



# MARYLAND FEDERATION

## NEWSLETTER

Spring 2015



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### Chapter President's Corner

*Jo Anne Groves, President  
Bay Area Chapter 1363*

Sadly, many chapters in Maryland and across the country are closing or combining with other chapters. Due to lack of volunteers, sometimes closing a chapter is the only solution. Combining two chapters is better, but will probably require members to drive further to attend meetings. In either case, I feel that we may lose members and we certainly do not want that to happen.

Through the years our chapters have become very sophisticated entities, with bylaws, newsletters, Facebook and websites. Many chapters are very active in promoting contributions to Alzheimer's, FEEA and the scholarship fund. We have also expanded our chapter officers to include multiple people. Some chapters have two vice presidents, two treasurers and two secretaries in addition to the service officer, newsletter editor, legislative, sunshine, membership, NARFE-PAC, etc.

Due to our declining membership and other issues, the tasks of chapter officers have become daunting and fewer members are willing to take on the positions. We need to find ways to streamline our chapters.

When I became president of the Bay Area Chapter, we had some challenges. The treasury was lacking; many NARFE interests were not addressed; and members did not attend training, federation meetings, or conferences. Here are some ideas that work for my chapter and may for others.

**Membership meetings.** Hold meetings regularly, *i.e.*, the last Wednesday of each month at the same place, if possible.

Our meetings are held at a restaurant. We gather at noon; the wait staff takes our orders from the menu; and while the food is being prepared, we begin our meeting with our speaker. When the food is served, the speaker wraps up and joins us for lunch. After lunch we have our business meeting. This works beautifully for us and our members know what to expect each month.

**Chapter Newsletter.** Our chapter produces a newsletter every other month. We provide chapter information, dates of events and short articles. There is no need to repeat articles from the *narfe* magazine or the Federation newsletter. We refer readers to articles of interest by giving them locations in those publications or suggest joining GEMS.

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## Federation Directory

### Executive Committee

President	Dan McGrath	410-641-5570	<a href="mailto:Mcgrathsop@aol.com">Mcgrathsop@aol.com</a>
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### Contacts

(See additional Contacts on Federation Directory)

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Chapter Development	Bernie Goldsborough	301-737-1315	
Fed. Employees Edu. & Asst. Fund Coordinator	Eleanor Kaul	410-896-4354	<a href="mailto:eekaul@comcast.net">eekaul@comcast.net</a>
Federal Legislative Committee Chair	Sudha Haley	410-535-5998	<a href="mailto:sudhabhagwat2002@yahoo.com">sudhabhagwat2002@yahoo.com</a>
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United Seniors of MD Representative	Vacant		
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Social Media Coordinator (Facebook)	Elroy Thomas		<a href="mailto:eit385@gmail.com">eit385@gmail.com</a>
Region II Vice President (DE, DC, MD, NJ, PA)	Evelyn Kirby	410-604-1141	<a href="mailto:ekirby@atlanticbb.net">ekirby@atlanticbb.net</a>
NARFE National Headquarters		703-838-7760	<a href="http://www.NARFE.org">www.NARFE.org</a>

### Chapters and Presidents

126	Western Charles/Indian Head,	Ed Rice	1466	Calvert County .....	Shelly Ziman
126	Co-Presidents .....	Ron Bush	1519	Glen Burnie, Co-Presidents	Don Bender
251	Annapolis .....	Carla Duls	1519	.....	Bob Minghini, Sr.
258	Bethesda/Chevy Chase .....	Allan Kam	1522	Susquehanna .....	Harold Forst
306	Hagerstown .....	Russell Wingerd, VP	1734	Howard County .....	Burdelle Dowdell
357	Takoma Park .....	Minnedore Green	1747	Greater Bowie/Crofton .....	Jerry Kursban
409	Frederick, Acting	Kathy Siggins	1770	Bel Air .....	Wayne Whiting
410	West-Mar .....	Donnie Gibson	1887	Wheaton/Glenmont .....	Jim Priestley
422	Laurel .....	Barbara Hemming	1888	White Oak .....	Stuart Sklamm
581	Gaithersburg .....	Charles Garfinkel	1892	Aspen Hill .....	Linda Cohen
969	St. Mary's County .....	Joe Luskus	1936	N.W. Baltimore Metro .....	Barbara Cuffie
1122	Northern P.G. County .....	Richard Bennof	1972	Waldorf/La Plata .....	Neil McGrath
1127	Rockville .....	Jennifer Ramsey	1990	Catonsville .....	Catherine Hiebler
1143	Leisure World .....	Bob Kessler, Alt.	2166	Eastern Baltimore Area .....	Jerry Kerner
1260	Southern P.G. County .....	Bettie J. Hill	2262	Upper Marlboro .....	Bob Jacobs
1363	Bay Area .....	Jo Anne Groves	2274	Ocean Area .....	Arlene Page
1372	Tidewater .....	Louise Woods	2306	Carroll County .....	Paul Beatty

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**E-Mail.** Many of our members use e-mail. I supplement our newsletter with e-mail reminders of meetings and events. I also forward information sent to me by HQ and the Federation.

**Treasury.** Our treasury was in very bad shape until we made a few changes. We increased the chapter dues to \$10; use our monthly 50/50 raffle to enhance our treasury; and we began publishing the chapter newsletter every other month. By making these economic changes we are able to pay our bills and subsidize members interested in attending Federation meetings, training and conferences.

**Bylaws.** Every chapter must have bylaws as guidance in doing business. Our chapter recently completed a revision of our Constitution and bylaws. The entire document is three pages. It is not necessary to spell out every circumstance or possibility.

Our chapters must remember the NARFE mission,

- *“To support legislation beneficial to current and potential federal annuitants and to oppose legislation contrary to their interests.*

*To promote the general welfare of current and potential federal annuitants by advising them with respect to their rights under retirement laws and regulations.*

- *To cooperate with other organizations and associations in furtherance of these general objectives.”*

Chapters must make the changes necessary to keep our chapters alive and to protect the NARFE mission.

Please read my membership column for additional ideas for chapter successes. ●●

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dan McGrath

At the Maryland Federation's February Board Meeting we continued the discussion of how NARFE should prepare for the future, with Jo Anne Groves, our Second Vice President and Membership Director, taking us through a discussion of her research into how chapter structure might be improved and, in turn, have a positive impact on our members and their ability and willingness to assume leadership roles in their chapters. Since, in addition to her Federation job, Jo Anne is President of Bay Area Chapter 1363, I asked her to author the Chapter President's Corner article to report on her findings, including input she received at and since the February meeting. In doing this, she also gave us a bonus, continuing the flow of the discussion into her regular newsletter article. Accordingly, if you have not read the latter do so while the content of the former is still fresh in your mind.

The Future of NARFE initiative has now progressed to the Strategic Planning stage. In her Region II Update, RVP Evelyn Kirby fills us in on the status of

this National Office Initiative. I would like to congratulate the two Marylanders who have been selected to participate in this process. They are Evelyn Kirby, Region II VP, and Ted Jensen, Immediate Past Federation President. They will serve on the Strategic Planning Team and Strategic Planning Committee, respectively.

On the Legislative front, NARFE has been quickly adjusting to the changes that have been taking place at both the Federal and State levels following last November's elections. As this newsletter is readied for press we have 23 Federation members representing all eight Maryland Congressional Districts preparing to attend the NARFE 2015 Legislative Training Conference March 14 to 17, including on March 17 a day on Capitol Hill during which Federation members are planning to visit the offices of all Maryland's eight Congressional Representatives and our two Senators. On the State front, the Maryland 90-day Legislative session has passed the halfway mark and Federation members have been active in walking the halls in Annapolis, and testifying at various hearings. More on these matters follow in detail in articles later in this issue.

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With regard to membership, it is confirmed that we are all starting to rally around the call to recruit new members. There is a brief report elsewhere in the newsletter on how the Federation responded to the four-month incentive program the end of last year. I encourage everyone to keep up and even pick up the pace during 2015. I would like to congratulate St. Mary's County Chapter 969 for recruiting the most members during the campaign. In a similar manner, hats off to Linda Cohen, President Aspen Hill Chapter 1892, on being the individual recruiting the most members.

In closing, I look forward to seeing you in Ocean City, April 25 to 28, for the Maryland State Convention. Among other things, we will conduct some Federation business, receive some top of the line training from our National Office Staff in both Membership Marketing and Legislation, and enjoy outstanding addresses from our National President and our Region II Vice-President on the present and future of our great association.

*Dan McGrath*

## LEGISLATIVE



Gary Roundtree

*Gary Roundtree, Sr., Ph.D.  
1st Vice President  
Legislative Director*

### LEGISLATIVE REPORT

#### YOU NEED A RAISE!

#### Fighting Growing Income Inequality and the Policies that Foster It

The income of most Americans has stagnated over the last 30 years, while the income of the top one percent has gone up. In fact, almost all of the income growth since the recovery from the recession has gone to the top one percent. Recovery from the recession has been slow because most Americans have not benefitted from the recovery and policies have not been implemented that would reverse this trend.

What we must do first is examine causes of growing income inequality including the interconnections and impact of corporate engineered laws and policies on labor, taxes and trade, which redistribute wealth upward. Next, we must eliminate the ever-widening drag on national economic growth and the social, financial, political costs to our

democracy and quality of life resulting from income inequality. Lastly, we must propose policy corrections, which would allow all Americans to enjoy the benefits of economic growth.

On February 5, 2015, Congresswoman Donna Edwards sponsored and introduced H.R.785 – Federal Employee Pension Fairness Act of 2015. It was referred to the Committees - House, Foreign Affairs, Oversight and Government Reform, and Ways and Means - to repeal the revised annuity employee and further revise annuity employee categories within the Federal Employees Retirement System and for other purposes.

Up on Capitol Hill, two U. S. Democratic Senators have just introduced legislation proposing to give federal employees a 3.3 percent pay raise in 2015, mirroring a bill already in the House. The two Senators are Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, and Sen. Ben Cardin, D-Maryland, as a co-sponsor and Rep. Gerry Connolly, D-Virginia, introduced the same measure, called the Federal Adjustment of Income Rates (FAIR) Act, in the House in March.

This legislation would increase federal salaries significantly more than the 1 percent raise pitched by President Obama, which federal employee unions have called "inadequate" and "pitiful." I truly believe that after several years of pay freezes, unpaid furloughs and government shutdowns, it's time to turn the tide and demand a fair deal for federal  
*(continued on page 5)*

employees' pay to increase with the private sector and bankers on Wall Street.

The House in 2014 passed a defense bill that would authorize a 1.8 percent pay raise for military personnel, which could lead to an opportunity for the pay parity argument that federal employee advocates have made numerous times in the past.

Representative Gerry Connolly, D-Virginia, and Senator Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, are proposing a new bill in the House and the Senate that would give federal employees a 3.8 percent pay raise. This legislation would help feds keep pace with the private sector wage growth and inequality.

In previous years, a House Committee had approved a GOP proposal that would increase federal employees' contributions to their pensions by five percent over five years, beginning in 2013. The vote was in large part an alliance with Republicans voting in favor of the measure and Democrats voting against, 19-15.

Currently postal and federal workers in the Federal Employment Retirement System (FERS) pay 0.8 percent of their salaries toward pensions and the USPS or government agencies contribute 11.7 percent (FERS employees also contribute 6.2 percent toward Social Security.) Postal and federal employees in the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) pay 7 percent toward their pensions.

This bill has been enacted and created a two class system for federal employees and has created significant income inequality among feds and most Americans fighting for a fair wage. Unfortunately, legislation has been reintroduced in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress to cut federal pensions. Congressman Bruce Westerman (R-Arkansas) has already introduced legislation that would alter or change the current way the pensions benefit formula is calculated for federal employees' annuity. This means the use of high five rather than high three years of earnings to calculate pension's benefits for our civil service.

This bad bill would really affect federal civilian employees, members of Congress and their staffs. It will also create such a wider gap of income inequality within the top 1 percent, which is ever widening, and the 99% of Americans who have not yet seen

recovery from the recession. Congress says that income inequality does not exist and wages have not been stagnated over the last thirty years.

NARFE opposes any action that erodes the solvency of the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund (CSRDF) and supports providing full public disclosure of the fiscal stability and financial obligations of the fund. ●●

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Sudha Haley

*Sudha Haley, Ph.D., Chair  
Federal Legislative Committee*

## **FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE (FLC) REPORT**

We mobilized NARFE members to meet with our lawmakers on the Maryland Federation's "Crusade to Capitol Hill" on March 17, to lobby for NARFE's legislative goals.

As long as sequestration is in force, our working colleagues, civilian and military, will continue to feel the across-the-board budget cuts. We are now in a tough fight, with a full-force assault on federal workers.

We are passionately focused on NARFE's Legislative mission and goals, and are excited and optimistic about our higher purpose to serve each NARFE Maryland Federation member. Our strategy is to link our goals with our Champion Maryland lawmakers: Senators Mikulski and Cardin, Minority Whip Hoyer, Ranking Members Cummings and Van Hollen, Representatives Delaney, Edwards, Ruppertsberger, and Sarbanes. They have vowed to us, during grassroots advocacy meetings, to combat any future Congressional effort to cut our earned pay and benefits. In all our previous grassroots advocacy discussions with lawmakers and fellow citizens, we have continued to highlight federal employees and retirees who have, and are, diligently serving our American public.

We are building a stronger, more inclusive legislative "grassroots" advocacy team. We are

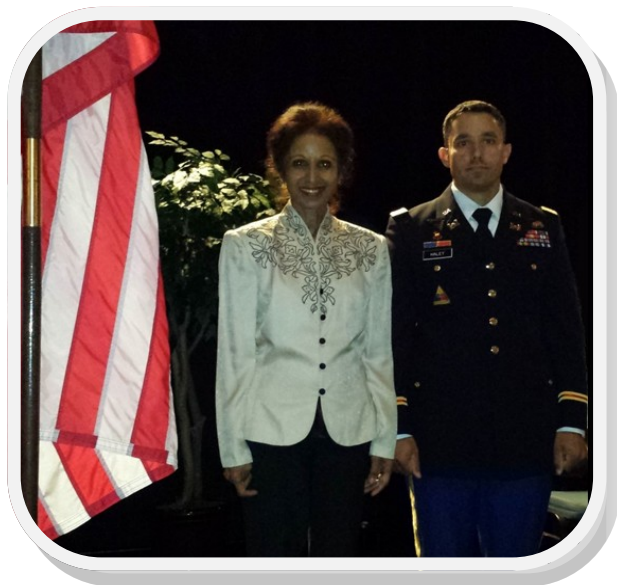
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involving more chapter leaders and members, encouraging sustained consultation and collaboration with Headquarters, and reaping the benefits of our Federation's best, for our mission's future. We are creating a stronghold of legislative advocates' community within our organization. These recent partners, because of their specialized knowledge and expertise, are sharing their fresh ideas, tools, systems and innovations with our LCAT Leaders.

What is so encouraging is that our Headquarters and Federation leaders enthusiastically guide and support our Maryland Federation's grassroots advocacy initiatives. They have created a clear channel for open communications. This is very unlike other milieus that we all have been associated with in our careers, where ideas submitted upward often disappeared into the ether of the bureaucracy.

Serving as your Federation's Legislative Committee Chair has been a privilege. I renew my commitment to serve each one of you, including our leaders, with transparency and accountability. Inaction, in my service to you, is unacceptable. Therefore, please continue to voice your opinions, expectations and concerns to me, as you are already doing, through your e-mails and phone discussions.



L-R: FLC Chair Sudha Haley, Ph.D.; Major Kris Haley

We give a **"shout out"** about **NARFE and the Maryland Federation and its Mission**, whenever we can. We did at Anna Maria Island Radio Station

in Florida, where **Major Kris Haley** (Engineer) who led the NARFE National Convention in Orlando with the Pledge of Allegiance, and FLC Chair Sudha Haley, Ph.D., were interviewed with Arun Bhagwat about Indian classical music, dance, culture and Indian-Americans who have excelled in the United States.



Ed Bice

*Ed Bice , Chair  
State Legislative Committee*

## STATE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE (SLC) REPORT

### 2015 MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The 2015 legislative session is particularly challenging for all, as Maryland faces a \$850 million fiscal deficit based in part on a sluggish economy, in part caused by federal government, cuts which has led to higher rates of unemployment during the recent recession and has resulted in less income tax revenue for local and state governments.

Upon taking office, Governor Hogan proposed budgets and other actions to eliminate the deficit in this year and the next year. However, the State Legislative Committee (SLC) has remained involved in legislation while being challenged by a reduced state budget and fiscal notes attached to bills noting whether or not legislation will increase state expenditures. Our long-term care insurance bill - Tax Credit for LTC Insurance Premiums, SB 6, was heard in committee on February 4 and HB 822 heard March 10. These bills would annualize the present one-time \$500 tax credit in two \$250 phases for tax years 2016 and 2017, then \$500 for 2018 and then annually for new or returning purchasers. This year we have the support of 11 other organizations, which agree with us that the legislation is needed and would reduce the State's future MEDICAID costs.

The SLC has supported other bills to this date. SB 194 and HB 144 - Income Tax Modification-Retirement Income broaden the definition of income eligible for pension exclusion. SB 374 and HB 405 -

*(continued on page 7)*

Maryland False Claims Act. HB 221 - Commission on Tax Policy Reform and Fairness; HB 392 - Subtraction Modification- Retirement would raise the maximum pension exclusion in seven steps. HB 177- Subtraction Modification - Retirement Income (Military); HB 99 - Tax Modification- Retirement Income, Law Enforcement, Correction Officers, Fire, Rescue, Emergency Personnel; SB 695 - Public Information Act - Enforcement, Fees, Exceptions.

We voiced our opposition to HB 646 - Subtraction Modification - Retirement Income. The bill reduces the maximum pension exclusion and therefore great

numbers of people will pay more income taxes. As I write this during the first week in March, the outcome of our legislation is uncertain.

Between now and your June chapter meeting is a wonderful time to invite your legislators to visit your meeting and speak about the 2015 session. Please ask them what they have done lately for the senior/ retiree community, a community that pays billions of dollars in state and local taxes and contributes billions of dollars through their volunteer efforts. ●●

## MEMBERSHIP

A chapter's bylaws should be as generic as possible, while including the important issues for running a chapter. All that is really needed in a chapter is a presiding officer and someone to take care of the chapter's money.

If you belong to any other associations, you know that people are not joining and volunteering as they have in the past. If we don't change and incorporate current trends and streamlined ways of doing business, our organization will dwindle until it cannot function.

I am convinced that if we rethink our chapter responsibilities, holding a chapter position would be less daunting. Look at your chapter's bylaws. This could be a starting place for rethinking our way of doing business. ●●

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Dick Strombotne

*Dick Strombotne, Chair  
Membership Retention Committee*

## MEMBERSHIP RETENTION REPORT

### Summary

Maryland continues in the top rank of federations in ratio of reinstatements to non-renewals in 2014, due in part to monthly mailings to lapsed members.  
*(continued page 8)*



Jo Anne Groves

*Jo Anne Groves  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Membership Director*

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

I want to thank all members who work hard to keep our chapters running and give our members a way to get the information they need to protect their earned benefits. However, as you know, we continue to lose members and close or combine chapters. WE NEED TO RESTRUCTURE OUR CHAPTERS.

In the Chapter President's column, I gave some ideas to help chapters streamline and retain their members as well as encourage members to volunteer for key chapter positions.

I have spoken with many of our leaders, who offered ideas to help alleviate our problems and achieve our goals of maintaining our chapters, keeping our members, and enticing new members.

Volunteer members often become overwhelmed, trying to manage or perform a long list of activities, which may not make a difference in running the chapter. We need to get back to the idea that a chapter is a way for people with shared interests to band together and pursue them, not a burdensome list of duties.

As of the end of January 2015, membership in eNARFE Chapter 2363 climbed to 25,302, with 1,967 living in Maryland.

### **Lapsed Member Mailings**

Since February 2011, the Maryland Federation has been sending letters every month to lapsed members inviting them to rejoin. The letters are personalized and are signed by the Federation President. An application to rejoin accompanies the letter; it offers three options – for 1-year, 2-year, or 3-year memberships. A business reply envelope addressed to NARFE Headquarters is also enclosed. The mailings are timed to arrive at least two months after the last attempt by NARFE HQ to reinstate the lapsed members.

One way to measure the success of the lapsed member mailings is to determine the ratio of members reinstated to number of letters sent, in percent. As of early March, the success rate was 10 percent for the year of lapsed member mailing ending with the December 2014 mailing. Over the four-year period, letters were sent to 5,458 lapsed members and 439 rejoined for 620 years of membership; the success rate was 8 percent for that period.

Next look at the ratio of reinstatements to non-renewals taken from the monthly regional membership reports. For 2014, this ratio was 39.0 percent for the Maryland Federation and was 33.9 percent for the rest of NARFE excluding eNARFE Chapter 2363. The plus 5.1 percentage point differential

for Maryland NARFE is another measure of the success of the lapsed member mailings.

### **eNARFE Chapter 2363 in Maryland**

At the end of January, eNARFE Chapter 2363 had 25,302 members, with 1,967 of them in Maryland. Total membership increased by 359 from the end of December. Membership increased by 18 percent in 2014 from 21,077 at the end of December 2013. This chapter has more than 4,000 Active Federal Employees members, 16 percent of total membership. For NARFE as a whole, AFE members are 9.5 percent of total members. The retention rate for eNARFE chapter members in Maryland is quite good – about 60 percent of the eNARFE members in Maryland, listed in the roster for November 2013 with expiration dates from February to September 2014, were still members in January 2015. This analysis can't take into account any eNARFE members who may have moved out of Maryland before January 23, 2015. The retention rates for AFE members and annuitant members are statistically identical although the raw numbers show a four-percentage point higher rate for the AFE members.

### **Advice for Chapter Membership Chairs**

The best time to contact dropped members to invite them to rejoin is about one month after they are listed on the non-renewal list. Call, write, or phone them. If you want a sample letter inviting them to rejoin, send me an e-mail request at [DickS.narfe@comcast.net](mailto:DickS.narfe@comcast.net). ●●

## **REPORTS, NEWS, EVENTS AND INFORMATION**



*Evelyn Kirby*  
*Region II Vice President*

### **REGION II UPDATE**

Evelyn Kirby

#### **Strategic Planning Process Underway**

On February 13, National President Thissen shared with Federation Presidents the Strategic Planning (SP)

Process developed for NARFE. It recognized that this was NOT the beginning of a process, but a continuation of effort. He pointed to the premise that we are past the time of developing a vision. We must now prepare and implement a plan of action.

He also indicated the SP Process was developed with and will be aided by an independent process facilitator, Sabatier Consulting. It includes a special e-mail address – [stratplan@narfe.org](mailto:stratplan@narfe.org) -- for individuals across NARFE to provide input. It will also have two-

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way communication with members. Methods to be used will be such as *narfe* magazine, Fact Sheets, *narfe.org*, e-mails, and discussions in leadership and other meetings. Member awareness of and appreciation of what is on the table and why it is critical to our success are very important. You recall that 2014 National Convention delegates voted for strategic planning using the Future of NARFE report as a foundation. With this vote and related ones, e.g. reducing National Resident Officers from four to two, our members embraced the need to evolve NARFE so its success and that of its mission could survive.

By now you should have seen Dan McGrath's e-mail forwarding the February 13 release on this process, its six phases, and members appointed by President Thissen to the Strategic Planning Team and the Strategic Planning Committee. The SP Team, after reviewing the Future of NARFE report, plus other pertinent reports, will categorize and prioritize issues, share relevant information and data for review by the SP Committee, and otherwise help guide and refine their efforts. The SP Committee will gather and analyze data, including input from focus groups and surveys, and can add priorities if desired. They are not to set a vision, but to offer views on planning for evolutionary change and implementation realities. They are to work toward actionable proposals that can help evolve NARFE and be accepted by an overwhelming majority of our members. The message for all in NARFE, and certainly for the SP Team and SP Committee, is one espoused by the National Executive Board (NEB), which will be engaged throughout the SP process: We are going to strengthen NARFE for effectiveness and growth. Remember, Plan development is just one step. Other steps, such as any proposed bylaws changes, will be discussed, developed and presented for consideration as appropriate.

At present the phases are seen as these, though timeframes may change somewhat if practical:

9/13-4/14: Future of NARFE, which identified critical issues and offered a vision for change;

8/24-28/2014: Passage by delegates of 'change' resolutions at the Orlando National Convention;

1/15-5/15: Knowledge gathering by an appointed Strategic Planning Committee;

1/15-8/15: Consensus building based on knowledge gained and research, including progress presentations at the July 2015 Federation Presidents meeting;

9/15-1/16: Strategic Plan preparation after review and consideration of input to date;

2/16-7/16: Communication of that Plan and related proposed Bylaws

Of course, as time passes there will be re-evaluation of our situation, efforts taken and impacts. There will be priority reassessment, appropriate revision of strategic thinking and plans, and various timeframes proposed for specific actions. What has been sketched for 2015-16 is just part of our path to Future NARFE. Quality strategic planning, with its many phases, is an ongoing process.

National Treasurer Dowie chairs both the SP Team and SP Committee. He will provide recommendations to President Thissen, and, of course, be intimately involved as the NEB considers ideas. The four-person SP Team also includes two Regional VPs, new RVP I Jim Crawford, of New Hampshire, and me, and the HQ Director of Marketing, Bridget Boel. The eleven members of the SP Committee joining Jon Dowie include some of the many who stepped forward to help look at change. They each have proven records of positive, constructive leadership. They come from every one of our ten Regions and include some who were on the Future of NARFE Committee, one from the Configuration Advisory Board, another from eNARFE, other dedicated Federation and Chapter officers and functional leaders, and a recent retiree. Input from Active Federal Employees is being sought as well via market research.

As emphasized earlier, there is to be feedback to and from the NEB on the thinking at hand and ongoing communications to the field. Stakeholders across NARFE should feel included in the SP process. Granted, not all will agree with all ideas. We should agree, however, to be open-minded and respectful and face facts. We should understand that any change (anywhere, not just in NARFE) could be messy but helpful in the long run. There may be times that

*(continued on page 10)*

the vast majority of us may be able to 'live with' what can strengthen us even though it may not be what we grew comfortable with in the past. The bottom line is simple: Always forward. ●●

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*Pat Farmer*  
*Secretary*

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Pat Farmer

Keep those F-7s and officer changes coming. I really appreciate the Chapter Presidents and Secretaries keeping me up to date with any officer changes within the chapters. It is a big help to me, especially in preparing the Federation Directory before each board meeting.

On the subject of the Federation Directory, I would appreciate it if each chapter president and Federation committee chair would look at the Federation Directory handed out at the Feb. 3 Board Meeting and let me know of any changes that need to be made – new address, e-mail, phone number, new committee members, etc.

Thank you for your continued support of me as your Federation Secretary.

In my role as NARFE representative to the Board of Directors of the Maryland Gerontological Association, I would like to encourage you to Save the Date for the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual MGA Spring Conference June 11, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Charlestown Retirement Community, 715 Maiden Choice Lane, Catonsville, MD 21228.

This year's conference theme is "Empowerment through Choices." Topics to be presented are: "Making CHOICE a Reality for our Elders," "Choosing Wisely<sup>®</sup>," "Caregivers Stress, End of Life Decisions, and Dignity" and "Intimacy and Sexuality for Seniors."

The registration fee includes continental breakfast, luncheon, conference materials and social work continuing education certificates for members and non-members. You may have a family member, in the field of social work, who could use additional CEUs. Please pass the information on.

If you would like further information on the speakers and the conference registration fees, please send me e-mail at [buttonspaf@aol.com](mailto:buttonspaf@aol.com) and I will send you the complete conference information.

*(continued on page 11)*



*Eleanor Kaul*  
*Federal Employee and*  
*Education Assistance Fund,*  
*Chair*

## FEEA REPORT

Eleanor Kaul

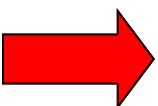
### NARFE/FEEA 2015 Scholarship Application

Friday, April 24, 2015 is the deadline for submission of a 2015 scholarship application. See page 47 of the March 2015 *narfe* magazine for details. The form F-105 can be obtained by sending an e-mail to [scholarship@narfe.org](mailto:scholarship@narfe.org); download it from website, [www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org), or call Headquarters, 703-838-7760, and request scholarship information.

The 2015 essay topic is "Young people are often mentioned as a disaffected portion of the electorate because many do not vote. Why do you think so many choose not to vote? What specific actions would you recommend to bring young people into the electoral process?" See page 47 of the March 2015 *narfe* magazine.

Judging panels in each NARFE Region examine each application, essay and supporting documents. There are six winners of a \$1,000 scholarship each. Winners are notified by FEEA and the scholarship money is paid out. A list of winners and their sponsors will be posted in September on the NARFE website and published in the December issue of the *narfe* magazine.

Our children are the future of our country. To make a tax-deductible contribution, send a check payable to NARFE/FEEA and mail it to:



NARFE Scholarship Awards  
C/O FEEA  
3333 S. Wadsworth Blvd.  
Lakewood, CO 80227

You don't have to be a professional – nurse, doctor, social worker, nursing home administrator - to attend. You will take away a wealth of information from this conference. I consider myself a layperson on the board but I always look forward to the spring conference because I learn so much about aging, caregiving, the resources available to older adults and much more. ●●

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## Electronic Communications Committee and Configuration Advisory Board News

*Pat Dempsey, Region II Rep to Configuration Advisory Board*

When you logon to the Online Activity Module (OAM) on the NARFE website you may have noticed a section for "Website Hosting." This will allow you to create a website for your chapter, which is on the computers at NARFE, or "hosted" by them. This has always been available but there are two recent changes. First, they changed the way security is done for website hosting. It is now the same system as the OAM. They also upgraded the software that you use when maintaining a website. Prior to the upgrade I was hesitant to recommend that chapters use the national hosting. Now I think that it is a good choice for chapters, especially when you do not have a technically oriented person. If you do not currently have a website but are thinking of doing one then you should look at this option. There is a drawback; you cannot move your website to another web hosting site. The national web hosting is similar to Google and others you see advertising online as being "easy to use." The same software that makes maintaining the site easy usually means it cannot be moved. The Maryland Federation uses **WordPress** for its website. WordPress allows you to build a website on many hosting services. I think that WordPress is harder to learn than the national web hosting but is more versatile.

Those who use the OAM may have noticed a few improvements to the security system. You no longer need to logon once as a member and then again when you use the OAM if the member logon is done with an e-mail address. This also makes life better for those with access as both a chapter and

Federation officer. You no longer need to logon again when going from the Chapter OAM menu to the Federation OAM menu.

There is a new e-mail system coming! The NARFE E-mail System (NES) will be an enhancement to the current options in the OAM and GEMS. It will be another menu off the main OAM menu, similar to the web hosting. Right now our technicians are working on some problems – some of the services that offer e-mail, like Comcast, Verizon and AOL, think that the high number of e-mails may be spam. Headquarters made the decision to provide access to the system in steps so that as problems are identified, the fewest number of people are impacted. They gave the Configuration Advisory Board (CAB) members access for testing first and then the Regional Vice Presidents (RVPs). The NES will be rolled out to Federation officers next. After a period of time the system will then be rolled out to chapter officers.

Your chapter may not have a website but you do have a "web presence." Try searching on "NARFE XXXX," where XXXX is your chapter number. If you do not have a website you will probably see the web page with your chapter information from the Maryland Federation website. You may also see something from the local paper if you submitted information about a meeting. This is important because this may be what someone searching for your chapter will see.

Here are a few hints about keeping your "web presence" current. Your meeting information can be listed on the national website when you submit an F-7; it could be in the chapter information on the Federation website; and it could be on your website. Unless you don't mind keeping multiple places updated when you change something, try to keep it in only one location and have the other locations point to the one place where the information really is located. You can enter the Federation web page ([www.mdnarfe.org](http://www.mdnarfe.org)) or your chapter website when you update the F-7 online. If you enter the Federation web page include something like "See Chapter Information under the Federation Chapters Menu on the home page." If you have a chapter website, then have the Federation site and national point to your web page. This way there is only one

*(continued on page 12)*

place to put information about meetings. The same rule of thumb applies to your newsletters. They can be kept on the Federation website, your own website or another location online but it is usually best to keep them in one place. Some people store their newsletters on a site called ISSUU.COM. This is where national stores the NARFE magazine and the Federation website links to the magazine stored there. It is free to use and works well with Facebook. (It is also a good place to read free magazines.)

Another facet of an online presence is **Facebook**. The Federation has a Facebook page, as well as some chapters. Last year the Electronic Communications Committee (ECC) worked with a consultant to help chapters set up a Facebook page. A few chapters set one up but we discovered that setting up and maintaining a Facebook page presents a challenge for many chapters. Regardless of whether you have a chapter Facebook page, please try to get your members to “like” the Federation Facebook page. The information presented on the Federation Facebook page is well worth it.

Sometimes the various online choices seem confusing. The good news is that there are people in the Federation, and at National, who are happy to help you. We may not be able to give you an answer immediately but we can try to get it for you. If you have a question about the Federation website you can contact Diane Bicjan ([dkbicjan@gmail.com](mailto:dkbicjan@gmail.com)), our webmaster. If you have a question about Facebook you can contact one of the other ECC members - Linda Adams ([ladams.narfe409@gmail.com](mailto:ladams.narfe409@gmail.com)), Howard (Flash) Gordon ([flash@acm.org](mailto:flash@acm.org)), Jim Lish ([jlish11@verizon.net](mailto:jlish11@verizon.net)) or Pat Dempsey ([patrickmdempsey@verizon.net](mailto:patrickmdempsey@verizon.net)). If you have a question about the OAM reports or web hosting by National you can contact Pat Dempsey. ●●

## Get the Inside Scoop

*Evelyn Kirby, Region II Vice President*

There is a wealth of information on how to be an effective, resourceful NARFE leader and on how to recruit and retain successfully. Where? On [narfe.org](http://narfe.org). Log on as a member. On the left side on the Members Home Page, under What You Can Do On

line, and then under Assess NARFE Publications click on Newsletters. There you will find the *NARFE Insider* and the *Recruiting & Retention Journal*. HQs continues to mail the *R&R Journal* via the U.S. Post Office, but the *Insider* has not been sent through the U.S. mail since 2012 as a cost savings and efficiency measure. You may recall that information of concern to our leaders was generally removed from *narfe* magazine in its redesign at about that same time. That allowed maximum space to feature Magazine articles of greatest interest to our general readership, and to prospective members. Such stories relate to legislative updates, information on pay, pensions, benefits, physical health, financial options and the like. So, to stay on top of good, current tips and information for dedicated leaders and recruiters visit [narfe.org](http://narfe.org). Please alert any individuals active in NARFE roles who don't have access to or don't choose to use [narfe.org](http://narfe.org) about what they are missing. While emphasis in this article is on the *Insider* and *R&R Journal*, do not overlook all the other great information and legislative activism tools on [narfe.org](http://narfe.org). Get the scoop, act on it, and share what's there! ●●

## WANTED: Federation Newsletter Editor

*Linda Adams, Maryland Federation Newsletter Editor*

For personal reasons, the fall and spring newsletters were difficult for me to complete. I will remain as the Chair ECC where timing is not as critical as the newsletter. I have enjoyed being the Federation Newsletter Editor, but I am asking for another volunteer to take over the duties. Dan and Pat have the editing duties very organized, so it will be easy for a new individual to take over the duties. So, if anyone is interested, please contact Dan McGrath or myself. E-mail addresses are in the Directory of this publication. The next publication is in August. I am more than happy to assist a new editor in learning how to publish the newsletter and I am willing to continue as the newsletter editor until a new volunteer is found. Thanks to all who have aided me in the years I have published the newsletter particularly the Federation Presidents and Federation Secretaries.



## FINANCIAL



Dick Strombotne

*Dick Strombotne  
Treasurer*

### TREASURER'S REPORT

#### FY 2014 Summary.

In 2014, gross revenues of Maryland NARFE were \$72,260, with \$55,136 coming from Ten-Percent funds from HQ. Per capita revenues in 2014 amounted to \$7,022, substantially less than in 2013, as a result of the significant decline in chapter membership last year. Expenditures were \$66,366. The surplus for the year was \$5,894 rather than the budgeted deficit of \$3,240. End of year assets totaled \$86,241, including \$25,897 in three Certificates of Deposit. One of the CDs will mature in April 2015. In the accompanying chart showing the approved budget for FY 2015 and FY 2016, see the amounts for each line item in the column labeled "Actual FY 2014."

#### Outstanding Checks.

A number of reimbursement checks dating back to September are outstanding. If you are holding a reimbursement check or receive one, please deposit it promptly. If you do not deposit your check as a way to help Maryland NARFE, just let me know and I will void the check and remove you from the list of those who are reimbursed for Board meetings, committee meetings and training sessions.

### Maryland Federation of Chapters Approved Budget – FY2015 & FY2016

February 3, 2015

	Actual	Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget
<u>CALENDAR YEARS</u>	<u>FY 2014</u>	<u>FY 2015</u>	<u>FY 2016</u>
Beginning Net Assets	\$77,347	\$83,241	\$73,186
Ending Surplus (Deficit)	\$5,894	(\$10,055)	\$2,315
<u>Receipts:</u>			
National Dues [10%]	55,136	51,800	48,700
Chapter Per Capita Dues	7,022	6,400	5,800
Interest on Saving	21	20	20
Interest on Certificates of Deposit	311	190	120
Income, State Convention	225	11,700	0
Income, Mini Convention	5,655	0	5,650
Matching funds	2,150	0	0
Other Income	1,740	1,600	1,600
<b>Actual/Budgeted Income:</b>	<b>\$72,260</b>	<b>\$71,710</b>	<b>\$61,890</b>
<b>Total Funds Available</b>	<b>\$149,607</b>	<b>\$154,951</b>	<b>\$135,076</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$66,366</b>	<b>\$81,785</b>	<b>\$58,575</b>
<b>Ending Net Worth</b>	<b>\$83,241</b>	<b>\$73,186</b>	<b>\$75,501</b>
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Ad Hoc Committees	0	200	200
Administration, General	1,454	2,000	2,000
Alzheimer's/Lupus	37	75	75
Chapter Assist & Devel	2,250	2,200	2,200
Convention, Mini	11,908	0	11,900
Convention, Maryland State	941	44,600	0
Convention, NARFE National	10,874	140	11,000
Executive Committee	4,908	5,000	5,000
Federation Board Meetings	7,989	8,200	8,200
Legislation, Federal	2,017	4,600	2,000
Legislation, State	8,250	4,500	4,500
Membership/Recruitment	7,372	4,200	4,200
Newsletter	1,808	1,800	1,800
Service Officer	0		
Training	6,340	4,000	6,300
United Seniors of Maryland	0	100	50
Web Site	240	150	150
<b>Total Expenditures:</b>	<b>\$66,366</b>	<b>\$81,785</b>	<b>\$58,575</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>66,366</b>	<b>81,785</b>	<b>58,575</b>
<b>Projected surplus (deficit)</b>	<b>5,894</b>	<b>(10,055)</b>	<b>2,315</b>
<b>Contingency</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>

# AROUND THE FEDERATION

## NARFE Legislative Training Conference, March 14-17, 2015



NARFE held a Legislative Training Conference March 14-17 in Arlington, VA. The three-day conference included training opportunities, national speakers, and the opportunity to network with fellow NARFE grassroots activists. The conference culminated in a visit to Capitol Hill (Crusade to Capitol Hill) where NARFE members met with legislators.

NARFE Maryland Federation's highlight of our ***Crusade to Capitol Hill*** was our face-to-face meeting at the Capitol Hill office of our Senator Barbara Mikulski. We were joined in the advocacy with NARFE National President Richard Thissen.

L-R: Senator Barbara Mikulski, Maryland Federation Legislative Committee Chair Dr. Sudha Haley and NARFE National President Richard Thissen.



L-R: Congressman John Delaney; Dan McGrath, Maryland Federation President; and Kathy Siggins, Acting President/Legislative Director, Chapter 409.

L-R: Paul Hudes, Chapter 1888, White Oak; Bruce Fowler, Chapter 1127, Rockville; Congressman Chris Van Hollen; Kathy Siggins, Chapter 409, Frederick.





## February Federation Board Meeting



**Federation Board Meeting  
photos provided by Melinda  
Scott, Maryland Federation  
Photographer. Many thanks for  
all of her efforts.**



*State Convention,  
Ocean City, MD  
April 26-28, 2015*



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

Protect Your Retirement



Maryland Federation of Chapters  
Dick Strombotne  
310 High Gables Drive, Apt. 205  
Gaithersburg, MD 20874-7424  
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## ***CALENDAR OF EVENTS***

### **2015**

APRIL 26-28	MARYLAND STATE CONVENTION, OCEAN CITY, MD
JUNE 11	MARYLAND GERONTOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION 33RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE
JULY 29	FALL NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
SEPTEMBER 21	REGISTRATION DEADLINE FOR OCTOBER BOARD MEETING, BOWIE, MD
OCTOBER 6	FEDERATION BOARD MEETING, BOWIE MD
OCTOBER 29	FEDERATION TRAINING DAY, BOWIE, MD
NOVEMBER 27	WINTER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE