National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association
Florida Federation of Chapters
Www.narfefl.net

Newsletter

July 2006

Officers:

President:
Ben Pappa 941-743-7117
retatc@comcast.net

1st Vice President:
Don Stewart 305-442-6388
dejs33149@aol.com

2nd Vice President:
Wally Roepke 941-355-6139
Wallnan2@verizon.net

Secretary:
Steve Henderson 941-776-9191
stevehende@msn.com

Treasurer:
Ken Carter 813-983-9101
kcarjax@aol.com

Newsletter Editor:

Marc Harris
marc.harris@narfefl.net

Newsletter Publisher:

Chapter 1104

Important Dates::

Federation EB Meetings
October 26-27, 2006
February 22-23, 2007
May 15 and 18, 2007
NARFE National Convention
September 10-14, 2006
Federation Convention
May 15-17, 2007

Status of Legislation:

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

See page 5. Call and write your representatives. Visit them during an upcoming recess:
House recess July 31-Sept 5
Senate recess August 7 – Sept 4

President's Message

Now that the 2006 Florida Federation Convention has concluded, and I have some time to reflect back on the past year and look forward to the next year, I would like to share some thoughts.

Over the past year, the Florida Federation has seen some changes, changes in the way we conduct business within the Federation. A different course of action has taken place in both our legislative and membership departments. Along with these changes came the public relations department, this is somewhat new to the Federation, in that it has been some time since we have had an active PR department. Most of the District Vice Presidents have taken a more active roll within their districts, and this has had some very positive results. Overall, this past year has been more on the positive side of what the duties and responsibilities of a Federation.

However, there is the flip side to this, we have not been able to get any of our issues out of committee, therefore, legislation has not yet been passed. Yes, we continue to gain co-sponsors to our issues, but until a bill is released from the committees and brought to the floor for a vote, we will never know just who really are our friends in Congress.

The reduction in membership has slowed, but it still continues to decline at a rate of about 3% per year. One in every three new members is a current employee. This is changing the face of NARFE, and far too many of our new retired members are being recruited by national. We, each of us at the Chapter level need to come forward and set a goal of recruiting at least 2 new members per year, do the math, this will turn NARFE around. Here in Florida there are over 166,000 retired federal employees, and yet NARFE membership is below 23,000.

The next few years will be very crucial to our retirement and the way we have accepted it. Major issues are presenting potential roadblocks, such as the enormous national debt that shadows over us, medical savings accounts that threaten our current medical plan, and the ever escalating cost of living that affects each and every one of us.

You ask: "What can I as only one person do to change things?" You can communicate on your own or as part of a group within your Chapter and/or District to your representatives on having our issues taken out of committee and placed on the floor to be addressed; carry a membership application with you at all times (you never know when or where you will run into a potential new member); become more involved with the issues that affect all of us by attending Chapter meetings and helping the meeting be more productive and not just a social event.

NARFE is not an Association that is here for the benefit of one or just a few, but it's for each and every one of us, to help current and future retirees maintain the benefits we have earned through our many years of service to our government.

Ben

Federation Convention

L to r: NARFE National President Fallis, Region III NFVP Harrell, Federation President Pappas

Nearly 300 Federation members gathered at the Hilton Hotel in Altamonte Springs to attend the 54th Annual Federation Convention on May 14-16.

After an uplifting opening ceremony by the JAFROTC Honor Guard from Lake Brantley High School in Altamonte Springs, and a Parade of Banners from all Chapters, a DVD from **Senator Bill Nelson** addressing the delegates was presented.

The key note speaker was **NARFE Region III Field Vice President Robert Harrell.**

The meeting was then called to order by **Federation President Benjamin J. Pappa Jr**. Reports were made by all elected and appointed officers, along with reports of several committees.

Re-elected to statewide office were President Ben Pappa, 1st VP Donald Stewart, 2nd VP Wallace Roepke, Secretary Steve Henderson and Treasurer Ken Carter. Also re-elected to officer were District Vice Presidents Harold Bartelt, Ruth Blackwell, Sharon Sharp, Tom Singletary, Mickey Rosenthal, Larry Thoroman, Richard Gerber and Lucette Chizik.

Newly elected as District Vice Presidents were Robert Shaw (1), Anthony Torchia (6) and Treva Devers (11).

Several awards were presented for outstanding service to NARFE, along with the annual main awards to the **Woman of the Year,** Treva Devers and **Man of the Year,** Michael Brose.

Convention business consisted of addressing 13 resolutions proposing to affect either the Florida Federation or NARFE nationally.

The first Dues Withholding Contest was a big success, with Marc Harris winning first prize.

One of the highlights of the convention was an added address to the delegates by **NARFE National President Charles L. Fallis**, who was also the feature speaker at the Thursday night formal banquet and installation of officers.

Other evening events consisted of nearly 100 delegates attending Dolly Parton's Dixie Stampede dinner and show on Tuesday evening, and an informal banquet and dancing on Wednesday evening.

At the Thursday night banquet, several door prizes were awarded, followed by the main raffle prize of $1,000.00, and three consolation prizes of $100.00 each.

Other highlights of the annual event were the raising of funds for NARFE's main charities, **Alzheimer's,** and the **Federal Employees Education & Assistance Fund (FEEA).** Alzheimer's, chaired by Leonora Sicular**, raised over $1,300.** FEEA, chaired by Nancy Roepke**, raised over $1,000.**

Pictures of the convention are available at www.narfefl.net.

Mark your calendars. The 2007 Federation Convention is set for May 15-18, again at the Hilton in Altamonte Springs.

Executive Board Meetings

By Benjamin J. Pappa Jr, President

May 15, 2006. Under the Bylaws, the Tuesday Executive Board (EB) meeting is mandated, but has very little substance within it due to the Annual Convention and election.

The main item at the meeting was the 2006-2007 draft budget prepared by the budget committee. The draft budget is presented at this meeting and discussed and voted on at the next meeting.

Correspondence was presented by the Secretary, reports were invited from each member of the EB, the Reg-III NFVP was recognized, final details on the 2006 Federation Convention were discussed, and honorariums were presented to the Treasurer, Secretary and Automations Chair. The Secretary donated his honorarium to FEEA to be divided between the disaster relief fund and education grants fund.

May 19, 2006. I presented a new Florida Federation Structural Chart which was approved by the EB. I then read a list of proposed Appointed Officers and Committee Chairs, which was accepted by the EB.

A comprehensive financial report was presented by the Treasurer, and filed for audit.

Appointed officers, committee chairs and EB members provided reports.

The 2006-2007 Fiscal Policy was addressed, and, after minor amendments, was approved by the EB. Copies will be sent to all Federation elected /appointed officers and each member chapter.

The 2006-2007 E-Mail Voting Policy was addressed and approved by the EB.

The 2006-2007 Federation Training Plan was discussed and approved by the EB. Training will take a different path this year…look for it at Annual District Meetings in order to provide Chapters with the opportunity to have more Chapter members attend.

The 2006-2007 budget was addressed in detail, and after much adjusting, was approved by the EB. The 2007 Federation Convention core committee assignments were made by the Convention General Chairman, along with the point system associated with Convention committee members.

Under old business, the EB voted not to participate in a NARFE National radio ad promotion that would have cost us $5000-$6000.

Under new business, a motion was presented and seconded to create a non-voting "Emeritus" position for any living Past National President residing in Florida. The motion was tabled until the next EB meeting.

Spotlight on Members Initiative

By Marc Harris, PR Chair

NARFE members have varied and interesting backgrounds…and we should highlight them. We are not just a bunch of retired feds trying to save our retirement benefits...we have contributed and continue to contribute to our communities and the nation. And we need to let the public know!

I recently worked with the PR Team in Miami-Dade to do a Press Release on a member who was the first woman on the beach after D-Day! Surely, all Chapters have similar stories. I am working on several for my own Chapter 1002.

I encourage each Chapter to embrace this initiative, and prepare a Press Release spotlighting one of your members every month. Send me copies of what you prepare and suggestions for members that we should spotlight statewide and/or in the NARFE Magazine. We will post what we can on www.narfelf.net. If you have any questions, or need a sample, call or email me.

I also want to thank all of you who have helped me get the PR Team up and running. However, several Chapters are still not represented with an email contact and thus will not be getting my PR emails. I really need an email contact from each Chapter…help!

2006-07 Dues Withholding Contest

By Bob Miller, Membership Chair

First, I want to thank President Pappa for appointing me as your new Membership Chair. It will be hard to fill the shoes of Mike Brose, the 2005-06 Man of the Year. I look forward to working with you all. I also would like all the Membership Chairs to contact each and every one of their members who are on the Sent Second Notice list. Let them know they are a valued part of NARFE and we need each and every member.

To start off the new Federation year, I am pleased to tell you that the Federation has announced a second Dues Withholding contest for 2006-2007. I urge all Federation members to encourage individuals to sign up for dues withholding. NARFE benefits from members on dues withholding in two ways. First, membership loss is greatly reduced. Second, the cost of mailing the renewal and second notice is eliminated, saving money that can be used for more important issues. Please include articles in your Newsletters, websites, and discuss the benefits at your monthly meetings.

Prizes - First Prize $200.00, 2nd and 3rd prizes, $50.00 each. Prize money will be awarded to the member.
Drawing - At the 2007 Federation Convention. You do not need to be present at the convention to win.

All signed dues withholding forms must be mailed to:

NARFE FL. FED. D/W Contest
Bob Miller - Membership Chairman
1406 SE 22nd Street
Cape Coral, FL 33990-4623

Do not send the dues withholding forms directly to National as forms sent directly there are not eligible for the contest. I will be recording each new withholding member for the drawing, and then forwarding the form to National to send to OPM when the time is right to convert the member from annual dues to dues withholding.

New Banner

Look for this new Federation banner at conventions, Senior Fests, and other Federation events

Region III

By Bob Harrell, Region III NFVP

All Region III Federation Conventions have concluded with great success. I wish to thank each of you for the interest and dedication displayed assisting NARFE in carrying out it's mission to protect and enhance our earned benefits. During these conventions, many discussions were held on the proposed resolutions as well as the preparation of resolutions to be forwarded to the National Office. These resolutions will require decisions in Albuquerque. Now as we move on to Albuquerque, it is imperative that each of you become familiar with each and every one of these proposed changes. All proposed resolutions are posted on www.narfe.org under the "National Convention" icon. A book containing all resolutions will be mailed to each Chapter Secretary and Registered Delegate on or before the Convention. It is imperative that each Chapter develop a method whereby all members can convey to the delegates or proxies how they are to vote.

In addition to the resolutions and bylaws change proposals, there will be an election for new officers to lead the organization for the next two years (including making a choice within Region III). It is going to be a very busy convention and the delegates are going to make many decisions that will direct where NARFE will go in the years ahead. NARFE needs the input of each and every member, not just a vocal few.

I hope to see many of you in Albuquerque.

FEEA

By Nancy L. Roepke, FEEA Coordinator

Members and Chapters who supported the FEEA Scholarship and Disaster funds this past year can give themselves a pat on the back. We took in over $13,000 for the disaster fund alone.

Now we are in another hurricane season and we need to be sure that we keep on supporting these funds. We never know when it may be us who needs the support next time so we need to keep giving. A little bit from each of us every year will add up quickly.. You can find a fund contribution form in any NARFE magazine. Be sure to check whether you are giving to the scholarship or disaster fund. Also, please let your Chapter know because I have no way of tracking individual donations. Your chapter should inform me of any donations so that I can put them on my list as being from that chapter.

Legislative Affairs

By Treva Devers, Former Legislative Chair

***L to R* - Jill Crissman, Legislative Rep.; Dan Adcock, Asst Legislative Director; Rebecca Rey, Legislative Asst; Treva Devers, Chris Farrell, Legislative Rep; and Judy Park, Legislative Director (standing).**

Trip to National. I traveled to NARFE Headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia May 9 through 11, 2006 to obtain a better understanding of what the NARFE National Legislative Office does, and to promote a better working relationship between the Federation and the National Office.

I attended several NARFE meetings, such as the Senior Executive Staff Meeting, NARFE-PAC (working and approval), Proposed On-line Medical Records Bill, and sat in on various Premium Conversion discussions on Capitol Hill. I am pleased to report that our National Legislative Staff is very dedicated, professional and knowledgeable. NARFE members should be aware that when this Team goes into meetings, they are very well prepared and have the expertise necessary to effectively do their jobs.

The numbers of Co-Sponsors for WEP/GPO and Premium Conversion continue to increase. NARFE is hopeful that we can, at least, get Premium Conversion passed before this session of Congress is over at the beginning of October.

CALL 1-866-220-0044. The message to your representative is:

I am a retired federal annuitant and NARFE member who is very concerned about my earned benefits. It is time for the Government to give fair and equal treatment to federal annuitants on the pre-tax cost of the FEHBP. Help pass the Premium Conversion Act, H. R. 994. Help return fairness and equity to your retired federal annuitant constituents by helping them receive the same tax benefits that active employees receive. It's the right thing to do!

The message to Senators Nelson and Martinez is:

I am a retired federal annuitant and NARFE member who is very concerned about my earned benefits. It is time for the Government to give fair and equal treatment to federal annuitants on the pre-tax cost of the FEHBP. Help pass the Premium Conversion Act, S. 484. Help return fairness and equity to your retired federal annuitant constituents by helping them receive the same tax benefits that active employees receive. It's the right thing to do!

NARFE-PAC

By John Trenkle, NARFE-PAC Chair

The purpose of a Political Action Committee (PAC) is to support national candidates for election to the U.S. Congress. PACs support candidates that generally agree with the objectives of the PAC or candidates that serve on a key committee that is concerned with legislation important to the PAC.

Following campaign finance legislation, NARFE National established NARFE-PAC in 1982. NARFE-PAC is a nonpartisan entity. NARFE is interested in fair and equitable Federal retiree legislation. Therefore, NARFE functions as an interest group, not as a political party. The slogan "Support the candidates that support NARFE" sums up the goal of the NARFE-PAC pretty well. But, by law, a PAC contribution to a candidate cannot exceed $5,000 per election. Obviously, this is not enough to affect the outcome of an election. So there is another key role that the PAC plays. It is from the idea of "access." It is critical to the legislative process that NARFE have access to critical legislators at critical times to provide NARFE positions on specific legislation. NARFE-PAC contributions help pave the way for our lobbyist to have direct access to legislators. And this access cuts two ways. We all see when new legislation is not enacted. This is frustrating to all of us. But what is not as visible are the lobbying activities that help keep what we have. Lobbying in Congress is very competitive. So this notion of access and the role that NARFE-PAC plays is very important.

A common question often asked is how does NARFE specifically decide who gets our money. The decision to contribute is made by the NARFE-PAC Committee at National. This Committee consists of our four elected National Officers (voting members) and the Director of Legislation (nonvoting member). The Committee requests and considers Federation recommendations. In addition to Federation comments, the PAC uses the following four factors in making their final decision:

1. **Can the candidate win?** Is there opposition? If there is, how much money have the candidates raised? If a candidate does not have enough money, the campaign is likely not competitive, and therefore such candidates are not attractive to the PAC. A contribution to a candidate that ultimately loses is of no help to NARFE in meeting its legislative goals.

2. **Level of influence** a legislator can exert in support of our goals. There are only a few Committees that are important to NARFE. So only a fraction of the total members of Congress, those on these committees, have a great deal of influence on our legislation. These congressmen are potentially very important to NARFE.

3. **Level of support**. For an incumbent the level of support is simply their voting record. If the candidate is a challenger or running in an open seat, and has no voting record to evaluate, then NARFE evaluates responses to a questionnaire to understand candidate views on matters vital to our interests.

4. **Level of communication** between the candidates and NARFE members, Chapters, Federations, and probably most importantly our lobbyists. The issue here is will the congressmen, or their key staff, at least give us a chance to tell our side of the issue. If they listen, they are at least more informed.

NARFE-PAC serves as a critical element in support of the legislative process. Thank you for your valuable contributions to the PAC. If you have not yet contributed this cycle, please consider contributing soon.

2006 Convention Pictures

A CD with pictures from the 2006 Florida Federation Convention can be purchased by contacting:

Ron Marten
10442 SE 177th Place
Summerfield, FL. 34491
352-347-4012
marten@xprinternet.net

Automation

By William Leatham, Automation Chair & Webmaster

If you are using Earthlink's SpamBlocker or a similar product, Qurb, it is pointless to fill out contact forms, whether on our website or others, because there is no way for anyone to get back to you for added info, etc. So far, three Florida NARFE members using Earthlink's SpamBlocker have completed the Contact Us form on our website to no avail. I needed to get a little more background to solve their issues then had to drop their requests into the electronic wastebasket when my emails bounced back.

Spam Blockers are an imperfect tool, however, the best is free; it comes with Outlook 2003 compliments of Microsoft Office Update! Microsoft provides free updates of known spammers as a free download to registered users. NOTE: You will need a high speed connection or an unlimited dial up account.

On another topic, our website, www.narfefl.net, is now a heavily used resource, drawing 130 – 160 visitors daily. By the time that you read this, it should have a new and exciting look! And, there will be new features added over the summer to make it more user-friendly.

Marc Harris and I have been working to get a fully functional Public Relations system going with mixed success and much frustration on both our parts. There are many blanks that need filling as to Chapter Public Relations Chairs and Media Contacts. Marc has raised the visibility of NARFE greatly, but he can't do it alone!

Phishing – mail fraudulently claiming to be from a trusted source that seeks to have you click on links in it in order to steal your identity or money – is increasing. NEVER CLICK ON LINKS TO FINANCIAL SITES IN AN EMAIL NOR PROVIDE FINANCIAL DATA IN RESPONSE TO AN EMAIL. If the email raises a concern, call the company's 800 number or go directly into their website in the normal manner. **Bypass the email and its links.**

The latest Phishing expedition that I received purported to be from Consumer's Union requesting that I update my account-including Credit Card info. It was actually from a dial up user of SBCGlobal.net. Had I complied, they would have been charging my credit card in minutes!!!

Have a Great Summer!

Convention Representation

By Don Stewart, 1st VP

I want to again remind all Chapter Presidents that have not submitted their registration for the National Convention to do so immediately. Alternately, if no one from a Chapter is planning to attend, it is imperative that the Chapter prepare a Proxy that can be used for voting.

For the Florida Federation to make a meaningful impact at the Convention, each Chapter's vote or proxy must be available.

If you want to know who can carry your Proxy, contact Federation President Pappa, with a copy to Federation Secretary Henderson and me.

Changes needed in your publications

By Marc Harris, Newsletter Editor

At the recent Federation Convention, several members asked me if they still needed to include a statement in their Newsletters, websites and publications, like the one found in the NARFE magazine, that *membership fees and dues, etc, are not tax deductible*.

The Public Relations Office in National has informed us that, as long as the statement is in the NARFE Magazine and on solicitations such as for NARFE-PAC, the NARFE Calendar, etc – **we do not need it anywhere else**. For many Chapters, Newsletters, websites and recruiting material needs to be adjusted accordingly.

Please pass this on to those who may need it.

Why are we mailing a quarterly Newsletter?

By Dave Whalen, Former Federation President

Three years ago when I started my term as President, I could not get anyone interested in the job of Federation Newsletter Editor. The cost of printing and mailing over 20,000 newsletters with old information or information previously published by National and local Chapters seemed to me to be an unwarranted expense. Consequently the hardcopy newsletter was canceled and I received some flak about that decision.

Part of my personal program was to convert the Federation into a paperless and formless organization and depend on internet communications rather than the US Mail. Secretary Steve Henderson led the effort to identify areas that could be converted from paper and some changes were made. Bill Leatham stepped forward to take over as Automation Chair to update the website and establish the Federation email list. It has taken over two years and a lot of effort to get it in the current state. My rationale was and is that all new members will be computer literate since they have been exposed to and used personal computers in the workplace for the last 20 years.

This effort has met with great success, and has been taken even further with President Pappa. However, a substantial number of our members still do not have email and need to be kept informed. Therefore, President Pappa resurrected the Newsletter idea, modified so that it is only mailed to about 200, not 20,000, including DVPs, appointees, and the President and Secretary of each Chapter. Treva Devers agreed to be the Newsletter Editor, but her busy schedule as Federation Legislative Officer made that impossible. Marc Harris, our Public Relations Chair, seeing the connection between PR and the Newsletter, eagerly stepped into the void.

In addition to preparing a Newsletter that is being mailed to about 200 people, Marc also prepares, and Bill posts, a copy of the Newsletter on our website. So, even though the demographic is changing as new retirees and current federal employees become members, we are attempting to meet the needs of all members, on-line or not.

Marc also is trying to get more members involved in the Newsletter process by seeking volunteer Chapters to publish and mail the Newsletter once it is completed. So far, Chapters in 3 Districts have stepped up to the task. More volunteers are sought. I urge the remaining DVPs and Chapters to contact Marc and volunteer to publish future issues.

Proposed National Resolutions and Bylaws changes available on-line for review

In addition to a mailing, the NARFE national website, www.narfe.org, is, for the first time, publishing all the resolutions that are to be considered at the National Convention.

All Florida members are encouraged to read them and provide input to their delegates.

Forum available for your comments

Cape Coral Chapter 1002's website, www.narfeincapecoralfl.org, has set-up a Forum for NARFE members nationwide to share thoughts, concerns, and suggestions before the Convention.

Members are urged to share their thoughts with others via the Forum

Be informed!! Participate!

Share your thoughts!