



**National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association  
Florida Federation of Chapters**

# Newsletter

January 2006

## **Officers:**

### **President:**

**Ben Pappa** 941-743-7117  
*retatc@comcast.net*

### **1st Vice President:**

**Don Stewart** 305-442-6388  
*dejs33149@aol.com*

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President:**

**Wally Roepke** 941-355-6139  
*wall\_nan@verizon.net*

### **Secretary:**

**Steve Henderson** 941-776-9191  
*stevhend@msn.com*

### **Treasurer:**

**Ken Carter** 813-983-9101  
*kcarjax@aol.com*

## **Important Dates:**

### **Federation EB Meetings**

February 23-23,  
May 18

August TBD

November

### **Federation Convention**

May 17-18

### **NARFE National Convention**

September 10-14

## **COLA News:**

The 2006 COLA is 4.1% for CSRS  
and 3.1% for FERS

## **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!

## **Web Sites:**

NARFE National – [www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org)

FL Federation – [www.narfefl.net](http://www.narfefl.net)

## **President's Message**



Welcome to the first of what I hope will be many issues of the Florida Federation Newsletter. It is my plan and sincerest hope that this issue, added to our excellent website, is the beginning of a new era for the Federation in the way we communicate with our members.

I would like to thank all of you that have placed your trust in me to lead the Florida Federation, and I will do my best to do just that. However, neither the National

Officers, nor the Federation Officers can keep NARFE relevant without the help of you, the Chapters and it's Members. NARFE must remain strong at all three levels, National, Federation and Chapter to carry on the battle to maintain what we have all worked so many years to achieve.

It is no secret that some Chapters are struggling to maintain officers that will be able to lead and hold the Chapter together. As part of our overall approach to addressing that need, we put together a Training Seminar on November 9 & 10. Attendance was excellent, with 41 of the Federations 79 Chapters being represented by 125 members. Trainers consisted of members of the Executive Board, Federation appointees, and **Region III Vice President Robert Harrell**. Topics included how chapters are organized and operated, how the Executive Board, Committees and NARFE staff are organized and work for our members, forms and reports used to make NARFE function, the Federation's Membership, Legislative, and Public Relations initiatives, and the Federation's excellent website.

I have received several phone calls and e-mails, all positive, expressing thanks for an outstanding session, and most wanted to know when the next one would be presented. As a result of this seminar, we already have had members step forward to fill Chapter Officer positions that were vacant, and going on line to our website and use the forms that are placed there to help them.

I hope you enjoy this Newsletter and will make more and more use of our website. We plan to issue a Newsletter after each EB meeting. In the interim, we plan to continue to post information on our website, and make as much use of email as possible to keep you all informed.

*Ben*



## Executive Board meeting

While a lot of the usual business was handled at the November 10, 2005 Federation EB meeting, several interesting things happened:

**New banners** - The EB agreed to a program to purchase new banners for the Federation and the Districts. Information on how to obtain a new banner is on the way.

**Legislative affairs** -The EB decided to send Federation **Legislative Officer Treva Devers** to NARFE's National office for a few days in February or March to shadow NARFE's Legislative Officer. The trip is intended to help Treva and the Federation better understand the problems facing NARFE and how to better work with Florida representatives and Senators, **most of whom are not supporting our legislative initiatives.**

Treva has also been actively visiting congressional offices around the state. Here is where she has been the past few months:

**Oct 26** - Met with Shirley Anderson, District Dir and Diane Trimis (a NARFE member). Staff Assistant for Rep Ginny Brown Waite (Cong Dist 5) - Met with Sonja Stefanadis, Dist Director for Rep Mike Bilirakis (Cong Dist 9).

**Oct 27** - Met with John Kynes, District Dir for Rep Jim Davis (Cong District 11) - Met with George Cretekos, Dist Dir for Rep C. W. Bill Young (Cong Dist 10).

**Nov 7** - Met with Rep Lincoln Diaz-Balart (Cong Dist. 21) (see article in the next column) - Met with Ariel Fernandez, III, Aide for Rep Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (Cong Dist 18) - Met with the NARFE District 7 Officers in Miami.

**Treva invites all members to visit her part of our website for up to date info on legislative activities and a score card on Florida's Senators and Representatives.**

**Mandatory Chapter Membership** - This issue was discussed at length, and will be on the agenda for NARFE's 2006 National Convention. It was clear from the feed back we received at the Training Seminar that many of our members want a change, at a minimum, to eliminate the terms "mandatory" and or "automatic" membership. **We would appreciate input from all members on this issue.**

**Federation Annual Convention** - The convention is set for May 17-18, 2006 in Altamonte Springs. At the November Exec Board Meeting/Training Session, Convention Packets were distributed to the DVPs and, where possible, to individual Chapter presidents. Among the enclosed documents was **Convention Cut Off Dates.** These are guidelines and you do NOT have to wait for those dates to submit your contributions. The earlier you submit, the easier it will be for the respective responsible Committee to complete its work requirements. This is especially true if the item is to appear in the program book. In this respect, the **Booster List** is an excellent example. Please submit your input to the Booster List to David Whalen electronically, preferably in a format that can be adapted to the final printed form. This will avoid errors due to hand written submissions. Another important submission is for the **two banquets.** If you wish to be seated in a group of your own choosing, the earlier you submit the more likely the chance of getting to sit where you want. REMEMBER, this is on a first come, first served basis.

There are several other events that are on a first come, first served basis. For instance, there is a trip to **Dolly Parton's Dixie Stampede** (across from DisneyWorld) on Tuesday evening (May 16) that includes round trip bus transportation. The Federation's buying power resulted in the total cost per person being less than the cost of buying a ticket at the door.

THE EARLY BIRDS GETS THE WORM! Last year, thanks to your efforts, the Florida Federation Convention was #1 in attendance and we hope for the same in 2006. If you have any questions, e-mail ([Dejs33149@aol.com](mailto:Dejs33149@aol.com)) or call Don Stewart.

*Congressman Pledges Support*



**Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Bacart**, a strong supporter of Florida retirees, recently met with several NARFE members and pledged his support to get the bills to the floor of the House of Representatives for a vote during this session of congress.

*Pictured from l to r: Donald Stewart, Federation 1st VP; Mickey Rosenthal, Federation District 7 (Miami Dade and Monroe County) VP; Congressman Diaz-Bacart; Treva Devers, Federation Legislative Chair; and Ivory Johnson, Chapter 1405 (Miami) Secretary.*

## ***Dues Withholding Contest***

Want to win \$200? The Federation is sponsoring a statewide contest in an effort to get as many members as possible to sign up for dues withholding. Thus far, response has been minimal.

In addition to the possibility of winning a few bucks, NARFE benefits from dues withholding in two ways. 1) The cost of mailing renewal and second notices is eliminated. 2) The loss of membership is reduced. Both benefit NARFE by saving money that can be used for more important issues. And individuals benefit by not getting extra pieces of unwanted mail, and also having to write less checks.

The Federation urges all of its members to encourage individuals to sign up for dues withholding. Check [www.narfeffl.net](http://www.narfeffl.net) for details and the form to complete.



## **FEEA NARFE WE MUST DO MORE**

*by Nancy Roepke*

After Hurricane's Katrina, Rita and Wilma impacting thousands of our NARFE sisters and brothers this year, the Federation set forth a challenge, to raise an amount equal to \$10 from each member. This showing of generosity would result in collecting about \$200,000 in Florida. At the end of November, Federation members have donated \$11,214 to FEEA/NARFE as a result of our call for contributions this year. In addition to donations from individuals, only 40 per cent of the 79 chapters in the Federation have contributed. This means that 48 chapters have donated nothing.

**WE CAN AND MUST DO MORE.** The FEEA/NARFE fund needs our support...you may be the next one who needs it's help. It has already paid \$142,500 for over 280 claims and there over 25 pending claims for over \$13,500 more (there is a \$500 limit on any single distribution). Given the scope of the destruction from this year's hurricanes, hundreds, or maybe thousands more claims can be expected.

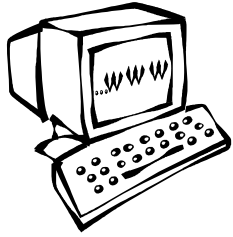
**Remember, it could be any one of us who needs the help next time. We need to be sure the funds are there.**

The Federation urges all Chapters and individuals that have not contributed to make a check out to FEEA/NARFE Disaster Relief Fund. Put your chapter name & number in the bottom left corner. Either take the check to your next Chapter meeting or mail it to:

**FEEA/NARFE Disaster Relief Fund, 8441  
Bowles Ave  
Littleton, CO 80123-9501.**

If you prefer to donate using your credit card, you may do this by calling 1-800-323-4140 toll free or 303-933-7580.

***If you use your card or mail a separate check be sure to tell let me know so I can give your Chapter credit.***



## From the Webmaster

by Bill Leatham

All members who use AOL for internet access should know that they can no longer rely on AOL to deliver important email. You may be missing important messages from NARFE, and who knows whomever else, and not even know it.

**Alternatives to AOL email?** Try permanent email at Yahoo.com, Gmail.com, or other free email service. Sign up for a free web email account NOW. For example, Yahoo's email service is FREE and gives you more for less (free): 125 megabytes of space, virus and spam checking, provides easy access through Internet Explorer from anywhere, and you never have to change your email address again! It's good for life as long as you use it regularly (monthly).

### Alternates to AOL for your internet provider?

**Dial-up.** If you want dial-up, NetZero is \$9.99/month for better service and more access numbers.

**High speed options.** In many parts of the state, Verizon DSL can be bought for \$14.95/month. In other areas, Sprint DSL starts at \$29.99 (\$24.99 if you have a Sprint cell phone)/month. DSL offers much greater speed than AOL dial-up, it is always on, and it does not tie up your phone line. Cable TV providers offer internet access at speeds higher than DSL, but generally at a higher price.

### Checked out [www.narfe.net](http://www.narfe.net) lately?

Our website, [www.narfe.net](http://www.narfe.net), continues to grow and prosper. I invite all members to visit the site and explore its many links to vital and informative web sites. Links to more are constantly being added, and more can be added if you fell the need and bring them to my attention. I have even provided a tutorial to help you navigate the site.

If you have any questions or need more guidance, email me at [webmaster@narfe.net](mailto:webmaster@narfe.net).



## Public Relations

by Marc Harris

Since being appointed a few months ago, I have attempted to jump start the Federation's Public Relations efforts.

My first effort was to establish the **Federation's PR Plan**, which you can find on our website.

Working with Bill Leatham and input from several members, an **extensive database of statewide press contacts** has been established. However, it is not complete and still needs local input and constant updating. All DVPs have been asked to provide the names of their PR chairs and press contacts to me so Bill and I can update the database and set up the PR Team. **I still need input from most of you.**

I developed several Press Releases for local and state wide distribution. Some are available on our website, where we plan to post more in the future as samples.

I developed a **sample Press Kit**, which is on our website and was recently used by District 9, a simple, **easy-to-read Newsletter layout**, which you can see on our website, and material for District 11's attendance at Mango Mania.

I also worked with Ben, Nancy and others to develop a message to all Florida NARFE members in regard to FEEA and Katrina.

Also, working with Ben Pappa, Bob Furrow, and NARFE National, we obtained matching funds for some PR initiatives.

All members should know by now that National has a **new PR Handbook**, hard copies of which can be ordered online. Also, in response to my suggestion, the Handbook is now available as a PDF file which can be read or downloaded from [www.narfe.net](http://www.narfe.net).

Please contact me by phone at 239.549.9909 or email ([marcharris@swfla.rr.com](mailto:marcharris@swfla.rr.com)) and let me help you put together a PR program for your District or Chapter.