



MARYLAND FEDERATION NEWSLETTER FALL 2013



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Dan McGrath

It was an honor to be elected Maryland Federation President at our 41st Biennial Convention. I found it particularly stimulating that the meeting site was within five miles, as the crow flies, of my home. While I believe all our conventions since I have been involved with NARFE have been great, the memories of the 2013 convention will be ones I will always cherish. Why, because first, we trumpeted out our very hard working previous elected officers with much thanks and second, you elected an outstanding supporting cast to lead the Federation in carrying out its primary mission of protecting the earned benefits of active and retired Federal employees over the next two years.

In the latter regard, our new First Vice President and Legislative Director, Gary Roundtree, really hit the road running and has already met with many of the members of our Congressional delegation, our legislators in Annapolis, and the staff members of both groups. At the same time he has assumed leadership of the Federation's revitalized grassroots campaign to Protect America's Heartbeat and in turn our earned benefits. With the support of Jim Cowie, Federal legislative Committee Chair, and Ed Bice, State

Legislative Committee Chair, I see the Federation positioned for continued progress on the legislative front.

Jo Anne Groves, Second Vice President, Membership, has taken over responsibility for what continues to be our number one priority and the most difficult to achieve. This is reversing our current trend of declining membership. She has been working hard to establish her membership plan and the team to execute it. So far our former membership chair, Barry Grier, has joined her to assist in the Federation's recruitment program as our new Membership Event Coordinator. Other members have been joining Barry in staffing recruitment tables at organization and Federal agency events. In an effort to gain access to Federal agencies at BlueCross/BlueShield's invitation NARFE members have started to accompany them when they visit agencies to put on their seminar on FEHBP in retirement. Using this avenue, Barbara Cuffie, President Chapter 1936, NW Baltimore Metro, has gained access to the Social Security Administration for recruiting, something NARFE had been denied for some time.

Dick Strombotne, Treasurer, was elected for another term and is the only elected officer not new to his position. Needless to say he has not missed a beat. He continues to

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126	Western Charles/Indian Head,	Ed Rice
126	Co-Presidents	Ron Bush
251	Annapolis	Meg Clarke
258	Bethesda/Chevy Chase	Allan Kam
264	Hyattsville	Thomas LoJacono
306	Hagerstown	Ed Wurmb
357	Takoma Park	Minnedore Green
409	Frederick, Co-Presidents	Bill Elsen
409	Kathy Siggins
410	West-Mar	Donnie Gibson
422	Laurel	Barbara Hemming
581	Gaithersburg	Joe Martin
969	St. Mary's County	Joe Luskus
1122	Northern P.G. County	Richard Bennof
1127	Rockville	Jennifer Ramsey
1143	Leisure World	Barbara Walter
1260	Southern P.G. County	Cel Aguigui
1261	Delmarva	Closed
1363	Bay Area	Jo Anne Groves
1372	Tidewater	Louise Woods
1466	Calvert County	Shelly Ziman
1519	Glen Burnie, Co-Presidents	Don Bender
1519	Bob Minghini
1522	Susquehanna	Harold Forst
1734	Howard County	Burdelle Dowdell
1747	Greater Bowie/Crofton	Jerry Kursban
1770	Bel Air	Wayne Whiting
1887	Wheaton/Glenmont	Jim Priestley
1888	White Oak	Stuart Sklamm
1892	Aspen Hill	Linda Cohen
1936	N.W. Baltimore Metro	Barbara Cuffie
1972	Waldorf/La Plata	Neil McGrath
1990	Catonsville	Lou Brocato
2166	Eastern Baltimore Area	Jerry Kerner
2262	Upper Marlboro	Bob Jacobs
2274	Ocean Area	Arlene Page
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The Maryland Federation Newsletter

Published Three Times a Year:

Spring, Fall, Winter

by the Maryland Federation, NARFE

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L-R: Elaine Hughes, National Secretary, NARFE; MD Federation Officers: Dick Strombotne, Treasurer; Jo Anne Groves, Membership Director; Dan McGrath, President; Gary Roundtree, Legislative Director

provide outstanding reports and data analysis needed for the management of an organization the size of our Federation. In addition, I would venture to say, as our Retention Chair he runs a program second to none. With all fondness, I designate Dick as one of our Federation's energizers.

When we learned that Jeanette Green, after 26 years as Federation Secretary, would be retiring, some of us lamented how would we find a

replacement. Well we did when Pat Farmer was elected Secretary. Her skills, with the support of Jeanette, made the transition seamless for the rest of us. Thank you ladies!

That's enough coverage of what your elected leadership is up to. I know you all know that all Federal Employees and Retirees and our benefits are under attack. Accordingly, I implore each chapter officer to motivate your members to do some serious recruiting. In a similar vein, we need to encourage our members to do a couple things on the legislative front. A more reasoned approach, as outlined elsewhere in this newsletter by Jim Cowie, may not have time to work in the next month or two in which we must act. First we all need to be telling our President and Congressional Delegation to vote against the Chained CPI proposal. Our second priority is to tell them to keep their hands off our Health Benefits; that these priorities are not negotiable; and we will not tolerate any adverse impacts on our COLAs or HEALTH BENEFITS period.

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LEGISLATIVE



*Gary Roundtree
1st Vice President
Legislative Director*

MEETINGS WITH MARYLAND ELECTED OFFICIALS

Report on Luncheon Meeting with Lieutenant Governor Anthony G. Brown, Democratic Whip Congressman Steny Hoyer, State Senate President Mike Miller, State Senator Ulysses Currie, District 25, and a host of other elected representatives from the state of Maryland.

There were two events scheduled on July 22, one at the Waldorf Hilton Garden Inn and the other at the American Legion Post 136, in Greenbelt. Various influential organizations, community groups,

residents of the community and members of the press were in attendance. I attended these events with our elected officials with the expectation of gathering more support for opposition to the Chained CPI. My time was spent at these events introducing myself as a representative of the Maryland Federation of Chapters of NARFE, National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association.



L-R: Congressman Steny Hoyer and Gary Roundtree, Legislative Director, MD Federation

I had a discussion with Congressman Steny Hoyer and his Press Secretary, Mariel Saez, on his current position on the Chained CPI and GPO/WEP. Hoyer currently stands

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opposed to the Chained CPI, unless there is a grand bargain in the making from the White House with House Republicans. If that were the case, Hoyer insisted that the Democrats might have to cave in on their opposition to the Chained CPI. I found this reply to be very alarming, and a wake-up call for NARFE and its members to get in touch with their elected officials before the vote on the Chained CPI. I believe that the vote will probably take place in September, and we should band together to show that we oppose the change to the CPI.

Our Lieutenant Governor Anthony G. Brown and



L-R: Maryland Lt. Governor Anthony Brown and Gary Roundtree Sr., MD Federation Legislative Director

his new wife were very affable in the discussion we had on how the Chained CPI would have a very adverse effect on our nation's veterans who receive VA compensation and pensions.

I also met and chatted with State

Senate President Mike Miller on our Long Term Care bill for which the State Legislative Committee has been lobbying. State Senator Katherine Klausmeier



L-R: State Senator Ulysses Currie, Gary Roundtree Sr. and State Senator Thomas V. Mike Miller

has already announced that she intends to introduce this legislation again in the next General Assembly session.

The rest of my time, I talked with State Senator Ulysses Currie, B&T, Delegate James Hubbard, District 23, and a host of city councilmen, seeking support for the NARFE agenda. ●●



Jim Cowie

**Jim Cowie, Chair
Federal Legislative Committee**

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE

In the recent past, Federal Employees have carried the majority of the burden of contributions to reducing the deficit. Federal Retirees have so far been spared, but this will no longer be true, if proposed changes were to be implemented.

One of the most significant proposals is to alter the method of measuring the change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to a replacement system, called the Chained CPI, which will reduce earned benefits, quite significantly over time, as indicated elsewhere in this Federation Newsletter.

NARFE is encouraging all members to protest these reductions in their benefits, but how effective is this likely to be when the proponents of Chained CPI are pushing for its adoption precisely because the reductions of benefits are viewed as contributions to reducing the deficit.

A more promising line of defense is to challenge the claim that the new method is a more accurate measure of inflation, especially when applied to seniors, who face major and increasing medical expenses in their twilight years, which are not likely to be curtailed much, with or without improvements in health legislation. The Chained CPI approach also argues that citizens can reduce their costs, if necessary, by substituting goods, such as cheaper food, but this is little comfort for those who have already economized as much as possible, and would be struggling mightily to make do with less. However, any such proposals should be considered within the overall assessment of what needs to be done to improve the economy and reduce the deficit, when there is clear evidence that a small proportion of the population is increasing their prosperity, compared to everyone else. If we are truly concerned about supporting the recovery of the middle classes, including most of Federal retirees, then we need to protest proposals that continue to

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hurt us. Without balanced contributions across the population, this should not be acceptable.

One of the ways of mitigating the effects of the Chained CPI might be to use a means tested approach, where it is not applied to those whose income is below a threshold. However, this is especially damaging for those who are just above this limit, who would still suffer the consequences of a system, which is unlikely to be fair to most seniors because of the pattern of their costs in their retirement years.

A second proposal of concern to NARFE is that the FEHBP Health system may be replaced by requiring its members to enroll in the new Health Exchanges. The FEHBP system is very highly regarded, because those eligible to join come from a stable and responsible slice of the population, which provides the platform for good quality medical services at reasonable prices. It is the overall quality of the membership that leads to this outcome, not because they have privileges at taxpayer expense. The reason for the proposed change to a system, which works very well, is less to do with improvement in health coverage as a whole, and much more to do with one other reason to build opposition to the Affordable Care Act. The proponents should be advised in no uncertain terms that they should stop trying to eliminate the FEHBP, and apply their objections to the Health Act, in other more constructive ways, should they wish to pursue this.

It is not suggested here that NARFE members should be hesitant to protest these proposed changes. We should be part of a much broader segment of the population, affected by the Chained CPI proposal, who should protest, for the broader reasons listed above. However, in the present political standoff, there is little sign that policies will be agreed to that respond to economic challenges in a balanced way, which fairly respond to the needs of the whole population. This would likely need to include stopping the targeting of the federal constituency, by replacing the blunt and arbitrary instrument of sequestration, consideration of revenues as well as expenditures, and adjustment of entitlement policies to more fairly balance the needs of the different generations. A change in the political climate would seem to be promising only as and

when a fair approach to economic policy became an electability issue, similar to the current reasons why immigration policies are undergoing reconsideration. NARFE will defend its interests more effectively to the extent to which we can contribute to the perception of economic policies as an electability issue. ●●



Ed Bice

Ed Bice , Chair
State Legislative Committee

STATE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE (SLC)) REPORT

The State Legislative Committee continued to meet during the summer, as it is our custom to work on the legislative agenda for the 2014 General Assembly session. The committee is always open to suggestions from chapter members for issues that the committee can address for inclusion in the agenda. Some members of the SLC met during the summer with Senator Edward Kasemeyer, Chair, Senate Budget and Tax Committee, as well as members of the staffs of Speaker Busch and Governor O'Malley. These meetings were an effort to obtain support for our legislative ideas.

New Committee Members. New members have joined the SLC. The additions were due to resignations principally as the result of health issues experienced by some members. If you are interested in serving on the committee, please see me. We meet 12 times a year with each meeting lasting two hours in Annapolis.

Maryland/PAC (MD/PAC). Once again, thank you for your generous support of MD/PAC during the recent Federation Convention. Your response was terrific. Since the end of the legislative session in April, we have received many invitations to attend fundraisers held on behalf of members of the General Assembly. The requests will end before the start of the session in January 2014. MD/PAC supports legislators who have shown support for our legislation and/or senior issues. Your support allows chapter members to attend fundraisers and meet their legislators and others and interact with them regarding our issues. Chapter Presidents, when you

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receive an email from a committee member (usually me) asking you whether you recommend that MD/PAC support a legislator's fundraiser, please provide an answer to the requester. The answer can be yes, no, or I do not know the legislator well enough to make a judgment. Also, you might check with the person who is your state legislation person, if you have one, before you make the judgment. If MD/PAC supports a fundraiser, please be prepared to send a member of your chapter to the event. ●●



*Jim Cowie, Chair
Federal Legislative Committee
and NARFE-PAC Chair*

Jim Cowie

NARFE-PAC REPORT

The results of contributions to NARFE-PAC, for the first six months of contributions in the 2013-2014 cycle, have just been published. The total of \$278,663.28 is higher than equivalent periods in earlier cycles, and most likely reflects the increasing anxiety amongst our members that our benefits are more at risk than they have been previously. The total for Maryland contributions of \$15,012 is third behind California at \$29,577 and Virginia at \$19,218. The large California input is enough to put Region VIII in first place with our Region II second. Within the state, Chapter 258, Bethesda-Chevy Chase, leads the way with \$1,857 contributed, followed by Chapter 1747, Bowie-Crofton, at \$1,205 and Chapter 581,

Gaithersburg, at \$1,100. The data on Regional/State and Chapter totals was sent to Chapters for sharing locally, along with a statement of the disbursements during these six months, which include contributions to Congressional Representatives Steny Hoyer, Elijah Cummings and Chris Van Hollen.

NARFE is grateful for all those who have had a role in encouraging donations and to all those who have made them in the past, but all members still need to continue to be active on this front in response to a hostile political environment.

The procedure for deciding which politicians get contributions from NARFE-PAC involves consultation, within a state, about the extent to which they deserve our support, which includes evaluation of their legislative record via the Federal Legislative Committee and Chapters who are well able to contribute. We have decided that this evaluation procedure can work in tandem with the administrative procedures for fundraising within chapters and at Federation events. Jerry Kerner, President of Chapter 2166, Eastern Baltimore Area, has kindly agreed to take over the leadership of the fundraising and is joining the FLC as our first member for District 2. I am grateful for the support that Chapter Presidents and NARFE-PAC officers have provided in the past, and I am very hopeful that you will continue to provide high-level assistance to Jerry. It may take a little while to sort out the details of this transition. Let us both know if there are any queries and we will sort things out. ●●



*Jo Anne Groves
2nd Vice President
Membership Director*

Jo Anne Groves

EACH ONE REACH ONE....

Membership! Without it there is no NARFE. Recruiting new members is essential and the key to

MEMBERSHIP

NARFE's success. This year our mantra is EACH ONE REACH ONE/ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE.

My plan includes continuing my learning curve by accompanying Barry Grier to fairs and expos, involving chapter membership chairs as partners and members of the membership program for the Federation, and teaming up with insurance and other vendors at federal retirement seminars. I am fortunate to have very active, knowledgeable team members who have already given me timely and useful advice. Namely:

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Barry Grier-Membership Events Coordinator
Dick Stombotne-Retention Coordinator
Gary Roundtree and Barbara Cuffie-
Membership representatives for
Baltimore venues.

Membership success will require a full-blown effort by all NARFE members. We want to increase our membership and stop our chapters from closing. A few, very easy suggestions for recruiting, which have been proven to be successful, are:

Publicity releases—Chapters should develop publicity releases for local publications. Be sure to include information on guest speakers.

Retirement luncheons—Newly retired members are often invited to retirement luncheons for co-workers. Enlist them in taking membership applications with them.

Earn money—Don't forget the \$8 finder's fee for newly recruited members who are Active Federal Employees. The fee only applies to recruitment of Active Federal Employees. Simply put your membership number on the membership application. If your prospective AFE member joins NARFE, you will be sent the finder's fee check.

Please join me and our membership team by providing your ideas and suggestions to increase our membership. If you know of events we should attend please contact me or Barry Grier (forbarryg@aol.com).

EACH ONE REACH ONE (or preferably, many)/
ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE! ●●



Dick Stombotne

*Dick Stombotne, Chair
Membership Retention
Committee*

MEMBERSHIP RETENTION COMMITTEE REPORT

Membership problems. NARFE is facing some very difficult problems with its membership numbers, as you know. The purpose of this report is to offer detailed suggestions for actions that chapters can take to improve membership retention

and to provide context by describing actions being taken by NARFE headquarters and Maryland NARFE.

NARFE HQ has the lead role in retaining members through its renewal notice procedures. The schedule for renewal notices is as follows: first dues notice – three months before Expiration Date (ED); second dues notice – at ED; “Final Issue” on *NARFE* magazine wrap-around cover - three months after ED (member is listed as dropped at this time); and two additional notices at five months and seven months after ED, respectively.

Membership retention in Maryland. In Maryland, about 55 percent of members renew after receiving the first dues notice, about 44 percent of the remainder renew after the second dues notice. In effect, about 26 percent of members who receive renewal notices are dropped and receive the “Final Issue” *NARFE* magazine wrap-around cover. About one-third of dropped members are reinstated as members, some almost immediately upon receipt of the wrap-around cover. Currently, the overall retention rate for members who are sent renewal notices is about 83 percent in Maryland. At the federation level, as you will recall from reading this report in previous newsletters, Maryland NARFE has been sending personalized letters to dropped members (monthly lapsed member mailing) about nine months after the dropped members’ Expiration Date. This activity has been ongoing since February 2011. The success rate for this program is over 7 percent.

Action by Chapters. I would urge chapter officers to contact their dropped chapter members directly and invite them to rejoin NARFE one month after they have been dropped. This is after they have had a month to respond to the “Final Issue” wrap-around cover. The Online Activities Module (OAM) on the NARFE website provides an up-to-date list of dropped members. It includes mailing address, email address and phone numbers, as reported to HQ. All of the chapter officers listed on the F-7 can have access to the OAM reports. Few of the chapters in Maryland would need to contact more than eight dropped members in most months.

These efforts by chapters would come on top of the usual chapter activities of having interesting meetings, sending informative newsletters about

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NARFE issues at the local and state levels, copies of vital GEMS messages, welcoming of new members, providing information about the benefits of dues withholding, etc.

Additional NARFE HQ Membership Retention.

Here are some suggestions I offered to the National Executive Board and the Federation Presidents for their meetings in July regarding retention as actions for NARFE HQ:

- Expand recruitment efforts directed at lapsed members.
- Emphasize dues withholding, partner with federations and chapters.
- Promote multi-year memberships and dues withholding in renewal actions.
- Offer five years of membership for the cost of four to renewing members.
- Offer economically attractive Life Memberships.
- Increase resources for membership marketing.

Region II Vice President Evelyn Kirby reports that all of these topics were discussed at the NEB meeting. It will be interesting to learn which ones are adopted, if any.

eNARFE Membership News. Members total 15,155 as of the end of June 2013. Some 1,232 (8.1 percent) of them live in Maryland. ●●

RECRUITING IN BALTIMORE AND THE NORTHERN REACHES OF THE STATE

***Gary Roundtree, 1st Vice-President
Legislative Director***

In a perfect world, these initiatives for NARFE membership would not be necessary and would free up our time for other important functions. But, we are currently not in that perfect world. Our membership numbers are declining; potential new members are not knocking down doors to join; and most importantly, our federation and chapter officers are pulling double duty to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of the total NARFE organization. That said, I would like to begin with some recent events that have, hopefully, helped with our goals of increasing and retaining membership.

- ☐ On June 26, I met with Dennis Smith and his

staff at the Congressional Veterans Service Group organizational event at Perry Point VA Medical Center, in Perry Point.

- ☐ On June 27, we met with personnel at the Social Security Administration, in Baltimore, for their “Commit to Be Fit Wellness Fair.” Over 200 employees were given the opportunity to discover what NARFE is and how effectively these employees can be involved in our organization. My personal thanks to Chapter 1936 President Barbara Cuffie who so graciously assisted at this event.
- ☐ On June 27, I attended a fundraising breakfast at Martin’s West for Delegate Adrienne Jones, Speaker Pro Tem of the Maryland House of Delegates.
- ☐ On July 12, I met with Michael Smith, President of the National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 176, which resulted in our representation at their state convention this October. This will be a golden opportunity to meet potential members and to get the word out for NARFE membership.
- ☐ On July 16, it was another stop at the Perry Point VA Medical Center. This time for a meeting with Human Resources Chief Teresa Gividen and Assistant Brenda Walden. This meeting was well received by the Veterans Administration folks and again, I would like to thank Barbara Cuffie, President, Chapter 1936, for her informative discussion on NARFE programs.
- ☐ On July 27, James Staton, radio talk show host of the Voice of the Community, Morgan State University, interviewed me. We discussed NARFE objectives, the Chained CPI issue and the benefits of membership in the NARFE organization.

Now that I have a moment to spare to reflect on the last month’s activities, I can honestly say that all the meetings were beneficial, both to NARFE and the organizations represented. Meeting all of these people to discuss our goals and objectives was enlightening.

Now we switch to some upcoming recruitment possibilities:

- ☐ September 26, Baltimore, Department of

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- Veterans Affairs Recruitment Seminar
- October 13-15, Ocean City, USPS and National Association of Letter Carriers State Convention
- October 24-27, Atlanta, Ga., Department of Veterans Affairs National Chaplains Association annual training event

In conclusion, I am grateful for the chance to serve our organization and I look forward to working with all of you on future endeavors.

●●

FINANCIAL



Dick Strombotne

Dick Strombotne
Treasurer

TREASURER'S REPORT

This is a summary report (unaudited) of revenues and expenditures and the resulting net worth of Maryland NARFE from December 31, 2012 through July 31, 2013.

Net Worth: 12/31/12	\$84,149
Revenues thru 7/31	\$50,000
Expenditures thru 7/31	(\$67,762)
Net Worth: 7/31/13	\$66,387

Rebates of Ten Percent funds from NARFE headquarters totaling \$33,811 made up most of the revenues. The remaining revenues came mostly from Maryland State convention revenues (\$12,133), Matching funds (\$2,750) and Other Income (\$980). Notable expenditures include \$44,636 for the Maryland State convention on 4/28-5/1/13, expenses totaling more than \$9,000 combined for the Executive Committee and Board meetings, and more than \$2,000 each for Membership Recruitment and Retention, and for the State and Federal Legislation Committees. The net cost of the Maryland State convention since July 2011 comes to \$34,221.

As of the end of July, Maryland NARFE's four certificates of deposit held assets of \$35,275. They have current values ranging from \$8,014 to \$9,765, interest rates ranging from 0.50 percent to 2.23 percent, and maturity dates from 2/27/2014 to 4/5/2018.

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. The financial report for the first nine months of 2013 will be available at the Federation Board meeting on October 1, 2013.

Note added: The Ten Percent fund revenues for 12 months through July 2013 are 5.5 percent less than for the preceding 12 months. The entire 24-month period is after the increase in national dues that took place on March 1, 2011. ●●

REPORTS, NEWS, EVENTS AND INFORMATION



Evelyn Kirby

Evelyn Kirby
Region II Vice President

REGION II UPDATE

Here are highlights from the National Executive Board (NEB) meeting of July 8-11, at the Rosen Centre

in Orlando, Florida, the 2014 National Convention site.

Our budget continues in the black, with our last audit producing the best findings in over a decade. We discussed the high value of fundraising (NARFE-PAC, Protect America's Heartbeat Campaign, cards, calendars, and such). These bring attention to NARFE and its mission as well as substantial revenue.

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National President Beaudoin is appointing a committee to address the future of NARFE, role of eChapters and much more. It will examine significant issues affecting our future growth and viability. The committee, co-chaired by Region II VP Evelyn Kirby and VA NARFE Past-President Bill Shackelford with MD NARFE Past-President Ted Jensen as one of the twelve members, is to recommend ways to promote strengthening and assuring long-term effectiveness of NARFE for the NEB to review, and if approved, published in time for disseminating at 2014 convention and be made available to the general membership. Joe Beaudoin hopes the NEB can receive a November interim report.

With only 40 chapters requiring paper reports on membership and financial data at a yearly cost of \$25,000, the NEB voted to eliminate paper reports distributed by HQ, effective October 1. Federations are to help Chapters that cannot produce reports via computer, a step some have already taken.

Jessie Klement, Legislative Director, raised her ardent hope that NARFE leaders and members take seriously the 'grassroots' role. Given the horrific impacts of Chained CPI, bills to change the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, furloughs and other blows, she challenged us all to be activists and be heard. Everyone can sign a letter and/or make a call. Some can arrange and participate in meetings; others can do articles for the press and/or use social media to deliver NARFE's concerns. If we don't grab the attention of every single member of Congress, they will think we don't care how much pain is inflicted on us, and the public we serve. HQ Legislative Staff has produced excellent tools, templates, and guidance and is eager to help us use them.

For about a day and a half, the NEB tackled NARFE's membership crises. It brainstormed and debated every imaginable aspect of recruitment and retention, with data and trends as a backdrop from National Secretary Hughes and Membership Director Bridget Boel. NEB ideas focused on priorities that might produce the biggest impacts, promote recruitment and prospecting, and aid 'field' initiatives for a greater volume of new member intake. Four top areas of agreement emerged:

- Send the highest volume recruiters to federation and regional events and conventions, with NARFE subsidies, to share best practices; establish a new membership category tentatively called "Supporting Member" to be open to ALL
- Initiate federation district/area training focused on membership, legislation, the website and OAM; and have federations focus on rebuilding and strengthening chapters tied to the importance of our mission to the whole federal community.
- Research of viable next steps is now ongoing to bring life to these ideas and to other proposals outside the top four. Stay tuned.
- And, the NEB voted to equalize first year dues. Effective October 1, National Dues for all new members will be \$40 pursuant to Bylaws Art. I, Sec. 4.B.

Bylaws 2013 Committee Chair Bill Shackelford spoke to work so far in the charge to look for provisions that do not reflect requirements of the DC Statute and to recommend changes necessary to comply with it. He reported finding to date four areas where mandatory applications of the Statute impact NARFE, and felt there may be eight optional applications to consider. He said that more information will be available in the near future.

Lastly, in an annual meeting setting President Beaudoin reported on the status of NARFE and National Treasurer Thissen discussed our financial outlook. They basically summarized information relayed to NARFE leaders and members earlier this year plus key proceedings of the Orlando talks just concluded.

HOLD THE DATE: March 31-April 1, 2014

Early planning continues for the Region II Training Symposium to be held March 31-April 1, 2014 at the Eisenhower Hotel and Conference Center, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The agenda will focus on topics of importance to us as NARFE faces the future. Feel free to share ideas for content with your Federation President, but don't delay. Also, volunteer to be on the team when the call for support goes out. The recently renovated setting is centrally located in an area of historical significance and

(continued on page 11)

numerous attractions. More on the event will be shared later, but please 'hold the date' and set a few dollars aside to support attendance—yours and others. ●●



Ted Jensen
Maryland Federation Immediate Past-President

MARYAND eNARFE DIVISION

Ted Jensen

The National Executive Board approved the eNARFE membership option in March 2011. The concept was based on the perception that there were many potential NARFE members who were comfortable in the online world and not interested in joining geographic-based chapters and attending meetings. Experience has shown that there was a market for this option. eNARFE membership has grown steadily. As of June 30, 2013, there were 15,155 members; 1,232 of them live in Maryland. Most are first-time members. Some are former members who rejoined as a result of aggressive HQ and Federation efforts to reach out to those whose membership lapsed. A handful of eNARFE members are transferees from other chapters who chose the eNARFE option. These eNARFE members belong to Chapter 2363, which is what I call a Virtual Chapter. It is also called a worldwide chapter. Chapter 2363 is organized and functions like all other NARFE Chapters, with two big differences. It has no geographic boundaries and all communications are electronic. The primary means of communication is a dedicated website staffed and maintained by full-time HQ employees. There is also a Chapter blog, which seems to be little used.

As soon as it was evident that the eNARFE concept was going to attract members in significant numbers, questions and concerns arose from the current Chapters and Federations. One critical question was how to best integrate and engage this new construct and these new members with the existing organizational structure so that all members would be, as it were, part of the NARFE family, all pulling together to support our mission. The NEB and the federations wrestled with the question of how the

federations could connect and communicate with the new eNARFE members who live in the respective states. After much deliberation and consultation with the Federation presidents, the NEB devised a solution, the Federation eDivision. The Federations were given the option to set up a satellite eNARFE website as the primary means of communicating with the eNARFE members in their states. The HQ IT Staff is responsible for the technical work of developing and maintaining these sites as satellites of the Chapter 2363 site. The individual Federations are responsible for supplying the content for their sites following HQ guidelines. (As an old systems hand, I see this as an elegant solution, which lets each party do what it is best at with minimal overlap and overhead. This solution provides the efficiency and consistency of centralized administration with customized local access and input).

What are the content guidelines? They can be boiled down to three: Stick to state-specific, mission related topics. Don't abuse access to eNARFE members. No soliciting.

Let's look at each of these guidelines in the context of the Maryland Federation. One of the concerns I shared with the NEB early on was our need to engage eNARFE members in our robust state legislative activities. Access to these individuals will be increasingly critical to our success in this area. The NEB recognized this and it became part of the rationale for federation access. So our site will cover this topic. Conversely, there is no need to duplicate the Chapter 2363 coverage of broad Federal issues, which is excellent. However, there may be legislative issues of particular interest to NARFE members in Maryland or our region that might not be covered by the Chapter 2363 site or even the National website. In such cases we might want to provide information not otherwise available. There will certainly be cases in which we would want to provide Maryland-specific information about the activities of Maryland's Congressional representatives. For example, we would cover Congressman Van Hollen's annual FEHB forums, and provide information about town hall meetings with Congressmen or Senators, which NARFE members might want to attend.

Avoiding abuse of our access to eNARFE members will simply require our judgment and discretion. We

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would be careful not to overload our Maryland eNARFE members with emails or letters. In this we would be following Chapter 2363's lead as well as common sense. The NEB has heard from some eNARFE members that they are wary of being bombarded with emails if they join NARFE. While not a scientific sampling, this fits with the clear desire of many folks at large to seek the information they want when they want it and not be bothered otherwise. Another way to come at this is to think about it from a chapter president's vantage point. How many chapter presidents would be happy to have a president from another chapter communicating regularly and often directly with his or her chapter members? This is a sensitive issue but one that we can manage.

I hate to even mention, "no soliciting." Simply means Federations shalt not try to entice eNARFE members to transfer to another chapter. We won't. Period. I have reviewed the eDivision sites of the 19 federations that have one. Most contain mentions of the Federation's website, some contain information about the location of chapters in case the viewer should want to attend. That seems to be appropriate as information only. My own comment would be that for the eNARFE members who are interested, basic knowledge of the organization would be useful.

It's hard to describe in words what an eNARFE website looks like. In short, it looks like the National website or the Maryland Federation website, with the usual sign in space, a basic greeting and explanation of what it is and who it's for, and it has links to other related sites. In our case, it will have links to the Maryland Federation site, the National site, probably the USM site and other allied organization sites. For those interested, here in our own Region II, we have an excellent eDivision next door in Pennsylvania. I'm pleased to say that the Pennsylvania eNARFE Coordinator, George Shal, has been great about sharing information and has graciously offered to help us get started. Go to the National site, log in as a member and click on eNARFE. Click on State sites on the left side of the screen and pick the state you want to view.

So where are we now? The Maryland Federation Executive Committee chose to wait awhile and learn from the experience of others before setting up an

eNARFE site, although we committed to doing so some time ago. I was overly cautious and not ready to take on more than we could handle at the same time. At this point, we still have a few details to work out but plan to be up and running with a good product this fall. Dan wanted to be sure our leaders and members had some background on this before we went live. In the meantime, we do have some one-way communications with the eNARFE members in Maryland. The Chapter 2363 President, Dave Snell, agreed last year to share the electronic version of our Federation newsletter with eNARFE members in Maryland, and gave them information about our Federation website. We have recently been given the okay to send a letter to them if we choose and are considering that option as a way of introducing ourselves and welcoming them to the Maryland NARFE family.

Are there other issues related to eNARFE? Sure, as would be expected with any big change. One is the perceived competition for members between existing chapters and the new eNARFE chapter. The NEB recently decided to make the first year dues for all new members \$40. This means that whether a new member joins a local chapter or eNARFE, the first year dues are the same. You can count on more debate on that subject. Another question is how to allocate the votes of the eNARFE members. As it stands today, Chapter 2363 with its 15,000+ members and growing has more votes than many States with all their Chapters combined. This too will be debated and ultimately resolved, but one thing at a time. ●● *See Letter-to-the-Editor relating to this issue, page 18]*



Chuck Thomas

*Chuck Thomas
USM Federation Representative
United Seniors of Maryland*

UNITED SENIORS OF MARYLAND REPORT

After a short summer hiatus, the United Seniors of Maryland (USM) will resume its activities on Monday, September 16, 2013, at 10 a.m. in the Chesapeake

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Room, 2664 Riva Road, in Annapolis. A speaker from the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will brief the attendees on health care reform and the newly established Maryland Health Care Insurance Exchange. The USM Board of Directors will meet at 9 a.m. in the conference room of the Anne Arundel County Office of Aging and Disabilities.

The annual Legislative Forum is scheduled for **January 21, 2014** at St. John's College in Annapolis. A large turnout is expected. There are volunteer opportunities for those who may be interested in helping with this event. If you are interested, please contact Dave Roseman at dave.roseman@comcast.net or Doug Newton at DNewton141@aol.com. ●●

CONFIGURATION ADVISORY BOARD UPDATE
Pat Dempsey, Chair

During the past several months the Configuration Advisory Board (CAB) has been looking at requests for change from NARFE members that involve mostly short-term efforts. You can see what we reviewed and the status of each item by looking at the CAB web page. Information on getting there is at the bottom of the article. We have just begun to talk about longer range, or strategic, recommendations. Our goal is to produce a document before July 2014 so that the recommendations can be presented at the convention. This fall we will be producing drafts, which can be reviewed within NARFE, so that all interested parties can be involved.

Some of the topics that we are talking about are not new. The NARFE Information Technology Advisory Committee (NIAC) report of July 2011 made several recommendations, which have not been fully implemented. A good example is the use of online meetings. Few federations have embraced online meetings. Florida has done so and they estimated that they saved \$10,000 in travel expenses within the past year. We are also thinking about what NARFE, as an organization, should do for itself and what can be done better by other services. As an example, NARFE hosts websites for a fee. Google will host a website for free. Should NARFE use scarce resources to

support something that can be done by someone else? This is not as simple as it sounds. NARFE IT staff will answer questions from NARFE members about their web hosting services. A real person on the telephone may mean the difference between a website that gets updated and one that has year-old information.

We also hope to learn from various efforts being undertaken within the Federations. In our Federation, the Electronic Communications Committee (ECC) is looking at social media and how NARFE can best use them. Social media covers such things as Facebook and LinkedIn but can also be thought of as most things internet-related. How best to utilize social media is a critical issue with potential younger members. Our hope is that the ECC will come up with recommendations that can be adopted by the CAB.

As always, I encourage everyone to visit the CAB web page. You can reach it by clicking the "CAB Activities" link at the lower left of the Officer Resource page or by the following URL: <http://www.narfe.org/cab/member/index.cfm>. Once there, you can view the CAB blog to see meeting summaries and what change requests members have submitted to the CAB. Also, you can use the "Contact CAB Members" link to send me any ideas which you may have for improving the NARFE computer systems. ●●

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE (ECC)

Linda Adams, ECC Co-Chair

The Electronic Communications Committee (ECC) has been working on the four priority recommendations presented in the Maryland Federation Spring 2013 Newsletter. The first two recommendations have been addressed. They are as follows with descriptions following of actions taken by the ECC.

1. Contract a Social Media Expert to provide a format for the use of diverse Social Media Tools by the Federation and its chapters, as

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well as identify pertinent training for a Federation Social Media Coordinator. *Action:* Cherie Lejeune of High Performance Aging has been contracted to develop a format for training Social Media Coordinators at the Federation and Chapter levels.

2. Create a permanent Social Media Coordinator (SMC) position at the Federation and Chapter levels. These positions would provide sustained long range technical support to initiate, develop, and update information. *Actions:* A position has been established at the Federation level for a Facebook page for the Federation and Elroy Thomas has agreed to fill this position and train with Cherie. SMCs have been assigned within the Chapters and some Chapters are still working on finding people to occupy these positions or some Chapters may choose to join forces using one Facebook page for two or more Chapters. Cherie has initiated a survey of the SMCs to determine what type of training should be developed. She also is working on a survey for members to determine the levels of expertise and how they will use social media. A guide is also being constructed for suggested use by the SMCs and other officers within the Federation.

We will continue to pursue these recommendations and the others as we move forward. The ECC hopes to have a form of training to present at the October Training Session. If you have any questions or ideas, please email the ECC at ladams.narfe409@gmail.com.

MARYLAND FEDERATION 41st STATE CONVENTION

Douglas Newton, 2013 Convention Co-Chairman

With a theme of “Listen, Learn and Lobby,” the 41st State Convention of the Maryland Federation of Chapters was held April 29-May 1 at the Carousel Resort Hotel, in Ocean City. Over 150 delegates,

from most of the 34 Maryland Chapters, attended the biennial convention.

The purpose of the Convention was to conduct Federation business, set policy and elect State officers, all of which were aimed at protecting the earned retirement benefits of Federal employees.

Rick Meehan and Gee Williams, the mayors of Ocean City, and nearby Berlin, respectively, welcomed attendees to Ocean City. Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot delivered the keynote address, praising the exemplary service of Federal employees. Mr. Franchot focused his comments on Maryland’s economy and spoke of the need for more fiscal discipline. Elaine Hughes, National Secretary, and Bridget Boel, National Membership Director, presented delegates with an overview of NARFE’s national membership drive.

Another well-received speaker was Sarah Weissmann, NARFE Grassroots Program Manager, who provided a detailed account of the successes (and failures) of NARFE’s national legislative program, which included examples of how attendees can influence their Congressional representatives. Another highlight was a presentation by Elizabeth Weglein, President of United Seniors of Maryland. USM is a consortium of organizations, which work to preserve and enhance the mental, physical and financial well being of Maryland seniors. As such, USM has many objectives in common with the Maryland Federation and leaders of both organizations are seeking a higher level of cooperation.

Based on delegates’ evaluations, the 2013 convention was a roaring success and we need to thank everyone who played a part in planning and conducting the event. In particular, a sincere thank you is owed to Jackie Roberson, Convention Co-Chair, and Arlene Page, Host Chapter 2274 President.

Based on the success of the 2013 convention, we will soon initiate plans for our next convention, which will be held in spring 2015. Our initial steps will be to determine which Chapters are interested in sponsoring the event and to establish a site selection committee. If you are interested in serving on the site selection committee, please email me at dnewton141@aol.com. In the meantime, remember to “Listen, Learn and Lobby.” ●●

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CHAINED CPI: A HOT TOPIC OF DISCUSSION IN POLITICS

Gary Roundtree Sr., 1st V.P./Legislative Director

This past year we saw the most unproductive Congress in modern American history, passing fewer than 250 bills in two years. In just 2012 alone, bipartisan consensus legislation on issues such as farm programs and violence against women languished and went uncompleted. The House even refused to vote on needed relief to victims of Hurricane Sandy. Yet, it voted repeatedly to repeal the Affordable Care Act, even after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on its constitutionality. In the Senate, 115 filibuster threats grounded work to a near standstill on dozens of issues. All the while, the adjustments for Social Security would be lower with the Chained CPI than with the plain CPI. This dysfunction in Congress pushed the nation towards a false crisis of a fiscal cliff. This act costs taxpayers nearly \$19 billion because of avoidable credit downgrades. The nation deserves better. Voters in the 2012 elections did not reward many proponents of these policies.

In contrast, while attacks on core retiree programs continued, many in Congress voted to preserve a tax system that favors the wealthiest Americans. For more than a decade, the wealthiest Americans have received trillions in tax breaks while older Americans have seen rising drug, health care, food and energy costs. Also many retirees saw their retirement security put in serious jeopardy. Millions saw their home values, personal savings and retirement accounts plummet. A new administration came to Washington in the midst of this turmoil. However, much of the cause of this economic distress was due to Wall Street practices, which put the global economy in jeopardy. So my question to you dear Sir/Madam is what can NARFE do about it? I say, "Become the informed citizen who advocates for those issues on which older Americans depend for respectable quality of life in retirement." We must learn about the facts and strategies essential for effective advocacy for NARFE, Coalition Partners, and how health care reform will truly benefit federal active and retired employees, seniors, retirees, disabled people and working families. There are a lot

of myths and misinformation circulating around out there. We have the power to influence the White House, Congress, and the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform (the Fiscal Commission), which included recommendations to cut federal retirement, cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) and pay, and to prepare constructive legislation and public policy. This leads to the profound question for this article, Why is Chained CPI such a Hot Topic of discussion in politics at the moment?

A task force co-chaired by former Senator Alan Simpson and former White House Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles released a paper estimating that the government could save roughly 300 billion over ten years by adopting the Chained CPI. This is why some politicians are pushing a budget proposal that focuses on cutting Social Security benefits to reduce the deficit. This proposal would change the yearly cost-of-living (COLA) for Social Security, reducing benefits by \$127 billion over the next 10 years. Regardless of whether the President gets his Chained CPI or we stay with the CPI-W we're using now, we're still falling behind every year, if we solely rely on Social Security.

Why the Consumer Price Index is controversial is a very important question to be looked at for the moment. For several years, there has been controversy about whether the CPI overstates or understates inflation; how it is measured; and whether it is an appropriate proxy for inflation. Originally, the CPI was determined by comparing the price of a fixed basket of goods and services in two different periods. Determined as such, the CPI was a cost-of-goods index (COGI). However, over time, the U.S. Congress embraced the view that the CPI should reflect changes in the cost to maintain a constant standard of living. Consequently the CPI has been moving towards becoming a cost-of-living index (COLI). The bottom line is the cost-of-living depends much on which of the formulas are used, and the exact amount of your Social Security payment received would change over the course of time. How much could your payments change? Our estimates show that under the proposed Chained CPI, your cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) would be about 0.3 percent below the plain old CPI.

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Which works out to be about \$3 less on every \$1,000, which at the current moment doesn't sound like much of a loss. Besides that, it continues to grow, compounding over a period of time. Let's put it in perspective this way. The COLA for this year 2013 was 1.7 percent. If your monthly Social Security check was \$1,250 last year, it increased to \$1,271.25 this year. Also with the Chained CPI, you would be getting \$1,267.50, approximately \$3.75 less a month and \$45 less a year. This on record might not seem that much to the average person who is not on a fix income, but this reduction in income will add up over time. If the COLA is the same again next year, the difference will most definitely increase to \$7.61 a month and \$91.32 for the year. The point is that with the Chained CPI, a gap will more than likely accelerate and begin to add up big time. Let's say that you're age 62 and you are going to take an early retirement this coming year, by the time you reach the age of 92- when health care costs skyrocket and more than 1 in 6 older Americans lives in poverty - it is estimated that you will be losing a full month's worth of income every year. What's the difference? Here's the difference. The initially small benefits reduction between the plain CPI and Chained CPI amounts to large losses down the road. For the past two years, the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) has engaged in a grassroots campaign to protect the earned benefits of federal workers and retirees. Protect America's Heartbeat (PAH) has done an excellent job at raising awareness on these issues, as well as engaging members from across the country to take action and participate in grassroots activities.

Over the next few months, the PAH campaign will focus outreach efforts in several states across the country. This phase of the campaign will be primarily focused on Congressional delegations that can influence the Chained CPI. As part of the overarching goal of building NARFE's internal capacity, NARFE Legislative Staff will be working with the Federation leadership in these states to amplify the importance of opposing the Chained CPI.

Kudos and Welcome

We are well served to have Federal Legislative Committee (FLC) Chair and NARFE-PAC Coordinator, Dr. James Cowie. Jim has shown his colors in a debut

article here. He will convene the FLC shortly and is currently collecting PAC-related information from HQ to help new NARFE-PAC Fundraising Coordinator Jerry Kerner to better manage the area. In State politics, kudos to the State Legislative Committee (SLC) for reshaping the NARFE/MD legislative program, sharing it with General Assembly candidates in the summer, and again with visits in the fall. Ed Bice is doing a fine job as SLC Chair. Attend hearings in Annapolis on key issues. Give the SLC the support they request for dissemination and sponsorship of our priority bills.

●●

MOUNT AIRY WELCOMES CONGRESSMAN VAN HOLLEN

Kathy Siggins, Co-President, Chapter 409

The opening reception for Congressman Van Hollen's new office in Mount Airy was well received, and his entire staff was present to welcome everyone. It started with refreshments in his office located at 205 Center Street, Suite 206. We then walked across the street to the Mount Airy Bowling Lanes for more refreshments and his welcoming speech.

State Senator David Brinkley welcomed Mr. Van Hollen and thanked him for choosing Mount Airy for his new office. I thought it was great and later thanked Mr. Brinkley for his formal welcome. Senator Ron Young along with Jan Gardner, former Congresswoman Beverly Byron and other delegates attended. Paul Beatty and his wife Raenell also attended.



L-R: Paul Beatty, Chapter 2306, Congressman Chris Van Hollen, Kathy Siggins, Chapter 409

Congressman Chris Van Hollen FEHB Forums

SAVE THE DATES!

Congressman Chris Van Hollen will hold his 11th Annual Federal Employees Health Benefits Forums in cooperation with NARFE on Monday morning, November 18 in Wheaton; Wednesday evening, November 20 in Rockville; and Friday morning, November 22 in Mount Airy.

Experts on federal health insurance plans and representatives of health insurance carriers will be present at all sessions to discuss various health plan options and the impact of the Affordable Care Act, and to answer questions.

Monday, Nov. 18, 2013

9 a.m. – 11 a.m.

(Panel: 9:30-10:30 a.m.)

Holiday Park Senior Center

3950 Ferrara Drive

Wheaton, MD 20906

Wednesday, Nov. 20, 2013

7 p.m. – 9 p.m.

(Panel: 7:30-8:30 p.m.)

Executive Office Building

101 Monroe Street

Rockville, MD 20850

Friday, Nov. 22, 2013

10 a.m. — Noon

(Panel: 10:30-11:30 a.m.)

Calvary United Methodist Church

403 South Main Street

Mount Airy, MD 21771

REMEMBRANCE OF ERMA PELLANT 1923-2013

Ted Jensen, Immediate Past State President

We, in Maryland, had the honor and pleasure of knowing Erma Pellant as a loyal and dedicated Chapter Leader and Federation Newsletter Editor. For many years, Erma served as Hyattsville Chapter 264's Newsletter Editor and Treasurer, and did anything else the chapter needed. I knew her best from working closely with her to produce the Federation Newsletter. She was very patient with me, took her job seriously, and always made the work fun. I always appreciated her advice. She loved NARFE and had strong opinions about doing things the right way. After serving as Federation Editor for a long time, she asked if I could find a replacement for her. In the same breath, she said to call her anytime if we needed her to do "just one more edition." I never doubted that she would do whatever we needed. In the last months of her life, when she could have been taking it easy, Erma stepped up to fix a very difficult problem within her chapter. She could have stayed out of it and spared herself some grief, and most people would have done just that. That was just not her nature. When she was needed, she always responded.

As is often the case, we only knew a small part of her story. As a nurse, Erma cared for many patients at Prince George's County Hospital. When her parents developed health problems, she never hesitated to return to Rockford, Illinois, to help them. She was active in the Buck Lodge Citizens Association and the Adelphians' Little Theatre Group. After she lost her husband to cancer, she went back to work at Nations Bank and there acquired the computer skills she used to help NARFE. Later she volunteered for Meals on Wheels and started a bereavement group at her church, which she actively supported until a few weeks before she passed. Other members of this group carry on her work and served us an excellent lunch after her funeral service. It was clear that they will miss her as we do. This is the short version, of course.

Erma's spirit, and a challenge for the rest of us, can be summed up in a few words her daughter Susan penned for her obituary. "Erma was always looking for the good in others...Wherever she saw some way to help another, she would do it—no matter how small or big...If you would honor her memory, strive to be more aware of the needs of others and seek to help build up others in any way you can without worrying about receiving anything in return, in that way, you will carry on her good work and be a light for others." ●●



Pat Farmer
Secretary

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Pat Farmer

A tough act to follow! Hard shoes to fill! These phrases describe Jeanette Green, the Immediate Past Secretary of the Maryland Federation, and the 26 years she worked diligently and tirelessly for the Federation. During the Maryland State Convention, Jeanette was given a royal send off, with many tributes, which recognized and applauded her longtime, loyal support and service to the Executive Committee and members of the Federation. At the closing banquet, Jeanette was treated to a big



Jeanette and her son, Jerry

surprise, when one of her sons joined her.

Jeanette, THANK YOU really doesn't cover it adequately, but please know that each of the Federation officers and members truly appreciate your

many years of service and the opportunity to get to know you. We fondly wish you the best in your retirement from federation office.

I personally want to thank Jeanette for continuing to support the federation as secretary, for a while in retirement, to allow me the time I needed to be nurse and coach for my husband after his hip replacement surgery. I am very grateful to Jeanette for her willingness and kindness to do this for me. I spent a rainy summer afternoon with Jeanette at her house, absorbing a great deal of information on my duties as the new federation secretary. That afternoon I also filled my car to the roof with secretarial supplies and historical documents and photo albums turned over by Jeanette. I continue to email her with questions I have and will probably need to rely on her knowledge for a while.

It saddens me to report that Chapter 1261, Delmarva, Md., was formally closed on June 26, 2013.

Immediate Past Chapter President Eleanor Kaul sent the chapter charter along with a letter to NARFE National Secretary Elaine Hughes. All members of Chapter 1261 were transferred to Chapter 2274, Ocean Area, Md. Immediate Past Treasurer Clifford Fridlind is storing all the chapter records.

Our Federation Board meeting is scheduled for Oct. 1 and I would like to remind everyone who will be presenting a report at that meeting, to provide me with a copy of your report for the minutes of the meeting.

Chapter presidents and secretaries:

- ☐ Don't forget to send me the names of deceased members, so that I can add them to the master list of deceased members, which is important for our next State Convention.
- ☐ If you have any changes to the Federation Directory, sent out by Jeanette Green, please let me know, if you haven't already.
- ☐ It is very important that you keep the online F-7 up-to-date, so that the Federation has the most accurate records possible. To that end, make sure that you update the F-7 every time there is a change in your chapter.

Please contact me if you have any questions or need any information or help from me. ●●

LETTER-TO-THE-EDITOR

Dick Strombotne, Treasurer
Letter to the Editor

Ballot Votes of Chapter 2363

In his report on the Maryland eDivision in this newsletter, Ted Jensen describes how the Chapter was started and its current membership. It has enjoyed amazingly rapid growth after its start in early 2011. In 2013 alone its membership has increased from 8,543 to 15,115 at the end of June. If this growth rate were to continue, the Chapter would have about 25,000 members by next April. Why is April 2014 significant? April is four months before the start of the national convention and it is when HQ informs Chapters how many ballot votes they will have. It appears likely that the Chapter could control as much as ten percent of the total ballot votes. It

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already has more than six percent of the number of NARFE's voting members.

I believe that this situation wherein one Chapter controls such a large share of ballot votes at National Convention is alarming and dangerous for the future of NARFE and its governance. In this situation, one Chapter president will have incredible power to decide who is elected to national office, whether they will receive salary increases, whether any changes to national dues will be approved or disapproved, and any other issue that is decided at the ballot.

There is a way to disperse this concentration of ballot voting power. It is by allocating to the Federation Presidents the ballot votes of the chapter represented by the share of its members in each state. For example, currently 7.8% of members live in California so the President of the California federation would exercise 7.8% of the chapter's ballot votes and similarly for other states. The President of the Chapter would then control the number of ballot votes remaining after the allocation to federation presidents in other states. Such a change can only be made by amending the

national bylaws, an action that requires a two-thirds vote for approval.

Is there a way to amend the bylaws before the 2014 National Convention? Yes, there is but time is getting very short. It is by submitting a proposed amendment to a referendum of the chapters, something the National Executive Board would have to approve by a two-thirds vote. The alternative of submitting a proposed bylaws amendment to the 2014 National Convention would give Chapter 2363 more time to grow and have virtual veto power over any ballot measure. By the time of the 2014 National Convention the situation may be uncontrollable.

What can we do about it in Maryland? We have a Board meeting set for October 1. A bylaws amendment to allocate the ballot votes of the chapter as described above can be developed and circulated before the Board meeting and then considered at that meeting. Please let President Dan McGrath, other members of the Executive Committee, and me know what you think of this idea. ●●

Around the Federation



Chapter 1170 officers greet Evelyn Kirby , Region II Vice-President at their Spring Luncheon Meeting in Bel Air. L-R: James Willard, Evelyn Kirby, Jack Heller, Wayne Whiting, Pam Donor, and Maria Magodo.



On 8/3/2013 Ocean Area Chapter 2274 staffed a recruitment table at the Ocean Pines 45th Anniversary Celebration. L-R: Dan McGrath, MD Federation President and Arlene Page Chapter 2274 President. Picture submitted by Ted Page.



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
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2013

SEPTEMBER 20
OCTOBER 1
OCTOBER 29
NOVEMBER 29

REGISTRATION DEADLINE FOR OCT BOARD MEETING
OCTOBER BOARD MEETING
FEDERATION TRAINING DAY
WINTER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

2014

JANUARY 21
FEBRUARY 4
MARCH 6
MARCH 7
MARCH 31—APRIL 1
MAY 5-6

USM LEGISLATIVE RALLY IN ANNAPOLIS
FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING
DEADLINE FOR FEDERATION SEC'Y TO RECEIVE RESOLUTIONS
SPRING NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
REGION II TRAINING SYMPOSIUM
MINI-CONVENTION