



National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association
Florida Federation of Chapters
www.narfeffl.net

Newsletter

April 2006

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Important Dates::

Federation EB Meetings

May 17, 19
August TBD
November TBD

Federation Convention

May 17-18

NARFE National Convention

September 10-14

Legislation Status:

WEP/GPO

House bill in Ways & Means
Senate bill in Finance

Premium Conversion

House bill in Ways & Means
Senate bill in Finance

What members should do to help

Call, email and write Cong representatives and ask them to help get these bills out of Committee and onto the floor for a vote!

President's Message

It's that time in the year when the Florida Federation is between it's two major events. We have completed the District Annual meetings and are gearing up for the 2006 Florida Federation Convention. This past year we also had a third major event, the Training Seminar last November. A central two day training seminar was not only a first for Florida, it's a first for most all Federations. My research found that only one other Federation some years ago held a similar event. The two day event was held at the Hilton Hotel in Altamonte Springs, with over 125 members attending representing 42 of our 79 chapters. It was rated as a successful event and for those that missed it, we hope to do a follow up to it in 2007.

The Annual District meetings also went off very well, at some the turnout was a bit less, but for the most, they were well attended. This gave Margaret and I the opportunity to meet many of the dedicated leaders and members of most of the chapters. Each meeting, though similar in nature, still had the personal touch of the District Vice President. Along with my attending each Annual meeting, our Region III NFVP Bob Harrell was also in attendance.

We are now looking forward to another record attendance at the May convention. For those that may have missed last year's event, Florida had the largest attended convention of all the Federations. Considering California has about 10,000 more members than Florida, I believe we fared very well. This year's convention will carry about the same agenda, however, we do have one event that is new and appears to be showing quiet a bit of interest...Dolly Parton's "Dixie Stampede". The event is set for Tuesday evening, with the bus pickup at the hotel at 4:00pm. Of course there will be the normal business meeting, and this year there are 13 resolutions to be addressed. Some pertain to the Florida Federation, and others will be sent on to our National Convention that is being held September 10th - 14th in Albuquerque, N.M. The National Convention normally has 1400 to 1500 delegates in attendance. The resolutions to be addressed there will be mailed to all Chapters in time for you to address the issues and make known your wishes through your Chapter Delegates that will be attending the National Convention. I understand that there will be some major issues coming up this year, so, please take the time to look them over and make your wishes know through you delegates or proxy vote.

Margaret and I are hoping to see many of you at the Federation Convention, so please try to get all of your paper work in before the deadlines.

Ben

Executive Board Meeting

By Ben Pappa

A regular meeting of the Executive Board took place February 22-23, 2006 at the Hilton Hotel in Altamonte Springs, starting at 7:00pm. Due to the distance some members need to travel, and to make use of what time is left in the day, the meeting is started in the evening and completed the next day.

A full agenda of items was addressed, highlighted by written and verbal reports from elected and appointed officers along with reports from committee chairs.

The National Convention and those planning to attend were discussed, with particular focus on some very important resolutions.

Donald Stewart, the Florida Federation Convention Chairman, discussed details with each of the sub-committee chairs and officers.

Our Fiscal Policy was addressed as there is some language in one section that may need to be amended. Further discussion was tabled until the Executive Board meeting following the Federation's Convention in May.

The main item on the agenda was to review our budget for the rest of the fiscal year. Fortunately, only minor adjustments were needed. More information about the state of our finances will be available at the convention.

For more in-depth details of the meeting, please watch for the published minutes of the meeting after they have been approved.

From the 1st VP

By Donald Stewart

Final deadlines are rapidly approaching for the **Federation's Annual Convention**.

Contributions to the Convention Program Book can be sent to Dave Whalen electronically at wordmast@comcast.net. This includes Chapter ads and Booster lists. Items sent electronically are

much more easily included and save Dave lots of extra work.

If you have not sent in your **banquet requests**, I urge you to do so as soon as possible, especially if you want to sit with your own group and get a good table. Remember, "first come, first served!" This is also true for any of you who want to attend the Dolly Parton Dixie Stampede! It is a great show and we are getting a special price!

I have a SPECIAL REQUEST! If you are living in a gated or senior community, ask your Administrator if he/she will consider placing an ad in our program book. The deadline is **April 5, 2006**, AND they can also be sent electronically. CALL ME FOR DETAILS, but the forms should be in your Chapter Convention packet sent to your Chapter President. This helps us finance the Convention and will contribute to how much money we will have left to distribute to Chapters whose members have worked on the Convention. Last year the Florida Federation Convention was number one in attendance nationally. Please help us continue to be NUMBER ONE NATIONALLY!

If you have any questions, e-mail (Dejs33149@aol.com) or call me.

From the 2nd VP

By Wallace W. Roepke

One of the major events of the year for the Federation and Chapters is the late winter/early spring District meetings. Shortly after the 2005 Convention, planning for the District Annual meetings in February and March 2006 was started. Early planning is necessary to be sure that all the Chapters have an opportunity to let their members get it on their schedules. It is also necessary for the District VP's to have time to get a confirmed meeting place and date. The dates are important because the Federation President attends all District meetings. There needs to be time between meetings for both travel and some home time. Since this meeting schedule worked very well, it is anticipated that, with the help of the District VP's, next year's meetings will be scheduled in a similar way. Although attendance was fair to good this year, it is hoped that attendance can be improved for all the Districts next year.

NARFE at the Cross Roads

By Bob Harrell, NARFE Region III, NFVP

NARFE is literally at a cross roads. We are approaching the convention season both in our state and the national convention in Albuquerque. The delegates at each of these conventions will be asked to make decisions that will seriously impact the future of NARFE. I know that many of you have heard this before but there will be resolutions at Albuquerque pertaining to Mandatory Chapter Membership, One Member-One vote and a single NARFE dues.

Each of these resolutions, if enacted, will have a great impact on the future of NARFE. Therefore, it is important that each Chapter and Member become familiar with the language in these resolutions. Once you understand the impact of these resolutions instruct your voting delegates to the conventions how you want them to vote. If there is no one going to the convention from your chapter, send a proxy with instructions how to vote. Your vote will count and the future of NARFE rests in the hands of each of its members.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Altamonte Springs and Albuquerque.

Federation Revenue

By Ken Carter, Treasurer

The Florida Federation has two forms of revenue:

Ten percent of the Florida Federation National Dues and Florida Federation National Membership Fees are sent to the Florida Federation every month. The amount is calculated on the member's membership anniversary date, dues payment schedule the member is on, and the member's National dues are up to date. Funds are directly deposited in the bank and an accounting report is provided each Federation Treasurer.

Per Capita Tax is a Federation Tax levied on active Chapter members. The M114 report is used to determine the number of active members in a chapter. Active members are defined as total

chapter membership minus life members. Federation Constitution and By Laws Article XII, Section 1 covers the Federation Per Capita Tax. Article XII, Section 1 sets a cap limit of \$1.00 per active member. Florida Federation Executive Board sets the budget for the new Fiscal Year and at that time sets the Per Capita Tax for the new Fiscal Year.

Per Capita Tax invoices are mailed to every chapter president on approximately January 15th. The invoices show number of Chapter members, active members, Code F members, amount of Per Capita Tax to be paid, and number of convention delegates. Payment is due to the Federation Treasurer no later than the first (1st) day of March. Non payment of Per Capita Tax could result in loss of convention voting privileges.

Dues Withholding Contest

By Mike Brose, Membership Chair

The Federation Dues Withholding contest **ends on April 30.**

All signed dues withholding forms must be sent to the Florida Federation Membership Chair for processing. Do not send the dues withholding forms directly to our National Office as forms sent directly to National are not eligible for the prize money. Mail all forms to:

NARFE FL. FED. D/W Contest
Michael F. Brose - Membership Chairman
P O Box I50803
Cape Coral, FL 33915-0803

I am logging in each new dues withholding member for the drawing, and then forwarding the form to National for processing.

Drawing - At the 2006 Federation Convention. You do not need to be present at the convention to win.

Prizes - First Prize 200.00, 2nd and 3rd prizes, \$50.00 each. Prize money will be awarded to the member.

The Federation urges all of its members to encourage individuals to sign up for dues withholding. Please include articles in your Newsletters, websites, and discuss the benefits at your monthly meetings.

NOTE: A dues withholding form may be sent at any time. The National Office will send it on to OPM when the time is right to convert the member from annual dues to dues withholding.

Legislative Affairs

By Treva Devers, Legislative Chair



Richard Conway, President of Apollo Chapter 1137; Treva Devers, Federation Legislative Chair; Mike Dobrin, Legislative Chair of Apollo Chapter 11347, at an Apollo Chapter 1137 meeting in Cocoa Beach

I hope that all of you have received the March 6, 2006 letter I sent to all the Chapter Presidents and Legislative Officers. This letter was the result of a conference call between Region III and National Headquarters on March 1, 2006. At that time new NARFE priorities were agreed upon, as follows:

- Opposition to any cuts or delays in our current benefits (CSRS and FERS), as well as, the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHBP);
- Concerns about bringing Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) into the FEHBP and the impact of that proposal to the future cost and cost-sharing aspects of the program;
- Our continued support for Premium Conversion (PC) for federal civilian retirees and military personnel, with special emphasis for additional support from the Ways and Means and Finance Committee members; and

- Our continued support to repeal or reform the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), with special emphasis for additional support from the Ways and Means and Finance Committee members.

Please contact your local Congressional Senators and Representatives and express your concerns regarding cuts to your benefits and the other priority concerns listed above. Stress the average net monthly income for your chapter! The figure is available from your District VP for each chapter.

My trip to National has been set for the week of May 8-12. Look for my report in the next Federation Newsletter.

CONGRATULATIONS, to NARFE District 4 and 5!!!! During the month of March, Representative Ginny Brown-Waite has co-sponsored, not only WEP/GPO (H. R. 147), but the bill to Increase the Government's share of the FEHBP Premium (H. R. 633) and the bill to Repeal Medicare Drug Negotiating Restriction (H. R. 376)!!!!!!

I am continuing to visit Congressional Offices around the state. Here is where I have been the past few months and also future plans:

- Feb 2** - Senator Bill Nelson's Office Staff
- Feb 16** - Representative Katherine Harris' (R, 13) Office Staff
- Feb 24** - Representative Ric Keller's (R, 8) Office Staff, Representative Adam Putnam (R,12) and Senator Mel Martinez's Office Staff
- Mar 9** - Representative Tom Feeney's (R,24) Office Staff and Representative Dave Weldon's (R,15) Office Staff
- Apr 24** - Representative John Mica's (R,7) Office Staff and Representative Cliff Stearns' (R,6) Office Staff.
- Apr 25** - Representative Ander Crenshaw's (R,4) Office Staff

I invite all members to visit my part of our website for up to date info on legislative activities and a score card on Florida's Senators and Representatives.

Public Relations

By Marc Harris, PR Chair

Getting the NARFE message to the right people? NARFE has 4 audiences who need to know what we are doing:

- Members
- Potential Members
- The public
- Elected Officials.

Keeping them informed of what you plan to do and what you have done is an important part of what we do as NARFE. And each needs to be approached differently.

NARFE has an excellent PR Handbook. It can be ordered from HQ, or downloaded from www.narfe.org. Get it, read it, follow its guidance.

Also we are trying to set up a statewide PR team. and have each Chapter and District develop a PR Plan. Several months ago I asked for the names and email addresses of all PR Chairs. Thus far, I have received only about 16...we can do better. When the list is complete, I hope to begin to plan an aggressive PR campaign for our next fiscal year, which is also an election year.

Websites – keeping members informed – attracting current employees. While only about 20% of current Federation members have email, all currently employed members and potential members do, making email and websites modern tools to keep members and potential members informed of NARFE activities.

The Federation recommends that all Chapters develop and maintain a website. The cost for a host for a simple website can be less than \$100 per year. If several Chapters want to join in to buy space on a host, the cost per Chapter can be even less. In fact, a District wide website would be very cost effective and is being considered by at least one District. Other alternatives would be to have your website placed on the Federation website, or a member's personal website, at no cost. Each alternative has its pros and cons.

Several Chapters have websites that you can use as a model. All are linked to www.narfe.net The files for the Cape Coral Chapter 1002s site can be emailed to you to get a running start. If you would like to discuss the options, and/or get a copy of Chapter 1002s files to start your own, email marc.harris@narfe.net or give me a call.

NARFE National has a "Matching Funds" program which provides financial assistance to Chapters/Districts and Federations for Public Relations and/or Membership recruitment advertising and special events. Included with this Newsletter is a form we developed for members to use to request matching funds. On the back of the form you will find the guidelines for making a request. The guidelines and the form also have been posted on www.narfe.net under Matching Funds. The Federation encourages the development of advertising and events that qualify for matching funds. Call or email the PR Chair or Membership Chair for assistance.

A *tip* of the hat

By Marc Harris, Newsletter Editor

I would like to thank the members of **Cape Coral Chapter 1002** for printing and mailing the first edition of this Newsletter, and the members of **Miami-Dade Chapter 1405** who printed and mailed this issue.

The Federation supplies the labels and pays the costs of printing, envelopes, postage, etc. And it is a good opportunity to get members together for some fellowship.

We need Chapters to volunteer to print and mail future issues. Our hope is that we can rotate this effort around the state, from District to District.

With this issue District 7 and 11 have done their part.

Districts 1-6, 8, 9 and 10, you are next. Volunteer now!

FEEA

By Nancy L. Roepke, FEEA Coordinator

FEEA Scholarship Fund deadline coming: A major FEEA activity is the Annual Scholarship Awards. The February issue of the NARFE magazine contained the application form with instructions. The instructions are very specific and each element of the application must be met fully for the application to be considered.

Applications must be submitted no later than April 30 to be considered.

Please don't forget that the FEEA Scholarship Fund is supported by our donations, too.

Donations for this fund should be sent to:

**NARFE/FEEA Scholarship Fund,
8441 W. Bowles Ave., #200
Littleton, CO 80123-3245.**

Please be sure to put your Chapter name and number on the check. You can also make donations on-line via the FEEA website.

NARFE/FEEA Disaster Relief Fund: Since the initial September 2005 collection started for the NARFE /FEEA Disaster fund, the Federation has collected \$13,094. I continue to urge member and chapter donations.

I will have a table at the May convention with twice daily raffles for some really fine donated articles, and the FEEA newsletter.

Please urge your chapters to continue donating. Tell them they must let me know when and how much they donate or it will not be properly recorded because I get no list of donations from the FEEA office in Colorado.

Automation

By Bill Leatham

AOL: AOL is planning to charge **e-postage** starting in late May to those sending bulk emails to its subscribers. It will use a company called Goodmail Systems to act as the "stamp" seller.

AOL has indicated that it MAY allow plain text messages without links nor graphics to go through. If so, everyone but AOL will receive an attractive message and AOL'ers an "ugly" unformatted message.

If this fails, AOL'ers will again be dropped from our mailing list.

We do not have the \$100,000 that it would take to implement ePostage.

NOTE: Anyone paying ePostage to AOL will get its message through to AOL subscribers, as AOL will turn off its SPAM filters to any paid mail.

AOL'ers: If you protest loudly to AOL or change providers, you can stop this extortion attempt in its tracks.

Anti-SPAM Blocks: Many members have a global blocker, such as **Earthlink's**, turned on without first setting up a "good list". I cannot go in one by one and fill out an extensive questionnaire within the 20 or so minute time allowance from the rejection notice. **As a result, if I get back a "blocked" notice, you get dropped!**

Web Remake: The NARFEFL.net website will be getting an update starting in May. Please let me know of any additions or improvements that you would like. Please let me know of any errors.

CONVENTION PHOTOGRAPHER?

Our photographer last year will not be able this year due to health reasons. We welcome any member who is a photography buff to volunteer his/her services. The Federation will help defray expenses to attend the Convention. If no one volunteers to photograph the entire convention, we are looking for volunteers from members who plan to attend, who would be willing to photograph one or more sessions. Anyone interested should provide samples of their work, electronically, to: retatc@comcast.net and dejs33149@aol.com. You can also call Don Stewart at (305) 442 6388.