



National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association
Gaithersburg Chapter 581

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

OCTOBER 2014

Our Next Meeting

Tuesday, October 28th

Gubernatorial Candidates Forum

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Rosborough Auditorium

Asbury Methodist Village

201 Odendhal Ave.

Gaithersburg MD 20877

Other Upcoming Events

October 23rd (Thursday)

- Chapter 581 Board Meeting
Conley Hall, Trott Building
Asbury Methodist Village
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

October 27th (Monday)

- Deadline for submitting articles
for the November newsletter

October 28th (Tuesday)

- Gubernatorial Debate
Rosborough Theater
Asbury Methodist Village
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Brief Chapter Meeting to follow

October 30th (Tuesday)

- MD Federation Training
Comfort Inn, Bowie, MD
9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

November 6th (Thursday)

- Newsletter Assembly
Edwards-Fisher Building
Asbury Methodist Village
9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

November 14th (Friday)

- Joint meeting with Bethesda/
Chevy Chase NARFE Chapter 258
(see article within)

November 17th & 19th (Mon & Wed)

- Cong. Chris Van Hollen's
FEHB Forums
(see article in this newsletter)

December 13th (Saturday)

- Chapter 581 Holiday Party
Golden Bull Restaurant,
Gaithersburg, MD
11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Please put these dates on your calendar

THREE IMPORTANT WEBSITES:

www.narfe.org • www.mdnarfe.org

[www.mdnarfe.org/chapter 0581](http://www.mdnarfe.org/chapter0581)

OUR TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28TH MEETING WILL BE IN THE AUDITORIUM OF THE ROSBOROUGH CENTER, ASBURY METHODIST VILLAGE; IT WILL BEGIN AT 10:00 A.M. WITH A GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES FORUM

This Gubernatorial Candidates Forum is being jointly sponsored by the Asbury Democratic and Republican Clubs and NARFE's Gaithersburg Chapter 581. Republican gubernatorial candidate Larry Hogan has accepted the invitation to participate in this forum; Democratic gubernatorial candidate Brown will not be participating in the forum. A brief membership meeting of NARFE Chapter 581 will follow the 3/4 hour debate. Please plan to attend; guests are always welcome.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Joe Martin

Since Cheryl and I have moved to Florida, this is my final message as Chapter 581 President. In the best interest of the chapter, I will resign as Chapter 581 president on September 30th; I have appreciated the opportunities I was given to represent you as your president, and the guidance and support with which you have provided me. In my first message to you, I listed the following objectives that I intended to focus on as your incoming president:

1. Be Visible
 - Focus on what is best for NARFE Chapter 581 and its members
 - Keep members informed of current issues that impact Chapter 581 members
2. Increase membership
3. Support legislation that exempts Federal retirement annuities
4. Continue to strengthen the legacy of the chapter

I hope that I was able to fulfill my promise in achieving the objectives outlined. But I will leave that to you, as Chapter 581 members, to decide. Charles Garfinkel has been appointed to complete my remaining term. I will be available to offer assistance during the transition, if needed.

As one of my last official duties as president and the chapter's lead national convention delegate, I would like to provide a brief update of

the convention. There were a total of 933 members in attendance. Total authorized votes were 4,822. The current National Treasurer Richard G. Thissen of Lake Ozark, Missouri was elected NARFE National President; Jon Dowie, of St. Augustine Florida was elected as National Secretary-Treasurer, and Evelyn Kirby of eastern Maryland was reelected as Region II Vice President. The convention was great and educational; I encourage each and every one of you to step up and participate in the future conventions.

As we approach 2015, we as a chapter **must** continue to focus on increasing our membership. To pursue this monumental task we must have volunteers willing to work and follow up to ensure we maintain our current members as well as recruit new ones. Also remember, we are always looking for volunteers to fill vacant offices. We need assistance with MD Fed Federal and State Legislature, Membership, Web Master, and Public Relations. If you can only assist the chapter with a few hours per month, we would greatly welcome your support.

I would also encourage everyone to participate in [the National September through December membership recruitment incentive](#). The national incentives are as follows:

- Recruiters will receive \$10 for each new member, current OR retired, who joins between September 1 and December 31, 2014. (Applications must be post-marked, and calls or website joins must be received, by the December 31 deadline.) Recruiters will also receive \$10 from the MD Federation of Chapters, for a total of \$20. Use the membership application in *narfe* magazine.
- All September through December recruiters will be entered into a drawing, once for each new member they have recruited.
- A Kindle Fire tablet will be awarded to a recruiter randomly selected from this pool.

Ongoing and Upcoming Events

- OPM has a separate website for this year's Federal Benefits Open Season that contains information on the various benefits that employees and retirees can enroll in or change enrollment in. It also contains information about Open Season web casts that will be available for viewing on line. Go to: <http://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/open-season>
- Consolidation of Chapters Meetings (TBD)
- Maryland Federation Board Meeting, October 7th, in Bowie, Maryland

- We will again have our Chapter Holiday Party at the Golden Bull Restaurant, on Saturday, December 13th, from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. We will invite members from the Bethesda Chevy Chase Chapter 258 to join us; look for the reservation coupon in our November/December newsletter. The menu will be the same as last year; when you return the coupon, you will be asked to make your choice of entree, which will assist the restaurant in planning for, and serving, our party.

- 2015 NARFE Legislative Conference - March 14th-17th in Virginia (see Sept. *narfe* magazine, page 9).

I want to again express my thanks to those who are already serving Chapter 581 and the members that continue to provide feedback to assist with moving our Chapter forward.

ELECTION DAY NOVEMBER 4TH GUBERNATORIAL DEBATE OCTOBER 28TH POLITICAL ACTION NOW



Dave Roseman, MD PAC Chair and MD Fed Budget Officer

NARFE, Gaithersburg Chap. 581, along with the Democratic and Republican clubs of Asbury, are sponsoring a debate between the Democratic candidate for governor Anthony Brown and the Republican candidate for governor Larry Hogan. Anthony Brown has declined our invitation and Larry Hogan has accepted our invitation. The debate will be held without Mr. Brown. Candidate Hogan has made some interesting remarks concerning taxes and our pensions. This will be an excellent time for us to find out what Larry Hogan will do for seniors and Federal employees living in Maryland.

The debate will be held in Asbury's Rosborough Theatre at 10 AM on Tuesday October 28th. Please be there.

Also remember all of our State Senators and District Representatives are up for election. Please support the candidate of your choice now. Volunteer and help get your candidate elected. Remember, if you want your candidate to listen to you in January, it will help your cause if they know you and have received your active support. Don't sit on the side lines and let others score points. Get active and play in the game. It's your duty as a citizen.

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

For the month of August, 2014 we gained no new members; three persons transferred out of Chapter 581; one member passed away; one member was reinstated, and 14 members were dropped for non-renewal of their dues, for a net loss of 17 members:

Please welcome back the following reinstated member: Ruby Giddens.

We were sorry to learn of the death of the following member: E. Scott Dillion.

Mr. Dillon was a long-time resident at Asbury Methodist Village, and passed away on September 17th at the age of 103. Approximately ten years ago, when NARFE was then offering Honorary Chapter Life memberships for those persons who had been a NARFE member for 20 or more years, and was over the age of 80, Mr. Dillon was awarded, from our Chapter, a certificate congratulating him for his becoming a recipient of an Honorary Chapter Life membership in Gaithersburg Chapter 581.

If you know of a member who may have let their NARFE membership lapse, please encourage them to renew their membership. And, a gift membership in NARFE is always a great idea for either a current or retired federal employee who is a relative or friend. Why not ask your letter carrier if he or she is a NARFE member? If they're not, a NARFE membership would make a thoughtful holiday gift to them.

Often we are not notified of a member having passed away by their spouse or family, and may be so informed many months after that member's death. We are very appreciative when other Chapter members and friends provide us this information.

CONGRESSMAN CHRIS VAN HOLLEN WILL HAVE 2 FEHB FORUMS IN NOV.

Congressman Chris Van Hollen will hold his 12th Annual Federal Employees Health Benefits Forums in cooperation with NARFE on Monday morning, November 17th from 9:00 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Holiday Park Senior Center, 3950 Ferrara Drive, Wheaton, MD 20906, and Wednesday evening, November 19th from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, MD 20850. These forums are always very informative concerning changes and updates in Federal Employees Health Benefits plans.

THE RESTAURANT FOR THE COMBINED NOV. 14th JOINT MEETING OF CHAPTERS 258 & 581 WILL BE MYKONOS GRILL, 121 CONGRESSIONAL LANE, ROCKVILLE 20852

Mykonos Grill (301-770-5999) has been selected for our joint Chapter meeting because of its private dining room accommodation, proximity to the Twinbrook Metro station, and free parking. NO ADVANCE RESERVATION IS NEEDED. Attendees may arrive between 11:30 a.m. and noon; cost of the luncheon (payable at the door with either a check made out to "Mykonos Grill" or cash) is \$25.00, which includes a salad, choice of main dishes (to be selected by each attendee), and a non-alcoholic beverage (coffee, etc.). Tax and gratuity are included in this price. Those who do not wish to have lunch may arrive at 12:30 p.m.

THANKS TO THE SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER ASSEMBLY GROUP

Thanks very much to the following eight members who helped insert the center page, fold, and apply address labels and wafer seals to our September newsletter on September 4th. We couldn't have done it without you!

Charlie Garfinkel	John Padan	Larry Lange
Dick Strombotne	Gene Oliver	Marty Piper
Ronnie Van Alstyne	John Del Vecchio	

Please think about joining us the first Thursday of most months to help fold, and apply address labels and wafer seals to our monthly Chapter 581 newsletter. The more persons we have helping us, the quicker this task goes – not only is this a big help to your Chapter, but you get to chat with several fellow 581 members, and – it's a lot of fun. We do our newsletter assembly in the ground floor library of the Edwards-Fisher Building on the Asbury Methodist Village campus beginning at 9:30 a.m.

And *many thanks* to our great diligent *proof-readers!*

TREASURER'S REPORT

Larry Lange, Treasurer

All Funds Summary, September 17, 2014

Checking Account	\$ 7,210.79
Certificate of Deposit (Restricted Chapter Life Membership funds)	\$ 2,551.68
TOTAL CHAPTER ASSETS	\$ 9,762.47
WORKING CAPITAL	\$ 7,210.79

2014 NATIONAL CONVENTION – A DELEGATE'S VIEW

Dick Strombotne, Chair

The 2014 National Convention in Orlando has been reported through official channels already. The October issue of *narfe* magazine on page 62 provides a concise overview, noting the new officers who were elected, reporting the fate of issues related to the Future of NARFE, and citing other highlights. I urge you to read it. In addition, on the www.narfe.org website, by clicking on the tab for the National Convention after logging in as a member, you can download the comprehensive daily reports of activities and the two legislative reports.

By contrast, this is a subjective report from one of Gaithersburg Chapter 581's three delegates in attendance. President Joe Martin and wife Cheryl Martin who recently moved to Florida were the other two delegates.

The single best thing about the 2014 NatCon was the election of Treasurer Dick Thissen to be the next NARFE President as of November 1. I have known him for years and have been impressed with his competence, good judgement, legislative sense, responsiveness to members' interests, and candor. When he attended the Maryland Federation's Mini-convention in May, he participated by providing useful background during discussion; he impressed many attendees. He will be one of two national residential officers; the other is newly elected Secretary-Treasurer Jon Dowie. RVP Evelyn Kirby was reelected.

Another good thing was the approval of the legislative proposal from Aspen Hill Chapter 1892 for NARFE to support legislation for campaign finance reform. The convention's Legislation Committee recommended that it be rejected. This recommendation was withheld for floor discussion. Linda Cohen, President of Chapter 1892 led off the arguments for supporting the proposal. She was supported by MD Federation President Dan McGrath, by me, and by others. As a result of the delegates' approval, the position will be part of the NARFE Legislative Program for the 114th Congress. Since NARFE is a grass roots lobbying organization it has a business interest in legislation affecting lobbying; such legislation has become of great political controversy after the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United*.

What about this chapter's resolutions submitted to the NatCon after having been approved by Maryland

NARFE? The short answer is that none were adopted. The long answer is rather more complicated. In previous conventions, during the discussion of Bylaws resolutions, delegates immediately voted after debate on any resolutions that were withheld for discussion. The procedure for deciding on Bylaws resolutions in this convention could not have been more different. Each Bylaws resolution was debated on Monday afternoon following the report of the Bylaws Committee. However, all of the Bylaws resolution fates were decided by voting by ballot the following morning, with the lead delegate of each chapter casting the total number of authorized votes. The voting delegates were provided with a "cheat sheet" (described that way at the convention) listing the resolution number, short title, and recommendation of the Bylaws Committee.

It should be no surprise that the results of the ballot voting mirrored the Bylaws Committee's recommendations; the HQ-supported resolutions succeeded and all others were defeated. A two-thirds vote was needed for approval. It is notable that the one defeated Bylaws resolution with the highest losing vote, almost 62 percent, was the resolution from the Maryland Federation (and this chapter) that would allocate the ballot votes of a Very Large Chapter (enarfe chapter 2363 with its 382 ballot votes) to the presidents of the federations where the members of the Very Large Chapter live. The large support for this Bylaws resolution makes it a prime candidate for consideration at the 2016 NatCon in Reno, NV.

The Report of the Rules Committee was issued to delegates Sunday afternoon. I noted several changes from the rules of past conventions that would have limited debate. On Monday, I offered six amendments to the Rules to open up discussion. Four were approved. One that failed would have provided 30 minutes instead of 12 minutes for debate on the main Future of NARFE resolution but the delegates decided 12 minutes was sufficient. As it turned out, this resolution was approved in a ballot vote by more than 80 percent. The second failed amendment to the Rules would have had the delegates decide whether a given Bylaws amendment would be decided by ballot, instead of having all of them decided by ballot.

I would have appreciated more time on the 2014 NatCon's agenda for meaningful discussion of NARFE's serious and continuing problem with declining membership. Maybe next time.

I had many opportunities to visit with other delegates. For example, I had lunch one day with former

National Treasurer Richard Ostergren and his wife. He is the current president of the California Federation. I also had a chance to talk with Jennifer Ramsey, President of neighboring Rockville Chapter 1127, and Linda Cohen (see above) at a leisurely lunch on Thursday.

Make plans now to attend the 2016 NatCon in Reno, August 28 to September 1.

PROGRESS REPORT – MERGER OF CHAPTERS

Dick Strombotne, Chair

Since President Joe Martin's report to you in the September newsletter much has happened. In Chapter 581, the committee on merger discussions met with the Executive Board of Bethesda/Chevy Chase Chapter 258 on September 9th and reached tentative agreement on several points. See below. Allan Kam, President of Chapter 258, reported to members at their regular meeting on Friday, September 12th, where the attendees approved further discussion of merging the two chapters. He also announced the members of their committee for merger discussions: Gordon Brown, Wes Chin, and Connie Price. (Subsequently, Wes Chin left the committee and Suzanne Ackerman replaced him.)

The combined chapter would be one of the largest in NARFE with more than 1,700 voting members. It would start off with a sound financial footing with assets exceeding ten thousand dollars.

Current thinking about the merging:

- 1). Meet every month except July and August. Currently Chapter 258 does not meet this often. Meet in a restaurant for a lunch with program to follow.
- 2). Meeting on the second Friday of the month, the current meeting day of Chapter 258. This meeting day will make it possible to get Federal legislators as program speakers. Rep. Van Hollen spoke at the Chapter 258 meeting on 9/12/14.
- 3). Find a meeting place that is more centrally located than Asbury Village in Gaithersburg and Alfio's Restaurant on the DC line in Friendship Heights. Restaurants in the White Flint Metro area are being considered.
- 4). Have a joint meeting on November 14, see article, top of page 3. The speaker will be Jennifer Malave from CareFirst Blue Cross/Blue Shield.
- 5). Publish a newsletter about seven or eight times a year to inform members of upcoming meetings and

report on local and State issues.

6). Chapter Dues would probably be about half way between the Chapter 258 dues of \$6 and the Chapter 581 dues of \$10, say \$8.00.

7). Retain the 258 chapter number as the more senior of the two.

There is more work to be done on such topics as the newsletter, officers for the new chapter, bylaws, etc. With the best of intentions it will probably take some time for these matters to be hashed out.

As reported in the September newsletter, the members of the Chapter 581 committee on merging include Dick Strombotne, Charlie Garfinkel, Gene Oliver, and, if scheduling permits them to attend such consolidation meetings, George Donovan, John Padan, and Larry Lange.

GUBERNATORIAL DEBATE AT ASBURY ON TUESDAY OCTOBER 28

John Padan

As noted in the September issue of this newsletter, Republican candidate Larry Hogan has accepted the invitation from the Asbury Republican Club. In late September, Democratic candidate Anthony Brown notified the Asbury Democratic Club of his decision not to participate. As a non-partisan organization, NARFE desires a balanced debate, but when one candidate is not responsive it is not fair to the other to cancel the debate. Therefore, the "debate" will proceed as planned.

The event will take place in Asbury's Rosborough Theater. It is scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. and run for about ¾ hour. Mr. Hogan will respond to questions submitted by a NARFE moderator. Index cards will be distributed to the audience so that written questions can be prepared. Cards will be collected and turned over to a screening panel to ensure that a variety of people have an opportunity to address a variety of topics.

The event is open to all members of Asbury as well as members of Gaithersburg 581 and other nearby chapters of NARFE.

This event comes just one week before the election and should help all of us to decide how to cast our votes. Be sure to attend and participate!

A short business meeting of Chapter 581 will follow the debate.

**Gaithersburg
Chapter 581**

20837 Scottsbury Drive
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Three important Websites

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



CHAPTER OFFICERS

President

Charles Garfinkel, 301-972-0183
garfinkc@verizon.net

1st Vice President

(Vacant)

2nd Vice President

(Vacant)

Treasurer

Larry Lange, 301-972-6775
LLange3751@aol.com

Recording Secretary

Marty Strombotne, 240-632-9881
martystrom@comcast.net

Financial Secretary

Donnie Sue Ferrell, 301-926-1361

KEY CONTACTS

Membership

(Vacant)

Service Officer

Helen Berkson, 301-881-1168

**MDFed Federal Legislative
Committee**

(Vacant)

**MDFed State Legislative
Committee & United Seniors of
Maryland Delegate**

Dave Roseman, 240-401-6628
dave.roseman@comcast.net

**Mont. Co. Council of NARFE
Chapters**

Larry Lange

Program Planning

Larry Lange and John Padan,
301-869-0616, jpadan@verizon.net

Asbury Liaison

John Padan

Chaplain

Larry Lange

Community Affairs

Charles Ferrell, 301-926-1361

Fifty-Fifty

Marty Piper

Sunshine Lady

Marty Strombotne

Greeters

Gene Oliver

Newsletter Coordinator

Larry Lange, 301-972-6775

Newsletter Assembly

Marty Piper, 301-299-6519

NARFE-PAC Coordinator

Doug Newton, 301-869-2129

MD/PAC

Dave Roseman, 240-401-6628
dave.roseman@comcast.net

Web Master

Judy F. Bernstein, 301-251-1482
chjb23@verizon.net