Sunday-Wednesday, March 10-13, 2019 – National NARFE Legislative Training and Report to Congress (now known as LEGCon 19) will be held in Alexandria, VA.; details to follow
- e) Sunday-Tuesday, May 5-7, 2019 – 2019 Maryland Federation Biennial Conference at the Dunes Manor Hotel in Ocean City, MD

Respectfully submitted, Barbara Ware, Secretary

MEMBERSHIP REPORT:

It is good to know that NARFE is actively working to help resolve the shutdown now in effect. The situation has gotten very serious to those who depend on that paycheck for their daily living expenses. Having an organization that is looking out for your best interests instead of using federal employees as a pawn in political negotiations should mean a lot to those who are closely affected by the shutdown. Contact any active employees that you know and let them know what your organization is doing to help end this shutdown. Let's make our chapter as strong as possible by recruiting more members.

Dorothy C Smith, Membership Chair.

Special Raffle:

Our special raffle still has 5 more months of drawings and it is not too late to increase your chance of getting the winning entry by buying more now. I'll be glad to help with this. Remember those extra address labels are a quick and easy way to fill your entries out.

Dorothy Smith, Raffle Chair.

Scheduled Guest Speakers :: 2019

February - **Mike Barnhart**, will talk about his experiences with the US Park Service.

March - **Eric Morrow**, Financial Advisor

April – **Buck Browning**, Executive Director, Fort Ritchie Community Center

May - **Kim Torsiello**, Clinical Nurse with Commission on Aging will discuss the Health and Wellness programs available at the Senior Activity Center.

**** 1ST-Vice-President-For-Legislation's-Report:**

"VERY-IMPORTANT" - MD Federation's - 2019 - ELECTION - PROCESS: One Member - One Vote (OMOV) Starts in 2019 -- (OMOV) provides each member of the MD Federation and National Only members who live in Maryland the opportunity to cast a ballot for election of officers, bylaws changes and resolutions. ** 2019 voting will be done by paper ballot. For all MD Federation members and National Only members who have email, the ballot will be sent to you by email for you to print, fill out, stamp and return by postal mail, based on instructions on the ballot. ** For the MD Federation members and National Only members in Maryland who do not have an email address, you will need to request a paper ballot be sent to you for voting. To request your ballot, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Maria Ray, Ballot Coordinator, P.O. Box 47097, Windsor Mill, MD 21244. ** For all voters: In order for your vote to count, you must sign the ballot and provide your NARFE member ID number. These ballots must be returned in a timely manner and postmarked no later than April 15, 2019 for your vote to count. Detailed instructions will be included in the ballot you receive. ** An Election 2019 Page will be set up on the Maryland Federation's website <http://www.mdnarfe.org> for information about the election and balloting. ** The slate of candidates, proposed bylaw changes and resolutions will be available by March 1, 2019 and will be included in the final version of the ballot by March 5, 2019. The slate of candidates, proposed bylaw changes and resolutions will be published by March 22, 2019 in the Maryland Federation Spring Newsletter and Emailed through the NES (NARFE Email System). ** The 2019 ballot will be printed and mailed by March 25, 2019 to those members without email addresses who have sent a self-addressed, stamped envelope and requested a ballot for voting. On the same date, a ballot will be emailed to members who have an email address. Those members are requested to print the ballot, fill it out, sign it and return it as directed. To vote, you must mark your ballot, affix a postage stamp to the self-addressed ballot, and mail it on or before April 15, 2019. ** The new Federation Officers will be installed at the Biennial Conference on May 6. **

** For information and steps you can take during the partial government shutdown, please visit: "NARFE's Shutdown Central webpage on: narfe.org. NARFE's Federal Benefits Institute is also available to answer specific questions regarding your situation at fedbenefits@narfe.org ..OR .. by calling: 1-800-456-8410 and selecting Opt5ion 2. **

** STATE-LEGISLATION-REPORT - ((by: Paul Schwartz, MD Fed. State Legislation Committee Chair.)) "Are you angry yet? No? Well if you are a Maryland taxpayer who ordinarily had itemized deductions on your Maryland state tax returns, then you should be! Who should you be angry with, you ask? The answer to that question is: With your elected officials in Annapolis who failed to protect you from the tax hike imposed on your 2018 state income taxes resulting from the federal tax plan passed last year and effective on your 2018 taxes. Currently, because itemization at the state level is tied to the federal Schedule A, if you take the now increased standard deductions on your federal return, you are precluded from itemizing on your Maryland state return. This is your money, not the state's. Whatever small benefit you might see at the federal level was not intended to be swallowed up by the state. This issue is, more than anything, a math issue. If you deduct less, you pay more. If you deduct more, you pay less. Bottom line? There is power in numbers and if you want this injustice fixed, you, every one of you, must raise your voice and make your concern heard by the very elected officials who turned a blind eye to fixing it last year. If you do not make it clear to your legislators that you take this issue seriously and will hold them accountable for not protecting your interests, they won't. How do you make your concerns raised to your legislators? Google "MD NARFE", click on the "Maryland Federation of NARFE" and then click on "Legislative - State Page" in the upper right-hand corner. You will then have access to an abundance of important information on this tax issue as well as "What you can do about it." The "What you can do about it" link will enable you to directly contact your elected officials in Annapolis, as well as provide you with a sample letter that can be used in the process. It is REALLY user friendly. Time to get angry and time to express that anger in a productive manner. Go for it! The money you save will be your own. **

** To learn: "The Top 5 Reasons to Attend LEGCon19" - Please Read: your Feb. 2019 - NARFE magazine, Pg.-10 and Our New NARFE President's Words About LEGCon19 on Pg.4.

V/R-Ed Reed, Chptr-306-V.P./Legislation.

For the good of the Chapter

The monthly membership meeting of NARFE Chapter 306 will be at noon **February 8, 2019**, The Western Sizzlin', 17567 York Road, Hagerstown MD. **Our featured speaker will be Mike Barnhart**, talking on his experiences with the U S Park Service. Mike, a Hagerstown Native and a Chapter 306 member, is active in his community and volunteers in numerous functions which include activities with his Harley and the Liberty Mt Ski Patrol. As a Federal employee he has held many positions with in the National Parks and diligently pursued his extensive education which included Virginia Tec, The FBI Academy and Advanced Training with The Secret Service. We look forward to hearing about Mike's adventurous Federal career.

BIRTHDAY ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS are in order for Pat Nix (January) and Dorothy Smith (February). We wish both these lovely ladies a very Happy Birthday!!

Chapter Weather Policy

The policy of NARFE Chapter 306 is, if bad road conditions cause The Washington County Public Schools to cancel its classes NARFE 306 will not hold its planned meeting. But, if the schools announce a delayed start, Chapter 306 will hold its planned meeting. The Board of Education announces weather related closings and delays on local TV and radio stations, hand held devices as well as a post on their web site.

Our next Business Meeting will be Friday, February 22 2019. (New Schedule) 10:00 am at the Senior Activities Center & Offices of The Washington County Commission On Aging, 535 East Franklin St. Hagerstown MD. We plan to have Lunch following our meeting, *location to be determined*. You are welcome to join us for the meeting as well as lunch, Dutch treat.

PAID AD SECTION


We encourage you to check out our sponsors!

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