



# National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

## Florida Federation of Chapters

*Your Future is Our Focus*

# Newsletter

September 2007

## President's Podium

*By Don Stewart*



It has been a busy, busy first three months since I was elected. Finding replacements for appointed officers who for personal reasons could not stay on proved to be tough. Fortunately, all appointed positions, except for two, have been filled.

**Federation Presidents Meeting.** In mid July, I attended a meeting of Federation presidents in Louisville, KY, which I found very useful and informative. As a group, we selected **Membership, Legislation, and Communications** to discuss. We were divided into three equal groups. In my group, there were 6 newly elected Presidents. By and large, discussions were proactive and concentrated on what we thought should be done.

**Membership, which has been one of my major concerns, brought out some creative ideas.** There was a presentation on the demographics of NARFE, just who makes up our membership and who is joining NARFE. It was pointed out that each group has specific interests that we must take into account. Our newer members tend to prefer getting their information on line. Many of them, after they retire, go back to work in non-government jobs or go into business for themselves.

**Communications was the second topic discussed but it was difficult to separate communications from membership.** It was pointed out that the more recent NARFE members have a preference for getting information on line and in many cases are used to interactive modes of communicating. Principal among the items discussed was the concept of a Federation Chapter, a Virtual Chapter and/or a Blog log.

National will look into establishing guidelines for the possibility of such programs.

The third topic discussed was **legislation**. National has implemented a legislative blitz for August-September to seek support for WEP/GPO and the Premium Conversion Bill. In July, National held a teleconference with each NARFE Regional Vice President and constituent Federation Presidents. This was felt by all to have been an excellent initiative and one that should be used again in the future.

There were many other items covered but these were the highlights of the discussion. Among the other issues were single dues, making the National website more user-friendly and other similar topics, many of which were referred to the National Executive Board when we met jointly with them to present the summary points of our discussion.

**Membership.** As I mentioned in the last Federation Newsletter, with the concurrence of the Federation Executive Board, membership at the Federation level has been divided into Recruitment and Retention Chairs to recognize that each of these responsibilities is a full time job and the membership problems we face have to be addressed. **Ed Fleck is the Recruitment Chair. Jake Maestas is the Retention Chair and also Chair of the Dues Withholding Contest.**

**Strategic Planning Committee.** Dave Whalen (Chair), Sam Girson and Herb Sicular have agreed to look into ways the Federation can meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

**Florida statewide issues.** All of you, I am sure, have been following in your daily papers the discussion on **property taxes**. Soon we will have to make a choice on which type of exemption we will want. I have looked into this matter closely, followed the debate closely, and my advice to each of you is to consult an expert or financial advisor to determine what is best for you. The reason is that there is no single answer and we need to consider and determine what is in our own best financial

interest. The choice you make will be final, so study the options closely!

The other issue that has hit every Florida homeowner hard is **property insurance premiums!** This is also an issue that I have been following closely. Some of us received renewal notices with no significant premium increases and maybe even a slight decrease. Others have been less fortunate and have received increases of as much as 100%. Any and all discussions on the subject of premiums, has been, at best, conflicting and contradictory. I consulted a trusted insurance broker and he made suggestions that greatly reduced my premiums, but in actuality, left me greatly exposed if I had significant losses. I came to the conclusion that the best way to get the best advice from him was to ask him what kind of coverage he had. I opted for something similar to his coverage, which gave me a good savings, though in the event of damages, I would have higher, but affordable, out of pocket expenses. **Recommendation**, find someone in the business you trust and consult them. They may be able to find ways to save you on premiums while not leaving you exposed to damages you cannot afford. Bottom line, you make the decision on what is best for you!

## 1<sup>st</sup> VP

*By Wally Roepke*

The First Vice President is responsible for the District Officers, Membership, Public Relations and Alzheimer's Chairs. I am pleased to tell you that this requires little effort since they all know their jobs and do very well without micromanagement from the 1<sup>st</sup> VP.

One unanticipated function was filling in for the Federation President on a National Office conference call with the Federation Presidents and Legislative Officers from Region III about the August Congressional recess. Having never done this before I found it very interesting because the word from the National Office was constructive and there was some give and take from Federation participants.

## Region 3 VP

*By Bob Harrell*

The **Region III Biennial Seminar** will be held October 2-4, 2007 in Columbus, Georgia. We will begin at 8:30 am, October 3, 2007 and end at noon on October 4, 2007. This seminar will be an excellent opportunity for Officers and potential Officers of Chapters and Federations in Region III to become familiar with NARFE operational procedures and also provide input through workshops on methods that will improve the management of Chapters and Federations.

**David B. Snell, Director, Retirement Benefits Services, and John Clements, Director, Recruiting and Retention** will give presentations of interactions with their respective departments. We will also have several of our leaders from within Region III provide input on how they accomplish their goals. Each presenter will follow their presentation with a question answer period to allow for input from the attendees.

We are expecting an informative three days and it is to your advantage to be there. Additional information is available on the Region III website ([www.region3narfe.com](http://www.region3narfe.com)) and several of the State websites.

I hope to see many of you in Columbus.

## Want to win \$200?

The Federation Executive Board has authorized a Dues Withholding Contest for FY 2007-2008. In addition to the \$200 first prize, there are \$50 prizes for 2nd and 3rd.

Dues withholding is a great member retention tool. **Please mention it at all meetings and include it in your Newsletters and websites.** Think about it, your NARFE National and Chapter dues come right out of the member's annuity check and they never have to worry about missing a payment.

## Chapter Assistance Program

*By Dave Whalen, Past President*

The Federation Executive Board has taken a step to provide an incentive and funding to create and implement local recruitment, retention and public relations actions that may not have been possible because of a lack of funds.

The budget for the Chapter Assistance Program for Fiscal Year 2008 has been set at \$5000. The request may be for single or multiple items but not exceed \$200, and approved requests are limited to one per Chapter each six months. Chapters are encouraged to submit requests early as, when the total amount has been distributed, no additional programs will be approved. **Forms for the program** have been mailed to all Chapter Presidents, and also are available on [www.narfeffl.net](http://www.narfeffl.net).

**Typical requests that most likely would be approved** include: postage, telephone card, printing, copies, guest free lunch, brochures, travel, posters, envelopes, extra Newsletters, speaker fee, audio/video production, portable booth purchase/rental, meeting registration fees, credit union mail stuffers, non-cash gifts/awards.

**Typical requests that most likely would not be approved** include: Radio advertising, TV advertising, major newspaper advertising, personal time payment, cash gift/award, and normal Chapter expenses.

**Consultation urged.** Districts and Chapters are urged to consult with the Federation PR Chair and/or Member Recruitment Chair and/or me as Program Chair, to help in the development of programs that qualify. This is especially important as we may be able to help you develop programs that also are eligible for Matching Funds from National. For example, a Chapter could receive \$200 in Chapter Assistance funds plus \$200 in National Matching funds, plus National would match any local Chapter funds.

We also plan to post all approved applications on [www.narfeffl.net](http://www.narfeffl.net).

## ALZ

**ALZ & NARFE - It started in Florida.** In 1985, Herb Jones, Florida Federation President, was the Keynote Speaker at the NARFE New Mexico state Convention. The Convention was raising money for a member whose spouse had Alzheimer's Disease. Herb thought that if NARFE adopted ALZ as its charity, it would help ALZ victims and caregivers, and improve NARFE's image.

At the 1985 Florida Federation Convention, Herb presented, and the convention adopted, a provision that all money raised by NARFE in Florida was to be used for care givers for ALZ victims and any other ALZ need. Monroe Williamson, NARFE National Treasurer, was the main speaker at that Convention. Herb told him he had contacted NARFE National about the idea and received luke warm responses. Herb told Monroe he was going full steam ahead. Monroe reported this to National and told the staff at National they better get moving on the idea. In 1986, National took up the cause and NARFE members responded with enthusiasm.

In those early days, NARFE Chapters would collect donations at shopping areas and local health fairs, and give out ALZ literature. People would shy away as NARFE members shook their collection cans because there was a stigma about mental health diseases. How the world has changed. Today, people are anxious for our literature.

In the early 90s, resolutions were presented at 2 Florida Federation Conventions to carry to the National Convention which would have provided a goal of each NARFE member collecting or donating \$2 a year to ALZ. With NARFE membership at about 500,000 in those days, donations would have been about \$1 million a year. The resolutions never passed.

### **Mark your Calendar**

#### **Federation Executive Board Meetings**

October 31 - November 1, 2007

February 20 - 21, 2008

May 20 and 23, 2008

#### **Federation Annual Convention**

May 20 - 22, 2008

#### **NARFE National Convention**

September 7 - 11, 2008

## Recruiting

*By Ed Fleck*

I am your new Federation Membership Recruitment Chair. I am interested in learning about any recruitment opportunities in your area in which I can either assist you, or even handle for you. My only prerequisite for traveling any distance is that the event is worthy of spending Federation funds and time, e.g., does the event have the potential to reach sufficient prospective members, either CFE or retired. My somewhat limited budget, and my availability, will determine whether I am able to attend a recruiting event. If you become aware of a Pre-retirement Seminar (e.g., at your former agency), I would be particularly interested in attending if able. Please contact me directly at [EEFLECK@AOL.COM](mailto:EEFLECK@AOL.COM) or 813.961.4259.

**Senior Extravaganzas.** I also plan to attend several Senior Extravaganzas around the state, such as October 10&11, Lee Civic Center, Ft Myers; *November 14&15, Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg*; January 23& 24, Florida State Fair Grounds, Expo Hall, Tampa; *February 20&21, Sarasota/Bradenton International Convention Center, Sarasota*; March 19&20, Harborview Center, Clearwater; *April 23, Cultural Center of Charlotte County, Port Charlotte*; May 23, Central FL Community College, Ocala. I am reaching out via the DVPs and Chapter Presidents for assistance in manning our booth.

## Retention

Jacob Maestas your new Membership Retention Chair, is responsible for developing new strategies and ideas to retain Federation members. He will be working primarily with Federation DVPs to enhance retention within their Chapters. Maestas has been a NARFE member since his retirement and was active within the North Carolina Federation, where he served as Chapter VP, Chapter President and Area (District) VP. He also currently serves as the PR Officer for Chapter 242.

**Dues withholding contest processing responsibilities have been moved to Maestas.** Please send your completed Dues Withholding forms to Jacob Maestas, PO Box 51436, Sarasota, FL 34232.

## Automation

*By William Leatham*

**New Look:** Our website has a new look and is being updated as you read this. Take a look: [www.narfeffl.net](http://www.narfeffl.net).

**Can You Live With Windows Vista?** If you have existing computer-related equipment, such as scanners, cameras and printers, they may not work with the new Vista operating system. Vista, much like Windows Millennium Edition (Windows ME), has a very limited compatibility with pre-existing equipment. Check here before you buy a new computer or upgrade to Vista: <http://technet2.microsoft.com/WindowsVista/en/library/ed1e3b7d-5ea7-4ad3-be3f-af29f7b48dde1033.mspx?mfr=true>. If you are looking to buy a new computer, you might be able to buy it with Windows XP loaded instead of Vista. Just ask.

**Get a permanent email address!** Tired of notifying friends and relatives of new email addresses, as well as losing touch with your college bulletins, etc.? Get a permanent email address from Yahoo, Google or AOL. Both Google and AOL can be used with Outlook, and Google with Outlook Express. AOL uses IMAP, a protocol that allows mail to be easily left on the server, so only later versions of Outlook can work with it. Google offers easy instructions, but AOL is harder to set up, because AOL wants you to come in via your web browser to serve you advertising. Excite also offers free email.

**We are suffering with the change of EarthLink to Embarq,** now that EarthLink has re-branded itself. NARFE Florida members with EarthLink addresses are now notifying us of changes of email addresses, greatly slowing down the delivery of other services while we manually update addresses. If members had permanent email addresses, we would not have this problem.

**Beware of EarthLink Spam Blocker!** Members are innocently turning on EarthLink's Spam Blocker, unaware of the impact that it has. It is a product that requires at least six months of tracking and adding safe email addresses before you turn it on. It's challenge and response system can not be used to get through by on line stores and the

NARFE bulletin systems, so you immediately lose touch with Amazon, eBay, your college bulletins, etc., as well as NARFE bulletins. And, any friends with vision impairments will not be able to decode the password in the challenge email to get through to you. **NARFE Chapter and Federation officers should never use this tool!**

## From your Secretary

By Bill Leatham

To overcome issues from static on the fax line, I redid the wiring and got a new fax number **941-375-8415**. In addition, the fax has a battery backup to prevent it from being knocked off line by power fluctuations.

Please remember that is important that all members **keep both their membership and Chapter information up-to-date**. We can not contact you if we do not know your physical and email addresses. Your Chapter will be poorly served if your officer list is not updated via the F-7 process **WITH A COPY TO THE FEDERATION SECRETARY**. The F-7 data is used to update the Chapter information posted on [www.narfeffl.net](http://www.narfeffl.net).

## Federation Officials

2007-2008

President.....Donald Stewart  
1st VP.....Wallace Roepke  
2<sup>nd</sup> VP.....Treva Devers  
Secretary.....William Leatham  
Treasurer.....Kenneth Carter  
Immediate Past President.....Benjamin Pappa

### District VPs

1 .....Robert A. Shaw  
2 .....Harold Bartelt  
3 .....Ruth Blackwell  
4 .....Sharon Sharp  
5 .....Richard Zeiner  
6 .....Tony Torchia  
7 .....Angel Almodovar  
8 .....Robert J. Miller  
9 .....Richard Gerber  
10 .....Lucette Chizik  
11 .....James Greene

### Appointees

Alzheimer's.....Leonora Sicular  
Automation.....Diana Leatham  
Chaplain.....Maureen Henderson  
Chapter Assistance Program.....David Whalen  
Coalitions.....Herbert Sicular  
FEEA.....Nancy Roepke  
Legislative.....Vacant  
NARFE-PAC.....John Trenkle  
Newsletter Editor.....Marc Harris  
Public Relations.....Marc Harris  
Member Recruiting.....Ed Fleck  
Member Retention.....Jake Maestas  
Service Officer.....Vacant  
ZIP-Code.....Margaret Pappa

## FEEA

By Nancy Roepke

In 1998, FEEA and NARFE launched the FEEA/NARFE Scholarship Fund to provide scholarships to the children and grandchildren of NARFE members. Since then, NARFE members have helped to open the doors of educational opportunity for the next generation.

Scholarship requests for the next academic year have been evaluated. There were 60 applicants in Region III this year. Of the 60, 27 came from the Florida Federation. All of these are only the very best students so it is extremely hard to differentiate them. They were evaluated for academics, an essay, extra curricular activities and honors awards. All but one of the students evaluated received A+ or A & B on their academic work. Those with straight A's and taking advanced college level courses received the highest evaluations. All the applicants had large amounts of extra curricular activities and honors, so the essay provided the greatest differentiation.

5 of the 27 applicants from the Florida Federation received the highest score of 100. Each final winner will receive a \$1000 scholarship for the next academic year.

## NARFE-PAC Report

*By John J. Trenkle*

Judy Park, NARFE Legislative Director, recently sent a letter to all Federation PAC Coordinators saying that this is an unusual year for NARFE-PAC. Although the purpose of the PAC is to support congressional candidates, she believes the earlier-than-usual kick-off of Presidential campaigns is affecting congressional races. This is coming from the fact that many states have moved up their Presidential primary dates this cycle. And since in many of these states the congressional primaries are held at the same time as their Presidential primary, many congressional races are also going to start up earlier than usual. Judy is expecting a deluge of requests after the August recess.

So it is shaking out that candidate contribution requests will come in earlier this year while, by the way, membership contributions are coming in slower than usual. Most members contribute one time during the cycle. For them it is not a matter of "if," it is a matter of "when." I encourage members to consider making their contribution earlier this cycle so that the PAC can effectively participate in this election cycle.

Judy also is already asking the Federation to start formulating recommendations as if a request had come in so that we can respond in a timely manner. I do think that there will be some competitive congressional races this cycle in Florida. The Democrats are likely to target Republican incumbents in Congressional District 8 (Keller), CD Districts 13 (Buchanan), CD 15 (Weldon), and CD 24 (Feeney). The Republicans are likely to target Democrat incumbent CD 16 (Mahoney) and CD 22 (Klein). Also it is possible that Congressman Young, CD 10, will not seek reelection. If that is the case, both parties will target CD 10. So it would be helpful if the membership in these Districts would begin the process of evaluating congressional candidates in these districts.

Thank you for your continued support for NARFE-PAC, and please consider contributing earlier this cycle.

## Fundraising tip

Many Chapters have solicited outside of NARFE for donations to ALZ over the years...and raised thousands of dollars doing it! However, few realize they need a License to do this.

Well...the Federation has a license for this purpose and renews it every year. So, if you want to solicit, contact Treasurer Ken Carter first and he will send you a copy of the license. With a copy of the license in hand, you can solicit without fear of being stopped and fined.

## Tax Info

*By Marc Harris*

**NARFE is Tax Exempt - to a point.** The question has been asked on many occasions "*If NARFE is a non-profit, why do we pay sales taxes?*" NARFE's National Treasurer has informed me that NARFE and its Federations and Chapters are 501(c) 5 not-for-profits, organizations. As such, each organization is allowed up to \$25,000 income above the dues received before federal income taxes kick in. However, a 501(c) 5 is not exempt from excise taxes, state taxes etc.

**Beginning in 2008,** small tax-exempt organizations, such as NARFE Chapters and Federations, that previously were not required to file federal income tax returns, will be required to file an annual electronic notice, Form 990-N, *Electronic Notice (e-Postcard) for Tax-Exempt Organizations not Required To File Form 990 or 990-EZ.* Organizations that do not file the notice will lose their tax-exempt status. More information on this new requirement was put in the mail by the IRS, starting in July. Our thanks again to NARFE National for this info.

***If you have any questions on the above, please contact Federation Treasurer Ken Carter.***

**IRS Tax Guide for the Retiree.** Want copies of this informative document for your Chapter members? Call: **Jackie Keller**, Senior Tax Specialist, 850-785-5515 ext. 228 and she will order and ship as many copies as you request.

## ROADMAP TO MORE MEMBERS

*By Jim Greene, President of Chapter 1263 & District 11 DVP*

Chapter 1263 in South Lee County, in 2005, was facing a decision to possibly dissolve due to lack of willing leadership and low interest in continuing the Chapter. Upon taking over as President in January 2006, immediate action was required to obtain new members and generate interest in keeping the Chapter active. Our membership at that time was about 218, including 35 National Only Members. Membership on August 8, 2007 was 240, including 24 National Only Members. The following is a list of some of the actions we took to increase membership:

- Notices to local newspaper with meeting date, time, location, and a phone number for information. Speaker info was added whenever possible.
- Decision to meet every month (except May).
- Monthly Board Meetings at local library.
- Obtaining interesting speakers for meetings
- Revising Quarterly Newsletters to include upcoming meetings and speakers.
- Collected email address in order to send monthly meeting notices and other info to members as available.
- Established an active Calling Committee.
- Split the Membership Chair duties, leaving Retention and adding new person for Recruitment/New Members.
- Researching the M114 report to locate inactive members, update telephone numbers and addresses, etc.
- Quick responses to calls for information. A packet containing latest newsletter, meeting information, list of officers/chairpersons, an Application for Membership/or Chapter Transfer Form sent within 2 days. Follow-up call made before next regular meeting.
- Guests made to feel welcome at meetings. Ask them to fill out an information sheet used to stay in contact with them, also allow time for them to cover background info on themselves at first chapter meeting. All eligible guests invited to join our Chapter. Mail follow-up letter with same information listed above if this was first contact.
- Applications to Join and Chapter Transfer Forms available at every meeting. Also,

members are encouraged to carry applications with them, and to bring guests to meetings.

- We invited snow birds to become Associate Members by paying just our Chapter Dues and we keep them informed all year long. We plan to continue this program in the fall upon their return.
- Screening monthly M112 reports, sending welcome letters to new members (including the packet information above, if not previously sent). Calls/letters to dropped members, and follow up on second dues notice. Updates/changes made to the M114 report.
- All new members receive a survey sheet listing officer and committee chairperson positions and are asked to fill out and return to the President to determine their interest in serving the chapter.
- All members asked regularly to become involved in chapter activities and to serve as an officer /chairperson, or serve on a committee.

## Food for thought

- Why not offer to pay for one year of Chapter dues to members who sign up for Dues Withholding at a Chapter meeting?
- Ever consider having a special weekend meeting to attract current federal employees?
- Ever try a special function and invite members from the District?

If you try these, or others, let us know and we might publish your story in future Newsletters, like the following ones.

## Fun Events for Members & Guests

NARFE is not just a magazine, newsletters, websites, members meeting once a month to eat and discuss our legislative efforts. NARFE can also provide great special events and volunteer actions that help communities. The following are examples of recent special events:

**Chapter 1405.** On August 11, Miami-Dade Chapter 1405 enjoyed a social gathering at The Palace Suites in Kendall, Florida. There were over 45

members and guests, relatives, and friends who joined in on the fun. Federation President, Don Stewart and his wife Mirta were among the guests. Social Event Coordinator, Angel Alvarado and his wife Hilda, directed and planned all the decorations and wonderful music while The Palace provided a delicious lunch. NARFE's version of "Charade" was provided by Nilsa Almodovar who led a game of songs. Everyone participated and earning points led to winning various gifts and prizes. Since this event was so successful, the chapter plans to have it again next year.



Chapter 1405 Social Event Coordinator Angel & Hilda Alvarado (l), District 7 VP & Chapter 1405 President Angel Almodovar (r)

Florida Federation President and Chapter 1405 Members



Donald & Mirta Stewart

**Chapter 1002.** On August 9, Cape Coral Chapter 1002 held its first Hawaiian LUAU. Invitations were sent to the DVP and Presidents of the other chapters in the District. Nearly 50 NARFEs and their guests, including Federation 2<sup>nd</sup> VP Treva

Devers, District 11 VP Jim Greene and his wife Beulah, and Federation PR Chair Marc Harris. Thanks to the efforts of many, and particularly Peg Thiel, and Loretta and Bob Miller, members and their guests were transported to Hawaii for a night of great food and wonderful entertainment.

Being a NARFE event, and considering the theme of the event, \$100 was collected for the Pearl Harbor Memorial and Visitor Center

## *NARFE helps School Program*



Pictured are Virginia Evans, Marc Harris, Jessica Picklesimer (Bigs of SW Florida), Dorothy Jessup, Shirley Sloper, Peg Thiel, Bob Miller and Loretta Miller

Members of Chapter 1002, and Jessica Picklesimer (3<sup>rd</sup> from left) of Big Brother Big Sisters of SW Florida, show a portion of the hundreds of dollars in school supplies and cash donated by NARFE members to the Bigs in School program. Through this program, volunteers offer children individualized time and attention at the child's school. Jessica was a speaker at a NARFE monthly meeting in the spring. She told NARFE members that, in addition to becoming volunteers, NARFE members also could help the program by donating school supplies like backpacks, books, pens and pencils, etc.

NARFE members jumped right on the opportunity to help and collected supplies and money all summer for delivery just before the start of the new school year.

## **2nd Vice President Reports**

*By Treva M. Devers*

Being your 2nd Vice President is a learning experience for me and a busy one! My first article for this newsletter will be about Legislation, since as all of you know, has been my background in NARFE for the past 3 years.

On July 20, 2007 I discovered the following update on the NEA website:

### **Repeal Social Security Offsets - Update on NEA's Campaign to Eliminate GPO/WEP, June 30, 2007**

- The Latest News: House Ways and Means Chairman Announces Intent to Hold Hearing on Social Security Offsets!
- In a June 27 letter to Representative Howard Berman (the primary sponsor of legislation to repeal the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision), House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Charlie Rangel (D-NY) announced that he has asked the Subcommittee on Social Security to schedule a hearing on the offsets. In his letter, issued as a direct result of his recent meeting with Representative Berman and NEA President Reg Weaver, Chairman Rangel expressed his concern about the "very serious issues" raised by the offsets and stated that Representative Berman's repeal bill "deserves to be examined." Watch the NEA Web site for further details once the hearing has been scheduled.

**Social Security Fairness Act Reaches Record Number of Cosponsors!** The House version of the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82), which would completely repeal the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision, has now garnered the support of 319 bipartisan cosponsors. The Senate bill (S. 206) has 33 cosponsors. See the complete list of House and Senate cosponsors.

**Ongoing Action Needed:** Thank Members who have cosponsored the bill and remind them that we need them to continue to advocate for movement of this important legislation. Urge all other Members of Congress to add their names as cosponsors to H.R. 82/S. 206.

Upon further inquiry to our National office I received a response from Jill Crissman one of our Legislative Representatives in the NARFE National Office.

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### **Response from NARFE National:**

*Treva:*

*Rest assured that we are indeed aware of a potential Ways and Means hearing on the Social Security Offsets in the fall. However, at this point, the Committee has not formally scheduled a hearing, nor is committee staff yet working on putting the hearing together. So there is no date yet, nor topic/scope established. Just as soon as the Committee staff actually schedules a hearing (likely several months from now), we will definitely be sharing this information far and wide as we want to keep our members in the loop. A hearing would be great news, but given the fickle nature of Congress, there is no sense in sharing this information with NARFE members until it is a given. It's not that this information is classified in any way, but that Congress so rarely does what it says.*

Chairman Rangel and his staff have indeed been hearing extensively about the need to address the GPO and WEP from all of the affected groups---including NARFE. In fact, I began meeting with his staff in early December following the elections to ensure that his key staff members would be well-aware of our agenda prior to his assuming the role of chairmanship. As in any year, the challenge for the Ways and Means Chairman is to find a way to address the GPO and WEP, while simultaneously balancing the needs of the Social Security Trust Fund. NARFE has worked to ensure that all of the other public sector groups---including the federal unions, postal groups, teachers, and police---keep the GPO and WEP at the top of their lists. NARFE held a meeting of the CARE Coalition that it chairs at NARFE Headquarters to bring all the groups together at the start of this Congress. Elections that result in new committees certainly present new opportunities to be exploited.

At the moment, the NEB is asking all of our Federation and Chapter leaders to be focused on NARFE's August Lobby Month. There is no better way to advance NARFE's agenda on Capitol Hill than by having our members engage in grassroots advocacy at home. The recent conference calls held by President Baptiste (with the full Legislative Department's participation) aimed to galvanize federation leaders to assist in setting up meetings with their state's legislators. Ideally, the federation leaders will be taking the lead in arranging the Senate visits, and assisting their chapter leaders in making the arrangements with House leaders. August is an essential month for NARFE 'face time' with congressional leaders as September will be a busy work month for Congress, and given the forces lining up on Capitol Hill, not to mention with regards to the White House, the fall looks to be a real wide ride---which opens up many possibilities for Congress to mess with our benefits. Hope you are doing well.

## **Florida Legislative Co-sponsors**

We are well into the new Congress and the track record in Florida to support NARFE's legislative initiatives is improving – we're over half way there!! As of August 18, 2007 we have the following:

### **GPO/WEP (324 Co-Sponsors):**

16 out of our 25 Representatives in Florida have cosponsored House Bill H.R.82:

CD 1	Jeff Miller	CD 10	C. W. Bill Young	CD 19	Robert Wexler
CD 2	F. Allen Boyd, Jr.	CD 13	Vern Buchanan	CD 20	Debbie Wasserman Schultz
CD 3	Corrine Brown	CD 16	Tim Mahoney	CD 21	Lincoln Diaz-Balart
CD 5	Ginny Brown-Waite	CD 17	Kendrick Meek	CD 22	Ron Klein
CD 8	Ric Keller	CD 18	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen	CD 23	Alcee Hastings
CD 9	Gus Bilirakis				

Senator Bill Nelson has cosponsored Senate Bill S. 206, but Senator Mel Martinez has not.

### **Premium Conversion:**

And, 13 of the 25 FL Representatives have co-sponsored H.R.1110:

CD 1	Jeff Miller	CD 8	Ric Keller	CD 17	Kendrick Meek
CD 2	F. Allen Boyd, Jr.	CD 9	Gus Bilirakis	CD 19	Robert Wexler
CD 3	Corrine Brown	CD 10	C. W. Bill Young	CD 20	Debbie Wasserman Schultz
CD 5	Ginny Brown-Waite	CD 13	Vern Buchanan	CD 23	Alcee Hastings
CD 6	Cliff Stearns				

Senator Bill Nelson has cosponsored Senate Bill S. 773, but Senator Mel Martinez has not.

**You all have done a wonderful job getting co-sponsors as evidenced by the above list. To those of you, that your Congressional Representatives has not become a co-sponsor - please contact your Senator and Representatives and urge them to sign on.**

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