

# Newsletter

November 2020

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## UPCOMING MEETINGS/ACTIVITIES (Open to all)

### Chapter:

- **Members Meetings:** Nov 17\*, Dec 8\*, Jan 26.
- **Newsletter Input Deadlines:** Nov 13, Dec 18.
- **Board Meetings:** Dec 2, Jan 6, Feb 3, Mar 3.

### Outside Events:

- Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board Mtg., Nov 17 @ 7:00 PM teleconference, (301) 715-8592 Meeting ID: 993 6902 0579.
- NARFE Region II Training Academy - March 15-16, 2021. Registration Required.

**NOTE:** Unless otherwise noted\*, our Members Meetings are held on the **4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays at 1:00 PM. Please note that until further notice, we will meet via videoconference using an online Zoom-LIKE platform.** If you cannot connect via the videoconference, you can hear the meeting on your phone using the teleconference number our chapter has used in the past. Link and telephone number information is on Page 2, under "Your Health Insurance Questions Answered".

**Our Facebook Page:** NARFE Chapter 1892, Aspen Hill.

## President's Message

I woke up with tears on my face and "Mama" Cass Elliot's voice in my head singing, "There's a New World Coming." Except in my dreams, I had exchanged the word "joy" for "truth":

*Yes, a new world's coming  
The one we've had visions of  
Coming in peace, coming in truth, coming in love.*

Asleep, I had realized that my hope for a new world was at odds with our divided Country, fed by some news media distorting the truth (and calling it "news entertainment" to deflect ethical standards and legal action). Misled especially during this election period, brothers fought against sisters, fathers against sons.

My soul longs for peace. NARFE is a non-partisan organization. Let us lead the way in our everyday lives by seeking truth (reading and listening to both sides so surely a kernel of truth can be found), by pursuing peace, and allowing love to win.

Sarah Richards, President ([NARFEsrichards@aol.com](mailto:NARFEsrichards@aol.com))

## Watch Out!

Fall comes with its own dangers, darkness descending at rush hour, slippery leaves covering the road, lower angle sun creating glare on windshields, deer in mating season running out into the roads. Be careful, note your surrounding dangers, and if a deer runs out in front of you, brake to slow or stop—swerving could hit another vehicle or the deer that jumped that way. Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Department says if a collision is unavoidable, release the brake pedal just before impact to keep the front of your vehicle high and avoid the deer crashing into the windshield.

## NARFE Supports Alzheimer's Research

As of July 31, 2020, NARFE members have contributed \$13,594,038 towards a commitment of \$14 million. Remember 100% of all contributions go to Alzheimer's Research. Checks are payable to NARFE-Alzheimer's Research and should be mailed to Alzheimer's Association, 225 N. Michigan Avenue, 17th Floor, Chicago, IL 60601-7633. Be sure to write "Chapter 1892" on the check note line. You can also pay by credit card (see page 65 of the October NARFE magazine). Your charitable contributions are tax-deductible! Thank you.

By Cathy Hobbs, Alzheimer's Chair

*Note: Our last meeting had a great presentation on Dementia by Christine Bitzer, C-ASWCM. The slides were sent to members' email addresses. If you didn't receive it, let us know and we'll send it again.*

## Our Next Meeting



### Your Health Insurance Questions Answered!!!

The Tuesday, November 17th general meeting will have our **health insurance panel discussion**. Blue Cross Blue Shield, GEHA, United Health Care, and AETNA representatives will give presentations and **answer all our questions about the 2021 changes**, etc. The meeting starts at 1:00 PM, but if you want, you can access the system at 12:45 PM to get comfortable with the electronic system.

You can easily access the videoconference via computer, tablet, or smart phone. There is no app to download; just click on the link (best way to connect) or type in:  
<https://live.unlimitedconferencing.com/live/SarahRichards/myconference>.

Then type your name, select a sound type if you don't like the default one, and click on the box that says allow microphone and camera. You'll be able to see and hear us, as well as speak.

This system **does not work on the Internet Explorer** browser. You will need to use Google Chrome, Safari or any other browser.

If you prefer, you can participate with audio-only with any type of phone by calling 301-232-0143 and when asked, key in the pin number 887080 followed by the # sign. You will be connected to the meeting.

If you want to test either the videoconference or the teleconference system prior to the meeting, email [NARFEsrichards@aol.com](mailto:NARFEsrichards@aol.com) and ask for a test. She's happy to help you get online.

*Note: This is one of our **most attended events**. Be sure to put this on your calendar so you don't miss it.*

## Virtual Holiday Open House!

Let's celebrate life and our Winter Holidays! On December 8, at 1 PM, we will gather virtually for an Open House to chat and share stories of our family holiday traditions including holiday recipes. Yum! You can come in costume or wear your best ugly holiday sweater or come as you are. **We miss seeing each other, so join us** as we drink a toast of hot chocolate or something stronger to each other and to happier times ahead!

Electronic access instructions to the virtual Open House are the same as noted on this page for the November meeting.



## HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

### Chapter 1892 Leadership

- President/MD Fed. Res Comm Chair** .....Sarah Richards  
301-589-7465.....NARFEsrichards@aol.com
- V-Pres/State Leg/MD Fed. SLC Chair**.....Paul Schwartz  
301-260-1903
- Secretary**..... **Myron Chace**  
301-330-4713
- Treasurer**.....**Jim Bachmaier**  
301-946-2280
- Membership**.....**Merle Biggin**  
301-814-6047
- Membership Retention**.....**Bob Kammer**  
301-847-9820
- Interim Newsletter Editor**..... **Sarah Richards**  
301-589-7465
- Sunshine**.....**Minnedore Green**  
301-565-2005
- Program Ideas/Past President** .....**Linda Cohen**  
301-460-5177
- Alzheimer's**..... **Cathy Hobbs**  
301-924-4633
- Greeter/Past President**..... **Saj Durrani**  
301-774-4607
- Historian/Past President** .....**Rudy Volin**  
301-598-2209
- Photography Team Lead**.....**Anita Rhawn**

## **Congratulations! Thank You to Chapter Members!**

From January through September 18, 2020, our Chapter members gave \$7,420 to the NARFE PAC to support political work towards issues that protect and support active and retired Federal employees' benefits and annuities. Our Chapter donated the third highest amount among the Maryland chapters. Thank you!

### **Flu Shot**

Flu Shots are still available at your doctor's office, clinics, drug stores like CVS, and grocery stores like Safeway. Check what protective measures they have before you go, so you can choose the safest venue, but do go and stay healthy.

### **Ground Yourself in Time**

At last month's meeting we discussed how to lose the feeling of the never-ending days of monotony, of not knowing what day it was. We noted Steven Johnson's *Washington Post* series about time perception and ideas of how to ground our days with anchor points, plus came up with some ideas of our own. A few of the ideas follow: schedule your week on a calendar, set goals, celebrate accomplishments, give yourself something to look forward to (a week, two weeks, a month in advance), safely serve the community, make regular social contact online or safely in person, switch up your activities, take time to relax.

### **2021 Cost of Living Increase**

The Bureau of Labor Statistics announced that the 2021 cost-of-living (COLA) increase for Federal retirement annuities and Social Security benefits will be 1.3 percent—the lowest in four years. This will take place January 2021.

### **Health Insurance Open Season**

**Nov. 9 – Dec 14**

Health Insurance premiums have gone up. Be sure to check out insurance options at OPM at <https://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare/plan-information/premiums> and at NARFE at: [www.narfe.org/open-season](http://www.narfe.org/open-season). You may want to change. Also, don't forget our Chapter has an electronic health insurance panel discussion on November 17 at 1:00 PM. You can ask your questions and get the answers you need to hear. See page 2 for instructions to access the meeting.

### **Action Alerts/Hotline Moved**

*NARFE's Action Alerts/ Hotline* that used to publish electronically on Fridays is now part of the *NARFE Newsline* that comes out on Tuesdays. The action alerts information comes under the Advocacy Update section.

### **NARFE Annual Meeting October 2020**

Ken Thomas, President of NARFE, presented some of NARFE's major accomplishments this year at the October National Meeting. One was that NARFE was a contributor in helping to fight the OPM/GSA merger and that NARFE helped write some of the language for the bill to set up a study of OPM rather than merge it with GSA. Then, Kathryn Hemsley, Secretary/Treasurer, presented an update on the state of the finances and work on new bylaws. The third presentation was by the CEO of the Alzheimer's Association who thanked NARFE for its generous contributions and discussed new advances in research like finding blood markers showing both tau and amyloid in lab tests which could lead to faster and easier identification of folks with Alzheimer's disease. He said there are more treatment options now, and that [there is a study in Finland that shows you can reduce the risk of Alzheimer's through lifestyle changes.](#)

## Do you remember...

when a new political appointee came in and told you to change a program though the law didn't permit it? Do you remember how angry he or she was when you said you had to follow the law and couldn't make those changes? Imagine if your job hung in the balance if you didn't make those changes. See the article below to see how Federal workers will be at risk with a new Executive Order.

Reprinted from the *NARFE Newslines*,  
November 3, 2020 edition

### Schedule F Call to Action and Update

Visit NARFE's Legislative Action Center to urge your lawmakers to block the president's Executive Order (EO) 13957, which will convert tens, or even hundreds of thousands of civil service positions into political appointments. The president's action threatens the integrity of a professional, nonpartisan civil service—a federal standard since the late 1800s.

If fully implemented, this executive order will allow agency heads to move employees into a new Schedule F excepted service designation. Civil service rules ensure federal employees are hired and fired based on their merit, not their political connections or lack thereof. These rules protect employees from being removed for choosing adherence to the Constitution, laws and professional standards over politically motivated actions.

Our country needs a competent, impartial civil service that holds the trust of the American people. Help protect the civil service today by emailing your lawmakers.

In response to the executive order, NARFE National President Ken Thomas issued a letter to Congress asking lawmakers to nullify this order, regardless of the results of the election. Congressional Democrats sent a letter to the acting director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Michael J. Rigas and requested that OPM "cease any activities related to the implementation of this executive order while the Committee obtains documents and information regarding the development of this policy." The letter contained a portion of NARFE's previously released statement on the matter.

## Best Material for Making Your Own Masks

The American Chemical Society published in *ACS Nano* an article (April 24, 2020) discussing the best material to use for making your own Covid-19 mask. It said, "One layer of a tightly woven cotton sheet combined with two layers of polyester-spandex chiffon—a sheer fabric often used in evening gowns---**filtered out the most aerosol particles (80-99%, depending on particle size), with performance close to that of an N95 mask material.** Substituting the chiffon with natural silk or flannel, or simply using cotton quilt with cotton-polyester batting, produced similar results." The authors of the ACS article acknowledge use of the U.S. Department of Energy's Center for Nanoscale Materials user facility at Argonne National Laboratory and funding from the U.S. Department of Defense's Vannevar Bush Fellowship.

### Welcome to the Fun Chapter!

We are super pleased to announce new and/or returning Chapter members: Faye Ann Schott, Daniel Mann, and Gail Moses-Kareri. Glad you're on board! Do say hi at our next meeting!

### Maryland's COVID-19 Vaccination Plan

The draft of the COVID-19 Vaccination Plan is available online at:

[https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Documents/10.19.2020\\_Maryland\\_COVID-19\\_Vaccination\\_Plan\\_CDCwm.pdf](https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Documents/10.19.2020_Maryland_COVID-19_Vaccination_Plan_CDCwm.pdf)

Check it out; it's pretty interesting.