



National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

Florida Federation of Chapters

Your Future is Our Focus

Newsletter

January 2007

*DUE TO RECENT CHAPTER ELECTIONS,
IF YOU ARE NOT THE CURRENT CHAPTER
PRESIDENT OR SECRETARY, PLEASE FORWARD
THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO THE CURRENT
PRESIDENT OR SECRETARY.*

President's Podium

By Benjamin J. Pappa Jr

As we start a new year, let's look back at what has taken place this year, and look forward to what may take place next year.

Over the past year, the Florida Federation has continued its course in the fields of Legislation, Membership and Communications.

In Legislation, we continued our program of visitation to as many of our Florida national elected officials as possible by our Federation Legislative Officer. By keeping them informed of who we are and what we expect of them, that being, to protect or enhance both our earned annuity and health program.

In Membership, our Membership Chair has attended major events that attract 2,000 to over 12,000 seniors, and is presenting NARFE at pre-retirements seminars when requested by National.

In Communications by way of our Federation Quarterly Newsletter and Public Relations Press Releases through our Newsletter Editor and PR Chairman has informed and kept the face of NARFE in the eyes of the public, members, prospective members and our legislators.

We conducted our Annual Convention in May, where NARFE businesses was conducted, old friendships were renewed and new friendships were established.

2006 being an even numbered year, we also saw our National Convention, where dreams really do come true. **Margaret Baptiste** was elected as the first woman and first spousal annuitant to be NARFE National President.

At the October 26-27, 2006 Federation Executive Board (EB) meeting, the following elected and appointed officers were installed.

William H. Leatham was elected Secretary by the EB to fill the remaining term left vacant by the resignation of John (Steve) Henderson.

I made the following appointments that were confirmed by the EB:

Treva M. Devers, Legislative Officer

Diana M. Leatham, Automation Chair.

The Florida Federation EB is honored to welcome each to their respective positions. A list of all elected and appointed officers is found at the end of this Newsletter.

November saw some major changes in the newly elected political leadership in Washington. A strong message was sent...no matter how much money a candidate spends, it still comes down to the power of the vote. What this means for NARFE, only time will tell.

So what is in store for the Florida Federation over the next year?

The three major programs of the Florida Federation, Legislation, Membership and Communications will continue on their present course.

I also look forward to some changes at our National HQ, but we must be patient and give our newly elected National Officers some time to get oriented and establish their programs, programs that will require the help of many.

NARFE is not an Association that works for the benefit of one or a few. Everything that is accomplished is done for each and every one of us, and yes, even those retirees who are not members of NARFE also benefit from our many hours of work.

From the 1st VP

By Don Stewart

Convention. By now all Chapter Presidents will have received 2007 Convention Packets. I want to thank Bob Shaw, District 1 Vice President, who is responsible for the preparation of the Packet. In the packet is a flyer with the CUT OFF DATES showing by when each convention item or form is due. As in year's past, I want to point out that it is not necessary to wait until the final date to submit your forms. The sooner they are submitted, the more time the editors of the Program Book will have to prepare their final version for the printer. Last minute submissions cause lots of work at the last minute. Items such as the Booster Lists should be submitted electronically, if at all possible. Barring that, please print all names clearly. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me or the appropriate Committee Chair. We have a great program for the Convention and room rates remain the same as last year. Please support the Florida Federation and plan to attend May 15 - 17, 2007.

NARFE Alzheimer's Benefit Cruises. Enclosed you will find information on **two** cruises the Florida Federation is planning for fellowship and to raise funds for Alzheimer's research. As you will see, one is scheduled to leave from Tampa on December 2nd and the other from Port Everglades (Ft. Lauderdale) on December 9th. The reason for two cruises is for the convenience of our members. We have secured excellent rates. The cruises will provide fellowship and, at the same time, benefit NARFE's support of Alzheimer's research. The cruises are open to everyone, so you can invite your non-NARFE member friends. We also are publicizing the cruises in other Federations. This is a Federation effort and if we have wide spread support, this is something that we can attempt to have annually. Please make your reservations early!

District meetings. 2nd V.P. Wally Roepke has published the final schedule for the 2007 District Meetings. These meetings are to promote training and to elect members to the Convention standing committees. The meetings also provide members with an opportunity to raise questions or concerns

they may have and also to share events or steps they have taken to improve NARFE's service to members. Please contact your District Vice President for date and time and please encourage Chapter members to attend. I plan to attend as many of the meetings as I can and I look forward to seeing many of you.

Membership. National's most recent membership report shows for the second straight month a net gain in national membership. Overall this is great news and very positive. However, what should be of concern to us in the Federation is the number of members with less than three years in NARFE who are not renewing their membership. They, among members with 20 years or less in NARFE, and whose membership number starts with 106, have, since April of this year, accounted for 56% of our non-renewals. In addition to the sample letters found in the FH-21 Letter book, available from headquarters, within the next week, I will circulate to the DVPs suggested letters that can be sent to those not renewing and to those with second notices. Please feel free to adapt the letters in any way that makes you feel comfortable, but please write them. Many Chapters phone non-renewers in addition to writing letters. If anyone has any other suggestions, especially if they have been successful, please share them.

Mark you Calendar

Executive Board Meetings

February 22-23, 2007

May 15 and 18, 2007

Annual Convention

May 15-17, 2007

National's Legislative Training Conference

March 3-6, 2007

2007 Alzheimer's Benefit Cruises (see enclosed flyer)

December 2, 2007 from Tampa Bay

December 9, 2007 from Port Everglades

Membership

By Bob Miller

As 1st VP Don Stewart states above, retention is our biggest membership issue. We need to put it at the forefront of Chapter efforts. All Chapters must ensure that either the Membership Chair or someone designated is attempting to contact former members listed on the M-112 and M-112-1. The reason given for not rejoining should be asked of the former member and annotated on the forms. Sometimes, all it takes it for someone to rejoin is to show that they are missed and that someone cares enough to give them a call.

And don't forget about dues withholding as a retention tool, and our contest! Please mention it at all meetings and include it in your Newsletters and websites. You, or one of your members, could win \$200!!

The Tropicana Field Senior Extravaganza was held on November 15th - 16th of November in St. Petersburg. My wife and I talked to approximately 80 people. We handed out the same number of NARFE magazines. Of the people we spoke to, 30 took applications and showed interest in joining. The following additional Senior Extravaganzas are scheduled: *January 24-25, Florida State Fairgrounds, Expo Hall, Tampa* - - March 14, Cultural Center of Charlotte County, **Port Charlotte** -- April 4-5, Harborview Center, **Clearwater** -- May 18, Central Florida Community College Senior Institute, **Ocala**.

Local NARFE volunteers are invited to help us man the booth.

District 8

By Larry Thoroman

Chapter 1713's First Annual Craft Show was held November 11-12, 2006 in North Port, Florida. **Barbara and Arthur Garafolo** worked tirelessly signing up 31 vendors to display their crafts. Flyers were distributed by Chapter members and one local newspaper provided several free ads leading to over 2,000 shoppers attending the event. The Chapter raised over \$800. A prospective NARFE transferee from Illinois said: "I have never seen NARFE do a community activity like this."

. PLEASE KEEP NARFE RECORDS UP TO DATE

By Benjamin J. Pappa, Jr. & William Leatham

The Florida Federation has established a database of all Florida Federation elected and appointed officers, and all Chapter elected and appointed officers. This database is maintained by downloading the M-111 from our National HQ. In order for our information to be correct, the information at our National HQ must be correct.

It is imperative that each and every one of you keep your national records up-to-date by updating your records each time there is a change.

Personal information such as name, address, phone number and e-mail address can be corrected on-line at the www.narfe.org, or by calling the Membership Department at HQ.

Information such as Elected or Appointed Officer up-dates must be transmitted to HQ on a F-7 form ASAP after the change takes place. You do not have to wait until the officers are installed, only elected.

If you need a copy of the F-7, National and the Federation have it posted on their web-sites, or you may mail a hard copy.

If you do not have a copy of the current F-7 form, or do not know how to find it on the web, please call/email Federation Secretary Leatham, 561-499-5456 or secretary@narfe.net. The F-7 may be mailed to HQ, or transmitted via www.narfe.org. And, a copy must be sent to the Federation Secretary and Federation President. If you have already submitted your F-7, thank you, if not, please do ASAP.

Questions? Call President Pappa at 941-743-7117.

District 1

By Robert Shaw

I am pleased to report that I worked with Chapter 1305 to print and mail Federation Convention packets to 77 Chapters and Federation Officers.

Region III VP

By Bob Harrell

We have seen another Congress pass without our members losing any of the benefits earned during our working years. Although we were not successful in progressing on our other legislative goals, please be assured that they will be carried forward into the next Congress.

The NARFE National Officers conducted a successful Strategic Planning Session in November; however, nothing will be published until after the February National Executive Board Meeting. I have received the first draft and it looks very promising.

The NEB also was urged to encourage Federations and Chapters to become more active in Public Relations and advertising. The use of Matching Funds was stressed as a means for Federations and Chapters to increase their advertising budget. If you need help with PR, or questions about the Matching Funds program, check the Public Relations section of narfeffl.net.

In 2007, remember ***"Your Future is our Focus."***

Federal News Radio

Over the Veterans Day Holiday weekend, Marc Harris, Federation PR Chair, emailed some Spotlight on Members articles to Mike Causey of Federal News Radio and Mike read them on-the-air.

Mike is interested in receiving other "Spotlight on Members" articles about our members' federal and community activities and has promised to read them on air. So email what you have to marc.harris@narfeffl.net and he will get them to Mike.

If you would like to listen to Mike on the radio, you can still hear him even though we are in Florida by going to www.federalnewsradio.com and listen in on your computer! By the way, Mike's mother used to live in Lehigh Acres

February = District Meetings

By Wally Roepke

The District meeting schedule for 2007 is set: **District 1 – 2/1, District 2 – 2/12, Districts 3 & 4 – 2/23, District 5 – 2/14, Districts 6 & 7 – 2/8, District 8 – 2/5, District 9 – 2/13, District 10 – 2/9, District 11 – 2/6.**

The schedule is arranged to minimize travel times for the President, who attends each meeting, and to give him some time at home in between weekly trips. The starting time of each meeting should be provided to President Pappa so he can show up on time. Unless told otherwise, he assumes each meeting starts at 8:30.

I urge each District officer to encourage Chapters to maximize the attendance of potential Chapter officers. These meetings are a great place to help potential officers start to get a feel for the things they would need to know to function as an officer.

Member to Member

*This issue starts a **new section** in which we plan to share information received from our members. If you have information you would like to share, please email it to the Newsletter Editor at marc.harris@narfeffl.net.*

A tip of the NARFE hat to **Ed Fleck** for letting us know that, when doing your taxes for 2006, watch for the special one time ***"federal excise tax refund credit"***. The IRS website says that for those claiming:

- 1 exemption**, the standard refund amount: **\$30**
- 2 exemptions**, the standard refund amount: **\$40**
- 3 exemptions**, the standard refund amount: **\$50**
- 4+ exemptions**, the standard refund amount: **\$60**

Another tip of the NARFE hat to President Ben Pappa who informs us that when he went to renew his driver's license, he was told that **Florida residents that are 65 or older do not need a fishing license, for salt water or fresh water fishing. One only needs to show a driver's license showing you are 65 or older.**

FEEA

By Nancy Roepke, FEEA Chair

Just a short reminder to all that the NARFE/FEEA fund has a two-part function. The first is the **Scholarship Program** which gives \$1000 each year to several dozen deserving high school seniors across the nation who are going on to college. The second is the **Disaster Relief Fund** which provides financial support to NARFE members in disaster areas. I am reminding you because it is easy to overlook the FEEA fund need without any immediate needs. Don't forget to give to the NARFE/FEEA fund. It needs all the support it can get. **And I repeat my challenge, that each Chapter set a goal to and collect an amount equal to \$10 per Chapter member before the 2007 Federation Convention.**

This One is a Keeper

OPM has mailed out the Form RI 20-53 explaining the changes to your monthly annuity. It reflects the 3.3% COLA. This is the **ONLY** Form RI 20-53 you receive each year that shows the gross monthly survivor annuity currently payable in the event of your death. The Federation recommends that you keep this form for your records until you receive the next form mailed in December 2007.

Another Credit Card Scam

If you get a call from someone saying they are from your credit card company, asking for information from one of your credit cards, please know that they never ask for anything on the card as they already know the information since they issued the card! Scammers have ways of getting hold of your credit card number. But what they really need to use your card is the 3-digit PIN number on the back of the card. Don't give out your 3-digit PIN unless you know exactly who is getting it. If you give scammers your 3 Digit PIN number, by the time you get your statement, you may see charges for purchases you didn't make, and by then it may be too late and/or more difficult to file a fraud report.

District 5

By Tom Singletary

The District 5 November Round Table meeting had John Hopkins from the Veterans Administration and Marty Hudspeth from Blue Cross and Blue Shield. Since Veterans Day was the next day, having John as primary speaker worked out well. John, being an active federal employee, was very interested in NARFE. He said he had not heard of NARFE before our meeting. Ann (my wife) and I explained some of the objectives of NARFE and he seemed impressed and asked for some applications to pass out at his office...I mailed him a dozen!

I am in discussion with Ann Decker, aide to former Congressman Mark Foley and a long time NARFE member, about having her visit the Highlands County Chapter 288 meeting. I hope she can enlighten us as to how to best get the new Congressman's (Mahoney) ear on NARFE issues.

Chapter 288 named Pauline White "Volunteer for the Month" for December. Pauline sold her home in Sebring, moved to Lynch, KY, and is helping the people in the area with food and other needs. She works with her church and Chapter 288 to make things happen.

Alzheimer's Benefit Cruises

The Florida Federation is planning two 2007 cruises. One leaves Tampa Bay on December 2, 2007, and the other leaves Port Everglades on December 9, 2007. Net proceeds from both cruises will be donated to Alzheimer's through the Federation. Take your pick of either cruise, and do it soon, as the best cabins go first!

For more information, see the cruise flyer in this Newsletter and the other information mailed by Don Stewart in December.

National HQ Directory

Please see the attached 2 page update of information about NARFE National staff. We hope you will find it useful.

Legislation

By Treva Devers

As we go into 2007, the following are the big news items:

- Your January, 2007 check reflects a 3.3% COLA.
- The 109th Congress has ended – this means that all bills introduced during that Congress will expire in January, 2007 and have to be re-introduced.
- The discharge petition for GPO/WEP (109-15) managed to gather 126 signatures before Congress adjourned for the holidays. It only takes 218 to get this onto the floor for a vote. We just need 92 signatures and we're there!! Also, if a Congressional Representative signed it in the 109th Congress they will most likely sign it again in the 110th Congress. The discharge petition was introduced by a Representative from Texas at the urging of one of the teachers groups.

Your Congressional Senators and Representatives will be back in Washington for the 110th Congress in January.

PLEASE – contact them and urge the re-introduction of our bills for GPO/WEP and Premium Conversion, not only in the House but in the Senate as well!

I am available to speak at the Annual District Meetings in January and February. If you would like to learn how to prepare the FL Fact Sheet for your Chapter or District, please let me know and I will show you.

Also, check the Legislative Scorecard on the next page.

New Federation Fax Line

Federation Secretary William Leatham has set up a fax line dedicated to Federation use:

941-237-2030

You can fax F-7's and other NARFE Florida Federation documents to this number.

Federation Officials

Elected

President.....	Benjamin Pappa
1st VP.....	Donald Stewart
2nd VP.....	Wallace Roepke
Secretary.....	William Leatham
Treasurer.....	Kenneth Carter
Past President.....	David Whalen

Appointed

Alzheimer's.....	Leonora Sicular
Automation.....	Diana Leatham
Chaplain.....	Mary Ellen Schoolmaster
Coalitions.....	Herbert Sicular
FEEA.....	Nancy Roepke
Legislative.....	Treva Devers
Membership.....	Bob Miller
Membership Awards.....	David Whalen
NARFE-PAC.....	John Trenkle
Newsletter Editor.....	Marc Harris
Newsletter Publisher (this issue).....	District 9
Public Relations.....	Marc Harris
Service Officer.....	Mary Ellen Schoolmaster
ZIP-Code.....	Margaret Pappa

Legislative Scorecard

Current Bills

Title	Senate/ House Bill Number	Co- Sponsors	Increase/ Decrease	FL Co- Sponsors	New FL Co-Sponsors
WEP/GPO	S. 619/	29	0	1	None
	H. R. 147	327	1	15	None
	D.P. 109-15	126	4	4	None
Premium Conversion	S. 484/	59	0	2	None
	H. R. 994	310	0	16	None

Other Bills That We Are Watching

Budget Offset	H. R. 692	7	0	3	None
Shaw Soc. Sec. Solution	H. R. 750	5	0	1	None
Gov't Increase in FEHBP Premium	H. R. 633	64	0	4	None

Discharge Petitions

Title	House/ Discharge Petition Number	Co- Sponsors	Increase/Decrease	FL Co- Sponsors	New FL Co-Sponsors
Concurrent Receipt	H. R. 303 109-2	240	0	22	None
		191	0	7	None
Repeal Medicare Drug Negotiating Restriction	H. R. 376 109-1	167	0	7	None
		176	0	7	None