



National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association
Florida Federation of Chapters

Newsletter

October 2006

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Newsletter

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Chapter 1104
Leonora and Herb Sicular

Important Dates

Federation Executive Board
Meetings
October 26-27, 2006
February 22-23, 2007
May 15 and 18, 2007
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

Membership

Help our retention effort:

- Emphasize our Dues
- Withholding contest at all Chapter meetings.
- Implement our Spotlight on Members PR initiative.



President's Message

By Benjamin J. Pappa Jr.

Since our last newsletter, there have been a few major events take place. I guess the highlighted event was our meeting with Congressman E. Clay Shaw. On Aug. 25th, Herb Sicular made arrangements for the meeting between Congressman Shaw and myself, I also invited the following to attend the meeting with me, Ann Murray, Treva Devers (Acting Legislative Officer), Herb and Leonora Sicular and my wife Margaret (see picture on



page 2). We were surprised that the meeting extended to forty five minutes. Twenty five minutes into the meeting one of his staff members reminded him of another meeting he had, and he waved her off with "I'll take care of that later, we are having a friendly meeting here", and the meeting continued for another twenty minutes. The end results of the meeting were that he would attempt to find a bill that he could attach HR-994 to and get it on its way. We were also successful in turning around his thoughts on the MSA issue, he now has a better understanding on its effect on the federal employee, and that if put into place as OPM has outlined, could end up costing major increases to the FEHP of both current and retired federal employees.

The second major event was the National Convention held in Albuquerque, NM. I have attended each national convention since 1994, and each convention has its positive and negative sides both on the issues and the conduct of the convention in general. I will be making a full report on the convention as I seen it in a different report, this report may already have been transmitted over the Florida-Net and posted on the Florida Federation Web-Site by the time you receive this newsletter. However, I would like to touch lightly on some of the positive sides of this convention. The highlight was that Margaret Baptiste, on the first ballot won 52.2% of the vote, and has now become the first lady to obtain the title of NARFE National President. Margaret will take office in November, and I have great hopes that she will be able to bring this association back on track to its goals. Others elected to office were, Bill Austin as Vice President, Nat. Brown as Secretary, Richard Ostergren as Treasurer and Bob Harrell as Region III NFVP. Another positive side was the better then normal attendance, over the past ten years we have had a declining attendance, but this year it did a turnabout.

As for the Florida Federation, we are still on track. The Federation Executive Board will be meeting on Oct. 26th & 27th with an agenda of items to attend to. Our goals remain the same, and your elected federation officers are doing what they can to protect your earned benefits. To all Chapter Officers, if you need help, please contact your District Vice President. If they are unable to help you, contact me and I will see if I can be of help to you.

National Convention

Over 70 members of the Florida Federation joined about 1,500 other delegates, members and guests at the 29th Biennial NARFE National Convention in Albuquerque, NM.

The highlight of the Convention was the election of the National Officers who will guide NARFE over the next two years. **Margaret L. Baptiste** was elected National President. **She is the first woman and the first survivor annuitant to become NARFE President.**



President-Elect Baptiste

Ms. Baptiste is a member of Chapter 72, North Charleston, and is currently President of the South Carolina NARFE Federation. She has been a member since 1978, when her late husband Al retired from his Federal civilian job. She has held many other elected and appointed positions in NARFE at the local, state and national level, including four years (1998-2002) as NARFE's National Vice President. *"I am honored that my fellow NARFE members have demonstrated their confidence by electing me as their President,"* Ms. Baptiste said, *"and I pledge to work hard to justify their trust in me".*

Also elected National Resident Officers were:

Bill R. Austin of North Carolina, National Vice President; **Nathaniel "Nat" Brown** of Arizona, National Secretary (beating out Florida's own Steve

Henderson by a mere 63 votes); **Richard Ostergren** of California, National Treasurer.

Robert Harrell of Georgia was re-elected Region III Field Vice President.

Delegates heard from a variety of speakers, including the **Director of the Office of Personnel Management, Linda Springer**, who thanked the delegates for NARFE's support of OPM's attempt to install a new system to not only speed up retirement processing, but to expedite changes made by federal annuitants. She also noted that with 60% of the federal work force set to retire in the next ten years, OPM is looking for ways to allow retired federal employees to return to work on a full- or part-time basis.

Judy Park, NARFE's Director of Legislation, urged all federal retirees and employees to get involved in the political process and vote on Election Day. She noted that NARFE's primary legislative goal for the 110th Congress, which convenes in January will be to protect the earned benefits already enjoyed by federal retirees. She also warned that no matter which party is in control, there will be changes and NARFE members will be called upon to meet them.

Federation Meets E. Clay Shaw



(L to R) Alzheimer's Chair Leonora Sicular, Acting Legislative Officer Treva Devers, President Benjamin J. Pappa Jr., Past President Ann Murray, Congressman E. Clay Shaw, Zip-Code Chair Margaret Pappa, Coalition Coordinator Herbert Sicular



Membership – Retaining & Recruiting

By Bob Miller, Membership Chair

Many Chapters seem to spend a lot of time and effort trying to recruit new members, and little or no time retaining members by making NARFE interesting and relevant. During my tenure as Federation Membership Chair, with your help, we will be focusing on both.

Retention. Knowing why someone **really** chooses not to remain a NARFE member can go a long way to retaining members. Therefore, it is imperative that all District VP's contact their Chapter Presidents periodically to ensure Membership Chairs are calling each person that shows up on the M-112 as being dropped to see if they will rejoin NARFE. A note must be made on the M-112 showing the reason they do not want to rejoin. Contact also should be made with members sent a Second Notice to ensure they feel wanted and that they have received their notices as indicated. Again, a notation on the M-112 must be made as to their response.

And, please emphasize our Dues Withholding Contest at all District and Chapter meetings and in your Newsletters and websites.

Recruiting. In addition to whatever Districts and Chapters may be planning, the Federation is again planning extensive recruitment outreach this year. For example, I, hopefully aided by some local members, will be attending the following Senior Friendly Extravaganzas:

*October 11-12, Harborside Event Center, **Ft Myers***

*November 15-16, Tropicana Field, **St. Petersburg***

*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***

Sharing of ideas. If you have any recruiting planned, or innovative retention ideas, please let me know. We hope to post recruiting events and retention ideas in the Membership and Public Relations section of www.narfeffl.net.

Spotlight on Members PR Initiative

By Marc Harris, PR Chair

When you read our PR Plan, you see that we have 4 audiences: Members, Potential Members, The Public, Politicians

The goal of the spotlight on Members initiative is to present to those audiences a different picture of NARFE members. NARFE members are not just a bunch of retired feds trying to save their retirement benefits. **NARFE members have contributed and continue to contribute to our communities and the nation. If you ask, you would be amazed at what NARFE members do and have done.**

Our PR Team should highlight our members varied and interesting histories in their local press. And the local press is eager for these types of articles. I hope that each Chapter will do a member spotlight each month, or at least every other month.

If you have any questions, or need any help, feel free to call or email me.

Also, send me suggestions for members that we should spotlight statewide and/or in the NARFE Magazine.

RETIRED VA NURSES NEED HELP

The Florida Federation has been asked by a group of retired Federal VA nurses to help them in locating retired VA nurses living the state of Florida. It seems they are experiencing a major problem in how their retirement annuity is being computed. They need help in gathering the names of those affected by this, and need support in legislation to correct the problem.

Information such as Name, Address, Phone #, e-mail, dates work started and date of retirement, are some of the information requested my them.

If you are affected by this and wish to be a part of the correction to it, please contact; Debbie McKown 978-263-4443. *(Please do not contact NARFE directly on this issue)*

Penny Wise and Pound Foolish

By Dave Whalen, Past President FLFED

In my humble opinion, the delegates to the 2006 National Convention have decided to be "penny wise and pound foolish" by refusing to amend the National By Laws to provide a housing allowance for National Resident Officers that live more than 100 miles from the National Office, and also for not approving the salary increase for the National Treasurer. I believe that both expenses are completely justifiable in today's economy and within the NARFE budget.

Continuing current policies will tend to limit NARFE to inside the Beltway thinking and keep outstanding leaders from seeking National office.

My recommendation is to let the National Officers meet monthly in Alexandria to conduct necessary business and provide oversight to the professional staff. The exception would be the National President who would be provided with a NARFE "White House" or an adequate housing allowance.

Mr. Henderson Moves to Washington

Florida Federation Secretary Steve Henderson has resigned and he and his wife Mickie are moving to Washington, D.C. Their new address is:

632 Brown's Court SE,
Wash, DC 20003
New phone # is 202-544-1902.
Email address is not changing.

Steve wishes to thank all members of the Florida Federation who supported him for the past 3 1/2 years in his capacity as Federation Secretary and also his quest to attain national office.

Members interested in filling the Federation Secretary position should contact President Pappa.

FEEA

By Nancy Roecke, FEEA Coordinator

Scholarships

FEEA received 582 scholarship applications nationally. Seventy of the entries were from Region III and 39 of these were from Florida. FEEA expects to award more than 400 scholarships this year with an average value of \$1000 each. As soon as the winners for Region III are posted on the FEEA web site I will put the Florida winners on www.narfeffl.net

Disaster fund

This has been a slow year for hurricanes, so we have not heard much about collecting disaster funds, but we never know when we will need some financial support. I have recently returned from the National convention in Albuquerque where I helped collect over a thousand dollars for the FEEA Disaster Fund. It was a fifty/fifty donation so half went to the FEEA Disaster Fund and half went to the winner of a drawing.

Challenge. We need to keep donating to the Disaster Fund. **I challenge each Chapter to set a goal to collect an amount equal to \$10 per Chapter member before next years' Federation Convention.** Remember, we never know when one or many of us will need the help.

PHOTO CONTEST

We all recently received the NARFE Calendar for 2007. The Calendar Program usually nets over \$400,000 for NARFE's general fund, with special attention to PR and membership efforts. Here is how you might have one of your pictures published in the 2008 calendar:

- Photos can be whatever you think makes a good picture. If NARFE is involved, so much the better, but that is not a prerequisite.
- No photos of pets or children.
- No e-mail nor Polaroid pictures will be accepted.
- Photos should be horizontal to best fit the format of the calendar.
- Only the work of amateurs will be accepted.

- You have to be a NARFE member.
- Any photo submitted becomes the property of NARFE.
- Do not re-submit photos entered in previous contests.
- Members whose photos were used in previous NARFE Photo Contest Calendars (2002-2007) **are not eligible** to enter this contest.
- Limit submissions to no more than **five (5)** photos, so only send the ones you consider your best.
- Send your photos to NARFE Headquarters, Office of the Vice President. National no later than February 16, 2007.
- Include your name, Chapter number, address, and phone number with your submission.

If you have any questions, call NARFE PR, 703-838-7760, ext. 369 or e-mail pubrel@narfe.org.

SERVICE OFFICER

By Mary Ellen Schoolmaster

Summer is over, even here in Florida as at least our nights get cooler, so it's time to get back to basics. Use this opportunity to take a fresh look at your survivor information form and make sure everything is current and correct. Actually, this review should probably be done every year, maybe when you change your smoke alarm batteries.

What's that you say? You don't have such a form filled out? Like the shoemaker who never repairs his children's shoes, I hate to admit it but I am busy filling out that form right now. I've always had all the information collected in the same place, but that place just wasn't on the form.

Here are a few reminders for you.

- If you haven't changed your address recently, did one of your children?
- Did a move place you in a new Chapter?
- How about your phone number?
- Do you have a new computer file name for email contacts?
- If you haven't made such a change, your children may have done so?

This could also be the time to review your Living Will and Health Care Surrogate forms. Your

Chapter Service Officer can provide you with a Form 100, a comprehensive and helpful way to be sure you cover everything. It's important to take a few minutes to review the information you are providing for those who will need it if you are unable to do so. I'm –finally – doing that and I know my daughter will thank me for it one of these days.

Thank You

By Robert S. Harrell, Region III, NFVP

I want to thank the NARFE members in Florida that supported me in my efforts to be reelected to another term as your Region III, National Field Vice President. I also would like to compliment Florida Federation President Ben Pappa for running a positive and honorable campaign. The competition for these positions within NARFE only serve to strengthen the efforts of the candidates to better serve the members. I look forward to continue working with Ben and the Florida Federation.

With this reelection, I pledge to continue to work with you for the improvement of this association. We have just completed our bi-annual convention and it was a very busy time with numerous controversial resolutions. The members in attendance overwhelming defeated resolutions on deleting the Mandatory Chapter Membership Requirement, Simplified Dues Structure and One Member-One Vote. With these decisions, it requires each of us in leadership and our Chapters to begin a renewed effort to improve the methods for retention of our current members. This may require some changes in the way we are doing business at the chapter level.

All of us are open to suggestions and I **wholeheartedly welcome any ideas you may have that will improve our organization.** During the next few weeks I will be contacting your leaders for suggestions and recommendations that will assist in addressing our declining membership problem. Let's attack this problem throughout our Chapters, Districts, Federations and Region. **WE CAN AND WILL SOLVE THIS PROBLEM IN REGION III.**

Once again thank you for your support and let's get to work together.



Legislative Report

By Treva Devers, Acting Legislative Officer

Well folks, here I go again volunteering to be your FL Federation Legislative Officer. Once again I have agreed to serve in this capacity if the Executive Board approves my appointment. Upon my appointment I will be putting together a legislative plan for the rest of this year. Once the plan is complete and approved I will post it on the Legislative portion of the FL Federation website. We have much to do this year and even more to do before the November elections!

There is currently a Discharge Petition in the House of Representatives for the GPO/WEP bill (H.R. 147) and we need to get all of our FL Congressional Representatives to sign it!! As of September 22, 2006 there are 34 signatures on the Discharge Petition. So, please, please call, e-mail or write to the Congressman for your Congressional District and urge them to sign the discharge petition!! GPO/WEP is not going to happen unless we all work together to get it done! One of the things I have learned is the ONE THING that works the best in getting things done is **PERSISTENCE**. Therefore, if we want to see GPO/WEP and Premium Conversion become a reality we need to be persistent. Another thing we need to be is to be **CONSISTENT** - consistent when we go to the polls! Know who co-sponsored our bills and who signed the discharge petition and vote your interests! If you don't vote your interests no one else will - they're YOUR interests! So let's all work together and see if we can make a difference in this election by keeping those people that have supported us and getting rid of those who haven't! **REMEMBER - If they didn't vote for you by co-sponsoring or signing the Discharge Petition you should not be voting for them!!!!**

COLA: As of September 15, 2006, the COLA for 2007 stands at 3.4%.

NARFE-PAC

John Trenkle, NARFE-PAC Chair

As I write this, the general election is about six weeks away. NARFE-PAC is the mechanism used at the organizational level to support candidates for

federal office who can influence legislation on issues important to federal employees and retirees. As an individual NARFE member, though, you can be an activist in the upcoming elections. You can;

- Make individual contributions to candidates friendly to NARFE goals
- Work in a congressional district campaign
- Invite candidates to speak at NARFE meetings
- Encourage your local NARFE membership to support and vote for the candidate who favors NARFE, and
- Help in a get-out-the-vote activity.

Please read and save the Legislative Report starting on page 36 of this month's iNARFE magazine. It provides the voting record of all federal legislators on issues important to NARFE for the 109th Congress. This voting record should be used in an evaluation of any incumbent federal candidate seeking financial support from the NARFE-PAC for the rest of this cycle. Please save this report. This is the voting record that will be used by NARFE-PAC during the next cycle (2008). We should refer to this record when making recommendations to NARFE on candidate contribution requests.

On behalf of President Pappa, I thank you for the Federation support of the NARFE-PAC activity this cycle. Once again the election is quickly approaching. At a minimum, please vote. And please consider NARFE goals in your vote choice.

Alzheimer's

By Ken Carter, Alzheimer's Treasurer and
Leonora Sicular, Alzheimer's Chair

Leonora- At the Alzheimer's meeting in Albuquerque, we awarded three grants totaling \$579,978.00. Dr. Thies, Vice President of Medical & Scientific Affairs of the Alzheimer's Association gave a slide presentation and an update on the various trials now in progress. At the present there are about 10 or so drugs in Phase III and from there they go to FDA. Also, there are about 30 or so compounds in Phase II. He feels that some of these drugs will probably be released by next summer.

To date, NARFE has raised \$6,427,318.00 toward our \$7 Million goal and from there go on to \$8 million. Many states contributed gifts to be raffled off as well as the United Airline tickets for two and a beautiful quilt made by the daughter of Eva Heller (Region VII Alzheimer's Coordinator). We raised \$6,323.00 on the raffles. Do keep your contributions coming for research, it is very important that we find a cure for this terrible disease. I would like to thank those Chapters that have been contributing money..

Ken Carter- At National Convention, the NARFE Alzheimer's National Committee set a new goal of \$8 million with no time frame or slogan. Convention delegates indicated their enthusiasm for the new commitment.

Recently I have received some questions concerning the donating of contributions for Alzheimer's. Here are the most common answers:

- All contributions are to be mailed to:
Leonora Sicular, Alzheimer's chair
6650 S. Oriole Blvd #207
Delray Beach FL 33446-1325
- Please include the following information:
 - Agency to receive the donation
 - Complete address of the receiving agency
 - Contact point if known
 - Chapter number making the donation.
- NARFE and the Federation do not receive credit for the donation if you mail directly to a receiving agency. NARFE has no record of the donation and your donation is not counted towards the \$8 million National goal.
- The Alzheimer's Association, located in Chicago, awards grants to various organizations working to improve the quality of life for Alzheimer's patients. The University of South Florida has been the recipient of grants from the Alzheimer's Association.
- Every year I receive requests for documentation that the Chapters may use to purchase items tax free. There is no such documentation. NARFE is a 501(C)(5) organization and is exempt from federal income

taxes. However, NARFE and its subordinate units are not exempt from state and local taxes.

Automation

By William Leatham, Automation Chair

The Federation website, www.narefchl.net, has been redone with a new look and more features, including a SUBSCRIBE feature that permits you to sign up for email bulletins from the Federation if you are not presently receiving them.

NOTE: If you are an Earthlink subscriber and have SpamBlocker turned on, we can not get through to you unless you specifically indicate that all mail from narefchl.net is OK.

Marc Harris and I are working together to make it easier to add Press Contacts for a better PR database of media outlets. If you know of any media contact who should be receiving NARFE Florida Press Releases, please let either of us know.

Now that AOL realizes that it never will make money as an Internet Service Provider (ISP), members using AOL should have a general awareness of whom they may wish to use as a replacement ISP in the future. AOL has indicated that it wants to shrink the dial up service by 50-60% by 2010. This will not affect your continued use of AOL software, just the access route to AOL.

Permanent email addresses are easily available for free from Yahoo, Google (GMail), Excite and AOL. GMail can be integrated into Outlook and Outlook Express. **This way, you do not change your email address when you change Internet service providers.** You need your ISP-provided email account only for internal contact and services from them. One member is now up to his/her 7th (**SEVENTH!**) email account in the 4+ years that I have been managing the FLNet bulletin system. What pain, aggravation, and work for him/her!

New Matching Funds Rules

National has revised the Matching Funds program to require a Post Event Report, and copies of all receipts. Check www.narefchl.net for the new rules.

NARFE's Relevance

By Don Stewart, 1st V.P.

I have just finished reviewing the August Chapter Activity reports (M112). The Florida Federation lost 198 members with three or less years as members, the worst such loss since I began tabulating losses by membership number. This illustrates two problems, continued loss of members and why newer members leave NARFE. The issue is one of RELEVANCE.

Does NARFE provide what the new generation of federal retirees are looking for? The answer for may appears to be NO, however, the fact is that **NARFE is indeed relevant, but it is a well kept secret**, since most of us do a poor job of informing our members, potential members, and the public of what NARFE offers and its members do.

The most high profile items NARFE backs are Alzheimer's Disease and FEEA. Inside NARFE, all of us know about this, but prospective members do not.

For instance, **how many people know what FEEA has done outside our own circle?** Do we tell members and prospective members how many NARFE members received the maximum \$500 grant this past year as a result of Hurricanes Wilma and Katrina? In the Key West Chapter, with 44 members, four received the maximum FEEA grant. How many more received this benefit? In your Chapter? In your District? In the state? In the country? **The availability of FEEA grants is reason enough to be a NARFE member! And donating to FEEA helps us all.**

Many of our members do volunteer work in their community, but no one knows they belong to NARFE. Some even run volunteer programs. We need to publicize EVERYTHING WE DO! We cannot limit ourselves in the eyes of others as just looking out for ourselves; NARFE members do a lot more than that!

Some members complain that we have not gotten any legislation passed in Congress, but at the same time, forget that **NARFE has prevented all attempts to reduce our earned health and retirement benefits.** This in itself is a remarkable

accomplishment and reason to remain a member. **Without NARFE, where do you think you would be?**

NARFE's legislative program is certainly relevant, but needs grass roots support. Membership is truly relevant! We need all out grass roots efforts to welcome new members and keep existing members. That is where you, the individual, come in!

What more can we do to make NARFE relevant? I believe there are issues at the State level that we can tackle that would not only be relevant to Federal retirees and CFEs, but to the entire senior community in Florida. Top on the agenda would be to lobby our State legislator and senators on the cost of home insurance premiums, especially windstorm and hurricane. Also relevant is State legislation that would allow homeowners who are downsizing their home to transfer their existing property tax rate to their new residence, and let's not forget the need for an increase to the Florida homestead exemption. There are other "relevant" subjects where the Florida Federation can join coalition partners and non-federal groups that would raise NARFE's visibility.

These are just possible suggestions. The point is to inform our members and publicize what we do and offer our members and activities they can support. Your elected Federation officers want and NEED your input. DO NOT BE SHY! PLEASE let us hear from you!

Mark Your Calendars

Federation Executive Board Meetings
October 26-27, 2006
February 22-23, 2007
May 15 and 18, 2007

Federation Annual Convention
May 15-17, 2007

NARFE 2007 Legislative Training Conference
March 3 - 6, 2007