

WHERE AND WHEN

Unless otherwise noted*, our Members Meetings are held on the 4th Tuesdays at 1:00 PM at the Holiday Park Senior Center, 3950 Ferrara Dr., Silver Spring, MD 20906, 240-777-4999; ample free parking; covered parking in rear. Additionally, most meetings are captured on Zoom and recorded. Virtual access instructions can be found on Page 2, in the “Two Presentations: First - Wandering: Understanding, Prevention, and Preparedness and Second - Organizing/Downsizing Tips & Professional Services” article.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/ACTIVITIES (Open to all)

Chapter:

- **Members Meetings:** Jan 28, Feb 25, Mar 25, Apr 22*
- **Newsletter Input Deadlines:** Jan 16, Feb 14, Mar 14, Apr 18
- **Board Meetings:** Jan 8, Feb 5, Mar 5, Apr 2, May 7

Outside Events:

- **Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board (MCCAB) -** Thursday January 16, 2025 at 7PM, virtual, contact Luisa Cardona at 240-777-8101 for link.

Our Facebook Page: NARFE Chapter 1892, Aspen Hill.

Chapter Webpage: <https://sites.google.com/view/narfe-chapter-1892/home>

President’s Message

Happy New Year! Wishing yours is healthy, happy, and full of love! This year we’ve lost Paul Schwartz as a co-president but gained him as the National Region II Vice President. As a National VP, he will help protect our federal employees and retiree’s community and serve seniors everywhere.

We’ve gained a new Chapter 1st Vice President, Stephen Greenberg, Ph.D., MLS, who worked at the National Library of Medicine as a rare book librarian for nearly 30 years. He is an historian, photographer, and musician, etc. and has a strong interest in politics. He looks forward to our work with state and national legislation. Meet him at our January meeting.

You are part of the federal employee/retiree community. We help each other and can now chat using the NARFE FEDHub community system. On FedHub, members warned each other about pitfalls with particular health plans and problems signing up. Folks shared their secrets to getting a rep to answer their calls, and much more. I encourage you to sign up for FEDHub (see FEDHub article on page 3) and especially the Chapter 1892 Community within it.

I’ve been sending emails through the FEDHub system recently. This is because our old email system is no longer active. We’ll be sending out the electronic newsletters this way, so don’t be afraid to open them and click on any links or attachments.

Best wishes, Sarah

BREAKING NEWS!

On December 21, 2024, Senate passed (76 to 20) legislation that repeals the Windfall Elimination Provision/Government Pension Offset (WEP/GPO) law that has been NARFE’s top legislative priority for many years. Having already passed in the House on November 13th by an overwhelming majority (327 to 75), the legislation has gone to the White House for President Biden’s signature. This bi-partisan bill is scheduled to be signed January 6. With the repeal of this over 40-year-old law, Federal government retirees who receive a pension under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and who qualify for Social Security, will no longer have their Social Security benefit reduced by the WEP/GPO law. (This article was re-written 1/1/25.)



Chapter 1892 Leadership

President.....Sarah Richards
301-589-7465.....NARFEsrichards@aol.com
Vice President.....Steve Greenberg
301-526-4078.....patzere4@gmail.com
Region II VP.....Paul Schwartz
240-838-2200.....pksyanks@aol.com
Secretary.....Myron Chace
301-330-4713
Treasurer.....Jim Bachmaier
301-642-6742
Membership.....Nina Chace
301-330-4713
USPS Mail Manager.....Merle Biggin
301-814-6047
NARFE PAC.....Bob Kammer
301-847-9820
Newsletter Editor.....Filomena Chau
301-642-6741
Sunshine.....Minnedore Green
240-839-7043
Alzheimer's.....Cathy Hobbs
301-785-6782
Special ProjectsDiane Boehr, Linda Jacks

Where's Paul?



Our newly elected Region II Vice President and Chapter member, Paul Schwartz, attended the National Executive Board meeting held in Alexandria, Virginia the week of December 9th. NARFE membership challenges were

a key issue of discussion and NARFE'S efforts to expand messaging platforms to focus on social media and radio ads were a welcome shift in strategy. It is hoped and expected that this focus will stem the current tide of membership loss due to deaths and failure to renew membership by reaching a wider audience including current Feds and tailoring our messaging to highlight the benefits of membership to particular Fed groups.

On December 11th, Paul (pictured center above) was at the rainy rally at the Capitol, to support passage of a bill to eliminate the unfair WEP/GPO practices of penalizing some federal employees' Social Security benefits. This rally was led by the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and other labor unions and employee organizations, including NARFE. Note that he wore the NARFE personalized t-shirt and hat we gave him recently.

Two Presentations

**First - Wandering: Understanding, Prevention, and Preparedness and
Second - Organizing/Downsizing Tips & Professional Services**

First: Most of us have older family members who have dementia or younger ones with developmental disabilities or autism. It helps to know what to do before they act out or wander. Our first presenter, Laurie Reyes, from the Montgomery County Police, will describe the new program to help families who have members with Autism, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Alzheimer's or Dementia.

Second: Do you need to organize your home and/or downsize? After a break with refreshments, our second speaker, Jeanne Alston, a professional organizer, will provide tips on organizing and downsizing and also explain professional services available to help.

Join us: Tuesday, January 28, starting at 1 PM. Mark your calendars, tell your friends, ask your questions, and enjoy refreshments!

How to attend this meeting:

In person, join us at the Holiday Park Senior Center, 3950 Ferrara Dr., Classroom 20, Silver Spring (Wheaton), MD 20906.

Online, access the meeting via Zoom using a computer (best way), tablet, or smart phone. Just hit the link below.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84654406850?pwd=Ky4PTu0RMeNxbV8bxHDFf9dGA1OQ0y.1>.

Meeting ID: 846 5440 6850

Passcode: 307663

If you prefer, you can participate with audio-only using any type of phone by calling 301-715-8592. You may need to key in the meeting ID and passcode.

Note: Meeting will be recorded and available on the Chapter website.

Annual Holiday Party

(Edited from Myron Chace's Written Accounts)



Early morning raindrops in no way dampened the enthusiasm and spirit of the holiday season for almost 30 people arriving at Mama Lucia's Restaurant in Olney, Maryland, on December 9th! The occasion was celebrating the arrival of

the 2024 year-end and winter holidays season. Though NARFE Aspen Hill Chapter hosted this celebration for its members, we also welcomed members invited from other Montgomery County NARFE chapters including Western Montgomery, Wheaton/Glenmont, White Oak, etc. chapters. Sarah Richards offered brief remarks. She welcomed all, noting especially attendees from chapters other than Aspen Hill. Moreover, she pointed out that Aspen Hill Chapter now enjoys a cooperative agreement with other Montgomery County chapters. One benefit of this arrangement is that members of the cooperating chapters receive the Chapter 1892 *Newsletter* that announces programs, tells how to connect to meetings *via* Zoom, and provides dates of upcoming social events, like this Winter Holidays party.

An exclamatory wish to all for "Happy Holidays!" by Sarah Richards coincided with Mama Lucia's servers covering the tables with bowls and plates of delicious food items. The quantities were sufficient so that many people left with takeaway containers. Conversations, generally concluding with well-wishes, continued for some people long after the meal ended. (Photographs by Bill Waller & Sarah Richards)



Want to Chat?

Sometimes you just want to ask a question or find out how other federal employees or retirees are handling a change. Sometimes you want to reach out to others who understand you to discuss politics, gardening, interesting things to do in your community. NARFE's FEDHub provides a secure list-serve type of chat for NARFE members.

FEDHub is really a community of communities - a way for you to be heard, to keep in touch with your fellow members, leaders, staff, and subject experts. A way to receive meeting notices, member surveys, election news, legislative advocacy notices, and get help for member issues or advice from the topical communities.

It also allows you to receive emails from your Chapter president - important since the former email system no longer works. Your Chapter President urges you to join so you don't miss out on newsletters or notices.

How do you access FEDHub?

If you already have a NARFE website log-in ID and password: Log into NARFE.org. Click the "FOR MEMBERS" tab and select "FEDHub: NARFE Member Community", an option on the drop-down menu. That's it! For help using FEDHub, read the "Quick Start Guide" at the top left of the FEDHub home page and follow instructions to set up a profile and select communities that will be of interest to you.

If you have never signed onto the NARFE.org website, go to NARFE.org and click on the "Not a MEMBER" button. Follow the prompts to select an ID and password and once the system has accepted you, follow the directions above to access FEDHub.

(Information above was patched from several FEDHub tutorials.)



NARFE
Aspen Hill Chapter 1892
713 Richmond Ave
Silver Spring MD 20910

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. Postage Paid
Silver Spring MD
Permit #5715

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

January 2025 Edition

NEXT MEETING: Two Presentations: First - Wandering: Understanding, Prevention, and Preparedness and Second - Organizing/Downsizing Tips & Professional Services - Join us, Tuesday, January 28, at 1 PM - See Page 2 for details.

Alzheimer’s Stamps

Since the end of September 2024, through the purchase of the Alzheimer's stamp, more than \$1.6 million has been raised for Alzheimer's research at the National Institutes of Health! Keep buying these stamps at your local post office or online.

Source: Kathy Siggins, Region II NARFE Alzheimer's Coordinator November 8, 2024



Important Note

Most of the articles in this newsletter were prepared in early to mid-December, before the passage of the WEP/GPO elimination bill (see “BREAKING NEWS” article on Page 1).

Many thanks to Paul Schwartz, our former co-president and current NARFE Region II VP, all the NARFE lobbyists and officers, and NARFE members who campaigned tirelessly for the passage of this potentially life-changing legislation. Congratulations to us all!