



NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES



Volume 12, Issue 6

Hagerstown MD

November 2020

From the Desk of the President

Vice President Ed Reed, Treasurer Pandi Reed and I attended the MD Federation virtual Board Meeting on October 5, 2020. The meeting went well with guest speakers Eric Hirschhorn, Former Under Secretary, US Dept of Commerce and Walter F. Landon, Deputy Chief of Staff and Director, Office of Homeland Security.

Special Federation elections from November 2020 to May 2021 (until the general election) included Dr. Sudah Haley as President, replacing Dr. Gary Roundtree who is now serving as Vice President of Region II, and Larry Walton as 1st Vice President, Legislative Director. Ed Reed continues to serve as 2nd Vice President, Membership Director, and Stuart Sklamm moved up from Assistant Treasurer to Treasurer.

All NARFE members who are Veterans – Hospice of Washington County is hosting a Veterans breakfast on November 7, 2020 from 8:30 – 10:30 at the Morris Frock American Legion on Northern Avenue in Hagerstown. It’s a drive up/pick up breakfast event. Please call 301-791-6360 if you are interested.

I want to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. We gather on this day to be thankful for what we have, for the family we love, the friends we cherish, and for the blessings that will come.

Patricia Nix, President, NARFE Hagerstown Chapter 306

Treasurer's Report

Sept 11, 2020	Balance	\$1,788.34
	Credits	\$298.00
	Expenses	0
Oct 17, 2020	Balance	\$2,086.34

P. Reed, Treasurer

Secretary's Report for November 2020 Newsletter

- Your Leadership Team met on October 9 at the Smithsburg Veterans Park with eight of us in attendance.
- Favorable comments were shared by Pat and Pandi about the Maryland Federation's Board Meeting which was held on October 5.
- Special Federation elections from November 2020 to May 2021 (until the general election) included Dr. Sudah Haley as President, replacing Dr. Gary Roundtree who is now serving as Vice President of Region II, and Larry Walton as 1st Vice President, Legislative Director. Ed Reed continues to serve as 2nd Vice President, Membership Director, and Stuart Sklamm moved up from Assistant Treasurer to Treasurer, replacing Dick Strombotne who died this past summer.
- Vice President Ed Reed (a) reminded us that the NARFE Membership Drive began on September 1 and runs through December 31, 2020; a packet was sent to all Maryland Federation chapters; (b) talked about the NARFE Chapter Officer Portal Training webinar scheduled for Wednesday, November 4 at 2 p.m. via ZOOM and encouraged our officers to attend; (c) asked about holding the November Leadership Team meeting at Western Sizzlin'.
- Secretary Barb Ware asked that the minutes of our September 4, 2020, Leadership Team Meeting be accepted by consensus.
- Treasurer Pandi Reed (a) told us there is \$1,819.34 in our checking account; (b) announced the NARFE dues have been raised to \$48 a year.
- Membership Chairperson Dorothy Smith will have a report in the November newsletter.
- Special Raffle Coordinator Dorothy Smith (a) announced that Pat Nix was the winner of the September drawing; (b) her report will appear in the November newsletter.
- Alzheimer's Co-Coordinator Charley Ware distributed copies of an article titled *Diabetes Drug Metformin May Protect the Aging Brain*. Dot Buhrman was asked to forward this article to all members who have an email address. Alzheimer's stamps are available at some post offices
- Service Officer Tom Brudenell shared information from an article titled *Lawmakers: Feds Should be Able to Opt Out of Tax Withholding "Chaos"*. www.fedweek.com/news/fedweek has similar information.
- Newsletter Editor Dot Buhrman (a) reminded us the deadline for the November newsletter is noon on Thursday, October 22; (d) distributed copies of the Spring/Summer 2020 edition of *Positive Aging Sourcebook*.
- Our November 6 Leadership Team Meeting will be held at Western Sizzlin'.
- With no further business, the meeting was adjourned. Lunch, which included apples from Pat and pumpkin muffins from Pandi, was enjoyed in the pavilion.

**Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Ware, Secretary**

UPCOMING CHAPTER 306, NATIONAL NARFE, and MARYLAND FEDERATION MEETINGS

- ✓ Maryland Federation Officer Portal Training Webinar, Wednesday, Nov. 4, at 2 p.m. via ZOOM.
- ✓ Chapter Leadership Meeting, November 6, Western Sizzlin, 11 a.m.
- ✓ Chapter Leadership Meeting, December 4, time and location to be determined
- ✓ Region II Training Academy in York, PA, March 15-16, 2021

**Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Ware, Secretary**

Service Officer Report

Federal Retirees Being Victimized by Fraud, IG Says

The inspector general of OPM has said that federal retirees are being victimized by various forms of fraud including “forged documents, identity theft, and other schemes” that “may stop federal retirees or rightful annuitants from receiving their deserved benefits.”

A report on recent investigations, dated in July but only recently released, cited one case in which an annuitant complained that he was not receiving his direct deposits; the investigation showed the money had been “directly deposited into a bank account for an individual the annuitant claimed he did not know.” In addition, “someone attempting to change details related to the annuitant’s account also contacted the OPM Retirement Services program office.”

“We issued a subpoena to the telecommunications providers for information about the numbers that had called the Retirement Services office, but the information did not generate sufficient leads and we closed our complaint. The annuitant now receives a hardcopy check,” it said.

In another case, “A nursing home provider contacted OPM over a retired annuitant’s failure to pay for care and alleged that the annuitant’s brother diverted the OPM annuity for his own use. OPM records showed that the brother was the annuitant’s representative payee . . . because the Representative Payee Fraud Prevention Act of 2019 was not law during the timeframe when the misuse of the annuity was allowed to occur, we were unable to pursue further investigation,” it said.

The report further estimated that in fiscal 2019 OPM paid nearly \$285 million improperly to retirees, survivors, representative payees, and families. “One of the most common causes of improper payments is failure to verify the deaths of annuitants, which sometimes allows improper payments to continue for years and costs tens of thousands of dollars,” it said.

It said that one such case involved nearly \$131,000, of which the government was able to recover about \$109,000. However, in another, involving about \$72,000, the government was able to recover only about \$5,000.

Source: [FEDWEEK.COM](https://www.fedweek.com) (Retirement & Financial Planning Report) September 30, 2020

Tom Brudenell, Service Officer

Membership Report

I need some help with recruiting and keeping new members. Be sure to put in your name and ID# and chapter 306 so you get credit for bringing in new members. This is a critical time for an active NARFE to watch out for and protect our benefits. That takes cooperation from all members to achieve our goals. Thank You.

Dorothy Smith, Membership chair

Legislation Report

** FEDERAL-LEGISLATION: At the October Maryland Federation Of NARFE Executive Committee Meeting, our 1ST Vice President, Dr. Sudha Haley: "Urged us All, to continue working-the-phones, sending email and contacting our law-makers in Congress. She stated that NARFE's Legislative Priorities have not changed:

- (1.) Elimination of GPO and WEP; have 257 sponsors but need 290.
- (2.) Support for the FAIR COLA Seniors Act and Equalize COLAs between FERS and CSRS.
- (3.) Postal Reform.

Dr. Sudha recommended that we all should read the (Latest) NARFE Magazine to see the latest Key Votes (On all-3-above)".

** STATE-LEGISLATIVE: Our Maryland Federation's State Legislative Committee Chairman, Paul Schwartz stated: "That The Committee's Focus continues to be Taxes and Tax Relief for Seniors! Other areas of focus are: Lowering of Prescription Drugs; Broadband and Infrastructure. Related: NARFE's 2021 Maryland State Legislative Program: Represents approximately 300,000 federal employees and Retirees (Annuitants) and more than 800,000 Seniors aged 65 and older in Maryland!

The Maryland Federation State Legislative Program's Goals for 2021 include - Tax Relief for Maryland's Middle Class Taxpayers, including the right to Itemize Deductions even if deductions are Not Itemized on the taxpayer's Federal Tax Return. Tax Incentives for Long-Term Care Insurance. An Increase in the Standard Home Owner's Tax Credit. Lowering Prescription Drug Prices. Broadband Expansion (More Affordable, Reliable, Internet Access). Infrastructure (Safer Access to Public Transportation and Better-Coordinated Limited Transportation Resources)". You may contact The Maryland Federation's State Legislative Committee for more specific-details (For all 6 Goals) at: Paul Schwartz, Chairman (pksyanks@aol.com), 240-858-2200 -or- Robert Doyle, Vice-Chairman (bdoyle47@verizon.net), 410-798-0079.

** NOTE-WELL: NARFE Members Approve Dues Increase - RENEW EARLY and SAVE !! In August, 2020, NARFE Members Approved A Dues Increase. This Modest Increase will help NARFE Continue Fighting for the Benefits and Well Being of Every Federal Employee and RETIREE ! The New Dues Rates go into effect on January 1, 2021: Dues for NARFE National Membership will increase from \$40 to \$48 per year. The Two Year National Dues rate will increase to \$92, and The Three Year Dues Amount will be #126. Members with Membership Expiration Dates after December 31, 2020, will be billed at the New Dues Levels. Chapter Dues are Not Affected by this change. Members whose memberships Expire After December 31, 2020, are Encouraged to: Save Money by calling: 800-456-8410 (Press 1 for Membership) and Renew their Annual Membership, Now, for one year at the current rate of \$40. To Save "Even-More-Money", members who currently pay the one year rate - Can Extend to a Two-or-Three Year Membership at the current rates of \$72 or \$102, respectively

V/R-Ed Reed, Hagerstown-Chapter-V.P./For: Legislation

SPECIAL RAFFLE REPORT

The winning entry for our September drawing was Patricia Nix. The name was drawn at our leadership meeting as it will continue to be until we can again hold our regular meetings. I am still accepting entries from all individuals by mail and have turned the checks over to Pandi Reed, our treasurer. Thank you and keep them coming! If you send your entry info to me, please include enough address labels that I can peel off and use to easily and clearly get your entries done quickly. Thank you!

Dorothy Smith, Special Raffle Coordinator

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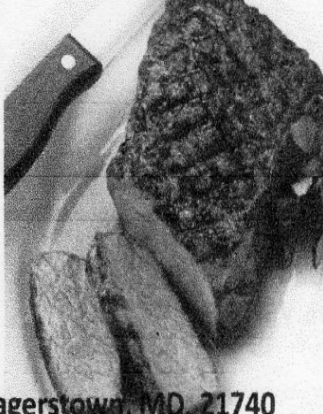


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